CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND CAREER INTERRUPTION IN EXPATRIATE WOMEN IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the domestic and social lives of expatriate women in the Cook Islands and New Zealand, using in-depth interviews and a feminist analysis of their social role. The study centres on the career interruption experiences of contemporary expatriate women from a perspective that understands this decision within the context of power, gender, and marriage. In addition, the thesis focuses on gender-specific cross-cultural adaptation and transition concerns. In doing so, the study highlights the role of domestic social networks both as a form of resistance to and a reinforcement of gender-assigned domestic labour. The thesis also includes a historical analysis of colonial expatriate women in the South Pacific. Using a qualitative methodology, the research also investigates key aspects of expatriate women's experience including leisure, work, and the family.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to investigate issues of cross-cultural adaptation and career interruption in expatriate women. It was conducted in Rarotonga,[1] (see *Appendix H* for map), Wellington and Palmerston North during 1998. It studies a group of sixteen women[2] identified by the researcher in both locations as sojourners or expatriates.[3] The women fall into two categories; firstly, those women who accompanied their husband overseas to Rarotonga for the sole purpose of his career advancement, and who do not work themselves,[4] and others, in Wellington and Palmerston North, who have chosen to settle in New Zealand (see *Appendix G* for profiles of the participants).

The study has the objectives of conducting research in an exciting and unexplored area in sociology (that of expatriate women, gender and work), and of researching with a feminist methodology, using in-depth semi-structured interviews. The research was conducted using this method, as it is one of the most widely chosen by feminist sociologists to investigate women's experiences. It examines aspects of sixteen expatriate women's lives, their careers, cross-cultural adjustments, leisure activities, and their decisions to leave work and home and move overseas. It documents their various attitudes to their new situations and identifies their issues of primary concern. The micro-dimensions of the research are defined by the data collected over thirty-three interviews about how expatriate women perceive and understand their day-to-day reality. This is then set against the backdrop of

a macro level understanding of power relations, gender, and the socio-economic position of expatriate women. The thesis concludes by drawing together the major themes within the research; the specific difficulties women face in cross-cultural adaptation and career interruption. Areas of further study are suggested.

Research about expatriate women, especially the historical analysis, has been less prominent than research on expatriate men. This is because it concentrates on the private sphere, which has traditionally been perceived to be of less value than research about the public sphere. In this way, what expatriate women do is seen as less valid and important than what expatriate men do in the public and political sphere. This bias became obvious when preliminary research on expatriate women was undertaken – only very few historical accounts of expatriate women's lives were found.[5] In reviewing the literature on expatriate women, it is clear there is limited research *on* expatriate women and even less which is *for* or *about* them. The thesis shows how expatriate women live and make sense of their lives, from a perspective that values their experiences and places them in a wider social and international context. In doing so, the study addresses a gap in sociological research.

Much research has been conducted on migrant women from developing nations and their experiences of poverty, deprivation, hardship, discrimination, and cultural isolation in developed nations. However, less work has been conducted with white[6] women from developed nations who sojourn for a set period in another culture. Studies relating specifically to expatriate women are few, but Black, Stewart and Stephens (1989), Ward (1990,

1992) and Black and Gregersen (1991a, 1991b) and De Cieri, et al (1991) are most relevant to the objectives of this research.

The aims and objectives of this thesis are fourfold:

- To investigate the social and economic position of contemporary expatriate women in the Cook Islands and New Zealand, to detail and analyse the social and domestic world in which they exist and to disseminate this understanding in a way that accurately reflects the participants and their experience.

- To examine the career interruption choices and cultural adaptation and transition mechanisms of expatriate women in Rarotonga and New Zealand, investigating their domestic and social support networks.

- To examine the historical context and social roles of colonial women in the South Pacific, and to compare this to contemporary expatriate women, investigating the origin of negative stereotypes about expatriate women.

- To conduct research drawing on a feminist methodological perspective and understanding of the whole individual, considering the power relations and biases inherent in any attempt at understanding social interaction, and drawing on in-depth interview techniques.

These objectives endeavour to establish a unique viewpoint, drawing on a feminist epistemological and methodological

perspective, of the social roles of expatriate women in the South Pacific. In order to understand the reality of expatriate women, information gathering in the field is crucial, as little research exists from the expatriate woman's perspective. It is the lack of this kind of research that allows the traditional, negative stereotypes to persist about "gin-drinking, tea-sipping, card-playing, bored white women."[7]

The research concludes that women who choose expatriation, and by association, privilege their husband's careers over their own, make informed decisions about improving their and their families' standard of living. This reasoning is primarily economic. It takes into account the well-being of their families in terms of social status and economic security. The research finds historical evidence to expose the myth of 'idle' expatriate women. This is replaced by a representation of colonial women who are involved in a number of different areas of work, and who exist within a set of social relations that offer little or no recognition of that work. The research finds that women have specific and common concerns relating to cross-cultural adaptation and career interruption that have not yet been explored from a feminist viewpoint or within sociological research.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 –Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of relevant literature on expatriate women and cross-cultural adaptation of expatriate spouses of men on overseas assignments. It includes some understanding of the historical significance of white women in the

Pacific, using the work of Knapman (1986) and Bulbeck (1992, 1998). Torbiorn (1982) specifically examines expatriation and expatriate women. There are three key areas of research. The first area is the research on expatriate women as economic dependents of their husband overseas, and the unique position these women occupy, using Furnham and Bochner (1986) and Ward (1992). The second area is the history of white women in the South Pacific, using Knapman and Bulbeck. The final area involves research on career women, housewives, and women as unpaid workers within the household, using Anderson (1981) and Harrington (1997). Expatriate women as 'incorporated wives' within the organisational infrastructure of their husband's workplace are also examined. The literature review details some of the feminist methodological and theoretical studies that have guided this thesis, including Reinharz (1992) and Cotterill (1992).

Chapter 2 – White Women in the Pacific

This chapter is an historical perspective on white women in the Pacific, using historical works of writers such as Grimshaw (1930) and Stevenson (1915). It utilises both Knapman (1986) and Bulbeck (1992) who detail the lives of expatriate women in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. The historical chapter is unique in that it uses reference material not currently in print. This chapter examines how the absence from history of white, colonial women has shaped perspectives and opinion surrounding them. It details how their participation in political, social and economic events in the public sphere is not recognised. It reveals their lifestyles and experiences from the women's perspective and shows how their daily lives and social relations shaped their views on colonialism and indigenous people.

Chapter 3 – Feminist Methodology, Feminist Research Methods, In-depth Interviewing and the Method of this Study

This chapter provides an overview of feminist methodology and feminist research methods and includes a detailed description of the method used to conduct this study. Drawing on Reinharz (1992), Cotterill (1992) and Finch (1983), this chapter looks at the way feminist methodology and epistemology has influenced feminist perspectives on conventional research methods, and the traditional 'objective' and 'rational' way of conducting social science research. While the feminist research method of in-depth interviewing is considered an effective tool, problems associated with the power relations between the interviewer and interviewed are acknowledged. Included in this chapter is a discussion of the merits and limitations of in-depth interviewing. Finally, this chapter details the method used to conduct the research for this thesis and recognises problems involved.

Chapter 4 - Cross-cultural Adaptation in Expatriate Women

This chapter examines the cross-cultural transition and adaptation experiences of expatriate women. It investigates how non-working expatriate women adapt less easily than their families to overseas settings because of the lack of natural support networks (such as work and school) in their adopted culture. This chapter uses Torbiorn (1982), Harvey (1985), and De Cieri (1991), to analyse the results of this thesis. This chapter focuses on domestic social networks, which are important sources of support for expatriate women, using Harrington (1997). It concludes with an analysis of the way expatriate women cope with cross-cultural transition and adapt to foreign cultures.

Chapter 5 – Work and Career Issues for Expatriate Women

This chapter looks at the intersection between career and gender. It examines the issues surrounding women's paid employment and domestic labour and investigates expatriate women's position as economic dependents of men. Women who have given up a career have many conflicting feelings about this new state of dependency. This chapter details the data collected on expatriate women's career choices and includes the participants' own views on their abandoned or deferred career options. Anderson (1981) and Harrington (1997) are utilised to show similarities between corporate gypsies, housewives, and expatriate women. The significance of domestic social networks for women not in paid employment is highlighted and the contradictory nature of these networks introduced. This chapter serves as a link between feminist thinking on gender and work and the experiences of expatriate women detailed in this study.

Chapter 6 – Gender, Space, Time, and Economic Dependence in Expatriate Women's Leisure

This chapter examines leisure and voluntary work and defines factors such as space, time, economic dependence, and gender in relation to expatriate women's leisure. Leisure and voluntary work are analysed from a feminist viewpoint, drawing on the work of Deem (1986) and Green et al (1990), among others. The ways in which expatriate women's leisure is restricted by these factors is demonstrated. Work on women's leisure in Britain, such as Henderson (1989) and Shelton (1992), inform this chapter, the key purpose of which is to examine expatriate women's leisure pursuits in Rarotonga within a feminist

understanding of leisure and voluntary work.

Conclusion

This chapter draws together the themes of the thesis and outlines the findings of the research. It examines the implications of the findings in relation to the aims and objectives of the study. It also determines where the research is placed in the field and suggests further areas of study. These include interviewing both expatriate men and women, and the possibility of a longitudinal study of expatriate women to study the stages of cross-cultural transition as they occur.

1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter details studies which highlight research on the main themes of this thesis; expatriate cross-cultural adaptation; women's career interruption issues; leisure; historical perspectives on white women in the Pacific; and feminist methodological and epistemological works which helped to frame this research. It is apparent from this review that existing research is limited in its engagement with the concerns of the expatriate spouse and does not address the issues of concern to expatriate women.

Expatriate Women – Invisible Research Subjects

Quantitative research has been conducted on expatriate men, mostly from an American perspective. Some have examined the effect of expatriation on the family, although Harvey (1985) notes that much research centres on the male employee, and the female spouse and children are often overlooked. Harvey explains that the well-being of the spouse and children on a foreign assignment impacts significantly on the productivity of the male employee. Harvey goes on to point out that 'failed' overseas assignments cost companies money.[1]

There is a strong tendency for organisations to choose men over women for foreign assignments.[2] Various factors influencing this gender skewing including women employees not attaining high positions in the organisational hierarchy in order to be considered

for overseas assignment. Organisations also prefer an employee to have a long-term and unbroken track record before they are sent overseas – women, however, often interrupt their employment for family-related reasons such as child-rearing and spousal career advancement. Finally, there is a perception that foreign prejudice against women will negatively affect their ability to successfully undertake foreign assignments.

The existing research demonstrates that family welfare is critical to the 'successful' overseas assignment of a male employee. Harvey explains that "the distinct line between work and home life is blurred in a international setting" (Harvey, 1985:89). The benefits of being posted overseas are many for the male employee - increased community status, prestige and career development. However, the spouse and children have less to gain from the upheaval of leaving home. Harvey also finds "the wife pays the greatest price for the family's move" (Gaylord, 1979, cited in Harvey, 1985:87). The 'trailing spouse' (women who follow a partner on a foreign posting) has the responsibility for the household in unfamiliar surroundings, and manages this perhaps without a sense of self-worth and identity, close contact with family and friends, and in social and cultural isolation. The gendered aspect of expatriation is relatively unexplored and the literature review exposes a scarcity of qualitative research. This study is unusual in its examination of expatriate women from a feminist perspective, as much research which investigates expatriate women does so in a way which explains spouse and family issues in relation to their impact on male expatriate work performance.

There are some studies which investigate working expatriate

women, including Taylor and Napier (1996), who look at the 'trailing spouse' who finds work on arrival in Japan. The research found the "adjustment to both work and the living environment was crucial to successful job performance in any country" (Black, Mendenhall and Oddau, 1992, cited in Taylor and Napier 1996:77). They found a married woman's adjustment to a foreign environment depends on how well her husband adapts. They also found that if the husband adapts well his family was more likely to adapt well, but if the wife does not adapt well, this negatively affected the husband's work performance. Single expatriate women reported dissatisfaction with the restrictive roles of expatriate women in Japan.[3]

Cross-cultural Adaptation and the Effect of Transition on Women

Culture shock, according to Oberg (1960, in Furnham and Bochner, 1986:49) is "an emotional reaction that follows from not being able to control, understand, or predict another's behaviour." The expatriate woman sees her children assimilated (through school) and her husband (through his work) and realises she has no natural network to help her adjust. Compounding this are the role changes a woman with a career (in her home country) faces when not able to work in her host community.[4] For the female spouse, "dissatisfaction with social relationships is common, due to the trauma of relinquishing old friendships and the difficulty of making new ones" (Brett, 1982, cited in Furnham and Bochner, 1986:152). Marital status, however, works in favour of the male expatriate who finds a stable union such as marriage "positively related to job performance" (Furnham and Bochner, 1986:152). Ward (1997) investigates this process of acculturation, by framing culture shock in more positive and adaptive terms, and viewing

cross-cultural adaptation as a life change. This concept of cross-cultural adaptation suggests that stress reactions are coping mechanisms which can be "efficacious and result in adaptive outcomes" (Ward, 1997:59). Ward and Kennedy (1992) find psychological adjustment can be predicted by "personality, life changes and *social support factors*" (Ward and Kennedy 1992:179, emphasis mine). Ward and Searle (1990) also find socio-cultural adaptation is measured in terms of variables such as "length of residence in the host country, language ability, cultural knowledge, cultural identity, cultural distance and interaction with hosts" (Ward and Searle, 1990, in Ward and Kennedy, 1992:179).

An important study of expatriate reactions to living overseas is made by Torbiorn (1982) who postulates that the expatriate may see their sojourn abroad as temporary, and thus endurable, and the expatriate from a multinational company may find their lifestyle in the host country an improvement on home. Examining the theme of expatriation by focussing on the family as a cohesive unit, Gaylord (1979) examines the effect expatriation has on the entire family, not just the male worker. This study examines how the husband has least trouble moving and is the main beneficiary emerging from geographic mobility in terms of upward socio-economic status. Women, however, are not so fortunate, giving up family, friends, a sense of community, self-worth and self-identity, close contact with relatives, and, perhaps most significantly, a job or career. The study uses Durkheim's concept of 'anomie' to explain the expatriate woman's experiences of isolation and disenfranchisement from society, the feeling of just existing, not living - "her identity, dependent on the recognition of others, is rarely transferable" (Gaylord, 1979:187).

Gaylord highlights the isolation and loneliness experienced by expatriate women in relation to male power relations within marriage and the family. Evidence to confirm these findings can be found in this thesis.

Ward (1993, 1994, and 1997) has conducted much research from a psychological perspective on cross-cultural adjustment using a quantitative methodology. Ward argues that perceived cultural distance or proximity assists in adapting to a foreign culture. Acculturation studies like Ward's investigate the difference between men and women's cross-cultural experiences, and indicate women who travel overseas as the dependent spouse of a partner find it more difficult to assimilate and integrate into a foreign culture. Ward, and Birdseye and Hill have contributed to the body of research by questioning the premise that men's and women's expatriate experiences are identical.

Marital status and expatriation are examined by Birdseye and Hill (1995) who argue that marital status is a "controversial variable in expatriate studies" (1995:790). Marriage is recognised as a stabilising factor for (male) expatriates, but there are many spousal and family-related issues that impact negatively on expatriate assignments.[5] Factors such as spousal satisfaction have a positive effect on expatriate assignments, as do the number and age children (Naumamn, cited in Birdseye and Hill, 1995:791). Developing countries were also seen as problematic assignments (Torbiorn, 1982, cited in Birdseye and Hill, 1995:792). Torbiorn relates this to perceived cultural distance and housing, health, transport, and food difficulties. He also suggests that accommodation compounds and white expatriate support networks can be helpful in the short-term, but long-term

the benefits of these 'white ghettos' are debatable (Furnham and Bochner, 1986:156).

One of the studies privileging women expatriate experiences is De Cieri et al (1991). These researchers examine expatriate relocation, its effect on families, and how women feel and react when relocated overseas. "The role of the wife is *crucial to the business of her husband,* and therefore, of the success of the company" (Thompson, 1986:14, cited in De Cieri, et al, 1991:378, emphasis mine). It is important to note the characteristics of expatriates are quite different from the tourist and the migrant and as such must be analysed in a unique way. Expatriates with a specific purpose for travel have four phases; the 'honeymoon' phase, the 'party's over phase' (or adaptation phase), the turning point phase, and the healthy adaptation and recovery phase (De Cieri, 1991:379). Tremayne (in De Cieri, 1991) points out the repatriation phase is often a difficult one for expatriate women, signaling a return to 'limbo-land' and re-entry into the workforce and home community after an absence of several years. The study concludes that vital to successful expatriation (for both men and women) are self-esteem, social support, and satisfaction with life and relationships. Adler (in De Cieri, 1991) argues women sacrifice the most with relocation and are the most disrupted. It is generally recognised that "supported people are physically and emotionally healthier than unsupported people".[6] These studies of expatriate women and relocation examine the effects of expatriation on the family, and have helped this research in relation to cross-cultural adaptation.

A Feminist Perspective on Organisations, Career Interruption and Expatriate Women

To investigate the social and gender roles of women in both the domestic and public worlds, not just in a foreign setting, it is necessary to look at the organisational structure of Western work organisations. Kanter (1977) examines the role of 'corporate wives' in organisations, looking at how a woman's role is defined in relation to the position in the company her husband holds. "Wives are outside the official boundaries of the corporation, but implicit within it" (Kanter, 1977). In addition, "some wives consider themselves unpaid workers for the corporation, in the sense of both direct services and of opportunity costs for options in their own lives they have forgone" (Kanter, 1977:106). She explores the public/private split where women married to prominent executives cannot avoid public identification with the role of their husbands.

Working women are examined by Cockburn (1991), who uses semi-structured interviews to assess women's experiences within organisations, identifying the structural disadvantages women encounter in the workforce. While Cockburn examines the dilemmas facing working women, she investigates the domestic roles assigned to women in the paid workforce. Cockburn's work is relevant to the themes of this research, particularly in the area of unpaid labour of expatriate women for their husband's employer. Much of what she argues in theoretical approaches to women's domestic and paid labour is applicable to this study. Like Cockburn, other work on women and organisations such as Anderson (1981) and Callen and Ardener (1984) influenced this research by understanding gender and domestic issues as indicators of why women choose marriage and children over career options. Gerson (1985) investigates the choice women make between career and the family, as this involves commitment

to either a career or family, and a compromise is problematic.

Anderson (1981) looks at 'corporate gypsies'; women who choose to accompany their husband to another city or country to further his career, at the expense of their own. While not looking specifically at expatriate wives, the concept of 'corporate gypsies' is relevant to this research. Anderson uses a feminist analysis when examining attitudes to traditional gender roles within marriage and questions the view these women feel 'false consciousness' about their situation. Anderson argues this concept is inadequate and believes their perspective comes from the "actual material conditions of their lives" (Anderson, 1981:312). Anderson's study examines the lives of women whose circumstances bear much resemblance to the lives of expatriate women. Their worlds contain "uncertain environments and engender financial dependence" (Anderson, 1981:315). Anderson explores the phenomenon of women who voluntarily defer or abandon their career and looks at the way 'newcomer clubs', play groups, and coffee groups serve as a locus of support for women new to the community.

The work of Harrington (1997) is valuable in examining the themes surrounding domestic labour and support networks, and much of her work can be applied to expatriate women. Domestic social networks for women with pre-school children represent leisure, work and companionship with other women in the same situation. Women who are home full-time have difficulty interacting in any other sphere or linking with others not home full-time. By forming domestic social networks, "women can individually resist full-time domestic labour" (Harrington, 1997:167). However, this practice is contradictory: it allows

women respite from gender assigned labour and encourages solidarity but reinforces the dominant mechanism that imposes gender assigned roles in domestic labour.

In examining career issues for expatriate women, both Anderson and Harrington are utilised, as is Comer (1974), who assists in understanding equity of access to money for men and women. The importance of equal access to economic resources is crucial for examining power relations within marriage. This issue was significant when discussing the participants' concerns about leaving paid employment.

These works examine expatriate women's concerns with relocating overseas, and career interruption issues, while the historical works detailed below focus on the domestic and social roles of white women in the South Pacific.

White Women in the South Pacific – A Historical Standpoint

Bulbeck (1992, 1998) is pivotal to this research, combining interviews with expatriate women in Papua New Guinea with a feminist understanding of the role of colonial women. She juxtaposes a theory of women's identity within the colonial experience with the history written by white men. Her most relevant conclusion is that the private sphere of women is inextricably linked with the public sphere. Bulbeck explains that, "the gender axis is central to this book" (Bulbeck, 1992:4). She examines the social hierarchy, including the subordinate position of women, in colonial Papua New Guinea. The domestic details comprising women's lives and the way they shape their social roles and identity influence this thesis. Bulbeck (1992) and

Knapman (1986) were drawn on for their examination of the domestic and social experiences of colonial and expatriate women in developing countries. Bulbeck in particular recognises and values the work of these women, and it is this approach which informs this thesis.

'Lady travellers' and British expatriates have written about colonial Fiji (Grimshaw, 1930), Papua New Guinea (Stevenson, 1915) and the Cook Islands (Buzacott, 1866), reflecting and reproducing ideology about the tropics and social relations. Knapman (1986) details both the domestic minutiae and larger public sphere of women in colonial Fiji. Unlike the Cook Islands, Fiji has never been a European settler society, and Knapman examines the pioneer and expatriate women whose work both supported their husbands and provided food for their families, without recognition. Knapman describes the harsh environment and poor living conditions these women faced, exploring issues of social isolation, domestic labour, and women's invisible contributions to society. John Young[7] makes a link between the presence of white women in Fiji and an increase in racial tension. The potential for sexual relations between white women and indigenous men made white society self-conscious and resulted in a "deterioration in race relations" (Knapman, 1986:6). However, Knapman proposes white women did not 'ruin Empire' and she argues against the idea that "the entry of white women in colonial society has the effect of exacerbating racial tensions and conflict" (West, in Knapman, 1986:8). The stereotype of "lazy, bored, card-playing, spirit-drinking white women"[8] endures in all tropical locations and Knapman believes a strong male bias exists regarding what 'we know' of white expatriate women. An understanding of what daily, lived experience was like from

expatriate women's perspective is crucial for understanding women in this situation. The image of men as social actors and women as peripheral and passive is most clearly enunciated in the stereotype surrounding white expatriate women in settler communities.

Women's historical experiences of expatriation have generally been ignored, or written about by men, and Knapman explores the locus of the stereotypes surrounding white expatriate women. She finds that gender relations in Fiji were proscribed and perpetuated by men, who had personal stakes in maintaining this image of women. Knapman's work underpins itself with the concept of ideology as "the process by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced, transformed" (Barrett, 1980, cited in Knapman, 1986:16). Ideology is Knapman's tool of analysis in investigating colonial women – examining the set of social beliefs and understandings that constructed social reality for them. Knapman's research uncovers the heterogeneity of women's labour and their diverse roles in the expatriate community - in doing so, she exposes the processes that construct the social roles of expatriate women. Knapman challenges the idea of 'dependence'. In her analysis, colonial women actively contribute to the support of themselves and their families in a way that could not or would not be recognised in a capitalist system.

Knapman contributes to this research by contextualising the different cultural situations within which expatriate women exist and adapt. Expatriate women are always located in a particular place and time. Knapman found expatriate women in Fiji engaged in paid and unpaid work much more than the stereotype acknowledges. By interpreting work more widely and including

domestic labour, Knapman ensures that white women's labour is not undermined or made invisible. Authors such as Grimshaw and Buzacott give us a less detailed glimpse of the experiences of white colonists in the South Pacific, and these accounts of expatriate women and their historical role in the Pacific are explored in more detail in Chapter 2.

White women were in the minority in the Solomon Islands in the period 1900-1942, and their existence and social role within Melanesian and expatriate society is described by O'Brien and Tiffany (1984). They examine white women as "members of an alien and imported culture living on sufferance in a world dominated by males and Melanesians" (O'Brien and Tiffany, 19894:173). Analysis of white women in the Solomon Islands reveals they generally conformed to female roles expected of white women in that era, though there were some important and overlooked exceptions to this rule. The overarching term 'expatriate women' is itself a mechanism which disguises the nature and diversity of the female community in a South Pacific setting, as they find "the expatriate women's community was less homogeneous and more stratified that the social systems of indigenous females" (O'Brien and Tiffany, 1984:174). Characterising expatriate life as 'ultra-conservative', this historical account details how women are seen as "passive and of low status, conditions felt to pertain to the non-white subjects of British imperialism" (O'Brien and Tiffany, 1984:175). This account of the missionaries, settlers, planter wives, and transients describes the lives of white women and their roles within pioneer society in the Solomon Islands.

Work with migrant women, particularly Pedraza (1991)

emphasises the social consequences of gender and family variables in female migration. Pedraza highlights themes such as work roles and their impact on migrants and the family, and places them within gender and organisational relations.

A Gendered Approach to Leisure

Leisure is now part of an understanding of women's oppression that includes work on leisure activities, time, space, and economic dependency. In investigating women's leisure activities in this research Shelton (1992) and Deem (1986) were central to understanding how leisure, work, domestic concerns, and childcare intertwine inseparably in women's lives. Deem's work on a feminist understanding of leisure determined the approach this study took to expatriate women's leisure activities. These activities and voluntary work are part of the 'expatriate experience' and are indicators of how childcare, access to transport and finances, affect women's leisure pursuits.

According to Green, Hebron and Woodward (1990), theories of leisure have reached a critical juncture, as feminist analysis has placed more emphasis on the gendered nature of leisure. The power relations that shape women's leisure in Green, et al, are reflected in the options available to expatriate women in the South Pacific, taking into account their middle to upper-middle class social positions. Leisure is not available equally to men and women, and Dempsey (1991) examines the way in which women contribute to their husband's leisure activities. This relationship is important to understand the way women cater for men's leisure at the expense of their own. Finch describes the services women provide in order that men have access to time and energy for leisure as "back up services" (Finch, 1983:94 in Dempsey,

1991:95). This concept of exploitative relations between husband and wife is useful for understanding expatriate women's leisure options in Rarotonga (see Chapter 6).

Feminist Methodology and Feminist Research Methods

In order to frame and identify a feminist methodology, Cook and Fonow (in Wolfe, 1996) were useful, separating the theory of feminist methodology from the reality. They regard 'abstract discourse' (cf. Stanley and Wise, 1983) as of little help to feminist researchers and scholars without an understanding of "direct experience directly related to us" (Stanley and Wise, 1983:181, cited in Cook and Fonow, 1996:71).

The link between gender and method in sociology is explored by Grant and Ward (1987), who examine the link between feminist research and qualitative research methods. They find qualitative research methods are best at serving the needs of women as "important dimensions of women's lives, more so than men's, are contained within private, emotional realms" (Grant and Ward, 1987:856). Qualitative methods also "allow for the subtle and context-bound significant events in women's lives" (Grant and Ward, 1987:856). The uniqueness of women's experiences make it difficult to compare between women, and this method fails to recognise the subtleties of social interaction in relationships such as friendships. Qualitative methods are seen as more appropriate for examining female phenomena, as they are consistent with female researchers use of emotion and self-reflexivity.[9]

The works influencing this research in relation to feminist methodology, were Reinharz (1992), Cotterill (1992), and Stanley (1983, 1990). These works helped construct a theoretical

approach to semi-structured in-depth interviews and target participants included in this research. Reinharz's work with feminist methodology examines how women have been excluded from the objective, rational quantitative approach to data collection, and advocates a gender conscious approach to methodology, which recognises, acknowledges and incorporates the locatedness and bias of the researcher. Power relations are examined by Cotterill (1992) who conceptualises the power issues involved in the researcher/researchee relationship. Cotterill's work is used to understand power, vulnerability, and bias within this research, in order to minimise their effects. Her work on confidentiality and using friends as informants is particularly pertinent to the issues that arose during this study.

Semi-structured interviews are, according to Reinharz "different to structured interviewing, by including free interaction between the researcher and interviewee" (Reinharz, 1992:18). Reinharz helped to conceptualise the methodological and practical aspects of the interview technique used for this study. She notes semi-structured interviews complement quantitative research, and that it is important to note differences between the two methods. Reinharz raises the issue of trust, crucial for successful research; it is imperative for the researcher to trust the interviewee, and vice versa. Anderson (1981) raises the issue of researchers who must be able to believe what their participants say, even if this conflicts with the researcher's own ideas. This stems from her research on women who are economically dependent, and was informed by the feminist viewpoint that women who express satisfaction with the conditions of oppression are 'falsely conscious'. Anderson though characterises her interviewees as aware of the material conditions that shape their perspectives.

Researcher self-disclosure is a thorny issue in feminist research. Reinharz understands that researcher disclosure "is a good feminist practice" (Reinharz, 1992: 32), although she notes timing is a crucial consideration. In terms of problems associated with feminist research, Stanley and Wise (1979) give the most personal account of the problems of which feminist researchers must be wary, as they note "public discussions and written accounts [of the problems encountered in qualitative research] are rare" (Stanley and Wise, 1979: 360). Interaction between the research phenomenon, feminist theory and feminist consciousness is at the "heart, not the periphery of the scientific enterprise" (Johnson, cited in Bell and Newby, 1977:4). The focus of their work is the nature of the relationship between researcher and researched and is a critical theme in feminist research and this study.

The issues surrounding interviewing women were detailed by Oakley (1981, in Reinharz, 1992), who advocates a feminist paradigm and theory of reciprocity within the context of the in-depth interview. Oakley's concern with the meaning of the interview to each person, including the quality of the experience, guides this research. Her approach to interactive interviewing means both participant and researcher gain from the process.[10]

Feminist Epistemology

Harding (1987) examines feminist epistemology and methodology, and argues feminism can adopt traditional methods of investigation, but must question the implicit rational, non-biased basis of these methods. Harding advocates formulating new ways of interpreting and analysing data, while recognising the locatedness and bias each researcher brings to studies of social

interaction. This thesis draws on Harding's emphasis on a feminist perspective which recognises diversity and difference.

The link between feminism and research is examined by Kelly (1978) who finds "it is much easier to say what feminist research is not than what is" (Kelly, 1978:225). Kelly argues that it is not enough to merely study women (as with men); feminist research should be seen as an evaluation, motivated by the way we would like the world to operate. As a tool for understanding, feminist research must not claim objectivity; it must embrace subjectivity and recognise all research is value-laden.

The power issues which arise when women interview women were examined by this study, drawing on Weissman (1987) who argues the narrative approach to feminist interviewing can be applied to women's life stories. In-depth interviews employ this technique for "reconstructing and interpreting the past" (Weissman 1987:173) and translate the participants' experiences into research. This theme reoccurs with Easterday et al (1977) who detail issues and concerns facing female interviewers in the field. Again, this comprises the gendered aspects of research and methodology and the problematic associated with rapport, reciprocity (cf. Oakley), and research relationships. Easterday defines problems associated with women interviewers in male settings, detailing roles female researchers may find themselves forced into in a research setting. Much of the work on feminist methodology, feminist research methods, and in-depth interviews is explored in detail in Chapter 3. These works understand women's role as social science researchers, and the part feminism plays in the theoretical underpinnings surrounding sociological enquiry.

Conclusion

From this review, we can conclude that there is some way to go on how social researchers examine and analyse the role of expatriate women and come to a feminist understanding of their reality. The majority of studies of expatriate women do not focus on the feminist perspective, and feminist research has not yet begun to look specifically at expatriate women. Expatriate women's experiences must be investigated for the way they represent a gender-specific social situation, and qualitative research must be sensitive to expatriate women's experiences, without relating them to male experiences.

2

WHITE WOMEN IN THE PACIFIC -'LADY TRAVELLERS', MISSIONARY WIVES AND COLONIAL SETTLERS.

WHITE WOMEN IN THE COOK ISLANDS

Much has been written on the colonial period in the Cook Islands (from 1901-1965) and there are many books on the historical and political events that mark its history. There is, unfortunately, nothing substantive written about colonial women and their domestic and social lives during this time. Daily life is not recorded in any history books of this era; they are more concerned with the public and political issues in progress at the time. Expatriate colonial women were not encouraged to record their lives, and were, by necessity, too preoccupied with domestic concerns to feature in the history of male enterprise. As historical accounts tend to record history that marks public and political events as more symbolic of all human enterprise - and worthier - than domestic labour, these women's experiences are invisible. Yet, colonial women played a significant role as teachers, nurses, traders' wives, and as the wives of the Resident Commissioners.

Much of what is written about the Cook Islands by Europeans has been written by travellers, those passing through the 'happy isles of Oceania'[1] and observing island and colonial life in a heavily romanticised and often ethnocentric way. The travels of an Irish journalist called Beatrice Grimshaw are chronicled in her book *In*

the Strange South Seas (1907) and several chapters are devoted to her time in Rarotonga. She describes social outings with white families, feasts, and provides cultural observations of the 'natives'. While she does not tell a complete story of domestic life in Rarotonga, she does vividly paint a picture of colonial life, including what was available, the eagerly awaited arrival once a month of the steamer carrying supplies, and descriptions of clothing and hairstyles. A steamer company, in exchange for her writing about her travels, paid for Grimshaw's passage around the Pacific. She was prolific, but also propagandist, as many claim she romanticised and idealised the Pacific, perpetrating many of the myths and stereotypes that pervade the area, and influencing the way white people saw the 'dusky isles'. Knapman, in her book *White Women in Fiji*, mentions Grimshaw, who came to Fiji in 1905.[2] Almost all accounts of Grimshaw's writing condemn her as conforming to stereotypes – "as she blamed lapses in white standards on racially mixed marriages, saw a concern for appearances as indicative of high self-respect, and approached Fijians as if they were children" (Knapman, 1986:99).[3]

Mission Life in the Islands of the Pacific (1866) by early missionary Reverend Aaron Buzacott tell of his time in Rarotonga, accompanied by his wife, Mrs Buzacott (we do not know her first name, but before she was married she is referred to as Miss Hitchcock). A Catholic priest, Reverend Buzacott arrived in Rarotonga on 16 February 1828. Mrs Buzacott was miserable on the arduous voyage from England to the Pacific, suffering "grievously from sea-sickness which induced great weakness" (Buzacott, 1866:14). The diary, written by Reverend Buzacott, only offers glimpses of his faithful wife. When the ship landed in Rarotonga, Mrs Buzacott's first question is recorded as "Is there

any danger?" (Buzacott, 1866:27). Historians can only imagine the difficulties she faced in her new life.

Hall and Osborne's book, *Sunshine and Surf* (1901) chronicles travelling through the Pacific, and describes a voyage to Rarotonga and Aitutaki by steamer with the British Resident as a passenger, (described as a Pooh-Bah[4]). His wife and daughter are only briefly mentioned (not by name) as 'charming' (Hall and Osborne, 1901:191). Fanny Stevenson (1915), the wife of Robert Louis Stevenson, tells of her journey by ship around the South Seas.[5] She writes of a visit to Niue, where the missionary's wife is starved of the company of other white women, "but this is to be a missionary's wife, I am sure she must have had a nervous fever after we were gone. She found a moment to bewail her fate to Louis" (Stevenson, 1915:27). The ship traveled to the outer islands of the Cook Islands group where there were no white women, "only three white men" (Stevenson, 1915:39), but the ship bypassed the main island of Rarotonga

It appears the first woman missionary teacher to be sent to Rarotonga was a Miss Ardill in 1892; her appointment is mentioned briefly on page 359 of Richard Lovett's *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795 – 1895* (1972). In that account, the work of the male missionaries on Aitutaki and Rarotonga is lauded. However, the contributions of their wives appear to go unrecognised. Wives are invariably described as devoted and hard working companions to their husbands, and as toiling alongside them to tame the 'noble, uncivilised savages'.

When Grimshaw visited Rarotonga, she described in much detail the fruit and vegetables, such as taro and mango. She also

believes Rarotonga to be "the jewel of the South Seas" (Grimshaw, 1907:46) and remarks that Rarotonga is the only 'white' town. She bemoans the lack of any books on the practical side of life in the tropics, such as ways of coping with the cockroaches and spiders and on the cost of housekeeping; "matters prosaic enough, but often of more interest to readers" (Grimshaw, 1907:51). She describes all white residents in Rarotonga at that time as government officials and traders. More often, Grimshaw describes her encounters with the 'natives' than the experiences of the colonial women.

She vividly describes steamer day, the day the boat arrives once a month from New Zealand, with fresh supplies.[6] Meat is also welcomed and in times before refrigeration, must be eaten within two or three days of arrival. She notes that "there are no social distinctions, except those between white and brown – all the seventy or eighty white residents knowing one another on a footing of common equality, although in England or New Zealand, they would certainly be split up into half a score of mutually contemptuous sets" (Grimshaw, 1907:92). She describes the seemingly languorous lifestyle of the women; picnicking and swimming, spending a planned day at the beach or relaxing in bathing dresses. She mentions that white women in 1907 were reluctant to adopt the island dresses, which were loose fitting and made of cotton and much more suited to the climate. They preferred not to relinquish their blouses and corsets, as these were seen as a better and more 'moral' way of dressing. She dedicates a chapter to housekeeping, which details the white housemistress's standards of housekeeping in the South Seas, which makes interesting reading in comparison to today.

Clothing was an issue of great concern for colonial women, who made everything they wore, under trying circumstances and without access to materials and equipment. The difficulties of making their own clothing were compounded by the elaborate patterns of the time for evening and formal wear. Reeves remarks upon the restrictive clothing worn by white women of the period "made to look hideously like hour-glasses" (Reeves, 1898:220). Servants were also a concern: as noted by Grimshaw, "it cannot be said there is no servant trouble in the islands" (1907:106). White servants did not exist. Indigenous boys and men were the only resource, as indigenous women married young, at thirteen or fourteen, and then left the workforce. Another important area of domestic work undertaken by colonial women was gardening, sometimes with the assistance of a paid gardener. Grimshaw describes the furnishings, the matting, and mosquito nets, insects, and housing. Overall, she believes the burden of housekeeping in the tropics to be somewhat less than at home – if white islanders adopted the native style of living; growing vegetables and fruit and living in thatched roofed houses.[7]

Grimshaw describes visiting the outer islands of Atiu, Mangaia, Aitutaki, Mauke, Takutea, and Manuvai in the schooner *The Duchess*, with the Resident Commissioner of the Cook Islands, describing native dress, and habits, but does not really provide a real glimpse into white women's lives of the time.

WHITE WOMEN IN FIJI

Knapman's book *White Women in Fiji* (1986) offers detailed insights into domestic life in Fiji during its colonial era. Her focus on the lives, details and experiences of women is lacking in any Cook Islands literature. A biographer of missionaries and their wives notes: "What pioneer wives had to endure was seldom recorded in conventional history books – nobody paid any attention to the women who supported their pioneer endeavours, who set up home in strange circumstances and bore their children miles from anywhere" (Dickson, cited in Knapman, 1986:4).[8] Knapman discovered pioneer women suffered many health problems due to poor sanitation and hot conditions, such as dysentery, dengue fever, influenza, worms and other maladies as well as heat exhaustion. They also had to cope with unsettled political conditions, cannibalism, hurricanes, sick children, and social isolation. As Knapman points out, "appearances by European women in the history books are brief, incidental and superficial" (Knapman, 1986:4). Knapman examines the belief that the presence of white women in colonial Fiji was 'the ruin of Empire' – that their presence in the colony caused an increase in racial tension, because they disapproved more strongly than white men of racial mixing and marriage. The white woman is represented as the "poker-backed white woman, all whipped up in whalebone" (Dutton, cited in Knapman, 1986:9). Knapman believes the theory that white women's presence obstructed colonial empire-building by increasing racial tension between whites and non-whites to be a weak one.

Stereotypes of white expatriate women abroad abound; Memsahibs in India, pith-helmeted, over-dressed white women in

Africa and heat-exhausted and snobbish women in the tropics. Rudyard Kipling's Mrs. Hauksbee spends her time "dancing, dining out, riding, gossiping, quarreling, romancing, intriguing" (Kipling, cited in Knapman, 1986:13). However, what is the real, lived experience of these women, in their own words? Knapman's task is to evaluate the stereotypes surrounding colonial women in Fiji and to examine the lives of these women.

Domestic Life in the Colonies

Providing food in an early colony such as Fiji was a time-consuming and stressful business. Fresh fruit and vegetables had to be cultivated from scratch. Both colonial men and women shared these tasks in the early stages, but once a garden had been established the women bore the responsibility for collection and maintenance. Pioneer women chopped firewood and ensured provisions such as flour and tea were ordered from the steamer (although such dry goods were often scarce and available only sporadically). It was often the wife's job to trade provisions with the Fijians and to tend to pigs and chickens. The life was hard, and especially for missionary wives, money was often tight. Feeding a family was hard work, trading or making small provisions last until the next steamer, "the chores of a woman were constant" (Knapman, 1986:41).[9] Produce was preserved in large quantities and stored in storerooms, or used immediately. Women ordered the supplies, estimated the provisions needed each day, planned the menus, perhaps taught the servants how to cook and supervised their kitchens, and often spent the entire day in the kitchen, baking bread, preparing chutneys and bottling fruit.

The women also tailored every item of clothing worn, often in

intricate patterns. A huge amount of time was spent sewing "given the long dresses, complicated styles and petticoats; and where the men wore white coats, shirts and trousers and changed as often as three times a day" (Knapman, 1986:44). Often elite women would order clothes from overseas, as Suva society had nothing that was fashionable or suitable for them. These were higher society 'ladies', who did not cook or sew, as they had servants who did these things for them.[10] Large families would generate an enormous amount of work in terms of feeding, clothing, and cleaning. The standards of tropical housing were also something that expatriate women had to come to terms with, and "housing had a profound impact on the ease and manner in which a woman carried out her domestic duties" (Knapman, 1986:37).

War and cannibalism were things that preoccupied colonial women when they first settled in Fiji. Healthcare was also a major focus for white women, whose responsibility it was to maintain their families' health with daily doses of castor oil, and had to cope with fevers, tropical illnesses, and influenza. Chronic ill health for missionary wives was common.

Entertaining, as a domestic task that was neither chosen nor necessarily desired, was a big part of colonial life, as the wives were often expected to act as gracious hostesses. With so few colonial settlers, and a shortage or absence of accommodation alternatives, any European visitors were expected to be welcomed and offered a room. This unofficial and unrecognised aspect of gender-segregated labour also shows how women's work is minimised and ignored.[11]

Knapman's expatriate women were usually resident in Fiji because of their husbands' work (very few were there as single women), and before they left England or New Zealand, they had little real idea of the practicalities of life in Fiji, nor the trials it was to offer. Knapman says "if my emphasis falls on the earlier years, it is because these provide most dramatically the background for lifestyles at odds with the idle lady of the stereotype" (Knapman, 1986:75). Not only did white women in Fiji work extremely hard under trying and difficult conditions, Knapman believes the social conditions that white women existed in contributed to perceptions of their racial prejudice. White women had little leisure time, and the time they did have was spent with other white women, or the white male colleagues of their husband. The belief that white women were more racist than white men came from these early patterns of social behaviour.

Travel between England or New Zealand by ship was arduous, and many did not survive the journey. Often the women would make this journey alone or with children, as their husbands would send for them after settling in Fiji.[12] Roads in Fiji were either non-existent or no more than mud paths, and the women used whatever was available as transport; carriages, carts, traps or later, cars. Transport was often arduous, and some families lived a distance from town and other neighbours.[13] Some colonial women in Fiji would not see another white woman for years at a time. White women to a certain extent maintained cultural isolation, as social distance from the local Fijian women was demanded and "the loneliness of European women was a yearning for the companionship and moral support of those whose cultural backgrounds, aspirations and knowledge of life, were the same as

their own" (Knapman, 1986:85).[14]

Leisure and Recreational Pursuits

Negative stereotypes about expatriate women's lives focus on their leisure pursuits. Social events and outings enlivened a life so often filled with dreary domestic tasks and child raising, and efforts were made by the wives to create a celebratory air at Christmas and other occasions. The women, working with limited supplies, describe fancy dress balls and picnics, demonstrating resourcefulness. Women pursued individual leisure activities, such as letter-writing, sketching, painting and writing, as well as collecting artifacts. Reading was "a standard leisure occupation" (Knapman, 1986:100). Musical talents, such as playing the piano or singing were also popular, as well as gardening, embroidering, fine sewing and photography; "the cultivation of leisure activities was for most, however, a pleasant respite from the day's main activities" (Knapman, 1986:100).

Knapman discusses social ranking and mixing, both between white social classes and between Europeans and Fijians. Her husband's position determined the social rank of the wife, and wives were seen as assets or liabilities to their husbands, and the social hierarchy determined whose houses they might visit, and what functions they would be invited to. Recent claims to England rather than colonial roots marked a family or couple as superior, and social standing and status were based around this and other variables. Collective leisure activities in Suva for whites included visiting, dances, circuses and magic shows, as well as balls and Christmas gatherings, which broke the monotonous solitary lives that many white women endured. Croquet was played, and colonial women did swim, albeit

swaddled in neck-to-knee bathers. Tennis was also popular, as was hockey. Women partook in cards and tea parties, which had special ritual and significance and were for women only. Weddings were also lavish and celebrated events.

Colonial women's relations with the local Fijians are characterised by the appearance of propriety: it was not seen as appropriate for white 'superior' women to associate with those who were indigenous to the country in which they lived. Marriages were only to be between a white couple, or the newlyweds would have to leave. However, according to Knapman, "female racial prejudice cannot be established from male presumptions" (Knapman, 1986:12). Knapman's work is contrary to traditional historical views, which place women at the heart of racial prejudice in colonial Fiji.

Opportunities for women in paid employment

Apart from domestic duties, women's work went unrecognised in the censuses, because women's economic participation was "defined in terms applicable to the way in which men worked. This devalued not only domestic duties, but nearly all the other work women did" (Knapman, 1986:53). Women's economic contribution to the colony was essentially regarded as a 'natural extension' of their gender-assigned domestic duties, and certainly not valued in any meaningful way. Women who had entrepreneurial ideas tended to opt for work such as dressmaking, which required only skill and a sewing machine. Some colonial women ran the accommodation houses or took in private boarders. They also ran retail business and guesthouses. Often, a husband and wife would run a business together, such as a rooming house and bar, and the woman would continue this if her husband died.

Women also ran theatres, bakeries and milk bars, and laboured as barmaids, washing girls, and domestics.[15] Colonial women undertook the teaching and the education of children, at both public and private schools. Before there was an established hospital in Suva, white nurses visited patients at home.

By 1921, women had opportunities to work in the civil service; as superintendent or matron of the hospital, clerks, shorthand writers, and telephone operators. These were the usual jobs for younger, unmarried women at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy. Women also engaged in unpaid labour, to support their husbands in their roles as missionaries, teaching scripture and acted as advisors to the new missionary wives. Sometimes they preached sermons when their husbands were away, or played the organ in the church. Knapman emphasises that when it came to unpaid labour, women and their children were an invaluable help to the male missionaries, planters, and doctors. On plantations where the colonial owners had many staff, it was the wife's responsibility to look after their wellbeing; feeding them, organising the numbers, and finding rooms for them, as well as delivering their wives' babies and tending to their weekly medicals.

WHITE WOMEN IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Bulbeck's work on colonial women in Papua New Guinea reflects the experiences of many colonial women in Melanesia and Polynesia. She points out that in the Pacific, women are seen as appendages to their husbands' jobs – the wife of the Resident Commissioner or the wife of the manager of the bank. They also had different interests to their husbands, whose lives focused more on their jobs. Women were more concerned, by necessity,

with household management and motherhood. They appear, if at all, in the history books written by men only briefly or in the background. Bulbeck seeks to understand white women's experiences of colonial life, from a perspective that privileges their narratives and allows interpretation of their circumstances in a way that allows space to construct an alternative history.

Bulbeck looks at the lives of nineteen women in colonial Papua New Guinea and examines the issues that surround the myths around white women in the colonies. Interestingly, because public events to have affected women and children in the same ways as they did men, women identified their postings by their duration rather than their time in history. Their accounts are more geographically descriptive than chronological.[16] The narratives that Bulbeck has collected reveal the daily lives of colonial women and the details of their lives; running a household where food is infrequently brought in by ship, clothing children and themselves, and entertaining themselves when they have no access to the company of other colonial women. These and other details of women's lives do not concern male-written history books.

As Bulbeck notes, many expatriate women experience the colonies as a set period in their lives, a "passage between growing up and before growing old" (Bulbeck, 1992:8), where, for a few years, they lived 'somewhere else'. Much of the expatriate population in Papua New Guinea came, like the Cook Islands, from the London Missionary Society (LMS). Colonial women in Papua New Guinea came as teachers, missionary wives, traders, and the wives of government officials – not so very different to Rarotonga in the 1990s. Bulbeck's women describe their days spent engaged in

sewing, visits, tennis, keeping the books for their husbands and days filled with social engagements and handicrafts, almost an identical picture of expatriate women's lives in current times. Bulbeck emphasises that colonial women, despite the stereotypes that abound, did not spend their time idly. They worked both inside the home, on domestic matters, and found voluntary work outside the home. Voluntary work is one way women, unable to engage in paid employment, could play a social role beyond support to their husbands.

There are differences between married and single women. Single women chose to go to Papua New Guinea, often as teachers or missionary sisters, whereas married women almost always went because of their husbands' jobs – a situation that finds analogy with today's expatriate women. It was unheard of for married women to have a option, let alone a choice, about their lives and the shift to Papua New Guinea.[17]

Status and Social Hierarchy in Melanesia

A woman's status and her place in the social hierarchy came from her husband's position and education. A social gap between the white community and the local Papua New Guineans appears to be the only major social division. Bulbeck points out that women's position in colonial society was unique, as few men traveled so far away from home as a complete dependent on another person. Women occupied a totally different and unique social position compared to colonial men.[18]

A woman in colonial Papua New Guinea played the role of dependent wife, and social and other networks revolved around her husband's place in the hierarchy, as a missionary, a planter,

or a government official. The wifely and motherly role was all that was permitted for her, and the demands of full-time childcare, for those with children, guaranteed this. The obligation to follow one's husband went almost unquestioned. Wherever he went, his wife dutifully followed, and only major illness distracted him away from his career. Women without children did volunteer work, taking first aid, or sewing classes for example, until they had children, and became fully occupied.

Riley (in Bulbeck, 1992:66) believes that "gender was the prime determinant of a woman's responsibilities" and that in all colonial societies, women were considered 'the weaker sex', less able to cope with oppressive heat, humidity, unsavory living conditions and insects. Despite this characterisation, colonial women were certainly not idle and weak. They were responsible for the smooth running of the household. All cleaning, childcare and food responsibilities fell to them - even if an expatriate woman had servants, they presented a problem of management in itself. A colonial woman's life does not sound idle.

Motherhood places demands on women wherever they are, and the white women in colonial Papua New Guinea found that after having children, they became their major focus, filling their days, when before they might have had time to explore the place they had come to call home.[19] Colonial women also engaged in paid employment. The few who came as single women to do 'God's work' were employed as mission sisters, administering to the needy, living in compounds, and visiting people in outlying villages. Others came out as nurses and lived in primitive conditions. When white women became more established in the territory, they also began to work as administrators and

secretaries for colonial offices. Bulbeck describes the barriers women had to entering the workforce, and they had to resign immediately upon marriage. The women talk about having to order spices, flour and sugar in bulk, and the way things would spoil easily, take on water from the humidity, or become infested with weevils. There was no refrigeration, which meant that meat had to be cooked within a few days of arrival. Gardens to grow vegetables and fresh fruit were essential, and invariably, it was the women who tended them. Chickens were kept for eggs and crabs were tied up in the kitchen.

These descriptions of the domestic sphere, so often ignored, provide us with a better understanding of the gender division of labour in colonial territories. This 'invisible labour' contributed to the economy in a way that is not recognised. The stereotype of colonial women as idle, with all day to gossip and talk, is derived from many sources. While they may have been idle at times, it may have been because social rules prevented women from working. Bulbeck describes the colonies as a 'man's world', a pioneer frontier, where the men go to conquer and dominate the wild land and its indigenous people into submission, and certainly 'no place for a woman'. The presence of white women at the frontier of colonial territories showed how 'easy' it was to live there, no longer the brave man's adventureland - if a white woman could live there, it was seen as no longer an challenge. Gender was a signifier for weakness.

Bulbeck's chapter on race and gender explores issues surrounding femininity, masculinity, and colonial attitudes to black men and white women and other 'inferior groups'. Relations between colonial white women and black men were unthinkable; Beatrice

Grimshaw believed that a white woman would no more be attracted to a native man than commit murder! Mistress/servant boy relations in Papua New Guinea in colonial times were also carefully managed, and the women were very careful about maintaining boundaries between themselves and the servants, and were cautious about them coming into the bedrooms while they were asleep.

Bulbeck looks at colonial life where a role for women was made for them, and the way that the idea that white women were more racist than white men came down to gender relations. Women were the 'softer' face of colonialism, but still undoubtedly maintained the idea that the colonists were superior. Bulbeck points out that "it is interesting how women, so often constructed as absent from the stage of history, should suddenly emerge as unsupported and centre actors in the one issue of racism" (Bulbeck, 1992:239). Bulbeck has noted that colonial women's experiences are finally being written within an emergent understanding, shaped by feminist perspectives on colonial society. This places the white woman as an actor within a historical context, the 'inherent limitations' of which have shaped the roles available to her.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out to establish the history that precedes expatriate women in colonial societies, and to background the relationship society has had with white women in these circumstances. The works cited are useful in examining the domestic and child-caring roles that women engaged in, to compare them with white women in Rarotonga and New Zealand today. Understanding the historical importance of white women

in the Pacific allows us to compare the experiences of colonial and pioneer white women with the experiences of white women in the 1990s.[20]

3

FEMINIST METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH METHODS, IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING, AND THE METHOD OF THIS STUDY

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of feminist methodology, and specifically feminist research methods as they pertain to this research. The link between feminist methodology and research methods will be explained and the relationship defined. This section will also incorporate a discussion of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods in feminist theoretical analysis. The merits and problems of in-depth interviews will be discussed with reference to Stanley (1983, 1990), Cotterill (1992), and Reinharz (1992). The interview process as a feminist research method will be explored with respect to this research and the relationship to feminism of the in-depth interview will be highlighted. The chapter will close with an explanation of the research method employed to undertake this study, and emerging problems discussed.

FEMINISM AND METHODOLOGY

Feminist methodology aims to "*document* women's lives and activities, *understand* women from *their* perspective and understand women within a *social context*" (Reinharz, 1992:3

emphasis mine). These goals allow feminist researchers to emphasise methodological perspectives, which cohere in a way that is instrumental in understanding the experiences and situation of women. Kaplan believes feminist methodology is a "shift in focus towards women" and the study of methods a "focus on methods as well as the specific techniques themselves" (Kaplan, 1964:23, cited in Nielson, 1990:70). Kaplan also asks: "Is feminist methodology ... something feminist researchers do, or what they aim for?" (Kaplan cited in Nielson, 1990:71).

A methodology is "a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed; it includes accounts of how the general structure of theory finds its application in particular scientific disciplines" (Harding, 1987:3). Feminist theory and methodology is the basis of the aims, objectives, and method of this research. However, it should be pointed out that feminism does not espouse any one particular methodology as more appropriate for research on/about/for women.

This shift in focus towards women and gender has brought about a change in feminist methodology. It has compelled social scientists concerned with these questions to study the method with which social inquiries are made, as well as developing specific techniques. Nielson argues that feminist research and methodology must privilege gender as a basic and underlying force behind social relations, and that to study the private sphere is just as important and valid as to study the public sphere. She reminds researchers that feminist methodology *acknowledges the researcher as gendered and located* in a particular time and space. She also stresses there is not a feminist methodology, but a multitude of existing research techniques that produce research

by, for and about women, from which feminist researchers can draw.

Stone (1992) argues "feminist belief means putting aside our conditional responses and allowing ourselves to experience total receptivity to the 'other'. Feminism does not supply the methodology, it supplies the perspective or attitude to apply to already existing doctrine and method, "formulating new roles, analysis and viewpoints" (Reinharz, 1992:243). Feminist research exposes biases in research methods, and offers its own response to conventional research, incorporating its own biases, or 'conscious partiality',[1] perspectives, and viewpoints.

Harding (1987) points out that feminist methodology and feminist inquirers challenge the fundamental ways that social science has analysed men, women and social life.[2] This challenge necessarily means a re-examination of methodology, method, and epistemology within social science. Harding asks whether there is a distinct method of feminist inquiry, and whether or not it challenges or complements traditional methodologies.[3] Moreover, if there is a distinct method of feminist inquiry, what is it? Harding argues against "the idea of a distinct feminist method of research" (Harding, 1987:1) on the basis that we should not think of feminist methods of research as separate and discrete, but as a way of 'doing' social research, using existing methods of inquiry. Others also caution against the development of a feminist "supermethodology" (Bowles, in Bowles and Klein, 1983:43). It is not alternative methods that define feminist methodology, but different origins of problematics, hypotheses, and evidence. It is a new prescription for the relationship between the researcher and the researchee. Harding emphasises the method may be usual,

but the methodology and analysis are unusual. She notes the three traditional methods of inquiry - informant interviews, observation, and examining records. She proposes these methods do not change, but it is the perspective with which the researcher equips themselves before undertaking the inquiry that is the paradigm shift.[4] The link between theory and methodology is a symbiotic relationship, an intersubjectivity, in that each spurs the other on to developing new theory or new methodology. It is not static or rigid, but evolving and "working as an agent for change, rather than maintaining the status quo" (Klein, in Bowles and Klein, 1983:89).

FEMINISM AND RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods

The issues surrounding the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry centre on interrogation by feminists of some of the problems inherent in using quantitative research methods. For example, "qualitative methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data; people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour. This approach...directs itself at settings and the individuals within these settings holistically, that is, the subject of the study, be it an organisation or an individual, is not reduced to an isolated variable or a hypothesis, but is viewed instead as part of a whole" (Bogdan and Taylor, in Bowles and Klein, 1983:145). Stanley and Wise (in Bowles and Klein, 1983) argue that quantitative methods of social science research are by nature gender biased, pretend to be objective, and falsely understand the world from one viewpoint, the 'view from above'. They point out this method examines the social world from the viewpoint of one true reality, which ignores the experience of difference, and worse, denies and suppresses it

altogether. Qualitative research, especially based on a feminist epistemology, understands and acknowledges its biases, celebrating and recognising contrariety and the multivariate responses available.

There is "no single definition of 'how' to 'do' feminist research" (Reinharz, 1992:244). Feminism values diversity and multiplicity, and thus utilises a myriad of methods and tools to achieve its goals. Helen Roberts (1986) puts the emphasis on doing *feminist* research, rather than on doing feminist *research*, and points out that "the problems encountered in research are themselves of sociological importance" (Roberts, 1986:1). These theoretical, practical, methodological and ethical problems are all of sociological concern. The interview process itself defines what these issues might be.

In addressing the issue of qualitative interviewing, Roberts takes the position that the interview schedule is the basis for the interview, and is not an agenda. This method, as Robert notes, is not value or bias free and does not pretend to be objective - that is what makes it of value to women and to feminists, and sets it apart from other theoretical methodologies. Roberts sees interviewing as a 'masculinist' paradigm, "a specialised pattern of verbal interaction" (Roberts, 1986:33). Denying reality, the interviewer must 'pretend' to have no opinions in order not to introduce bias. This objectifies the researchee and perpetuates the myth of unbiased and 'hygienic' research.

According to Lather, feminist research is defined as desiring "to put the social constructions of gender at the centre of one's inquiry" (Lather, 1988:511). Cotterill (1992) raises many

methodological and research issues.[5] For instance, she says that "interviewing your friends is hard to make feel like real work, when in fact, it is a very difficult thing to reconcile" (Cotterill, 1992:594). She also argues that being a woman does not automatically bind the researcher to other women; race, class, age and ethnicity differences are also factors. Gender does not always reduce cultural distances over race.[6] Not all women feel oppressed in the same ways, and women of colour are oppressed in different ways to white, middle class, or lesbian women. Ely (1991) talks of the dilemma of being a female social science researcher, and the intimacy and closeness with the subject matter that can be felt. There are difficulties and identification issues surrounding being a woman interviewing women, and Ely describes the difficulty of separating after the research is complete, especially when a rapport and friendship has been established for the purposes of obtaining information.

Cotterill goes on to probe issues involved in interviewing women, such as vulnerability, friendship, and power. However non-hierarchical feminists desire the researcher/researchee relationship to be, inevitably there are imbalances in the dynamic. Oakley (1981, in Reinharz, 1992) advocates a 'reciprocity counterbalance' within the interview, where the process is made as mutually beneficial as possible. The theory of reciprocity and acknowledgment of bias goes a long way to confronting issues of objectivity and subjectivity, but many disagree with Oakley, who argues for researchers becoming friends with participants. As Cotterill points out, "there is a difference between friendship and taking on the role of friendly stranger" (Cotterill, 1992:595). The 'art of impression management', as phrased by Erving Goffman, illustrates how

participants, when placed in a situation of social interaction in which they are unsure how to behave, put on a 'best face'. Interviewees are careful to respond the 'right' way to the interviewer, and at first, the research may be consistent with public and unemotional accounts, but may, with time, develop more personal and emotive narratives.

Cotterill discusses the problems of using friends as participants. She found it difficult, if not impossible, to differentiate between the two roles, as researcher and friend, as "there is always a momentary disjunctive between informal talk and formal interview, but this tended to be more profound and embarrassing with friends" (Cotterill, 1992:597). The issue of vulnerability is another factor in women interviewing women – Cotterill questions the "moral basis of encouraging intimate conversations for the purposes of research" (Cotterill, 1992:602). She argues that research interviewing makes more vulnerable the already vulnerable. She points out that the researcher is also vulnerable and dependent on the continuing cooperation of the interviewees, without whose participation the research cannot proceed.

Women interviewing men is the general focus of power relations in interviewing,[7] but Cotterill examines the power relations inherent in women interviewing women. Cotterill suggests the balance of power is not fixed, "and may vary according to how particular respondents are recruited into the study, and the age and status of the women being interviewed" (Cotterill, 1992:599). She notes that while all women are oppressed, some experience this oppression less, or in ways that differ from how the researcher might experience it.

FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS - INTERVIEWING

Qualitative research methods, specifically, in-depth interviews, are used within this research to explore the experiences and views of sixteen expatriate women. In-depth interviews are chosen for several reasons: qualitative research methods allow a concern with experience *how it is lived by the participants,* enable women to answer questions personally and fully, and permits them a 'voice' to illustrate their situation. In addition, qualitative research allows the researcher into the research setting to engage with the participants in an interactive and non-predetermined way. One of the aims of this research, which coincides with the many goals of feminism, is to develop and establish relationships with women, and study them in a way that recognises their experiences.

Oakley (in Reinharz, 1992) emphasises the ambiguous relationship between researcher and researchee, and how this must be prefixed with belief and trust in what the participant is saying, and must involve openness, engagement and intimacy with the participants of the study.[8] Oakley believes that a feminist ethic, based on commitment and egalitarianism, should guide this model of interviewing, in contrast to the scientific ethic of detachment and role differentiation between researcher and subject. Oakley suggests a "new model of interviewing must be developed as an alternative to the dominant model" (Oakley, in Reinharz, 1992:27). Characterised by free interaction or exchange between researcher and researchee, in-depth interviews appeal to feminist researchers because they work so well. This form of unstructured/semi-structured interview "explores people's views of reality and allows the researcher to generate theory" (Reinharz, 1992:19). Reinharz argues that in-depth interviewing allows

more leeway in terms of the format of the interview, and Bart and O'Brien have noted that "careful listening allows the interviewer to introduce new questions as the interview proceeds. Thus, the interviewer, the interview and the study become interviewee oriented" (in Reinharz, 1992:21).

Reinharz argues that in-depth interviewing is the most versatile method for feminism to employ in studying gender issues. As evidence, she cites the wide and varied applications for study it had been used for, such as housework studies, mothering, sexual abuse, feelings about being incarcerated, and religious experience.[9] She believes in-depth interviews are versatile, flexible, and can be modified to suit the research topic and the individual participants.

Finch (1983), like Cotterill, explores some of the ethical problems in interviewing other women. She sees issues of confidentiality as paramount and argues against the usefulness of the framework of 'ethics' in research as this is "drawn from the public domain of men, which I find unhelpful in relation to research with women" (Finch, 1983:71). Oakley (1981, in Finch, 1983:72) argues that it is precisely this idea of how research 'should' be conducted and the need to adhere to a formal one-way interview format that forces women into objectifying other women. Oakley points out that seeing the interview as a two-way and interactive process dislocates this objectifying force. Reinharz also regards the in-depth interview as disturbing the standard format demanded by quantitative research; it is this fluidity of format that "allows the research question, not the method, to drive the project forward. It has encouraged creativity" (Reinharz, 1992:22).

Reciprocity is another issue within feminist debate, as there are arguments for and against introducing the researcher into the mix. Oakley (1981:49 cited in Ribbens, 1989:583) believes that there is "no intimacy without reciprocity" and this reciprocity is not a dangerous bias, but an *integral* part of feminist research and understanding. Ribbens outlines several different levels of reciprocity that Oakley advocates and argues for the first level of reciprocity - responding honestly to the participant's questions. This allows a mutual relationship to form. Ribbens (1989) argues that interviewing and the interview format itself is an "unnatural situation"; liberating, but also revealing of complex issues. She describes interviews as "particular types of social encounters" (Ribbens, 1989:579) and is concerned with the nature of the relationship developed within the interview context and the dilemmas that arise. She argues that in-depth interviews may upset the participants sense of social equilibrium, and that "it might be best to chat for a little while about some topics of general interest to help the respondent restore his (*sic*) equanimity" (Oppenheim, 1979:48 cited in Ribbens, 1989:580). As a form of social exchange, Ribbens sees the interview format as an unnatural situation, where one person has more to gain from the process, than the other. Feminist enthusiasm for in-depth interviewing must include techniques for making the interview process more egalitarian and reciprocal.

INVESTIGATING EXPATRIATE WOMEN – FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS

Sixteen expatriate women were interviewed (in a total of thirty-three interviews) over a period of 18 months. Most of these were living in Rarotonga, but five of the women were interviewed in New Zealand (Participants 6 – 10). Expatriates[10] are those who

sojourn outside their country of origin for a period of between six months and five years. They count strictly as neither tourists nor migrants, but something different altogether. They usually anticipate a return to 'home' and base their current experiences on the temporary nature of this allegiance to a host country.

This table shows the details for the participants in the research, both in New Zealand and in Rarotonga, and highlights the diverse range of occupations, ages and ethnicity of the interviewees.

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Career	Partner's Job	Children
1 – Paula	28	New Zealander	Nurse	Civil Servant	1
2 – Joanne	30	American	Teacher	Lawyer	2
3 – Vaine	35	Cook Islander	Administration	Civil Servant	2
4 – Kerry	29	New Zealander	Not given	Engineer	2
5 – Suzanne	33	New Zealander	Shop Assistant	Civil Servant	2
6 – Nancy	34	Canadian	Childcare	Lecturer	2
7 – Kate	32	American	Student	Lecturer	2
8 – Sharon	37	British	Accountant	Lecturer	2
9 – Anita	27	Indonesian	Media industry	Diplomat	-
10 – Kamla	43	Indonesian	Promotion	Diplomat	2
11 – Jennifer	35	Australian	Caregiver	Civil Servant	4
12 – Linda	32	New Zealander	Various	Civil Servant	2
13	-	Discontinued	-	-	-
14 – Kim	26	New Zealander	Retail manager	Retail Manager	-
15 – Jillian	30	New Zealander	Hairdresser	Retail Manager	1
16 – Dawn	55	New Zealander	Librarian	Manager	2
17- Catherine	56	New Zealander	Self-employed	Civil Servant	4

Table 1 – Participants in the Research

The expatriate women interviewed were chosen from observations at expatriate-dominated events such as coffee group and play group. A good mixture of women was sought; old, young, working,

not working, mothers with young children, mothers with older children, women who were childfree. The respondents in Rarotonga have two things in common; they are all identified as 'white' (Australian, New Zealanders or North American) and they are all married to the partner with whom they came to the Cook Islands. The respondents in New Zealand were more diverse, two were American, one was from Britain, and two were Indonesian. They were all married to the partner with whom they had moved to New Zealand.

The same basic process was followed with each participant. All were contacted and the research explained. The procedure was then:

1. Papers taken to participant home to discuss. These comprised an interview schedule (*Appendix A),* a consent form (*Appendix D*), and an information sheet (*Appendix E*). Allow the potential participant time to read the preliminary material and then to check she was still prepared to be interviewed. Schedule first interview.

2. Conduct first interview at her home. Show participant copies of confidentiality forms, and explain the confidentiality measures taken. Obtain signed consent form.

3. Transcribe interview and allow participant her copy to note changes. Alter any details at this point that would compromise confidentiality. Obtain final consent for all transcripts, print copies of their own transcripts, and consent forms.

As Finch (1983) mentions, the researcher found she was welcomed into the participants' homes, "one is [therefore] welcomed into the interviewee's home as a guest, not merely tolerated as an inquisitor" (Finch, 1983:74). The fact that the researcher and the participants are the same gender is an important and crucial methodological issue, as "both parties share a subordinate structural position by virtue of their gender" (Finch, 1983:76).[11] Finch says "the ease which once can get women to talk in the interview situation depends not so much upon one's skills as an interviewer, nor upon one's expertise as a sociologist, but upon one's identity as a woman" (Finch, 1983:78).

Finch talks of 'unmasking' – whether or not the researcher should reveal information about themselves to the participants. This was apparent during the course of this study especially with the women in New Zealand who were met and interviewed only once. Finch argues the process of empathy, identification, and in-depth interviewing creates a potentially exploitative relationship between researcher and research. One issue relevant to the research was Finch's belief that the participants cannot anticipate the uses their data will be put to and are therefore less able to evaluate confidential assurances. This ethical issue of what happens to the data once collected is very relevant to the research, as "collective, not merely individual interests are at stake" (Finch, 1983:83).

For analysis, each interview was photocopied and coded according to themes and categories - in this way, types, topics, and commonalties between participants were grouped together. Themes being examined, such as career issues, were then used as a basis for writing.

Most interviews were conducted with only the researcher and participant present, although some were conducted while the women were looking after their children (and occasionally other people's children). In order to establish some sort of rapport, twenty minutes would be spent before the interview chatting, and talking about current affairs. A wind-down period at the end of the interview might last thirty minutes, and include discussion 'off the record' of topics the interview had highlighted. For the five women in New Zealand interviewed only once, the time frame was a lot tighter. There was informal talk at the beginning of the formal interview, and then at the end, when the participants felt they had told the researcher about themselves, and asked questions in return.

The interview guide

Reinharz has pointed out that, in feminist research, and in the interview process "the digression is as important as the schedule" (Reinharz, 1992:250).[12] The interview guide (*Appendix A*) was devised to allow grouped questions, which were categorised for easy reference, questions that lead naturally to other related questions and finally, it allowed an extensive range of questions.

The broad overview of the interview guide reflects the lack of research conducted about expatriate women, and was divided into separate categories, such as career concerns, relationships, leisure activities, children, and childcare. In this way, emerging patterns, cycles, and responses could be analysed and coded within each question grouping.

The purpose of the initial questions (Section 1, *Appendix A*) was to

set the participant at ease, to encourage confidence, and to allow her to familiarise the researcher with her personal situation. Hadgood (in Reinharz, 1992:23) notes that some of her questions asked "respondents to disclose information which was very well known to them, thus putting them at ease" thereby "creating an atmosphere where the women felt knowledgeable" (Reinharz, 1992:23).

Career questions (Section 2) sought to find out how important, if at all, their careers were to the participants. These questions established whether the women had been working before arriving in Rarotonga or New Zealand and then what they were doing at present (full-time childcare, study, part-time work, or unemployed). The relationship questions (Section 3) gave participants an opportunity to define the effect, if any, being expatriates or migrants had on their relationships with their partners. This section established the effect of shifting career structure and how their partners' careers had changed through expatriation or migration.

The group of childcare questions (Section 4) established what the women thought about the influence of expatriation on children of different ages. Networking and social grouping questions (Section 5) established the 'milieu' in which the expatriate women moved. Leisure pursuit questions (Section 6) followed, establishing how the women felt about their opportunities for leisure. The 'isolation' questions (Section 7) considered any negative aspects of expatriation, including boredom, homesickness, loneliness, frustration and unhappiness. Most women expressed some momentary periods of these emotions, but these episodes did not shape the full 'expatriate experience'.

The interview schedule served as a guide only and the categories often provided a natural cut-off point for the interview (as did the length of the 90-minute tapes). Each participant was issued with a copy of the questions before the first interview, in order that they could think about the questions, and so that both parties had a reference point during the interview.[13]

Problems and issues arising in the research

Daily identification within the field, especially in Rarotonga, meant that confidentiality was a particularly important issue.[14] When interviewed by the *Cook Islands News* (the daily newspaper published in Rarotonga), the researcher was overwhelmed by interest in the study. This period also was a difficult one, as many people asked who was being interviewed, expressed interest in being interviewed themselves, or knew someone who would be perfect for the research. Many of these issues were avoided by saying the research was incomplete; it was a period that highlighted the vulnerabilities of the participants and the responsibility to protect their data.

The women interviewed in Rarotonga remain friendly with the researcher, although many have finished their assignments and left. The participants in New Zealand may never see the researcher again, but the issues are the same, namely, how can the identity of these women be protected and how boundaries are maintained between the roles of researcher and friend? Lofland and Lofland (1995) call this work getting in, getting along, and getting out. The researcher found getting in was relatively effortless, getting along more problematic, and getting out not yet achieved. Overall, the research took longer than expected, and

demanded much more than textbook sociological skills; it required social skills and childcare ability, as well as tact and discretion.

Conclusion

By outlining the method utilised by this study, it is hoped the transparency of the research method will allow engagement with the material in a way that makes it more accessible and open. It also demonstrates the way the research was conducted to allow the most interaction between participant and researcher, and as a non-hierarchical method of inquiry which attempted to give the participants some control over their own interviews.

4

CROSS -CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN EXPATRIATE WOMEN

Introduction

This chapter explores cross-cultural adaptation from the viewpoint of non-working women who accompany a partner to a foreign posting. It will explore themes that developed during this research and make comparison with broader cross-cultural research. The chapter will investigate the role of women in expatriation. Four stages of cross-cultural adaptation will be defined. The research was conducted in Rarotonga, the main island in the Cook Islands group (*Appendix H*), and a four-hour flight northeast of Auckland, New Zealand.

Studies in the area of cross-cultural adaptation attempt to explain the reasons expatriate assignments fail[1] because this represents an enormous cost to organisations and companies (Baker and Ivanevich, 1971; Black, 1988; Copeland and Griggs, 1985 et al; cited in Black and Gregerson, 1991a:498).[2] The expatriate spouse and family have been studied as separate factors in expatriate success or failure (Berry and Annis, 1988, Mendenhall and Oddau, 1985; Pahl, 1971, Gaylord, 1979; Black and Gregerson, 1991b). However, the cross-cultural adaptation of women has been examined for its effect on male career and expatriation. This research examines women's cultural adaptation from their

perspective and looks at four stages of expatriate women's experiences of cross-cultural adjustment.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN EXPATRIATES

Individuals respond to cross-cultural transition and adaptation differently. Factors such as their race, age, gender, previous mobility experience, education, employment, class, and attitude to foreign cultures (Gaylord, 1979) all have an impact. The theoretical underpinning of a feminist understanding of cross-cultural adaptation must prioritise gender factors.

Black and Gregerson (1991b) examine factors determining adjustment in women, reporting that spousal satisfaction is a major indicator in the success or failure of expatriates (Harris and Moran, 1989; Harvey, 1985; Tung, 1981 in Black and Gregerson, 1991b:462). In particular, they ask, what factors affect spousal cross-cultural adjustment - conceptualised as the "degree of psychological comfort in various aspects of a host country" (Black and Gregerson, 1991b:463).

Adjustment to a host country is also affected by 'cultural novelty' (Black, 1988; Mendenhall and Oddau, 1986; Oberg, 1960; Torbiorn, 1982) "the more novel...the host culture is to the home culture, the more uncertainty one would expect" (Black and Gregerson, 1991a:466-467). Much of the work on cross-cultural adaptation and transition is based on the work of Torbiorn (1982) and Oberg (1960) on cultural shock. Culture shock is defined as "stress induced by all the behavioural expectation differences (between home and host country) and the accompanying uncertainty with which the individual must cope" (Black and Gregerson, 1991a:463). Adjustment is the process of learning

about the host culture and minimising instances of uncertainty. Reducing uncertainty (cf. Black and Mendenhall, 1990, Church, 1982 and Gullahorn and Gullahorn, 1962, cited in Black and Gregersen, 1991a) can be achieved by pre-posting information gathering and training (Nicholson, 1984; Davis and Lonquist, 1984 in Black and Gregerson, 1991b:464). Culture shock describes the disorienting symptoms new arrivals experience when sojourning in a new culture, and involves a natural course of adjustment including phases of frustration, homesickness, hostility, denial, and lethargy (Furnham and Bochner, 1986: *xvi*).

This research argues that women who cannot work in a host country have much more to cope with than their spouse or children, who are sheltered within the organisational structure of work or school in the host environment. Women are more isolated when they come to a new country, and without work or school as natural support networks, they are on their own and isolated for much of the time: "while expatriates have ... a built in network with HCNs (host country nationals) at work, spouses usually have a much more difficult time developing a social network with HCNs and are quite often socially isolated" (Harvey, 1985, in Black and Gregerson, 1991a:466).

A woman's cross-cultural adaptation can be further inhibited if the woman has interrupted her own career (Black and Gregersen, 1991b) because of the posting. The suspension of her relationships with friends, family and workmates (Harvey, 1985) can also make the transition more difficult. The expatriate spouse may be adjusting to a sense of loss of important social support networks as well as adapting to a new culture and may be less happy about the move abroad than the working expatriate

(Black and Gregerson, 1991b:463). Black and Stephens (1989) have found the willingness of the spouse to initiate pre-posting training, and her ability and motivation to understand and engage in the host culture, as positively related to the working expatriates intent to stay the full duration of the international assignment.

Gaylord (1979) examines geographic mobility and its effect on the corporate family. She finds there is mounting evidence that "the wife pays the greatest price for geographic mobility" (Weissman and Paykel, 1972, in Gaylord, 1979). Most women suffer losses as a result of relocation, including fractures in the relationships between family, friends, and workmates, losing a sense of community, and the self-esteem associated with a job or career (Gaylord, 1979). Housewives, who are isolated within the home in a host country, begin "to merely exist, rather than lead a rich and purposeful life, deprived of significant community ties" (Gaylord, 1979:187). This research found evidence to support this phenomenon; the husband moves seamlessly between working in their home country to working in a host country, and the spouse is left to cope with both a sense of loss of purpose and the need to rebuild her identity in the host country.

As an 'expatriate wife', the women's roles in Rarotonga or New Zealand differ from roles played at home (Thompson, 1986). Women who worked in their home country must adjust to differing expectations of their behaviour in a host country. Role conflict and role ambiguity, especially in the first year of a posting is most contributive of culture shock in women (Furnham and Bochner, 1986:152). In this study, culture shock or cross-cultural transition is expressed by the women, particularly in Rarotonga,

in negative attitudes to the availability of food, entertainment, and facilities for childcare. As the posting progressed, frustration about these issues diminished. Black and Gregerson note that because most (US) expatriates are married, "another potential source of uncertainty, is the spouse" (Black and Gregerson, 1991b: 502). Tung (1981) argues the influence of the spouse is a major contributor to failed expatriate assignments. This view of the spouse as somehow the cause of failed expatriate assignments fails to acknowledge the social practices and power relations within the process of expatriation that create this situation.

A positive correlation was found in this research between smoother cross-cultural transition and previous expatriate experience. The length of time spent in the host country is a contributing factor – the longer an expatriate remains in the new environment, the more likely they will have successfully adapted their behaviour and attitudes. The research results suggest that those women who are self-motivated and socially outgoing adapt better than those who are isolated and have little contact with host country nationals. The relationship between these factors depends on the variables unique to each expatriate.

De Cieri et al (1991) examines the adjustment of the spouse in relation to the adjustment of the working expatriate. Evidence suggests the role of the wife is key "to the successful adjustment of her husband, and hence, of the companies operations in the overseas posting" (Thompson, 1986:14, in De Cieri, 1991:378). Along with individual variables, the importance of social support for the expatriate wife is emphasised. For the spouse, role change and conflict occur when she must conform to "the social norms and expectations of the host culture" (De Cieri, 1991:386).

Expatriate women, who often live in expatriate occupied 'compounds' protected from the local environment by high fences, have less chance to socialise with host country nationals than their husbands, but are also expected to assume a social role for which their previous circumstances may not equip them.

De Cieri (1991) defines social support as "an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient" (Shumaker and Brownell, 1984:13 in De Cieri, 1991:386). This support between women is seen as a buffer against stress, not just in cross-cultural transition, but in general. Research has shown that people with social support are better equipped to deal with stress and are emotionally healthier than non-supported people (Shumaker and Brownell, 1984:22). De Cieri also notes that, despite the help that social networks can offer, "*not being able to take up employment herself* in a foreign country can be a source of frustration and resentment" (De Cieri, 1991:387 emphasis mine). Companies should recognise that the wives and partners of male expatriate workers have their own separate social identities, and are not just 'invisible adjuncts' to their employees. As is often the case, women whose husbands hold socially visible and high status office (such as diplomats or company managers) are, by association with him, forbidden to engage in activities that would bring his reputation into disrepute.

Marital status is a controversial element in expatriate studies (Nauman, 1992, in Birdseye and Hill, 1995) as marriage is a stabilising element for male expatriates, though the influence of an unadjusted spouse can cause a manager to return home early.

(Tung, 1988).[3] For men, successful expatriation is associated with fewer and younger children,[4] higher education, and overseas experience (Black and Stevens, 1988, in Birdseye and Hill, 1995: 790). Torbiorn (1982) looks at the experience of expatriation from the non-working spouses perspective, although he argues the general difficulties of adjustment are gender blind, and the primary problem for women expatriates is "the attitude towards women in general in the host country" (Torbiorn, 1952:38). He acknowledges those who occupy positions overseas are still generally men, and thus the distinguishing feature of the wife is that her presence in the host country is motivated and precipitated by her husband's employment. Torbiorn recognises the timing, duration, and location of the sojourn overseas are dictated by the husband's employment and therefore the non-working spouse's adjustment has some special features, such as deferring or abandoning her own profession ambitions, and taking on the role of 'housewife'. Torbiorn suggests "this enforced unemployment is often new to Western industrialised women" (Torbiorn, 1982:38). Cross-cultural theory must take into account gender and location when discussing expatriates and the process of adaptation.

Children and Cross-cultural Adaptation

Torbiorn (1982) examines the impact cultural adaptation has on children and finds there are many factors that influence the adjustment of children. He argues that childhood is when "we are most receptive to impressions, and most strongly affected by them" (Torbiorn, 1982:138). Torbiorn believes children are more adaptable than their parents to new and different cultures, as they are less rooted in their home country norms. Adjustment for children involves changes; in schools, in friends, and in

environment (a situation under which they have no control). Torbiorn introduces the concept of upbringing (the transmission of cultural traditions from older to younger generation), and the way this is influenced by attitudes belonging to the host country. Young people are characterised by Torbiorn as more accepting of the host country culture, and some expatriate parents find children experience "conflict between the culture at home and the culture in the host country outside the home" (Torbiorn, 1982:140). Adolescents especially react most strongly to this concept, and are particularly sensitive. This may explain the fact that successful expatriation is associated with younger children (Black and Stevens, 1988, in Birdseye and Hill, 1995:790), and that none of the expatriates interviewed in this research had children over eleven with them at the post.

Expatriate parents also have problems with their children adjusting more profoundly to the host culture, and may themselves feel alienated when their children so readily adapt to host country norms. Tension between parents and children at this juncture are common; between parents wanting their children to assimilate into the host culture, but not so much as to lose their identity with home. Because expatriation is a set term, children must be able to assimilate back into their home country, and parents are aware they cannot allow their children to 'go native'.

The following phases have been postulated by Harris and Moran (1979) and Harvey (1985) in De Cieri (1991) and seek to explain and analyse the domestic and social world that expatriate women occupy when confronted with change and transition.

FOUR STAGES IN CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION

The four stages of psychological adjustment in expatriates are defined by the time they have been in the host country, and the varying responses to cross-cultural stress they experience. Each stage represents a time period (which is variable between individuals) and identifies a set of emotions and responses to a new environment. As expatriates may spend three or four years in a foreign country, they need to adjust to the living conditions present there, however different they may be from home. The stages of cross-cultural adjustment are depicted below and move from arrival and excitement to departure and withdrawal.

Stage 1 – The Honeymoon Phase

The 'honeymoon' stage is the arrival stage, sometimes also referred to as the 'spectator' phase, and usually lasts the first two to four weeks after arrival. It is a phase of wonderment as the recent arrival discovers all that is new and exciting about the host country. There is little feeling of participation, and expatriates feel like spectators to the host culture. The participants in this research described how they came to be in Rarotonga or New Zealand, and each move is unique. Some had a long time (up to a year) to prepare for the move, others, like Anita, had a month's notice to relocate. Some of the women had already lived overseas before coming to Rarotonga. As Black and Gregerson (1991b) note, previous overseas experience is positively related to adjustment to another culture, as expectations are more realistic. For Linda, who had lived in Samoa previously, Rarotonga represented a better lifestyle:

From Samoa, it [the shift to Rarotonga] could only have been a step up. If we had gone the other way around it would have been a severe disappointment. It would have been very difficult.

Linda, 32 (Rarotonga)

Some of the women who had lived overseas before coming to Rarotonga[5] came from Defence Force backgrounds, as children had shifted around a lot. Kamla came from such a family:

Coming from an Army background, disruption and change every few years feels like a way of life to me now. I don't know anything else; if I was to be settled for three or four years, I would be 'God, what's wrong!'

Kamla, 34 (New Zealand)

Others were married to men whose career automatically involved the possibility of overseas service. These included women married to diplomats (Kamla and Anita), or airline staff or managers within multinational companies. Other women, such as Nancy, from the United States, had not lived away from home at all, but had always wanted to live in New Zealand:

I always wanted to come to New Zealand, that was the one place I wanted to travel to. When I graduated, people would want to go to Europe, but New Zealand was the one country I wanted to travel to outside the United States.

Nancy, 34 (New Zealand)

Nancy, Kate, and Sharon emigrated from America or Britain to Palmerston North and had all discussed living in New Zealand with friends who had travelled or studied there. Their overall impression of New Zealand before they arrived was that it was safe and an ideal environment in which to raise children.

Kerry, Joanne and Linda were all in Rarotonga and had all had previous experience in developing countries, because they and their husbands had chosen previously to live offshore for the financial benefits. Joanne remembers her arrival on yet another small island, and her reaction to experiences that may have been stressful for women without prior experience of the trials of tropical living:

I unpacked our stuff and looked around the house. There were a few insects and bugs to sweep away but I was used to those.

Joanne, 30 (Rarotonga)

The participants were, for the most part, well equipped to deal with the cross-cultural transition between America, Britain or Indonesia and New Zealand, or from Australia and New Zealand to Rarotonga. This research concluded that the honeymoon stage was felt more acutely by the women who had not lived overseas previously, and was less pronounced for those who had. This first stage is brief but intense, and contributes to how effectively the women made the transition to the second stage.

Stage 2 – The Adjustment Stage

It is at this time that some the participants experienced the symptoms of culture shock (Oberg, 1960). These included frustration, hostility, loneliness, homesickness, and unhappiness brought on by uncertainty as well as the daily stress of managing everyday tasks in a strange country. Women especially have fewer resources for dealing with the host culture. Their husband begins work almost immediately, their children are at school, and they are at home, alone and in a strange environment. The

adaptation phase usually begins about a few weeks after arrival, when the newness and novelty have worn off, and the newcomer must begin to participate fully in the new culture. The women in this study reported this period as the settling in stage, and although they did not use the term culture shock, or said they suffered from it, the women pointed out this period was one of comparing their new country to home, and finding the new country lacking. Regardless of their original home country, the women expressed dissatisfaction, frustration, and annoyance with aspects of their new culture. Kate for instance, found being in Palmerston North from California a very isolating experience:

I feel, there's a certain.... You feel in a bit of a backwater here, that's sort of an issue when you're used to urban California, which is pretty much on the cutting edge of a lot of stuff – so there is a certain adjustment to making being on a little island.

Kate, 32 (New Zealand)

She also found that, although the 'cultural distance' between New Zealand and the United States was perceived as small, she found an undercurrent of difference that was not immediately apparent. Sharon and her family had arrived from Britain only five months before being interviewed and she was still very much in the adjustment stage. Her perception of New Zealanders was that they were serious, reserved, and private, and she felt as if they did not readily accept strangers:

I guess I felt in the first few weeks, not regret but – what have we done. I thought people were quite friendly, in the supermarket the checkout people say hello but then I realised it was only a thing they had learned. I felt it was a false friendliness. Like fences between the houses here are so high you can't see or want to talk to you neighbours. People don't have so much of a sense of humour,

they don't seem to laugh as much.

Sharon, 32 (New Zealand)

Nancy also found that shifting from America took a lot of adjustment, in terms of not knowing brand names in the supermarket, meeting people, and finding it cold. Attitudinally, she also found New Zealanders differed in how they viewed consumer items or spending money:

I remember feeling, the first year, a point where I just felt pissed off at everything, the light switches are upside down, are wrong, the supermarkets frustrated me, some point, a month or a couple of months when everything new and different irritated. And everything is expensive, and New Zealanders seemed very miserly.

Nancy, 34 (New Zealand)

The women from the America and the Britain took some time to adjust to New Zealand being comparable, but in many ways, unlike where they had come from. For Kamla and Anita, who came from upper-class backgrounds in Indonesia, and had married senior New Zealand diplomats, their lives in Jakarta had prepared them for New Zealand. Both had visited on holiday before permanently settling in Wellington and their social contacts in Jakarta also prepared them for life in another country. Anita had been used to speaking English in Indonesia, and was prepared for the social realm her husband occupied:

I didn't really feel difficulties here, with the culture, with the social functions you would call it, because when I was working in Jakarta, it was all multinational companies, and I was quite used to speaking English, and working and environment. I am also used to party culture, social culture, and diplomatic contacts.

Anita, 32 (New Zealand)

For the women from Australia, America or New Zealand who relocated to Rarotonga, adjusting meant not only getting to know and understand Cook Island culture, but also more prosaic things such as dealing with the heat and humidity:

I like the sun, the tropics – you could go through three sets of clothes a day! And showering that often. Some people just wilt in that heat. Some people lived in air-conditioning all the time, which is very restricting. That brought it to me how it affects people differently. You never think about it in New Zealand do you?

Catherine, 55 (Rarotonga)

Shopping and the availability of supplies was an issue for all the women, for it is at this adjustment stage that they must come to adapt to local food, products, services and supply. For the women from America and Britain, the unavailability of their preferred brands and familiar foods in New Zealand was problematic. The Indonesian women in Wellington lamented the lack of locally available herbs and spices to create their own food. For the women in Rarotonga, there were differing views about how they imagined the shopping to be. Catherine, who had lived in Rarotonga for two years in the late 1980s, found that food supplies in Rarotonga had improved. Her expectations from prior experience were exceeded by the growth in private sector manufacturing, importing and production. Others, who had not been told realistically about the availability of products, or the fluctuations in supply, found not being able to buy many things frustrating. Dawn, who had lived all of her life in New Zealand,

felt:

Well there's nothing, there's nothing. I've brought the odd thing, although they are getting better, bringing in more stuff. Makeup I can't get – my brand, I just buy a cheaper brand, or do without, or get friends to bring it when the come. There's really very little. I do miss shopping, I was a shopaholic. And I did miss not being able to buy things.

Dawn, 55 (Rarotonga)

Planning meals when food is not available or supplies are unreliable is extremely difficult under these conditions. For the women in Rarotonga, this can be a source of stress. Kim found this frustrating, especially when it came to entertaining people:

Planning a dinner party, you can't actually plan what you are going to cook, you have to go into the supermarkets and see when you can find, and then work around that.

Kim, 26 (Rarotonga)

The participants did not mention local food, or changes in diet as problematic, as it is possible for foreigners in the Cook Islands to eat as in New Zealand.[6] The Indonesian women mentioned that they were both used to eating international cuisine, although Anita had to be careful about checking for pork products in restaurants, as she was Muslim.

Cross-cultural adaptation at this stage included adjusting to differences in food, transport, housing, and climate, and can include language issues.[7] For the women in Rarotonga, knowledge of even basic Cook Islands Maori had proved unnecessary. Kim mentioned that she had been discouraged from

attending the Cook Islands Christian Church because its services were conducted in Maori. The research showed that language was not problematic for any of the informants.

How quickly the expatriate women adapted to their new surroundings depended on three key things; their *expectations* of Rarotonga or New Zealand (and how closely these matched with actual experience), *previous experience* with shifting and change, and perhaps, most relevant, their *attitude* to the host country, and to the move overseas. This phase is not of any set length but many of the informants reported it took them at least a year before they felt 'at home'. Those who had been in country less than a year had not yet fully adjusted to their new lifestyle, and said they were unhappy, dissatisfied or frustrated. This period, characterised by uncertainty, is one where the women were constantly information gathering and coping with all the things that made their new culture interesting and different.

Domestic Social Networks – Coffee and Play group

It is at this stage that the women in Rarotonga reported being introduced to either coffee or play group. For the women in New Zealand who were mothers with young children, social networks are represented by Parent's Centre gatherings for people who were new to the area. Nancy said that for her, Parent's Centre was a welcome support network when she first arrived in Palmerston North:

We joined a mothers group through Parents Centre. They'd had organised a group for mothers that were new to Palmerston North ... and as it turned out, I clicked very well with these mothers. I would define it as a real 50's housewife support network which I didn't realise I was so hungry for. I had always thought a baby is

not going to change my life, I'm going to keep my career.

Nancy, 34 (New Zealand)

This organisational support is available for the new expatriates in Wellington, but was lacking for the new arrivals in Rarotonga. While New Zealand provides formal support networks, and some informal ones, the Cook Islands provides only informal social networks for expatriates. The function of these groups, which serve as a starting point to welcome newcomers but are also ongoing, is to bring women together.[8]

A changeover person introduced most of the women in Rarotonga to someone in coffee group. The importance of this person *cannot be overstated.* A changeover worker is a spouse who is willing to take the new expatriate wife around and show them where the shops, school, and amenities are located. This involves the new and incumbent expatriate being in country at the same time. Some organisations formalise this arrangement; others do not, and the women themselves initiated it. The changeover period was greatly appreciated by the expatriate women in Rarotonga, and its value is clear.

As has been stated before, the women in Rarotonga actively sought out other expatriate women.[9] Play group eventuated when some of the women at coffee group wanted to focus more on their children's leisure time, rather than trying to control them at coffee group. Although play group was not studied, they met once a week in a church hall and organised activities for children. Those without children (or with children at school) continued to attend coffee group, and there was very little overlap between

those who attended either group. Joanne found coffee group excellent as a way of finding out information when she first arrived from California:

Sure, I met other ladies and met people who knew things about the island. It was good to have people to ask things like where is the best place to buy meat and all that other stuff that isn't in the guidebooks.

Joanne, 30 (Rarotonga)

Coffee group identified expatriate women as acquaintances, or what Harrington (1997) would define as 'co-workers' in that they are mutually engaged in domestic labour, especially if they bring children to the group.

This adaptation phase was a difficult time for many of the women. While it is a challenge, the women reported gradually moving on to the third stage. Much of what has been postulated in previous studies on cross-cultural adaptation was evidenced by this research.

Stage 3 - Commitment

This refers to the period when expatriates start to feel at home in their new environment and begin to participate in activities such as sports, classes and voluntary activities. It entails a feeling of community, commitment, and belonging, and comes after the uncertainty of the first two stages but before the impending sense of departure. The commitment phase lasts until approximately six months before departure and is characterised by participation in all aspects of the community and with a diminished sense of absence from home.

The women in this research reported adapting well to Rarotonga or New Zealand, and made the transition from adaptation to commitment uneventfully. Paula found her first six months in Rarotonga onerous, but this was partially due to the move coinciding with the birth of her first child. The women from Indonesia settled into New Zealand life well, mitigated by their previous experiences overseas. The major settlement problem with the Indonesian women was they had not yet found employment - in itself unsettling and possibly causing loneliness and loss of self-esteem. Sharon, from Britain, was in New Zealand with her family, and had only been in Palmerston North for five months - she had not yet passed through the adjustment phase.

The comments from the women at this stage[10] were mainly positive. They found much to occupy themselves, and many were very busy. The initial problems were less in evidence and the participants had made allowances for their environment and were beginning to appreciate and enjoy what was available to them.

The commitment phase, for some expatriates, can stretch for years, as many are away for long periods, making repatriation more problematic.[11] In this study, the women reported feeling happy, part of the community, and satisfied. Jillian noted this period was one of stability and Nancy mentioned that once they decided to stay in New Zealand, she felt much more settled and could begin to build a life.

The questions the participants were asked at this stage sought to establish if the shift to New Zealand or Rarotonga had affected

their relationships with their spouses. This commitment phase was also important in understanding how well each person in the families had adjusted to their new environment. Most of the women had established themselves in community groups consisting predominantly of other women, which meant they divided their time between activities with other women and recreation solely with their spouse. The area of leisure and voluntary activities is covered more in Chapter 6.

At this stage, as well as the adaptation phase, domestic social networks were still important. Participation in coffee group and play group tended to level off, if not diminish in the commitment phase, as the need for solidarity with other expatriates declined and the women formed links with host country nationals or other expatriates. The commitment phase is almost a return to normality in terms of social and cultural ease with surroundings. Overall, the commitment phase lasts the remainder of the posting, until six months from departure, and represents the coming to terms with the host country for all the women, whether in New Zealand or Rarotonga.

Stage 4 - Departure and Repatriation

This final stage is summarised briefly, as like pre-departure, not enough data was gathered in order to expand on this subject within the confines of this research. All of the participants anticipate leaving Wellington, Palmerston North, or Rarotonga at some stage and many have left since this research was conducted in 1997 and 1998. For most of the participants, departure was less of a concern than adjustment, as they were closer chronologically to arrival than they were to departure. Those near departure in Rarotonga when interviewed (Joanne, Suzanne,

Linda, and Catherine) expressed widely differing opinions and reactions to going home.

Research (Harvey, 1982 and Myambo, 1988) suggests that repatriation for the non-working wife is a return to uncertainty, as they are home, but with little sense of community, and friendships and family networks may need re-establishing (Gaylord, 1979). Research also indicates that repatriation is experienced as a drop in both social and economic status, as the financial compensation paid to expatriates ceases on return home. Women also, as with the departure from home, bear the largest proportion of labour in organising to shift back to their home country. Aside from the administrative aspects of shifting from one country to another, there is the emotional cost of leaving behind friends made in a new country. Women who have committed themselves to their host country find it difficult to leave, even if they have always known that departure is inevitable. The nature of expatriate relations and friendships is one of transience. As Kerry commented when she was interviewed:

It's a transient society, you have to protect yourself, to avoid being hurt, you have to put a wall around you. At times it can be quite a depressing lifestyle, friends always leaving all the time, and sometimes you think to yourself, why bother getting involved in the first place as they will only be moving on, save yourself the sadness later, but on the other hand, it's a great way to meet all sorts of different people so there are pluses and minuses.

Kerry, 29 (Rarotonga)

Kerry had lived overseas for 18 years, as her father was in the defence forces (as was Kamla's) and she had never really felt that

anywhere was home. This sense of pointlessness, of making friends only to sacrifice them, is characteristic of the nature of expatriate relationships – which tend to be more shallow, "based on circumstance rather than longer-term friendships at home" (Shneider and Asakawa, 1995:1113). The women who were leaving Rarotonga reported mixed reactions; some were relieved to be leaving, others were looking forward to going home, or departing for another location in the Pacific, and others were sad to be leaving and unsure of the future. Going home also forces the expatriate wife to think about looking for employment. It also involves finding schools for children and re-establishing her own identity in a location that may have changed.

Catherine anticipated being in Rarotonga for nine months,[12] and she felt unsettled as it was too long to be away from friends in New Zealand and too short to achieve anything worthwhile in Rarotonga. Dawn, whose husband planned to retire when they returned to New Zealand, was ambivalent about returning:

I would be keen to go to Nelson but we'll see. He'll be ready to retire – we don't really have an option of going somewhere else, unless they offer. Basically, its back to New Zealand. If I had a choice, I'd like to go to another Pacific place, maybe Tahiti – except we don't speak French. And now that we've been here, we could cope with Suva or Apia, yes. We'd go to Suva rather than home if we had a choice.

Dawn, 55 (Rarotonga)

Suzanne, a New Zealander in Rarotonga, was relieved to be at the end of her husband's posting. She anticipated a return to work when she got back to Auckland:

I'm happy about it, I'm ready to go home, I just want to go, pack up. I'm not going to any more parties or doing any more new things, what's the point? We are leaving anyway so there's no point in starting something new. I am quite negative now about living here, I just want to go back to work, I'm bored and I'm waiting to go.

Suzanne, 33 (Rarotonga)

Kate, an American in Palmerston North with young children, had found small town New Zealand backward, her frustration exacerbated after leaving the lifestyle in California. Although they felt New Zealand was a safe environment in which to bring up children, they were planning to return to California as soon as practicable:

Well, it's a permanent position but my husband has never been happy here so I think we will go home sooner, rather than later. We were always going to go home, but now it's like, whatever comes up next, rather than saying, oh five years or seven. We are going back to family in California.

Kate, 32 (New Zealand)

The results of the research on this stage correspond with other research on the repatriation experience which characterise it as time of increased uncertainty and dissatisfaction, both with the host country and with the decrease in social and economic status on return home. The participants reported feeling excited but anxious about returning home; both these sentiments are intensified with increased time away.

Conclusion

The four stages examined here do not include pre-departure and travel, which were not focussed on.[13] This study finds evidence that host country-committed expatriates with good social support networks, strong marital relationships, and a positive attitude toward both the posting itself, and the location, adjusted quickly. Those expatriate women who adjusted poorly, or more slowly, included women with weaker social support, who experienced boredom due to lack of meaningful activity in the absence of work, and exhibited a negative attitude, both towards the posting itself, and the location. Cross-cultural adaptation for all the women who participated was facilitated by previous experience with transition.

This chapter has addressed the issues expatriate women face when confronted with relocating overseas, and has compared these experiences to other research conducted with American and British expatriates. Much is unique to the South Pacific and the gender-focused examination of expatriate wives has tried to analyse this process from their viewpoint.

The next chapter links cross-cultural adaptation with issues surrounding career interruption, as the two concepts are uniquely intertwined in expatriate women's experience.

5

WORK AND CAREER ISSUES FOR EXPATRIATE WOMEN

Introduction

This chapter analyses expatriate women's views on work and career-related issues. These experiences are then examined in the context of feminist perspectives on gender, work, and corporate mobility. It looks at the social forces at work when women give up employment in order to have children or accompany their husbands or partners overseas, and details the results of the research. There is a discussion of the social position of housewives and expatriate women and the similarities between them, and the differences race and class play in career options. This chapter concludes with an understanding of the issues concerning career choices for expatriate women and the problems associated with economic dependence.

This research examines the career decisions women make when confronted with the choice of maintaining their own career, or deferring or abandoning it to follow their husband or partner to a foreign location. It uses the analogy of 'corporate gypsies' (Anderson, 1981) to explain the behaviour and attitudes towards careers of expatriate women, and Harrington (1997) to analyse domestic social networks formed by non-working women. Itzin and Newman (1995) are useful for understanding barriers within

the workplace for women, which make marriage and children a viable and realistic alternative. They were also utilised to explain race, class, and cultural and religious differences between women's experiences in the workforce.

CAREER PATTERNS AND CHOICES

Career as an Expendable Commodity

The literature concerning work and gender recognises women's position in the workplace as subordinate to men's (Itzin and Newman 1995:3), observing the limitations placed on women both at managerial and lower levels. This research found that expatriate women who had given up a career, had not been as integrated or committed to the workforce as they had been to their marriage or the idea of being home full-time with children. Various factors influenced this decision, including the husbands' careers progressing more rapidly than the women's. Institutional discrimination in relation to ethnicity when expatriate women from Indonesia tried to find employment in New Zealand, was also visible.

All the women in the research had at some time held paid employment; the trend when analysing their career patterns was they had chosen to give up their career in order to have children, or accompany a partner to an overseas job. Career and job satisfaction were more central for the women without children, and was of less concern to those women whose children were young and required constant care. This differentiation brings into sharp relief the gendered division of labour within marriage (Cockburn, 1991).

The women in the research came from differing class, race, and

religious backgrounds, and these factors affected their attitudes to career, children, and marriage. Those from the developed world (America, Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada) occupied middle class positions, were not affiliated to any one religion, and were Pakeha. Kamla and Anita, from Indonesia, and living in New Zealand, were Muslim and upper-middle class. They were the only women of colour interviewed. For the women from America and Britain, leaving their jobs was considered temporary, and they found work within a reasonable time in New Zealand. However, for the Indonesian women in New Zealand, employment in their chosen field had been elusive, which may in part be due to their identity as 'other'. The disadvantages black and minority women face in the workforce is reinforced by Cockburn, which notes "the disadvantage of black women is not, however, due to their ethnic culture, but to individual and institutional white racism" (Cockburn, 1991:176). The women in Rarotonga were all Pakeha, occupying middle class positions, although their socio-economic status may be artificially elevated by expatriation.[1]

The willingness of women to accompany a partner masks the power relations that inhere within gender relations. While the women would see it as their choice, the inequalities between men and women's employment opportunities (Cockburn, 1991) make it desirable for women to give up employment and become economically dependent on men. For some women, this scenario is changing due to increasing wages and employment opportunities for women, and the increase in dual-career families. However, for the majority of the women in the study, the decision to accompany their husbands was based on sound economic reasoning. As Kamla, an Indonesian Muslim married to a New

Zealand diplomat puts it:

Then Alan left for the Pacific, and we had no plans for me to go with him or anything, and I said goodbye, I didn't want to leave my job, his divorce wasn't final yet, all these complications. Anyway, he came back to Jakarta to ask for my hand after a year, and I said yes which meant I then left my job and went with him to Vanuatu.

Kamla, 34 (New Zealand)

Anita, a journalist from Indonesia, saw relocating to New Zealand as a natural consequence of being married to a senior New Zealand diplomat:

We married one year ago and my husband was a diplomat in Jakarta, Indonesia. When his posting finished, he came back here and I followed him because I was married at that time. So I follow my husband.

Anita, 32 (New Zealand)

This research shows the women were initially reluctant to leave their jobs, but once married, were more likely to think of themselves and their husband as a unit, with his professional life and their financial security as more important. This was true of all the participants regardless of class or religious affiliations. Career had become less of a priority for the women, and they focussed instead on promoting and prioritising their husbands' careers. Their domesticity in the home, especially when primarily responsible for full-time childcare, allows men the independence to have both careers and families. As Cockburn points out, "independence for a man is predicated on a woman's lack of it" (1991:79).

For the women in Rarotonga who were not working, their careers had been forsaken for several reasons: to spend more time as a family or with partners, and to do things they felt they had no time for when they were working, such as hobbies, or playing with their children. The research found career was an expendable commodity to women who gave priority to their marriage and children. Even the women who valued work and had given it up only temporarily to have children or move, had for the time being become full-time housewives in order to give primacy to their children or their husbands' careers. For the women able to work part-time,[2] their employment was not as skilled as their previous work, and under-utilised their professional skills and abilities.[3]

What the women said about their employment

It is important to understand how the women themselves felt about career and their working lives. Dawn, who was close to retirement when she arrived in Rarotonga from New Zealand, left the job as a library assistant she had held part-time for 18 years:

It was sad to leave my job. It wasn't just a job though – it was like leaving a family. It had just really happened, that job, I went to start working there temporarily, and it got expanded into a position for me. People don't stay in jobs that long anymore, it used to be, from the cradle to the grave, but it's not anymore. The factors that influenced our decision to come here were really, me, it was going to be better for Philip job-wise, these were advantages, the disadvantages were leaving the family, and friends behind.

Dawn, 55 (Rarotonga)

Jillian had left her job in New Zealand as an office administrator to have a child, and had not worked in paid employment for

nearly two years - she recently obtained a part-time administrative job in a large office in Rarotonga:

I wanted something, I needed something, just wanted to get out there, do something for myself, something that gives me another avenue, being a bit more independent, that's important. Having my own money is good, but it's not enough to say it's my own money, it's not just for the money. I had always been working around people, jobs with people and I had no people around me. Just the general things that work gives you, just the idle chitchat, news– that's what I missed about being at home. I'm not really career-orientated, but still being in the work environment is a good thing, and I know I'm a mother but I can't just do this mother thing seven days a week, wherever I am, it's not good for me, its not good for her, its not good for the whole family. It's not the person I am, to be a full-time mother. I need to work part-time.

Jillian, 32 (Rarotonga)

Linda, a middle class New Zealander had previously lived in the Solomon Islands (with her husband who was a senior manager), and had found not working there difficult; this became less of an issue once she had two children:

After a week of not working [in the Solomons], I thought – I just can't do this, I was completely bored. I really didn't have any idea of what it was going to be like there. I hadn't realised how serious not working was going to be, and this was before I'd had the children. I am putting up with not working at the moment, I would love to do some part-time work, I really would. I don't have a career, or particularly want a career.

Linda, 32 (Rarotonga)

Anita was an experienced media professional in Indonesia, and had lived in a house with servants, but had left to follow her husband (a New Zealand diplomat) to Wellington. She found

looking for work difficult and had been either overqualified for the jobs she applied for, or her experience in Indonesia was not suited to New Zealand conditions:

My experience is quite extensive and I just started a good job for six weeks in Jakarta, then my husband get this notice that we are leaving in one month. Yes so we have very short notice. Before I left Indonesia, I left my job about three weeks before we were due to leave. At first, I felt like I was on holiday, or I was on leave, but the second month I felt that I needed something to do, like wake up in the morning, what am I going to do today?

Anita, 32 (New Zealand)

Kamla was also from an upper class Indonesian family and her husband was a New Zealand diplomat. His high profile job in the country where he was posted before they came back to New Zealand severely restricted her opportunities to find work:

It would definitely be politically incorrect for me to have worked openly and with quite a high profile. It's one of the frustrations. I didn't work really the whole three years. It was a hard thing to give up, but I thought to myself, its all about making choices, you – OK, you do want to have your cake and eat it too ... So, when it came to having to make a choice about letting go of my career, it was hard...do I make this a permanent relationship and think about employment opportunities in other places later on. So I made the choice to make the relationship work.

Kamla, 34 (New Zealand)

The ways women have come to Rarotonga or New Zealand are many and varied. They do however, have many things in common: they all discussed the move with their husband (although it was the husbands' jobs which initiated the moves), they all weighed up their options, and most anticipated a return

to work, although some moved towards this more quickly than others.

Why do women work?

Work and paid employment is much more than just a way to earn money. It offers self-esteem, an opportunity to participate in public and social life, and allows people to develop skills and proficiency at work that cannot be gained at home. Work offers much more than financial rewards (Cockburn, 1991 and Zaretsky, 1973), giving both men and women social status, respect, and power. Women regard work as a source of power, respect, and pride, in the same ways that men do. The work of the housewife does not occur in the public realm, is unpaid and therefore 'valueless', and invisible. Marshall (1995) investigates women in senior management who have left their job, because it had ceased to offer the things they valued once they had reached a certain level. These women's experiences show that working is not just about financial security and economic independence (although these may be a necessity), but is more complex and multidimensional. There are many reasons given for working (or wanting to work) by the participants of this research:

- for the financial rewards
- contact with others during the day
- to avoid the feeling of being stuck at home
- to avoid the boredom/isolation of domestic life
- independence and self-esteem
- to avoid wasting qualifications.

Work is valued both by society and by those who engage in it.[4] Self-identity and self-esteem are partially based on how people

perceive you and your job - our position in class-based society is judged by our jobs or those of our husband (Eisenstein, 1979). Work is also a necessity in order to pay basic costs. All the women in this research were living with and economically dependent on men who were on higher than average salaries.[5]

The consequences of not being allowed to work

Under Cook Islands immigration laws, women who accompany partners (or indeed, men who follow women, although this is less common) may not engage in paid employment, unless they can demonstrate that they have specialist skills not available locally.[6] Some of the women in Rarotonga expressed disappointment and resignation because they could not legally work in the Cook Islands. Not being permitted to work took away choices expatriate women previously felt they had about their own lives and careers. While they recognised the Cook Islands government needed to protect working conditions for its indigenous people, they felt there was inequality within the system. Jennifer, a middle class woman from Australia with four children, put it best:

No – some days I think I would like to be working, and then other days, no. I suppose what I don't really like is the fact that I <u>can't</u> work because of my visa. More so than I'm not working, it's just not a two-way street, like Cook Islanders can work in Australia and New Zealand but it doesn't work the other way around. But here, you are just not allowed to. It makes sense in a lot of ways, because, we also have unemployment in Australia, and we don't stop people from coming and working, so I don't know, its a moral thing I suppose, and I can see both sides of the story, but I don't think its fair either.

Jennifer, 35 (Rarotonga)

Choice was an issue for many women with young children. They

wanted to be home to care for and raise their children, but they also wanted time away from the mothering role – this was often expressed as doing something 'for themselves'. The money earned would be recognised as theirs, and the time spent at work would be valuable for contact with other adults.

Not being allowed to work also reinforced gender-based stereotypes about men and women and norms of behaviour. When recent arrivals to Rarotonga are introduced, very often the women are asked: "so what does your husband do here?" This reinforces three things: it assumes the woman is in the Cook Islands because of her spouse's job, it places more value on what her husband does than what she might do, and it allows the newcomer to be placed within the class hierarchy according to the position her husband holds. Thus women are seen as an appendage to their husband's position, peripheral in all senses to the 'real' work that occurs between men in the public sphere.

For the Indonesian women in New Zealand there were other barriers to their employment, even though they were permitted to work. Anita expressed how difficult it was for her to find work in New Zealand with Indonesian qualifications - her perceived difference and the lack of recognition of her overseas qualifications prevented her from finding suitable work.

Corporate Gypsies – Expatriate Wives

Anderson (1981) provides the best analysis of corporate wives and women who give up careers and jobs in order to put their husbands' jobs first. Much can be found to compare her analysis of corporate women's lives with the experiences of expatriate women. Anderson investigates women who assume traditional

gender divisions of labour within the household and how they feel about their situation. The homemakers report "great happiness with themselves and their situation, contrary to feminist belief and say they would not want things any other way" (Anderson, 1981:312). Anderson looks at how the actual material conditions of these women's lives form this belief. The women are under no illusions about their situations, they are aware of the consequences if circumstances within their marriages were to change. False consciousness, as a feminist argument for the reason some women express contentment in their oppression, assumes that women who believe they are happy in a patriarchal marriage situation are mistaken. Anderson points out that this situation means "researchers ... are put in the untenable position of being unable to believe what their subjects report" (Anderson, 1981:314). In many ways, the choices Anderson's corporate wives make are reflected in the choices expatriate women make – they "establish beliefs in the context of the material and social resources available to them. For these women, these resources are not slight; they establish their beliefs ... out of an active commitment to the systems in which their lives are imbedded" (Anderson, 1981:314-315).

Anderson's description of the daily lives of the 'corporate gypsies' (women and families who move from city to city to follow the progression of their husbands' careers) reveals lives which are frequently disrupted by shifting every few years to new places without family, friends or support networks apart from their husbands. Anderson notes "their continual mobility creates uncertain environments for the women. It also encourages financial dependence on their husband, for with such frequent moving, it would be difficult for the women to maintain careers of

their own" (Anderson, 1981:315).

A focal point of Anderson's research is her examination of a 'newcomers' club, which allows the new settlers in the city to meet other women, socialise, and organise volunteer activities. This club exists in many forms in many places. For Rarotonga, it was participation in coffee group or play group; for the New Zealand newcomers, it was Parent's Centre or a diplomats club. These domestic social networks (Harrington, 1997) are a form of resistance to the daily drudgery of domestic life for women whose entire worlds can exist hidden from the public world within the home.

Domestic Social Networks – Work and Play

These are networks of interlinked relations between women who are full-time caregivers and homemakers. Harrington (1997) discovers that women who are not part of a paid labour environment and who stay home to look after children, develop complex and integrated networks of family, friends, neighbours and acquaintances, which are "overwhelmingly based in a shared engagement with domestic work" (Harrington, 1997:164). Contact between women in these domestic social arrangements revolves around a shared commitment to children and childcare, and allows women space to feel part of a community.

Harrington's analysis of social networks focuses on the gendered nature of child-raising in Western society. She describes these networks as both liberating and restraining, as they allow women an outlet for the frustrations of domestic labour, but fortify the gendered nature of domestic work by reinforcing the women's roles as primary caregivers and domestic workers. She points out

that these networks allow resistance to difficulties involved in full-time childcare and domestic labour, but they are also an aspect of being a mother. Harrington notes: "women at home full-time have no independent sources of income or organisational infrastructure to help them. They rely more heavily on informal non-monetary exchanges of support, thus *their social network activities are part of their work activities*" (O'Donnell 1985:117, cited in Harrington, 1997:165, emphasis mine). Not only does meeting with other mothers mean women have social contact, but these networks also form part of how mothers care for their children, and are therefore integral to domestic labour. Jillian, a mother of a young toddler, expresses it well:

I mean I couldn't thing of anything worse prior to having Monica, than going to a mother's group. I couldn't think of anything worse! I have no problem with the play group now. If I didn't have kids, I wouldn't be there.

Jillian, 32 (Rarotonga)

Participation in these networks is a way for expatriate mothers to extend the role as caregiver outside the confines of the house, and to associate with other workers in the same occupation. The sense of social isolation for expatriate women is two-fold; they are isolated from the community they left, and they are isolated within the home in a host country. As Harrington found, women's associations are based on the ages of their children and a common bond between women wholly consumed with domestic labour. She also recognises that these non-kin connections are not deep friendships but 'co-worker'[7] relationships - associations between kindred workers. These findings are consistent with the findings of other empirical research of white Western women and domestic

networks.[8]

Anderson concludes by arguing that some women, within the constraints that society offers their gender in terms of low-paid and low-prestige work, "have actively chosen a life which makes economic affluence, personal autonomy, and community influence a possibility for them" (Anderson, 1981:325). She argues the interplay between the two ideologies of capitalism and patriarchy is too complex and too intertwined to unravel simply. Anderson makes an important point when she says that class structure and social hierarchy have an important part to play in gender relations, and that women would not automatically want liberation if it were to change their lives for the worse.

His Money – Our Money – My Money

The issue of access to financial resources was a feature of this study in relation to working and career.[9] The women were asked if they currently held a job, and Jillian and Kim were working part-time. The women were then asked if they had worked before coming to Rarotonga (all had, at some stage), and who controlled the money now. Invariably, they said responsibility for it was shared:

We can both sign the chequebook, and we budget it all, so neither of us has the control. We have to have a set amount for food or whatever; otherwise, it just gets out of hand. ... We, I'm the one that goes to the bank every week and gets the groceries so I am usually the one that goes to the bank as well.

Jillian, 32 (Rarotonga)

Control over the joint chequebook and account is often given to

the woman, who is free during the day to go to the bank[10]:

He gives me the chequebook, I go to the bank, he takes out his lunch money every day, he doesn't have his own money either. It's all ours.... it's just all our money, I'd never, God, it wouldn't be any other way.

Linda, 32 (Rarotonga)

The women understood the finances as joint, and that both of them could access the accounts at any time.[11] Not having their own accounts with the bank was a difficult adjustment many women had made. Dawn had worked for the past eighteen years, and found adjusting to financial dependence especially difficult, which may in part be attributed to the traditional attitude her husband had towards money:

I'm quite happy about it really, there's only one drawback and that's that I don't have my own money. It's been strange. If you've got your own little bank account you can go and fiddle around with that. All that's changed is that I have to ask Phil for money; he says you just have to ask.

Dawn, 55 (Rarotonga)

Being used to having her own financial dealings, Dawn also noted she had never had to think before she bought something:

Before I would have just bought something without a second thought, but now I have to think twice. It is a big difference really. I said also to him that when we go home, I want him to put some money into a bank account that's just for me, so if I want to go and buy a lipstick I can go to my little bank account. But then he said I don't have a separate bank account and I say no, but you have control.

Dawn, 55 (Rarotonga)

The women who did work part-time all said they did so, not for economic reasons (although that was a benefit) but for other reasons associated with self-esteem, independence, and control. While money was a motivator and an incentive, work was associated with social and cultural benefits in addition to financial benefits:

It [getting a job] wasn't about money, it was about independence. My choice to work was more about self-esteem than money. I guess it makes a difference to think like ... being financially independent is about having a relationship thing. It's my money, and not John's.

Kim, 26 (Rarotonga)

Financial independence also represented control over what commodities they felt they could buy, and independence from having to ask for money. It is at this locus of control over money that gender and work issues meet. The concept of 'our money' exists because to think of economic resources as anything other than jointly owned is to examine the vulnerabilities that exist within a dependent financial relationship. Equality of access to money is key to understanding the relationship power has to money within gender relations and marriage. Women feel 'immoral' or 'guilty' (Comer, 1974) for spending money earned by their partners on themselves, and may well go without in order that they never have to ask for money for goods and services for themselves. Like many women's wages, the wages of those women who worked tended to be for 'pin-money', or as an 'extra' to their husbands' money. The main economic burden of rent, food,

clothing went to their husbands' salaries; theirs was spent on 'extras' such as luxury items at the supermarket, spending money in the holidays and dinners out - treats that made the money feel extra and frivolous, rather than hard-earned and contributive.

Economic subordination is, in part, mitigated by the concept of 'our money', and the feeling that, although the women do not own ultimate control of the finances, they can withdraw money when they care to, and can feel partially responsible for spending it. Even if a man gives his wife everything she needs, she still feels dependent, because, ultimately, he earns it, he gives it to her, and he has the power to take it away.[12]

The women who did engage in part-time work expressed pleasure in having their own money to spend – a situation they may have taken for granted when working or before having children. Jillian had grown used to financial dependence on her husband, but found the situation difficult to begin with:

I hated it at first, hated it, 'cause I'd always had my own money, like just my tips when we were working, I mean we share a lot of stuff, but we also have our own money.

Jillian, 32 (Rarotonga)

The issue of control over economic resources is an important indicator of the level of power exerted by men over women in marriage relations. As can be seen from this research, the men appear to have relinquished some day-to-day control over the finances, but maintain overall authority over the economic resources available to their spouses simply by being the sole income earners and retaining ultimate control of financial

concerns.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the differing experiences of work and career expressed by expatriate women, and shows that gender, power relations and attitudes shape how women experience economic dependence. Women who work, be it in the domestic sphere or the paid labour force, must confront difficult issues when they relocate to another country with their partners. This research has shown expatriate women's perspectives of giving up work in order to prioritise their husbands' careers, or to have children. It also found that women who were able to work, albeit part-time in a foreign country, valued this for rewards such as increased self-esteem and respect, not merely for financial reasons. This ability to work greatly enhanced their experience of living overseas, and allowed them to mix and associate more easily with host country nationals. This has important implications for cross-cultural adaptation and for the personnel policy of multinational companies.

Expatriate women have much in common with 'housewives', in that men only guarantee their incomes while they maintain the marital or sexual relationships. They also must face other issues when they are not permitted to work in the country they have shifted to, even if they wish to do so. The laws of the country in which they reside dictate their career and work aspirations in a way that living at home would not. For the women from countries with education systems that differ markedly from New Zealand, the difficulties in getting their qualifications and experience recognised are many. Race and ethnicity also play a part when women move away from their country of origin and are perceived

as different in a host country. While they have much in common with traditional homemakers, expatriate women have their own particular set of concerns centering around their inability to work, the importance they place on marriage and children over career, and their economic dependence.

The next chapter examines leisure and voluntary work for expatriate women. With career an almost entirely unavailable option, expatriate women must seek meaningful leisure and voluntary activities to replace career and the associated benefits of work status and organisational participation.

6

GENDER, TIME, SPACE, AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE IN EXPATRIATE WOMEN'S LEISURE

Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections and will begin by focusing on four factors that influence women's leisure and voluntary activities; gender, time, space and economic dependency. The contradictory and complex distinction for women between work and leisure is highlighted, using Shelton (1992) and Deem (1986). Dempsey (1991) is utilised in an understanding of women's incorporation into their husband's leisure pursuits at the expense of their own recreation. The following section will link this feminist perspective on leisure with the data collected from expatriate women in Rarotonga. It will emphasise and reinforce the theoretical implications of gender, space, time, and economic dependency, showing how these factors influence and restrict expatriate women's leisure and voluntary work.

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES OF WOMEN'S LEISURE

The conventional approach to leisure studies neglects or amalgamates women's leisure concerns with men's. Feminist perspectives on women and leisure place women at the forefront of their analysis, linking a gender aware understanding of

women's specific leisure demands with suggested policy charges to redress gender imbalances, as well as utilising a feminist methodological approach to data collection.

Green, Hebron and Woodward (1990) conceptualise leisure theory as having reached a critical stage within feminism, merging gradually with more traditional views on leisure. This perspective examines women's leisure specifically and looks at how it is defined by women, particularly in relation to domestic tasks (Deem, 1986). There is more understanding of women's leisure as relating to gender and linked to their function within the household. Deem points out the context and content of women's leisure and the many factors that influence this, including confidence, income, educational level, health, and the needs of dependent children.[1] Deem argues that women's leisure often occurs concurrently while working or looking after children, and the fragmented nature of women's leisure makes it "difficult to compartmentalise under a conventional framework" (Green et al, 1990:84). Talbot (1981, in Deem, 1986) notes that "fewer women than men participate in leisure activities, but women also participate in a narrower range of activities ... there emerges a picture of home-based domestic leisure for women" (Talbot, 1981:35 in Deem, 1986:7). While this may be more accurate for the early 1980s than it is in now, women's leisure is still restricted by childcare responsibilities, lack of time, financial constraints and the control of public space by men.

Green et al believe a feminist understanding of leisure should "document the lives of women, and ... represent their experiences in their own terms" (Oakley, 1974; Pollent, 1991 and Sharpe, 1984 in Green et al, 1990:17). Green et al note that leisure is

inextricably linked with feminism as a political issue and views leisure concerns for women as not only about facilities and institutions, but also as a "reflection of the sexual division of labour in capitalist society, and reinforcement of traditional gender stereotypes" (Green et al, 1990:19). Work and leisure, from a feminist viewpoint, are inextricably linked to gender and power relations. Green et al note women, even those who work outside the home, are not seen to 'earn' a right to leisure in the same way that men do, and that for women "domesticity and maternity are presented as the source of women's pleasure and [women] are not supposed to seek personal gratification from leisure, and to do so is considered selfish" (Green et al, 1990:33).

Understanding the power relations that shape women's leisure is crucial for an analysis of the context within which expatriate women participate in leisure activities. Green et al focus less on the amount and type of women's leisure, but on the "cultural significance of leisure, which clearly has a gender dimension" (Green et al, 1990:*ix*). It argues that leisure cannot be compartmentalised or isolated from the factors that control it, and leisure itself is embedded within wider social structures. This perspective of leisure focuses on class, sexuality,[2] and structural inequalities within society that restrict and determine women's access to leisure. This perspective values women's leisure as important in and of itself, and as an indicator of women's oppression. Leisure represents freedom, and self-expression, and therefore has a "revolutionary aspect" (Henderson et al, 1989:7).

Women experience leisure differently than it has been conventionally conceptualised and established as a discrete activity from work (Green et al, 1990). They find women perceive

leisure as being free to choose how they spend their time, without the constraint of the demands of others; what comprises much of the leisure of others, is in fact work for women (for example, preparations for Christmas). Green et al see as androcentric the distinctions between work and leisure and understands the two, especially for women, as interrelated with children, work, marriage, and domestic responsibilities. Division of women's lives into work and leisure is impossible. Green et al suggest a new understanding of the concept of leisure using a gender conscious model of interconnectivity between leisure, housework and paid employment, and attention to factors such as time, gender, space and economic dependency which together restrict leisure opportunities for women.

Time for Leisure – Expatriate Women and 'free time'

The time that women spend on leisure has not been studied as much as paid employment and housework (Shelton, 1992) and there is limited analysis of how women define leisure. Green et al confirm that women have less time available for leisure than men (Deem, 1986a; Wimbush, 1986; and Wearing and Wearing, 1988, in Green et al, 1990). It is correspondingly hard for women to define which activities count as leisure – some activities count as leisure sometimes, and other times as work.

In this respect, expatriate women mirror the patterns of other Western women in relation to leisure. However, they have the added dimension of being immersed in leisure and the 'housewife' role in an involuntary capacity (similar to the unemployed), as the option of working is removed from their discretion. It is this feature of expatriate women's leisure, the availability of time, which is similar to unemployment, as financial and other

constraints preclude calling this 'free time' leisure. There is such a thing as too much free time. It is this aspect of expatriate women's free time that finds them labelled as idle and indulgent in much the same way as the involuntarily unemployed are labelled as lazy. Deem sees women's leisure, paid work and household labour as interconnected with power relations and points out "having free time and being able to use it as you wish are not the same" (Deem, 1986:90). The notion of time and availability are tied up with the concept of motherhood in Western society and Green et al highlight the notion of 'motherhood as sacrifice', and the view that women must be available to the family at all times. This has direct consequences for women "and severely restricts the time available to her for leisure" (Green et al, 1990:119). Restricted (or expanded) time for leisure means women characterise and contextualise their leisure in ways that are not easily defined by traditional views of how leisure time is interpreted.

Space for leisure – women in public and private places

Women lack 'space' for leisure, and this is an invisible component of their oppression. This is partly due to women's enforced focus on the family, often to the exclusion of their own leisure time and energy. In examining the differences between men and women's leisure, Shelton (1992) finds some specific leisure activities are not equally gender balanced. Men, for example, spend more time watching television, listening to the radio and engaged in sports activities than women, but women spend more time attending movies or concerts and socialising outside the home. Men spend more time than women engaged in outdoor activities like camping and fishing as women are taught from an early age to fear being alone and to avoid such activities, while men are encouraged to

seek out and enjoy activities that test their physical skill and stamina. This relates to issues of space, safety, and security, and being alone and outdoors is not yet as safe for women as it is for men.

Public leisure space, both indoors and outdoors, is less accessible for women due to such constraints as spousal disapproval, transport, finances and the presence of men in places not constructed as suitable for women (Deem, 1986).[3] Stanley (1980, in Deem, 1986) notes the 'policing' of women's leisure activities, as men socially sanction the behaviour and presence of women in particular places, especially groups of women in public spaces such as bars. How women interpret and construct their identities in relation to leisure pursuits is also examined within the social context, which does not allow women 'space', in either a physical or metaphorical sense for leisure, either alone, or with other women.

Lack of space limits women's leisure within the home, as even in larger homes typical of expatriate compounds, women may not have a space they can call theirs; the kitchen or bedroom is not exclusively hers, nor is the kitchen particularly conducive to leisure. Space for technology for leisure in the home such as the location of television, books, stereo, and sewing machine is also problematic, as women must negotiate use of these items with other family members. For women, using the home as a leisure centre has severe disadvantages relating to "their dual work/leisure use, the presence of other household members, and lack of privacy" (Deem, 1986:96).

Like Anderson (1981), Green et al (1990) find that opportunities

and room for women's leisure via volunteering in many organisations is about women meeting other women in a safe and supportive environment. She argues "their ostensible function is often less important than the opportunities for sociability and the support and companionship of other women, which they offer in a forum that is socially approved and a legitimate place for women to be" (Green et al, 1990:154). The research on voluntary activities of expatriate women in Rarotonga supports this as they involve places where women gather to socialise as well as to help people in need.

Socio-economic status and economic dependence

Important to women's leisure, in conjunction with space and time factors, are class and socio-economic factors, which affect types of leisure activities, frequency, and participation in leisure pursuits by women. Working class women are more likely to be dependent on men than middle class women (Griffin, 1981, in Deem, 1986). Expatriate women, by virtue of their husbands' higher than normal salaries and occupations in higher status jobs, would clearly be classified as middle or upper-middle class. Access to financial resources is a deciding factor in women's leisure activities (Pahl, 1982, in Deem, 1986), as money spent on leisure, for economically dependent women, is problematic; this money may be seen as being spent selfishly. Women who are economically dependent are more likely to pursue home-based leisure activities as these are seen as costing less, and may have benefit for the family such as baking, cooking, and needlework.[4] Economic restrictions limit women's participation in leisure activities, both because they cannot afford to do so, and because limited access to economic resources denies women the power to chose their leisure activities.

Gender and leisure

Gender is the factor most closely associated with two aspects of leisure; marital status, which decreases real leisure time for women, and participation in active or passive leisure pursuits (Shelton, 1992). Women spend more time on some active leisure activities, such as walking, than men, although men spend more time on sports (both participating and watching). Women also spend more time on activities that benefit others; "thus, although gender does not appear to be significantly associated with *total* leisure time, it is associated with the *type* of leisure" (Shelton, 1992:138, emphasis mine). Types of leisure activity are closely related to gender and Shelton, Nock and Kingston (1989) note women spent leisure time on activities that benefit others within the household, "particularly among women who are not employed, some leisure activity is closely related to household labour" (Shelton, 1992:140).[5]

What women do for leisure and who they may be 'allowed' to engage in leisure activities with is also a factor, as women find participation in mixed gender activities can cause conflict with their spouses or partners. Women pursue leisure pursuits primarily with other women, and Green at al confirm the results of this thesis, finding that "it is common for men and women to engage in independent leisure outside the home with members of the same sex" (Green et al, 1990:121).

Gender concerns are a factor which benefits men's leisure, as women in stable heterosexual relationships, such as marriage, perform work to manufacture and construct space and time for male leisure. These "back-up services" (Finch, 1983:94 in

Dempsey, 1991:95) include domestic work, such as cleaning sports uniforms, and social activities when club or organisational protocol demands the spouses attend functions. Women may be asked to spend time with their husbands' friends' wives, regardless of their feelings for either the activity or the individuals. Even if the women do not feel exploited, Dempsey argues they are, whether or not they perceive it.[6] Dempsey concedes that participation in their husbands' leisure does offer some rewards for women, such as contact with other women and increased status reflected from their husbands, but concludes by observing that wives' incorporation in their husbands' leisure as unpaid workers restricts the women's own leisure activities. Dempsey reinforces Green et al in understanding leisure as a political issue, and this incorporation of women into their husbands' leisure is significant, in that it "often occurs at the cost of the leisure activities of the wives themselves" (Dempsey, 1991:88). Women's support of men's leisure is both physical and emotional, while men do not reciprocate for women's leisure activities.

In these ways, leisure for women is influenced by time, space, gender, and economic status, and is inextricably linked with ways in which women are oppressed. The women in Rarotonga assess their own leisure activities and detail the ways in which they feel their leisure pursuits are expanded or restricted by expatriation.

EXPATRIATE WOMEN'S LEISURE AND VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES IN RAROTONGA

This research replicates many of the key themes detailed above. Gender factors, such as marriage, reflect the sexual division of labour and demonstrate how women's leisure is constructed along gender lines, limited both the time and the type of leisure activity available to them. Time, the abundance or lack of it for leisure, was factor for the expatriate women, and the differences between women who had children, and those who did not, were striking. Space and location were also a central factor, although contrary to much of the literature, space and location were perceived as beneficial for the women in Rarotonga, who felt more free to use space in the semi-rural setting than they did in the urban environments they had left. Economic concerns were central in relation to career (see Chapter 5) and leisure, as expatriate women were found to have (albeit restricted) access to economic resources, due to their socio-economic status being principally middle to upper-middle class. The expatriate women's concerns were with spending money on leisure activities for themselves, rather than on something that may benefit the entire family. Most mentioned the scarcity of supplies as a deterrent to many leisure activities, such as needlework, or gourmet cookery. The data from Rarotonga reflects the four themes that have been detailed above, and the race, class and socio-economic distinctions between participants.

What do they do all day?

The patterns of women's leisure in Rarotonga tended to mimic the leisure patterns of Western women with children from other research (such as Deem, 1986 and Green et al, 1990). However,

for those women who had been career focussed before coming to Rarotonga, the enforced leisure of Rarotonga was a difficult adjustment. For the Indonesian women in New Zealand, their enforced leisure was compounded by the difficulties they faced in finding employment. For the New Zealand and Australian women in Rarotonga it was found, once career was taken away from them, other activities filled the void left. Some found they were bored or restless until they could find meaningful activity to replace work.

Leisure activities, for the women in Rarotonga varied; some participants spent a large proportion of their leisure time alone, others spent their leisure with large groups of people. What was interesting is that most participants found their leisure opportunities expanded in Rarotonga (particularity in relation to outdoors pursuits and sports) but found indoor and cultural activities were more restricted than at home.[7] The women reported missing movies, theatre, art galleries, museums, shopping malls (or shops being open on Sundays), playgrounds for the children, quality television and dramas, and cafés and restaurants. However, they had adapted successfully to the changes in their leisure pursuits, taking up new activities in Rarotonga such as swimming, golf, or mahjong.

Television was not available during the day in Rarotonga, so it was not a priority as a form of entertainment. Movies from New Zealand and videos were popular but finding time at home to watch a video for an uninterrupted two hours meant children had to be in bed. Some women used their enforced leisure to learn new hobbies and skills. Although Rarotonga is not well provided with vocational training at tertiary level, there were word-

processing, language, and cookery courses at basic levels in which the women participated.

Space for Leisure

Overall, the women reported favourable conditions for leisure, particularly in terms of space, conditions, and proximity to beaches. They mentioned being able to pursue recreation outside as good for themselves and for their children. For women such as Linda and Catherine, whose leisure was almost entirely outdoors-based, such as walking, golf, and swimming, Rarotonga was an excellent environment for these activities. Within the home, leisure pursuits included learning the local Cook Islands crafts, such as making floral *ei katu,*[8] weaving with coconut fronds, and learning *tivaevae* (a form of embroidery). These skills were applied for others, such as making wall hangings as gifts for others, or making *ei katu* for incoming visitors to wear when they arrived in Rarotonga.

Voluntary work is traditionally an activity associated with women (Henderson et al, 1989:105), as, "denied official employment, women throw their energies into supporting social change" (Henderson et al, 1989:106). Women have conventionally been the backbone of community work, engaging in voluntary activity connected with the family, school committees, youth, church, and charity work. Women volunteer for many reasons - they prefer to help in groups, to be with others, because they care and want to help, and because voluntary work helps to maintain personal growth.[9] Voluntarism is difficult to categorise as work or leisure, and it varies according to the individual. For women who volunteer, it brings them out of the private sphere and gives them the opportunity to participate in public life. Voluntary work can

partially be classified as leisure in that it brings pleasure to the volunteer, but counts as a service to others and the community. Voluntary work is an integral part of the image of expatriate women, especially of the spouses of senior officials such as diplomats and executives, for whom voluntary and charity work is seen as a natural extension of their husband's role. Expatriate women, who are not working or 'contributing' to society, are often viewed as being selfish and idle, and voluntary work is seen as some form of societal contribution.

Most of the women interviewed had volunteered at some activity at some time. Jennifer had taught part-time, Kim had tutored Brownies and Guides, Catherine took children's toys up to the maternity ward, Dawn did many volunteer activities, such as visiting the sick in hospital, and Linda fund-raised for sports committees. Jillian had volunteered at the Library[10] and Paula did treasury work for her Church. Dawn was especially busy, listing five organisations to which she gave her time and energy. One was Rotary-Annes, a sister organisation to Rotary, which assists with their fundraising activities. Although it was not segregated, Hospital Comforts (a charity which takes supplies, baking and flowers to the sick in hospital) was reported by Dawn and Catherine to comprise entirely of women. They were both active in visiting and baking, as well as fundraising for new equipment. Kim was involved with the Esther Honey Foundation (a branch of the SPCA), sitting on fundraising stalls and other work, and had made friends through the organisation.

Much of the voluntary work is, as Anderson (1981) would agree, less about the actual activity, and more about meeting people and socialising with women in common circumstances. The women

generally reporting hearing about local organisations from friends, and the international organisations they knew about, were found in the phone book. They enjoyed the voluntary activities they engaged in, seeing them as helping and interesting, rather than work or a chore. Because these activities could be discontinued at any time, the women were also free to go on holidays and interrupt their commitments.[11]

Time for leisure

The expatriate women in Rarotonga reflected Western women's patterns in relation to time: those with young children found leisure activities that could be fitted around children's needs, and could be easily interrupted. For those women without children, the key was finding meaningful leisure and voluntary activities to substitute for career. For women with children, such as Linda, this meant she had to take leisure opportunities within the home when she could and read a lot while the children played or slept:

I guess reading is the only hobby I have here, lots and lots of reading. If I'd been at home in this same position with the kids and financially okay, which is something I've never done, had I been at home I'd probably be doing a pottery course or something, crafty things interest me, I would be doing something. I do read, I read an awful lot. With kids it's harder to have hobbies, you don't get time to yourself, an uninterrupted period. I'm never alone, the only time I get away from both of them is when I go to the gym, and they are here when I get back, even if they are asleep. So, never alone, not really, you never get any time to do your own thing. I don't know what I would do with myself!

Linda, 32 (Rarotonga)

Unusually, Linda hired a nanny for two hours every weekday between 11 – 1pm specifically so that she could attend an aerobics

class. This period was also used to do shopping or go to the bank so was not completely leisure-oriented, but, like Green et al (1990), is incorporated into a seamless blend of work, domestic concerns and leisure.

Being childfree meant that Kim, a young expatriate woman with a part-time job, had been able to take up some solitary outdoor pursuits, such as walking and swimming. She wanted to do more sports activities with friends but many had children and could not commit the time.

Economic resources and women's leisure choices

The expatriate women chose to engage in leisure activities that cost little to pursue, such as reading, craft, walking and swimming. This was in part because the women felt money should be used for the good of the family, and should not be spent on themselves. Some felt that economic resources for family leisure activities, such as sailing lessons or dining out took priority over the cost of their individual leisure.

Creating things such as crafts, knitting or sewing was popular, but as Jennifer, a mother of four, pointed out, supplies for tapestry or cross-stitch were not available locally and had to be mailed from overseas or obtained when the women visited home. This meant that hobbies or crafts, requiring specialised supplies were difficult to pursue in Rarotonga. Catherine engaged in many local craft activities, particularly with Cook Island women and expatriates who had been in Rarotonga for many years.

Dawn especially spent a large proportion of her leisure time entertaining. These were often guests of her husband, in

Rarotonga on business. She spent a lot of time preparing meals and providing clean accommodation for official guests. She reported that many of her nights out were spent at restaurants with her husband entertaining his colleagues. This work for her husband's job and leisure was also, as Dempsey (1991) would characterise it, an exploitative relationship, as Dawn's unpaid labour contributes to her husband's work and status. These "back up services" are a reflection of the sexual division of labour, reinforcing the gender division of labour within marriage. Dawn was also especially active in voluntary work.

Gender, motherhood, childcare, and leisure

For the women without children, leisure pursuits were either spent alone while a partner was at work during the day, or were engaged in with other women without children (or whose children were at school). For those with children, planning activities with other women in the same situation was common; arranging to meet at a hotel with a pool, attending play group, or simply visiting each other for coffee. The women with younger children were less able to pursue leisure activities without them during the day, unless they could arrange and pay for childcare. Much activity available for women with children during the day revolved, by necessity, around the children's play or sleeping habits, although this time was typically spent catching up with household work, rather than leisure, which was considered secondary to domestic chores.

Gender factors contribute to the type of leisure that women with children can engage in, and usually revolve around domestic-based activities, which can be fitted around the eating, sleeping, and play routines of children. Marriage is also a factor in leisure,

as all the expatriate women are married. Their leisure during the day involved being with other women, or alone with children. During the evenings, leisure tended to be based around dinner parties attended with their husband.

Conclusion

In speaking of their leisure activities in Rarotonga, the consensus was that leisure pursuit opportunities such outdoor activities had been expanded in comparison to home, but restricted in other ways. Leisure was still a precious commodity for those with young children, while for those without the constraints of childcare, it was the pressure to find meaning in what they did that was difficult. Voluntary activity was helpful for many of the women in Rarotonga, who found having a social capacity rather than purely a domestic role was welcome.

This research concludes that leisure is a difficult concept to determine, and the women themselves found it difficult to define which activities were leisure and which were work, as this can shift depending on its context. Overall the leisure activities of expatriate women vary considerably and depend too on age, marital status, and home interests as well as gender, space, time and economic factors. While the participants engage in leisure in and around the home, they also, as middle class white women, have access to private transport for activities. This research details many leisure activities not unique to Rarotonga, however the issues and problems leisure raises for expatriate women are distinct from other concerns about work and childcare. The research also demonstrates the importance of leisure, as an indicator of the way expatriate women construct and determine their lives around family and domestic and childcare

responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

This thesis began with questions about expatriate women's choices and the consequences and implications of the decision to live offshore for a period of time. The research has uncovered and documented the lives and socio-economic positions of sixteen women who have chosen to live away from established friends and kin networks during a time when their career may be suspended, deferred or relinquished altogether in order to raise children and/or prioritise their husband's career advancement. Current feminist research on leisure, work and career and cross-cultural adaptation has been evidenced by this thesis, as the literature review demonstrates. The historical material on colonial and pioneer women in the South Pacific has provided a backdrop against which contemporary expatriate women have been examined. What conclusions can be drawn from this research for the position of expatriate women?

The four aims of the thesis were, firstly, to investigate expatriate women and to disseminate that understanding in a way that accurately reflects their experiences. These women's lives have been analysed with an understanding of the social position of expatriate women, and as a way of understanding their domestic and social roles.

The second aim was to understand career interruption choices and cross-cultural transition mechanisms of contemporary

expatriate women. This research has found that women make choices to give up or defer their career in order to ensure the well-being and economic security of their family. They understand their decision based on sound economic reasoning and within a system that privileges male employees and provides them with the best and most rewarding work. The mechanisms expatriate women utilise to cope with cross-cultural transition have been detailed. A range of social, as well as voluntary groups allow women a venue to gather for social support.

The third aim was to examine the historical context of expatriate women in colonial and settler societies. The research has detailed historical material which records the domestic and social lives of expatriate women, who lived in extremes of climate and social change. The work they did is made visible by examining the social relations that existed at the time, and the roles expatriate women were expected to conform to. This historical material allows a glimpse of the private realm and expatriate women's lives and enables social scientists to shape a history that allows a positive interpretation of expatriate women's contribution to the society within which they existed.

The fourth and final aim was to conduct research within a feminist methodological framework. The aim was also to consider and take into account the biases and power relations involved in any investigation of human social interaction. The study has attempted to do this by seeing the semi-structured in-depth interview as a two-way mechanism, involving a reciprocal relationship. The interviews allowed the participants to fully express their thoughts and experiences without a rigid format to restrict their individual responses.

The research has attempted to understand, from their own perspective, the actual and material conditions of expatriate women who live in a foreign country as the economic dependent of a male spouse. It has tried to disseminate this analysis within a framework that recognises these experiences within the social forces that shape them.

Chapter 1 – The literature review

This examines the literature surrounding expatriate workers and spouses, historical literature, and works that examine the position of working women in capitalist society. The review located this research within a broad field of work such a Knapman (1986) and Black and Gregersen (1989), which recognised that sociological work on expatriate women has not been conducted using in-depth interviewing and a feminist understanding of their role within both settler and non-settler societies. This thesis has attempted to provide an analysis of expatriate women's experiences within this field.

Chapter 2 – White Women in the Pacific

This has explored expatriate lives in colonial times, and compared these to expatriate life in the Cook Islands today. It concluded with an understanding that men often restricted the social role of white women in colonial countries, and this has encouraged a perception of white women as racist, particularly in relation to indigenous people in settler societies. Historical accounts reveal the unrecognised contribution of white expatriate women to colonial society through unpaid and domestic labour, as well as paid labour and voluntary work. Their contribution is markedly more significant than history has recorded. This chapter found

that a wider interpretation of 'work' allows an understanding of how expatriate women contribute to society.

Chapter 3 - Feminist Methodology and the Method of this Research

This chapter explained how feminist views on both qualitative and quantitative methods of social research have influenced this research. While feminism does not advocate a single method of data collection for women, it does question the traditional methods of social research. It has exposed the biases inherent in any researcher/researchee relationship. This skepticism of conventional research methods has lead this research in a direction that has endeavoured to empower the research participants.

Chapter 4 – Cross-cultural Adaptation in Expatriate Women

This chapter explained cross-cultural adaptation issues involved in women's unique experiences of adjustment to a foreign environment. This aspect of research into expatriation, privileging women's viewpoints, is not a common one. The research concluded that women who adjusted well to cross-cultural changes had three things to assist them – previous expatriate experience, strong social support networks, and a positive attitude to both the role change and the country of residence. The central role domestic social networks play in easing cross-cultural transition for women were highlighted in this chapter. This aspect of the research concluded that expatriate women experience four distinct stages in the process of cross-cultural adaptation, and that these stages are separate and dissimilar from the cross-cultural adaptation processes that

working expatriate men experience.

Chapter 5 –Work and Career Issues for Expatriate Women

This chapter highlighted the particularly limited career opportunities available to expatriate women, which led them to identify alternatives to full-time work. Although this trend is changing, and working conditions for women are slowly improving, the participants in this research were married to men whose career, status and earning power were generally above their own. This chapter concluded by emphasising the unique position expatriate women hold as economic dependents of men in foreign locations. It highlights the impact not working has on women who have previously enjoyed career or satisfying work relationships and notes the difficulty expatriate women have finding meaningful replacements for work. It concluded with an understanding of the process and consequences of relinquishing employment opportunities that expatriate women experience, linking these with the wider social context of difficult and unequal working conditions for women.

Chapter 6 – Gender, Time, Space, and Economic Dependence in Expatriate Women's Leisure

This chapter explored a neglected area of study in relation to expatriate women; that of the role of leisure and voluntary work in women's lives. Although their engagement in leisure is often much maligned, expatriate women who have time for leisure find that many of these activities are engaged in, by necessity, within the home. The research found that factors such as gender, time, space, and socio-economic status have a restricting effect on the leisure activities of expatriate women. While others, such as Deem (1986) and Shelton (1992) have found that space is a factor

which limits women's leisure, this research revealed expatriate women in Rarotonga found space, and the relative safety of outdoor activity, was a positive factor in their leisure activities, both for themselves and for their children. Leisure is constantly in conflict for women who must balance domestic and maternal responsibilities with the perceived 'right' to leisure. This research confirms that expatriate women engage in similar leisure and voluntary activities to other Western women, and finds the same factors restrict and inhibit their leisure activity choices.

The key findings of this research show that:

- Expatriate women in historical contexts lived within a set of social relations that did not recognise the work that they did as 'real' and did not acknowledge the contribution that expatriate women made to the society in which they existed.

- Contemporary expatriate women experience cross-cultural transition and adaptation in a way that differs from the way working expatriate men do, and their experiences are located within their identity as the dependent spouse of working expatriate men. This unique economic position is reflected in their formation of domestic social groups and networks which function as social support in the absence of natural social support networks such as work or school.

- Expatriate women make sound economic choices about their career interruption, based on the benefits available to their spouse, and the limited availability of comparable jobs for women. These career interruption choices are seen as valid alternatives to full-time work and reflect the gender

imbalances in work organisations and limited opportunities for women to gain employment overseas. Expatriate women must also contend with the laws of the country they are resident in which may not allow them the automatic ability to work. The expatriate women in New Zealand highlight problems with the recognition of their overseas qualifications and the difficulty finding work when they are identified as 'other'.

- Expatriate women engage in leisure and voluntary work as a way to participate in the public sphere, and as a means to form social support networks with other women. These leisure and voluntary activities, however, are circumscribed by the same factors which limit and restrict women's leisure in other Western countries. These include gender, time, space and socio-economic status. The research concluded that space in Rarotonga greatly contributed to a positive transition and leisure experience for expatriate women and their children. It also found that economically dependent women, such as expatriate spouses, spent less time on individual leisure, as they felt uncomfortable with spending money on their own leisure pursuits.

This thesis has revealed aspects of contemporary expatriate women's lives which are changing and interesting. In also examining historical expatriate women, this study allows a comparison of the domestic and social lives of expatriate women in various South Pacific locations. It has attempted to contextualise the experiences of expatriate women who exist within a set of social relations that bind them to a particular place and time, and to understand the choices they make in terms

of their career and family responsibilities.

Further Research

This research has enhanced the possibility of further research on the cross-cultural adjustment and practices of expatriate women. Examination of expatriate women can be incorporated with a sociological understanding of the wider context within which women are located.

A longitudinal study over a period of several years is feasible, conducting interviews with potential and contemplating expatriates before, during and after their postings, to record experiences as they happen, rather than retrospectively. This approach, of interviewing expatriate women as they experience the difference stages of cross-cultural adaptation and change, would be valuable; it is often difficult to recall emotion and events retrospectively, as this research has done. In order to examine the expatriate experiences of women more intimately, it would be useful to follow them over a period of several years, interviewing them before, during, and after a posting. An interesting area of further study would be to conduct more research with a feminist perspective on women in settler societies both historical and contemporary, and compare differences between them. A study of a comparable type could interview both the expatriate worker and his partner to determine differences in the perception of the expatriate experience between genders. Historical research of this type could use secondary data collected from diaries and records available to piece together the lives of expatriate women in Africa, Asia and India.

APPENDICES

A-H

Cultural Adaptation and Career Interruption in Expatriate Women in the South Pacific: A Case Study

Appendix A – Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1 GENERAL OR INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1) How long have you been in Rarotonga?
2) What had you heard about Rarotonga before you came here?
3) What expectations did you have of the Cook Islands?
4) Are you working here in Rarotonga?
5) How did you feel about coming to the Cook Islands?
6) Where were you living previously?
7) What factors influenced your decision to come here?
8) How are you finding life in the Cook Islands?
9) What are the advantages and disadvantages of living here?
10) What similarities/differences did you expect coming here?
11) What does your partner do here? (if they have a partner)
12) What did your partner do previously?
13) Are you planning to return to New Zealand?
14) Where are you going after you finish here?
15) Where do you want to go next?

2 CAREER

1) Do you currently have a job here?
2) How do you feel about working here?
3) Or - if not – how do you feel about not working?
4) Is this by choice?
5) Are you doing any study while you are here, and what type?
6) Do you think this will affect your career when you return?
7) What did you do before you came here?
8) How did you find leaving this job (if you had one) to come here?
9) Is this (previous job) something you would like to do long-term?
10) Would you like to have the opportunity to train for something else?
11) Do you think coming here has affected these plans?
12) How do you feel, in terms of your career, about coming here?
13) What do you think it will be like, career-wise for you on your return?
14) How do you feel about not having financial independence?
15) What sort of work are you doing here in Rarotonga?
16) What issues concern you about your career on your return?

17) What is important to you regarding your career?

3 RELATIONSHIPS

1) How long have you been in your current relationship?
2) Does your partner do the same thing here?
3) Was the decision to come here mutually agreed on?
4) How have you adjusted to living here? (such as working out transport arrangements, shopping, heat and humidity issues and health and education concerns)
5) If supported financially by her partner – Does this affect your relationship?
6) Is it an issue in the relationship?
7) Has living in a small community affected your relationship?
8) Has living in a foreign environment affected your relationship?
9) Do you think shifting here has affected your relationship in any way?

4 CHILDREN AND CHILDCARE

1) Do you have children? How many, how old?
2) Do you plan to have children in the short or long term?
3) If so - do you plan to have them here?
4) How do you feel about having children here?
5) How have you found medical facilities for your children here?
6) How have you found educational opportunities for your children here?

5 NETWORKING AND SOCIAL GROUPS

1) Do you participate in any organised groups?
2) How did you hear about the existence of these groups?
3) How often do you attend – regularly or only occasionally?
4) Do your children attend these groups (if she has children)?
5) Has this group helped you meet people? How?
6) Has this group helped you cope with the transition? How?
7) Have you made friends from this group?
8) Do you see these people outside the group situation?
9) What do you do? (if so)
10) What other groups of people do you socialise with?

6 LEISURE PURSUITS

1) How do you and your partner meet people?
2) What leisure activities do you participate in?
3) Have you met any people here that you have become friends with?
4) Are they also expatriates, or are they local people
5) Do you attend any religious services?
6) Do you play team sports?
7) Do you play other sports?
8) Who do you mainly associate with at leisure?
9) What hobbies do you have here?
10) Have you taken any classes or done any courses in Rarotonga?
11) Do you participate in these activities alone or with your partner?
12) What social activities do you do around the island?
13) Do you do any voluntary activities?
14) Did you plan any activities before you came?
15) Do you feel your leisure opportunities here are expanded or restricted compared to opportunities at home?
16) What leisure activities do you miss from home (if any)?
17) What leisure activities do you do here that you may not have done at home?
18) Why is this do you think?

7 ISOLATION AND LONELINESS/HOMESICKNESS

1) Have you ever experienced any feelings of loneliness?
2) Have you ever experienced any feelings of homesickness?
3) Have you ever experienced any feelings of isolation?
4) Have you ever experienced any feelings of boredom?
5) Have you ever experienced any feelings of unhappiness?
6) Have you ever experienced any feelings of frustration?
7) How do you feel about being away from home?
8) How do you feel about being away from family and friends?
9) How often have you had visitors from home here?
10) How often do you go back home for holidays?
11) How often do you contact by phone/letter/email, friends and family at home or other parts of the world?

Appendix B – Confidentiality Clause – Proof Reader

CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSE – PROOF READER

I....., consent to maintain confidentiality of all proof reading I complete for Venise Comfort, in the following way;

1. I will not discuss the content of the thesis with anyone except Venise Comfort

2. I will not disclose any details of the interview transcripts to anyone

3. I will not ask Venise Comfort who specific interviewees are

4. I will not copy papers given to me to proof read without the specific permission of the researcher

Signed

Dated

Researcher

Appendix C - Confidentiality Clause - Typist

CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSE - TYPIST

I....., consent to maintain confidentiality of all typing I complete for Venise Comfort, in the following way;

1. I will not discuss the content of the typing with anyone except Venise Comfort

2. I will not disclose any details of the interview transcripts to anyone

3. I will not ask Venise Comfort who specific interviewees are

4. I will not remove papers or disks from the typing location without the specific permission of the researcher

I can renegotiate this contract at any time.

Signed

Dated

Researcher

Appendix D – Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

EXPATRIATE AND MIGRANT WOMEN

I....., consent to participate in this research. I accept the assurances:

1. That at any time I may tell Venise Comfort, the researcher, that it is not convenient for me to see her and this will be respected.

2. That confidentiality will be kept throughout the research.

3. All names and characteristics that would lead to my identification will be changed.

4. I am free to withdraw from the research project at any time.

5. That at any time I can renegotiate this contract with Venise Comfort.

I agree to give Venise Comfort permission to include information gained during her research in any publication she may write. This will still ensure my absolute confidentiality.

Signed

Dated

Researcher

Appendix E – Information Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

EXPATRIATE WOMEN RESEARCH PROJECT

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

Society seems more mobile than ever before. Why is this? How does it affect us? What does it mean for women and society? I am interested in discovering the answers to these questions.

For this study, as part of my Masters thesis in sociology, I am interested in women's experiences of moving away from home. The goal of this study is to find out your individual experience of coming to be here. I am interested in how you feel about moving to another country, how you feel about being here (Rarotonga or New Zealand), and your 'personal story', and how you tell it. I am also interested in your plans for the future, and how your relationship has been affected by the shift away from home. I am also interested in finding out about your career, leisure pursuits, and children.

OBJECTIVE

This study focuses on unstructured in depth interviews. The information from these interviews is valuable to me for both its content and the way it is presented. The research will be conducted in the first half of 1998 and the data is to be presented as quoted extracts in my final thesis in 1999.

WHAT WILL YOU HAVE TO DO?

If you agree to participate in this project you will be asked to meet Venise Comfort for two or three interviews of about 45 minutes in length, at a time and place convenient to you. The interviews will normally be conducted in private. I would like to tape-record the interviews, as is my normal practice, but if you are uncomfortable with this, please do not hesitate to discuss it with me. No one, apart from me when I am transcribing the tapes, hears them, and they are destroyed at the end of the project when the thesis is accepted.

The interviewer will ask about you, your partner, and how you came to be here. How did you decide to shift here, what were your reasons, how did you think it would be here, and how you are adjusting to it. You are under no obligation to tell Venise anything you do not wish her to know, and all information is

completely confidential.

YOUR RIGHTS

If you take part in the study, you have the right to:

i. refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any time;

ii. ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation;

iii. provide information on the understanding that **is it completely confidential** to the researcher, that you will not be identified in any reports that are prepared from the study;

iv. determine the disposal of interview tapes, transcripts of interviews and personal documents made available to the researcher.

CONTACT DETAILS

The research is being conducted solely by Venise Comfort under the guidance of her supervisor, Dr. Ann Brooks, Senior Lecturer, Sociology Department, Massey University.

Venise Comfort
House 3, NZHC Compound
Nikao, Rarotonga
Telephone/fax 23-719
Email: pawpaw@oyster.net.ck

Appendix F – Transcript Cover Sheet

TRANSCRIPT COVER SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Participant
Interview
Date of interview

Dear

Please look over this transcript of your interview and make any amendments from your recollection of the interview. If I have misunderstood something, please clarify it for me.

If you are happy with this transcript, then please let me know and this copy is yours to keep. If you need any changes made, please mark them clearly on the sheet, and I will make any amendments, print it out and the amended copy will be yours to keep.

I will call you to schedule another appointment at a time convenient for you.

Thank you again for your help and continuing participation.

Venise Comfort

Appendix G – Participant Profiles

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

1 Paula – Rarotonga – 2 interviews

Paula is 28 year-old New Zealander with a baby under one (who was about five weeks old when they came to Rarotonga). She and her husband had been in the Cook Islands for about a year when interviewed. They are in Rarotonga on a three-year posting with the New Zealand government and Paula was training and working as a nurse before deciding to start a family.

2 Joanne – Rarotonga – 2 interviews

Joanne is a 30 year-old American who had previously been a teacher. Her and husband were in Rarotonga on a three-year contract, which they had cut short to return home early. When interviewed, Joanne was getting her family ready to leave the island after 18 months, and was organising to pack and sell their belongings. She had a young son of 18 months, who was born in Rarotonga, and her husband worked as a lawyer for a multinational company.

3 Vaine – Rarotonga – 2 interviews

Vaine is 35 year-old Cook Islander and was the only Cook Islander interviewed, her husband Piri and their two children, nine and ten, had returned to the Cook Islands after 10 years in New Zealand. She came back to establish the family on family land, and to educate her children in Cook Islands culture. Her husband and herself worked in administration jobs in offices in Rarotonga.

4 Kerry – Rarotonga – 2 interviews

Kerry is a 29 year-old mother of two young children, and was pregnant with her third child when interviewed. She is of Irish descent, and had lived for many years in Asia. She was married to a New Zealander who was a mechanic, and they had been in Rarotonga for two years when interviewed. They are in the Cook Islands on a semi-permanent basis, and can choose when to go back to New Zealand, or elsewhere.

5 Suzanne – Rarotonga – 2 interviews

Suzanne is a 33 year-old mother of two and is married to an engineer. They had just finished their two-year posting in Rarotonga when interviewed, and she was looking forward to moving back to Auckland and finding work as a retail assistant, as she had been doing before the posting.

6 Nancy – New Zealand – 1 interview

Nancy is a 34 year-old North American who had married a New Zealander working at the University in Palmerston North and they had two young children. They had lived previously in Canada and Britain, shifting to New Zealand about six years before being interviewed. She was working part-time as a childcare worker when interviewed.

7 Kate – New Zealand – 1 interview

Kate is a 32 year-old American and had married an American who was a university administrator in Palmerston North - they had two children and had been in New Zealand for three years when interviewed. However, they were looking forward to returning to the States soon, and expected to shift home shortly after the interview.

8 Sharon – New Zealand – 1 interview

Sharon is Scottish and a 37 year-old mother of young boys, and she had lived in Britain for most of her life. She was married to an American who was a lecturer in Palmerston North. They had just shifted to New Zealand five months before being interviewed and she had recently found a job as a financial controller.

9 Anita 27 – New Zealand – 1 interview

Anita is a 27 year-old Indonesian woman, of Muslim faith who had married a New Zealand diplomat. They had returned to New Zealand only two months before being interviewed. They had no children. Before coming to New Zealand, Anita had been a journalist, but was having difficulty finding work in the same field in Wellington.

10 Kamla – New Zealand – 1 interview

Kamla is a 43 year-old Indonesian woman who had married a New Zealand diplomat. The couple had two older children who were no longer living at home when interviewed. They had been back in Wellington for two years when interviewed, and expected the government to relocate them somewhere else in the next year. She had experience in promotion, advertising and tourism, but had not worked for many years when interviewed.

11 Jennifer – Rarotonga – 4 interviews

Jennifer is a 35 year-old Australian, with four children and a husband who works for the Australian government. They had been posted to Rarotonga for the past two years. The family was soon to return to Australia when Jennifer was interviewed, and she was looking forward to finding a house and getting the

children settled into school. Before she had the children, Jennifer had been a craftsperson and a childcare worker.

12 Linda – Rarotonga – 3 interviews

Linda is a 32 year-old New Zealander and mother of two children of two and four. They had been in Rarotonga for three years, and were soon to relocate to Noumea for their next posting when interviewed, where her husband was to work for the government. Before having the children, Linda had held many jobs, including as a flight attendant and a bar worker. She planned to spend her time developing her creative writing and computer skills when they left Rarotonga.

13 Discontinued

14 Kim – Rarotonga – 3 interviews

Kim is a 26 year-old New Zealander recently married, and had been in Rarotonga for 18 months when interviewed. They couple currently have no children, but plan to start a family once they leave Rarotonga. They aim to stay another two or three years, and then relocate to either Australia or New Zealand. Currently, Kim is working in retail as a part-time manager, which was what she had trained to do in New Zealand.

15 Jillian – Rarotonga – 3 interviews

Jillian is a 30-year old New Zealander, and has a two year-old daughter. Her husband is from North America, and the couple had previously lived there and in New Zealand. They had been in Rarotonga about a year when interviewed, and plan to stay for another two years. She was working part-time in an office in Rarotonga, and her previous jobs had included hairdresser, and

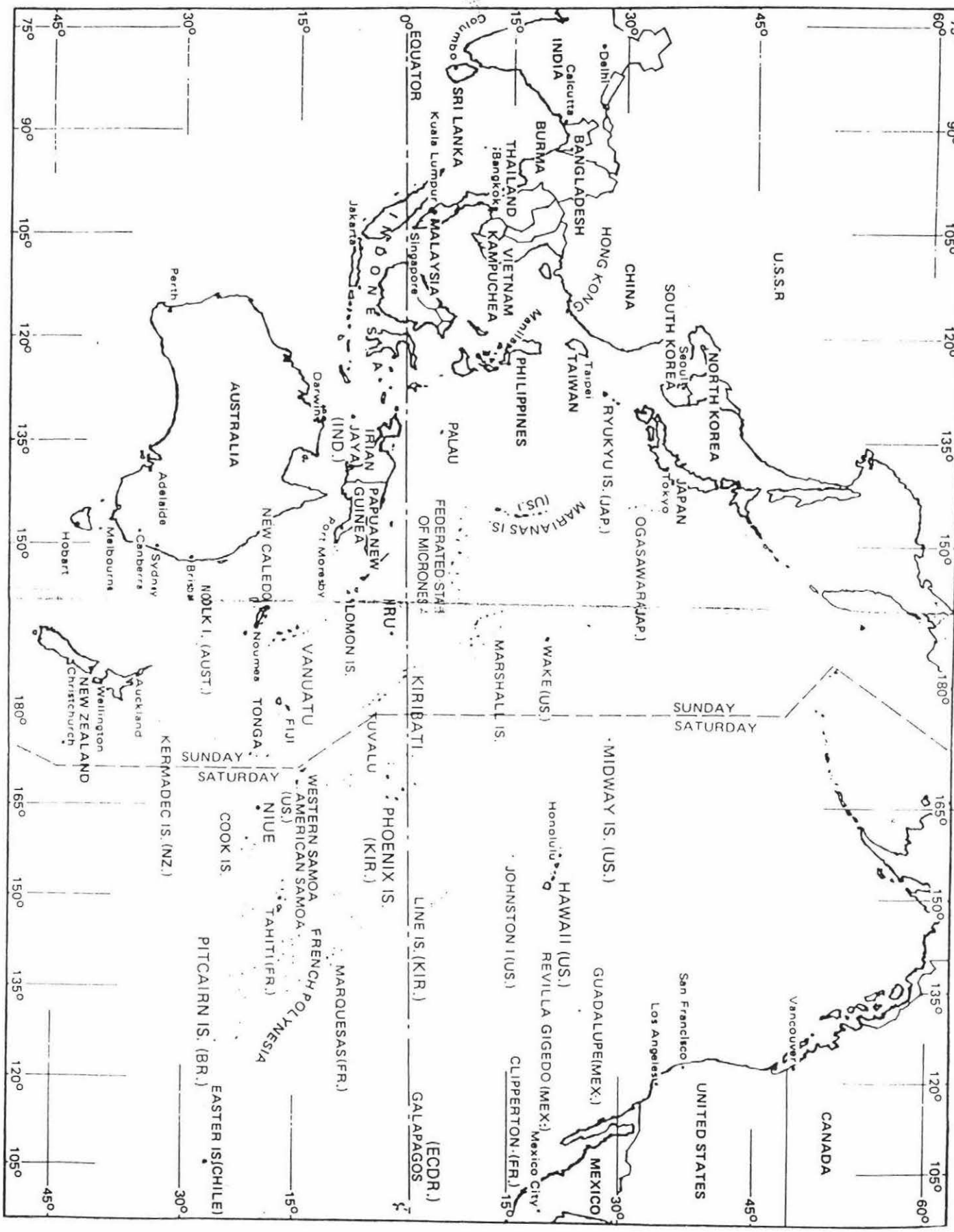
office administrator.

16 Dawn – Rarotonga – 3 interviews

Dawn is a 55 year-old New Zealander, and her and her husband are in Rarotonga on a fixed term contract. They have two children over 30, who live in the South Island, and her husband is working for a multinational company. Dawn in not working in Rarotonga, but had previously been working in a small office. They had been in Rarotonga for the past two years when interviewed, and planned to settle back in New Zealand and retire.

17 Catherine – Rarotonga – 3 interviews

Catherine is a 55 year-old New Zealander, but was born in England. Her and her husband were only in Rarotonga for nine months, and she was interviewed after they had been here for two. They have four children, none of whom are with them in Rarotonga. Catherine had previously lived in Vanuatu for several years, and had been posted to the Cook Islands for two years in 1989-1991. Before this, Catherine had been self-employed in the retail industry, and her husband had worked for a large multinational company. They plan to return to New Zealand and retire.



MAP OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC SHOWING THE LOCATION OF BOTH NEW ZEALAND AND THE COOK ISLANDS GROUP.

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1] The research for this thesis began in early 1997. I had left my job in Wellington and shifted to the Cook Islands to accompany my partner on a three-year posting with the New Zealand Government. I had chosen economic dependence and the role of 'expatriate wife', although I had little idea of what was involved. New to the expatriate lifestyle and curious about the women who chose it, I found myself in a role that I had not encountered before; that of the role of housewife and non-working woman, in an environment where this was perfectly acceptable. On arrival in Rarotonga, I found I there were many white women living in the Cook Islands - there seemed to be many more than I had expected. I began to think about the women I knew back in New Zealand my age; single, feminist, working full-time, in relationships, flatting and supporting themselves. I could see no women like that in Rarotonga. This thesis is the result of this initial curiosity about the lives and circumstances of women in a unique and dependent situation.

[2] See *Appendix G* for a full profile of each participant, with names and some detail altered to preserve confidentiality.

[3] An expatriate is a person who lives overseas for a set period of time for a specific task, and is referred to as either an expatriate, or a sojourner. Employment is the usual reason for expatriation, as well as church and missionary work, voluntary work and study.

[4] Some of the women interviewed in Rarotonga did work, but this was part-time work as an adjunct to their primary responsibility of childcare. They did not work in the field in which they had been trained, and were under-employed in terms of their skill level.

[5] See the works cited within Chapter 2, and the bibliography at the end of the thesis which details the works loaned by the Crocombes.

[6] While fourteen of the participants in this research identify as white, two where also from Indonesian, and can be characterised

as Asian.

[7] This is from Price, 1939:226, *White Settlers in the Tropics* in O'Brian and Tiffany 1984:194.

CHAPTER 1 – LITERATURE REVIEW

[1] Between $50,000 and $150,000 US per employee who returns early.

[2] Harvey, 1985:85. Examples of studies which demonstrate that men are chosen more frequently that women are in Harvey – Hays, 1974, Sieveking, Anchor and Manston, 1981 and Lubin, 1983.

[3] Taylor and Napier, 1986:79.

[4] See chapter 5 for reactions to this transition for the participants interviewed in this research.

[5] See Tung 1984, Naumamn, 1992, cited in Birdseye and Hill, 1995:791.

[6] Shumaker and Brownell, 1984:22, cited in De Cieri et al, 1991:386.

[7] John Young's study of frontier society in the 1860's and early 1870's "is the only work which approaches examination of some European women in any detail" (Knapman, 1986:4). However, his major claim for the inclusion of European women is to describe their 'ruin' of Empire, and race relations between Europeans and Fijians at the time, and to detail the antagonism the presence of white women is said to encourage between indigenous people and Europeans.

[8] This is from Price, 1939:226, *White Settlers in the Tropics* in O'Brian and Tiffany 1984:194.

[9] Cook and Fonow, 1985 in Grant and Ward, 1987:857.

[10] From Wolfe, 1996:76.

CHAPTER 2 – WHITE WOMEN IN THE PACIFIC

[1] From Paul Theroux's travel book on the Pacific *The Happy Isles of Oceania*, Ballantyne Books, New York, 1992

[2] Grimshaw's travels to Fiji are noted in Knapman pp 1986:99, 119, and 122.

[3] This quote is from Grimshaw *From Fiji* pp 150-3, 158, 164 from

Knapman (1986).

[4] According to the dictionary, a Poo-Bah is a "pompous self-important official holding several offices at once and fulfilling none of them" from the Gilbert and Sullivan opera *The Mikado*.

[5] Mrs. Stevenson's journal is prefaced with the note that she intended her diary to act as a supplement to her husband's writing, in the instances where he may not have captured all the details.

[6] These days it is twice a month, but the effect is similar, as stock for the supermarket and mail are eagerly awaited.

[7] Grimshaw advocated that white islanders adapt to native conditions, without letting their 'superior standards' slip of course.

[8] This quote is from Dickson, interviewed in the *Fiji Times*, 15 July, 1978.

[9] From Knapman, a quote from the Stinson family, who had nine children in Gau in the 1920s. The son describes his mother's chores as constant.

[10] To a certain extent, this tradition remains in expatriate societies when wage labour is cheaper than in the home country, households will employ staff to do cooking and cleaning duties that would normally be performed at home by the female partner.

[11] One of the participants in this research, Dawn, demonstrates how this aspect of domestic labour has not changed much since colonial times.

[12] While air travel has made the journey to Rarotonga less lengthy, other issues concern expatriate women today, such as the costs involved.

[13] Transportation within the host country is also an issue for the women in my study, as lack of transport increases the feeling of both social and physical isolation.

[14] Isolation in the 1800s must have been similar to isolation in the 1990s, but being far away from family and friends has been helped by modern communication methods such as facsimile and email.

[15] See Chapter 4 in Knapman for fuller details of this aspect of colonial life.

[16] As noted by Judy Davis in Bulbeck, 1992:3.

[17] While we cannot yet celebrate women's equality, we can

certainly argue that the women who chose to come to Rarotonga, jointly and co-operatively decided this with their partner.

[18] Bulbeck explores this dependent state in relation to colonial women, and I will examine dependency in terms of feminism and gender relations further on, within the analysis of expatriate women in Rarotonga.

[19] Bulbeck's colonial women vividly describe their experiences in the same way that my research does, and it is interesting to compare the conditions of 40-70 years ago to now.

[20] I am indebted to Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe and Professor Ron Crocombe for the loan of the rare and out of print books on Cook Islands and Pacific history. These books are not available in the libraries in Rarotonga:

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CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

[1] Bowles and Klein, 1983:122.

[2] Harding, 1987:1.

[3] Ibid.

[4] This point is from Harding, 1987:7.

[5] Many of which were felt acutely during the study, by the researcher.

[6] In order for me as a perceived white woman (who is also half-Chinese) to recognise the issues confronting black women, gender is not all I need in common, ethnicity and race are also important. This is why I chose not to study Pacific Islanders while I was in the Cook Islands – I doubted my ability to 'see' their cultural issues and perspectives, coming from a different cultural background.

[7] Another power issue is men interviewing women, although this is not the focus of this research it is worth mentioning.

[8] Oakley (1981, in Reinharz, 1992:27).

[9] Reinharz, 1992:25.

[10] From the Latin *ex – patria* native land.

[11] I certainly experienced strong gender identification due to our perceived 'sameness'; that we are (mostly) white New Zealanders or Australians, and female. Certainly, because I do not have children, this may have curbed some talk of childbirth, but did not stop many of the women talking of their children, miscarriages and birth experiences as well as asking questions - such as if my partner and I plan to have children

[12] This was true of my research, which was partially conducted without the use of a comprehensive interview schedule. When one was enlisted, it often proceeded in a different order to the questions, as one answer would lead to a myriad of other issues. I also (as per Reinharz, 1992:31) treated the interview as a two-way dialogue, an "exchange of information" rather than a monologue, or a straight question and answer session. Although it cannot be said, from listening to my own comments on the tapes, that I

always remembered to "listen, rather than fill silences" (Reinharz, 1992; 25).

[13] Some questions, it became obvious after a couple of interviews were clearly in the wrong place, or category, and it was only with practice and repetition that these were shifted.

[14] The Cook Islands, and in particular, Rarotonga, has only 8,000 – 10,000 people, and as a white woman living there, I am easily recognisable and identifiable, as would be the participants if their names and circumstances were not changed.

CHAPTER 4 – CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION

[1] As many as 15-40% of American expatriates and their families return early from an overseas assignment (Black and Gregerson, 1991a and 1991b).

[2] The failure of expatriates to adjust to a foreign culture has meant a huge financial cost for multinational companies to rectify; both in training replacements and returning failed expatriate families.

[3] Tung also found that family and spousal issues were factors in two out of three failed assignments (also of Harvey, 1985).

[4] This is also reinforced by this research.

[5] This was approximately half of the eleven participants in Rarotonga.

[6] Marmite and Weet-bix as icons of 'home' are readily available, although at least double the price one would pay at a supermarket in New Zealand.

[7] Most of the women spoke English as their first language, but the two Indonesian women also spoke a dialect of Indonesian. They were used to speaking English with their New Zealand born husbands, and in their business dealings in Jakarta.

[8] As well as expatriate women, a few local Cook Islanders are members of coffee or play group, as well as expatriate women married to Cook Islanders.

[9] One woman, not interviewed, called the High Commission to ask if there were any community groups for her and her son to join in a display of initiative.

[10] Approximately a year into their time in New Zealand or Rarotonga.

[11] For more work on the repatriation dilemma, see Birdseye and Hill, 1995; and Harvey, 1982.

[12] In fact, she stayed much longer, after her husband renewed his contract for another year.

[13] For a nine-point phase theory, Shneider and Asakawa offer Jacobson (in Shneider and Asakawa, 1991:123) including pre-departure, enroute, exploration, tentative commitment, and ultimate commitment (including the decision on whether to stay in a destination, return to home, or travel elsewhere).

CHAPTER 5- WOMEN AND CAREER

[1] This point is also noted by Black and Gregersen (1991b), who state that expatriate allowances and lifestyle elevate company workers above their position at home, making adjustment to repatriation and a decrease in status and remuneration much more difficult.

[2] By being permitted to change their entry visa status with the Cook Islands Immigration Department.

[3] This point is also made by Everett when reviewing the book *They Only Laughed Afterwards* by Carol Allen and Richard Hill which explores in more detail the underemployment of expatriate women in the Army and diplomatic corp.

[4] Much expatriate research has been written about work satisfaction, see Gaylord, 1979 "Relocation and the Corporate Family", Callan and Ardener, *The Incorporated Wife*, 1984, Anderson, 1981 and Harvey, 1985, to name a few.

[5] Income questions were not asked, but because of the managerial responsibilities of the partners, the incomes can be assumed to be between NZD$60 - NZD$90,000 per year, and include other benefits such as accommodation, transport (such as use of a car) heating, electricity, gas and phone bills taken care of by the employer. Most expatriates also enjoy trips home once a year, free medical and pharmaceutical care, and the employer often pays for children's education costs.

[6] The Cook Islands Entry, Residence and Departure Act of 1972 and its amendments does not give explicit instructions for expatriate partners, but women enter under a visitor's visa if their partner is working, and they must, as a condition of entry, sign a declaration promising not to engage in paid labour of any kind under the Act. Conditions for this are found in part XI –

Offences, 38 – False statements in relation to permits.

[7] The term 'co-worker' is used in Harrington, but cited from Park, 1982:101-102, in Harrington, 1997:164

[8] Harrington cites Luxton, 1980, Stivens, 1981, Park, 1982, Weaving, 1984, all in Harrington, 1997:165.

[9] Not all the participants were asked about their financial situation, but those that were (Jennifer, Kim, Linda, Jillian, Catherine and Dawn in Rarotonga) had much to say that was relevant, not just for expatriate women, but also for other financially dependent women.

[10] Rarotonga is still a cash and cheque society, and because there is no EFT-POS or electronic banking, all transactions at any retail outlet are primarily in cash. Like New Zealand in the early 1980s, queues form at the banks at payday and before the weekend, when customers must take out large amounts of money to last through the weekend. Because of this, trips to the bank can involve a long and uncomfortable wait.

[11] The women who were working prior to the coming to Rarotonga, said they found it much more difficult to adjust psychologically to not having their own accounts, EFT-POS cards, and chequebooks and that not having their own money was one of the hardest adjustments they had made in coming to Rarotonga.

[12] Comer, 1974.

CHAPTER 6 – GENDER TIME AND LEISURE

[1] As noted in Deem, 1986:6.

[2] Women's access to leisure may also be controlled by heterosexuality, which controls women's access to leisure as proscribed by her male partner.

[3] Other studies reinforce this theory of male constraint - Stanley, 1982; Deem, 1982a; 1982b; Green, Hebron and Woodward 1985a and 1988b in Deem, 1986:7

[4] Although these activities may also have costs such as ingredients, supplies and power.

[5] Such as preserving and canning fruit and vegetables.

[6] As noted elsewhere, this perspective is not a universal one shared by all feminist research, as it puts the researcher in the position of not being able to believe the information the participants are supplying.

[7] Home in each case was Australia, New Zealand, Canada or America – in all cases, the expatriate women came from more industrialised countries to the less developed Cook Islands.

[8] A decorative head decoration made of flowers and leaves.

[9] Henderson, et al, 1989:106.

[10] Jillian had begun to volunteer at the library, but had to stop as her commitment to her young child, and transport problems intervened.

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