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Refugee settlement: Acculturation, ethnic identity, ethnicity and social network development

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***Refugee settlement: Acculturation, ethnic identity,
ethnicity and social network development***

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B.A. (Melb Uni) Grad Dip., Applied Psych (Swinburne)

***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of***

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Abstract

Refugees arriving in Australia undergo a number of settlement processes including adaptation and acculturation, social support and network development, and an exploration of their ethnic identity. This research examines the settlement processes of mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia who arrived in Perth, Western Australia in the early to mid 1990's. A mixed marriage is one where the couple are from different ethnic backgrounds. This research has two main aims. The first aim is to examine the processes of acculturation and adaptation, the development of social support networks, and ethnic identity, within the refugees. These processes provide a framework from which to understand the settlement process. The second aim is to investigate the initial settlement programs and supports provided by Australia's government and community groups, and to provide recommendations for future service provision. Throughout the research, the experiences of the refugees are located within the sociopolitical context of the conflict in what was Yugoslavia and their migration. The impact of the refugees' ethnicity and ethnic identity is also considered.

The research was comprised of a study in two stages. The first stage involved scoping interviews with critical participants and refugees to identify key conceptual domains for the purpose of guiding subsequent interviews. The second stage consisted of multiple-case, conversational interviews with 12 mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia.

Data was analysed thematically and the results indicated that the participants were moving towards an acculturation outcome of bi-culturalism. The majority have taken out Australian citizenship, were proud of and grateful for it and saw it as a

security for the future. The results also indicated that ethnicity impacts on the development of social networks. The participants generally socialised with other mixed marriage refugees as they felt comfortable and emotionally supported by them. Mainstream Australians provided more instrumental support. The participants referred to a feeling of belonging to Australia increasing with participation in the community and have made substantial efforts to understand the Australian way of life. Feeling part of the Australian community was a process that was taking time.

The participants described their ethnic identity as either Yugoslav or Bosnian, regardless of their ethnicity. Whilst maintaining this identity, being Australian was also important and did not conflict with feeling Yugoslav or Bosnian. The links between the various settlement processes are discussed as well as the validity of the research process and recommendations for future research and for settlement programs.

The results illustrated the diversity of experiences of the participants as well as a commonality resulting from their being in a mixed marriage. With respect to the second aim, the initial settlement experience is characterised by stress, due in part to the nature of the refugee experience and exacerbated by a lack of English, receiving confusing and untimely information, difficulties in finding work and difficulties in meeting mainstream Australians. The refugees who went through the On-Arrival Accommodation program felt less supported than those who went through the Community Resettlement Support Scheme, which offered a chance to meet Australians and provided better material assistance.

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) Incorporate without acknowledgment and materials previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii) contain any defamatory material.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	9
Chapter 2. The refugee context	12
2.1 Refugees in Australia	12
2.2 Refugee assistance in Australia	13
2.3 Refugee research	14
2.4 Refugee settlement	17
2.5 History of Yugoslavia and the conflict	20
2.5.1 Yugoslavia 1945-1998	21
2.5.2 Yugoslavia - the society	23
2.6 The Australian context	24
2.7 The settlement process: An integrated look	26
Chapter 3. Refugee adaptation and acculturation	28
3.1 Refugee adaptation	28
3.2 Refugee acculturation	31
Chapter 4. Refugee ethnic identity and ethnicity	37
4.1 Ethnicity and ethnic identity - definitions	37
4.2 Social Identity Theory	45
Chapter 5. Refugees' social support and social networks	47
Chapter 6. Summary - The context and process of settlement	53
6.1 Research aims and objectives	54

Chapter 7. Method	56
7.1 Methodology and Design	56
7.2 Stage 1 - Preliminary studies - Critical participant and scoping interviews to identify conceptual domains	59
7.3 Stage 2 - Main interviews	62
7.3.1 Participants	62
7.3.2 Procedure for the main interviews	63
Chapter 8. Results	67
8.1 Analytic process	67
8.2 Initial settlement experience - On-Arrival Accommodation (OAA) and Community Resettlement Support Scheme (CRSS)	71
8.3 Acculturation	76
8.4 Ethnic identity	81
8.4.1 A Yugoslav identity	82
8.4.2 An Australian Identity	83
8.5 Citizenship	87
8.6 Developing social networks	89
8.6.1 Meeting mainstream Australians	89
8.6.2 Developing links with other mixed marriage refugees	93
8.6.3 The development of social support - linking the Bosnian and mainstream Australian networks back to theory	99
8.7 The settlement of refugees in context	101

8.8 Reflection on the methodology: Developing convincing and useful research	104
Chapter 9. Conclusion and recommendations	107
References	113
Appendix A	125
Appendix B	128
Appendix C	129
Appendix D	136
Appendix E	139

Chapter 1. Introduction

The Balkan conflicts of the 1990's have seen a large number of refugees leave the regions that were part of what was Yugoslavia¹ - Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia and more recently Kosovo. A number of these refugees have made their way to Australia to be sheltered and begin a new life here. The settlement process that the refugees experience once they arrive in Australia is long and often difficult, requiring adaptation to the new country, its language, customs and people. Settlement involves the establishment of a home and material goods, contact with others in the new homeland, a return to employment where possible, and often the learning of a new language.

In the mid 1990's a large number of the refugees arriving from Bosnia were from ethnically mixed marriages. These couples were forced to leave what was Yugoslavia due to actual or potential persecution of one or both members of the couple because of their ethnicity. These refugees present a unique challenge to those assisting their settlement, as they do not represent one ethnic group, but two, making it difficult for them to receive assistance from the established ethnic communities. The

¹ The refugees arriving in Perth in 1998 and 1999 from Bosnia-Herzegovina are referred to by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs as Bosnian. This refers to their country of origin (Bosnia-Herzegovina) rather than their nationality which could be Muslim, Serbian, Croatian or another nationality. For example, they may be a Bosnian Croat, a Croat living in Bosnia. The issue of how to refer to (label) these immigrants is complex. The Australian government generally refers to them as being from "The Former Yugoslavia", a term that some members of the community dislike. The problem with this definition is that it does not differentiate between various nationalities and means that people may not be directed to services which can best meet their needs. Some people refer to different subgroups as Bosnians, Serbs or Croats, whilst others refer to these refugees as Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. A further problem with the use of the term "Yugoslavia" is that Serbia and Montenegro at the time of writing are now commonly referred to as Yugoslavia, making the label even more uncertain. Rather than attempt to find a solution to this problem, within this research this group will be referred to as people from "what was Yugoslavia".

established communities often provide material and social support to newly arrived refugees from their own community. The Federal Government also provides a number of settlement services to assist the newly arrived, both materially and socially, and these services impact on the settlement outcomes of the refugees.

There is a rich body of literature (eg., Falk, 1993; Jupp, 1994; Nicassio, 1983; Patel, 1992; Rubenstein, Lubben, & Mintzer, 1994; Williams & Berry, 1991) covering various aspects of refugee settlement, including the psychological, social, economic and cultural influences on settlement. The refugee literature, particularly within the discipline of psychology, has focused on individual outcomes rather than group processes and group outcomes. Researchers have investigated the acculturation process and its relation to social support structures (Falk, 1993), ethnic identity (Bemak & Greenberg, 1994; Nicassio, 1983), mental health outcomes (Williams & Berry, 1991) and acculturative stress (Saldaña, 1992; Williams & Berry, 1991). Current literature also addresses the notion of prevention of isolation (Bemak & Greenberg, 1994), prevention of mental illness in refugees (Patel, 1992; Williams & Berry, 1991) as well as correlates of mental illness and social support in refugees (Patel, 1992).

The research reported in this thesis focuses on mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia. There is a strong argument for studying different cohorts of refugees. A number of authors have noted that similarities exist in mental health outcomes across differing groups of refugees, such as trauma related illnesses (Westermeyer, 1986; Williams & Berry, 1991) and have suggested that refugees, in this regard, can be considered as a unique group. Whilst refugees are a unique population defined by their migratory experience, which is involuntary, often

permanent and traumatic, the experiences of different cohorts have not been fully researched. Each new cohort brings a range of skills, life experiences and group characteristics which influences their settlement. For example, the experience of a group of urban, professional refugees speaking a number of international languages, would be markedly different to that of a group of rural, uneducated, illiterate refugees whose sole language is very different to English.

There is also a strong argument for examining the specific cultural context of refugees in research and when designing interventions (Bemak & Greenberg, 1994; Marin, 1993; Trickett, Watts, & Birman, 1993). The refugee literature in the last 20 years has focused largely on the experiences and outcomes of South East Asian and Latin American refugees and the findings may not be generalisable to other groups.

The research reported in this thesis examines the acculturation and adaptation processes of mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia as well as their social support networks, ethnic identity and ethnicity. Within the research, the experiences of the refugees are located within the sociopolitical context of their immigration. An examination of these processes provides a framework in which to understand their settlement. A focus on psychological processes rather than outcomes (such as number of refugees who are employed), allows for a deeper understanding of the settlement and relocation process and for an understanding of what circumstances are conducive to positive settlement outcomes.

The research reported in this thesis also provides a review of the settlement services provided to refugees along with recommendations that may assist in the design of appropriate settlement services, services which lessen the negative impacts of the refugee experience and strengthen the support processes.

Chapter 2. The Refugee Context

2.1 Refugees in Australia

Australia currently accepts approximately 12,000 humanitarian entrants each year (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs [DIMA], 1997). Included in this number are entrants who are regarded as refugees, as defined by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, as well as people who are not defined as refugees, but are accepted on humanitarian grounds (DIMA, 1997). The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as any person who:

[d]ue to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

(cited in Jupp, 1994, p. 8)

The conflict in what was Yugoslavia has led to more than two million people being expelled from their homes (Malcolm, 1996) and thousands have sought refuge outside its borders. Australia has accepted many of these refugees, initially those displaced by the war in Croatia and subsequently those displaced from what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina² (DIMA, 1997). Western Australia received 831 humanitarian entrants in the 1997-98 financial year. Of these 478 were from what was

² Bosnia -Herzegovina will be referred to as Bosnia throughout the paper.

Yugoslavia (DIMA, 1999). Whilst 80% of the world's refugees are women and children, most who make it to the West are men (Jones, 1994). Many refugees who have arrived in Australia in the last decade, however, are women. This is due in part to the government's Women at Risk program, which favours women who have no male relatives to assist them. This is also because many of the refugees who have arrived from what was Yugoslavia have come as a family, as they are not able to settle in their homeland due to their being in a mixed marriage.

2.2 Refugee assistance in Australia

Refugees who arrive in Australia are offered a variety of specialist services by the Australian Commonwealth Government. These include the On-Arrival Accommodation (OAA) program and the Community Refugee Settlement Scheme (CRSS) program. The OAA program provides initial short term (13-26 weeks) accommodation in self contained flats. In Perth these flats are currently in Balga in the northern suburbs. Associated case coordination services, based on individual needs, help the refugees to access the appropriate community services. The CRSS program involves volunteer groups who provide initial accommodation and settlement assistance (access to schooling, English classes, social security etc).

Other refugees who are sponsored by their family but who have arrived under the humanitarian program are also eligible for assistance from various government and community agencies, such as Migrant Resource Centres, the Translating and Interpreting Service and the Adult Migrant Education Program (DIMA, 1997). All humanitarian entrants are entitled to full Social Security benefits and 510 hours of English classes. Other assistance offered varies according to the circumstances under which the refugee arrives.

2.3 Refugee research

There are a large number of research papers concerned with refugees, both within Australia and internationally (e.g., Fredale, Mitchell, Pe-Pua, & Pittaway, 1996; Jupp, 1994; Jupp, McRobbie, & York, 1991; Kunz, 1981; Morrissey, Mitchell, & Rutherford, 1991; Pittaway, 1991). This research has been criticised for being sporadic, unsystematic, isolated and cursory (Stein, 1986) due to “refugee studies” not being considered a singular discipline worthy of continued and systematic study.

Rather than considering refugees as a sub-sample within research populations, a number of authors have suggested that refugees themselves should be considered a distinct group, defined by social behaviours and psychological outcomes which are common to all refugees (Kunz, 1973; Stein, 1986). Behavioural commonalities across diverse refugee groups have been noted in the literature (Williams & Berry, 1991). These commonalities relate to their common experiences prior to and after leaving their home, which unite them as refugees as well as commonalities in types and frequencies of mental disorders (Westermeyer, 1986). Sianni (1992, cited in Francis, 1997) noted that there are a number of factors which distinguish the refugee experience:

1. Refugees are forced to abandon their country of origin as a result of persecution, threats to life and livelihood, and destruction of shelter.
2. Refugees have a minimal contribution in the decision making process that results in their arrival and settlement in Australia.
3. Prior to arrival, refugees have limited understanding and knowledge about the country of resettlement.
4. Refugees are unprepared for the impact of expulsion from their country of

origin and subsequent cultural shock as they adjust to life in the country of resettlement.

5. In the immediate future refugees have no option of returning to their country of origin and those they have left behind (p. 10).

A common phenomenon experienced by most refugees is a “state of temporariness” whereby their life and identity before the event/s that precipitated their leaving, and their state of displacement gain a status of permanence and validity, which can never be replaced no matter how long they live in their new home (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Many refugees are not able to attain a feeling of permanence within their new homeland as easily as economic migrants. This “state of temporariness” occurs even though the experience of becoming a displaced person can vary greatly. For example, some people have family and friends who sponsor them, whilst others are reliant only on aid supplied by international aid organisations, as well as their own spiritual, emotional and physical resources (Yuval-Davis, 1997).

Rather than treat specific refugee situations (such as the current refugee situation arising from the wars in what was Yugoslavia) as unique, atypical, individual historical events, they are better “analysed from a general, historical and comparative perspective that views them as recurring phenomena with identifiable and often identical patterns of behaviour and sets of causalities” (Stein, 1986, p. 5). Refugee research should be a specific subject that looks at “refugee behaviour, problems and situations which recur in many contexts, times and regions” (Stein, 1986, p. 5).

An interdisciplinary approach would benefit both theory development and programs designed to meet refugees’ needs in their homeland and abroad. This

approach. Stein (1986) argued, should cover the breadth of problems, build on previous research and programs and allow governments to take an immediate and systematic approach to new refugee situations. Instead, he argued, with each new wave of refugees, ad hoc programs are implemented which do not consider previous research and these programs are rarely evaluated or written up.

Part of the lack of a consistent approach is due to the different focus various disciplines take when researching refugees. For social scientists, for example, "the refugee category is defined by the trauma and stresses, persecution and danger, losses and isolation, uprooting and change of the refugee experience." (Stein, 1986, p. 6). Other disciplines, such as social work, may look instead at the common refugee experiences in settlement and service use. Whilst it is important to note the commonalities across refugee groups, which means researchers and practitioners can build on the knowledge of previous settlements, several researchers have noted the importance in locating experiences within the socio-cultural context in which the refugee migrates (Bemak & Greenberg, 1994; Berry, 1994; Rubenstein et al., 1994; Trickett, 1996).

Falk (1993), in a review of Vietnamese refugee settlement, reported various cultural factors which impact directly on refugees' settlement and social support. Similarly Lipson (1991) noted the importance that divisions between members of the Afghan community have on the experiences of individual refugees. She suggested these divisions are due to politics, social class, ethnicity, urban/rural origin and culture. Lipson suggested that whilst general research on refugees should consider common experiences and characteristics shared by most refugees (e.g., reasons for leaving, trauma and loss, acculturative stress etc.), culturally specific data for each refugee

group should also be considered. These data include settlement patterns, cultural characteristics, health beliefs and the ecological conditions under which the refugees left their home.

2.4 Refugee settlement

What constitutes successful adjustment and settlement is difficult to define and involves some subjective judgement. Pittaway (1991) outlined a model of adjustment based on interviews with humanitarian entrant women. She argued that successful settlement includes the following outcomes:

1. A good command of the English language.
2. Secure accommodation with which they are personally satisfied, preferably owner-occupied.
3. Employment which provides both adequate income and job satisfaction.
4. A family which is achieving well in the education system, in terms of progression to tertiary training.
5. Income security.
6. Material possessions and consumer goods equal to the community norm.
7. Community involvement, measured by active participation in schools, community groups, sports groups and so forth.
8. Interaction, friendships and social activities shared with the wider Australian community.

Successful settlement for refugees may be associated with a number of factors, relating both to pre-migration experiences and circumstances and post-migration factors. Pre-arrival factors include the political, social and economic situation of the countries they migrated from, level of language and education and family situations

(Iredale et al., 1996). Shergold and Nicolaou (1986, quoted in Pittaway, 1991) stated:

The "settlement process" perceived as the movement towards full participation and equitable access to Australian society - is determined by far more than length of residence. The extent of settlement over time depends on the conjunction of the migrant's life cycle (age and family status at the moment of migration); individual characteristics (sex, education, occupation, wealth, language and culture); and Australia's economic cycle (labour market demand, availability of housing, business opportunities, price movements and supply of welfare benefit). (p. 62-3, 325)

Associated closely with the idea of successful settlement are the specific needs which refugees have. Numerous researchers have studied the needs of immigrant groups (Allotey, 1996; Iredale et al., 1996; Morrissey, Mitchell, & Rutherford, 1991). Studies that have evaluated settlement programs have shown that different groups of migrants have different settlement needs. Jupp, McRobbie and York (1991) stressed the need to identify each different migrant group's needs in order to provide appropriate services. Cox (1987) provided the following list of needs for newly arrived migrants: (a) needs at the personal level: accommodation, employment, income maintenance, orientation and information, language training, vocation-related needs, child care, child education, health care, aged care, identity related needs, (b) needs at the family level: family cohesion, family viability, maintenance and development of parental roles, and (c) needs at the societal level: social support, identity support and community support.

Pittaway (1991) notes the existence of these types of needs and has expanded

on this list, observing that refugees have additional problems and needs to other migrants and that the needs of refugees are as diverse as refugees themselves. She noted that as refugees migrate not out of choice but due to forces beyond their control, they are often ill-prepared emotionally and materially and often have no knowledge of the country to which they are sent. Further, they often are split from their families, and may not have a chance to farewell family and friends or even know the whereabouts of their family prior to leaving. Additionally, many refugees experience torture and trauma prior to arrival in Australia which impacts on their needs throughout settlement.

In order to gain access to education, English language training, accommodation and other necessities, migrants need access to information. Pittaway (1991) reported that only 39% of women refugees seek information outside of family and friends. English is not their first language and many who speak some English cannot read English. The women interviewed in Pittaway's study reported difficulty in finding information in languages other than English and almost no provision of information for women who cannot read. Services were reported to be uncoordinated and unfamiliar (especially for refugee women) and little effort was made for survivors of torture and trauma who may have additional difficulties absorbing new information. Shergold and Nicolaou (1986, cited in Jupp et al., 1991) found that lack of English competency is the most common cause of disadvantage for newly arrived immigrants from smaller communities.

Pittaway (1991) concluded that rather than cultural background being the main determinant of refugees' settlement experience, this experience is determined by age, level of English, level of education, professional status, age of dependent children, and

whether one is from a rural or city background.

Jupp et al. (1991) suggested that the needs of newly arrived ethnic groups do not necessarily differ from those of more established ethnic groups and centre around employment, and English training as well as family reunion. They suggested, however, that these groups lack a strong, experienced community structure and are often transient and lacking in institutional loyalty and resources. This makes it difficult for members of these groups to access existing funding and resources available to the more established groups. They noted a suggestion made by a worker at a Migrant Resource Centre that additional resources and workers be available to assist these new groups to negotiate the complexity of service provision and providers.

The literature reviewed above suggests that the settlement process of refugees is both complex and lengthy. It points to a need to identify the specific needs of particular groups whilst keeping a focus on the experiences which unite refugees as a group.

In this research the author considers the impact various demographic and experiential factors have on the settlement of refugees from what was once Yugoslavia and considers the needs that this group has as determined by the context of their migration. In particular the author looks at the services provided and whether they meet the needs articulated by the refugees. In order to understand the context of the refugees' migration a brief history of Yugoslavia is outlined in the following section.

2.5 History of Yugoslavia and the conflict

This section offers a brief history of the recent conflict in what was Yugoslavia, including its causes and outcomes. It is based on a number of historical and journalistic texts and analytic pieces (Malcolm, 1996; Ryan, 1995; Silber & Little,

1992; Zajovic, 1994) which address issues surrounding the reasons for the conflict.

This section is included in order to locate the pre- and post- migratory experiences of the refugees from this region within their social and cultural context. It is intended to offer some background to the situation of the participants in this research, mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia.

2.5.1 Yugoslavia 1945-1998

Yugoslavia came into existence as a kingdom in 1918 and after WWII became a communist state as part of a reorganisation of Europe's boundaries. It comprised the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia as well as the two Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. The capital was Belgrade, Serbia. From 1945 the country was effectively ruled by Josip Broz, "Tito", leader of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, who died in 1980. In 1974, a new constitution created a collective Federal Presidency which had representation from all republics and provinces and had an annual rotating President (Malcolm, 1996).

The wars in what was Yugoslavia began in Slovenia in 1991. This conflict lasted only a few weeks and ended in Slovenia gaining independence. This was followed by war in Croatia, between Serbs and Croats, which lasted about one year and ended also with Croatia's independence. Following this came war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, initially between a united Croat and Muslim union against Serbian forces and later between Muslims and Croats. This war only came to an end in 1996 (Malcolm, 1996). Armed conflict has since ensued in Kosovo between ethnic Albanians and Serbs.³ To date over 150,000 people have been killed in the wars and

³ There is currently (June 1999) armed conflict in Kosovo between Serbia and ethnic Albanians, who

over 2.2 million people have been displaced (forced to flee their homes) (Ryan, 1995).

Extreme abuses of human rights of civilians and soldiers were recorded by human rights watchers during these conflicts. Especially distressing were reports of rape camps and concentration camps, which have been widely written about and which have devastated the lives of millions of people (Amnesty International, 1995; Human Rights Watch, 1992; Silber & Little, 1992; Zajovic, 1994).

This brief historical description does not explain either the politics behind the war or state explicitly who the victims or aggressors were. Rather, the position taken during the development and implementation of this research is that all refugees from what was Yugoslavia are victims of the wars as they have, at the very least, had to leave their homes and start a new life in Australia, a move which has not been voluntary and which is traumatic over and above any trauma suffered during the war.

The current political situation is that former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are now independent, internationally recognised states (Visser & Beer, 1998). Serbia and Montenegro are currently referred to as Yugoslavia and incorporate Vojvodina and Kosovo. Although in Croatia and Bosnia minority nationalities (e.g., Hungarians in Bosnia) are guaranteed human rights under law, the reality is that it is often difficult for refugees who are minorities in that region to move back to their former residences, due to a variety of social, political and economic reasons. An issue of concern for mixed marriage couples is that they often have no place in the region to go to as one or both members of the couple will have a

form the majority of Kosovars and who want independence from Serbia. Since completion of this research, NATO has also commenced a campaign of aerial bombardment against Serbian targets in both Serbia and Kosovo. A large number of ethnic Albanians have been displaced from their homes in Kosovo and are seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, elsewhere in Europe, North America and Australia.

legitimate fear of persecution based on his or her ethnicity wherever they try to settle. It is for this reason that Australia has accepted many refugees who are in mixed marriages.⁴

2.5.2 Yugoslavia - the society

Prior to the wars in the 1990s all residents of Yugoslavia held Yugoslav passports although there were around 40 different nationalities represented under this banner. Some republics and provinces were more homogeneous than others, for example Kosovo in the early 1990's was 90% Albanian, whilst Bosnia in the early 1990's had a Muslim population of 44% (in Yugoslavia, the term Muslim was used to refer to nationality as well as religion), a Serbian population of 23% and a Croatian population of 17% (Silber & Little, 1995). Generally the religion of the Serbs is Serbian Orthodox and the religion of the Croats is Catholic. Sekulic, Massey and Hodson (1994) note that in the 1981 census, only 5.4% of people in Yugoslavia identified as Yugoslavs rather than any other nationality (8.2% in Croatia, 4.8% in Serbia, 7.9% in Bosnia, 0.1% in Kosovo, 0.7% in Macedonia, 5.3% in Montenegro, 1.4% in Slovenia, and 8.2% in Vojvodina).

Although there was inevitably some ethnic tension within the country due to historical, economic, and political factors, the majority of residents of Yugoslavia resided relatively peacefully together until the 1990s, regardless of the nationality of family or neighbours. One outcome of the rise of nationalism during the conflicts is that the peaceful coexistence began to fracture, so that family members, friends and

⁴ Background information in the text regarding the situation and status of refugees both here and in Bosnia is often drawn from discussions with DIMA funded community workers and colleagues working for the United Nations in Bosnia. These comments were made to the author in her employment as well as during the course of her research.

neighbours took opposing sides in the conflict, albeit often unwillingly. Many of the refugees arriving in Australia have family members of two or more different ethnic backgrounds and many are in mixed marriages (e.g., Serbian and Muslim or Croatian and Serbian). The “mixed” nature of the marriage was often a source of trauma when war started in Yugoslavia, which has resulted in participants not wishing or being able to have contact with their spouse’s ethnic community in Australia. It is clear that mixed marriages were relatively common in Bosnia and Croatia, representing about 10% of marriages (Sekulic et al., 1994), although the exact figure is disputed (Botev, 1994).

2.6 The Australian context

The first wave of refugees from what was Yugoslavia to arrive in Australia came from what is now the Republic of Croatia. This group was followed by refugees from what is now the country of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who were still arriving in 1998. Many refugees passed through other countries, such as Austria or Germany, before being accepted by Australia. Each new wave of arrivals consisted of refugees of different nationalities and from different geographic areas depending on where the conflict was occurring and which side was in power. It is therefore not possible to determine the nationality or ethnicity of refugees based on where they left from. For example, the refugees coming from Croatia were at first generally of Croatian nationality when the war began and later when the Croats gained control, they were often Serbs. The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is even more complex.

Prior to the conflict in the early 1990’s there was a “Yugoslav” community in Australia. Many people in these communities arrived soon after WWII and further waves of immigrants arrived in the 1960’s and 1970’s. In Perth there is a Yugoslav

Club which is open to all people from what was Yugoslavia. There is also a Bosnian society (Muslim) and various Serb and Croat societies and welfare organisations, as well as other ethnic organisations such as the Hungarian club. The clubs generally have close links to churches, the Croats to the Catholic church and the Serbs to the Serbian Orthodox church. Apart from the Yugoslav club, the clubs are generally ethno-specific, and although people of other nationalities do attend occasionally they are generally not welcome. Although there have been reports of discrimination on the part of welfare organisations, generally they do not discriminate. However, it is possible that people will not feel confident in seeking help from an ethno-specific organisation if they are of a different nationality.

The tensions regarding the use of labels to refer to refugees from what was Yugoslavia and appropriate referrals to agencies, are not insignificant and form an important part of the sociopolitical context in which this research was conducted. The tensions between some newly arrived refugees and the established ethnic communities such as the Croatian or Serbian communities is great, as is the tension between various members of the incoming groups. Perth welfare groups have made efforts to counter this tension and provide appropriate services, for example by employing workers who are linguistically proficient but who are not of Yugoslav background. A radio program has also been established for mixed marriage couples (though some regard it as purely Serbian).

Conflict between the various ethnic communities will continue to impact greatly on the design of services for this group, who continue to arrive in 1999 and possibly for some years still. This conflict also provides ongoing difficulties for researchers wishing to understand and assist the settlement and psychological

adjustment of the refugees.

2.7 The settlement process: An integrated look

In the preceding sections the socio-political and socio-historical context of refugee arrival and settlement is outlined. This is necessary as the context of immigration impacts heavily on refugees' settlement and aids in giving the settlement process meaning. One of the two main objectives of the research is to investigate a number of important psychological and social processes that take place after arrival in Australia and which provide a framework from which to understand the settlement process. The following processes are considered in this paper: (a) acculturation and adaptation to the host country, (b) the development of social support networks, and (c) a redefining or reassessment of refugees' ethnic identity. These processes emerged as important domains of interest during the first stage of the research, described in chapter 7.

The basis for the selection of these processes was both theoretical and practical. Acculturation and adaptation are included as they are processes which all new migrants will experience at some level and which will influence settlement outcomes. The subject of social support was chosen following previous research undertaken by the author which indicated that a lack of support systems is a major issue for mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia. Social support networks have been linked in the literature to acculturation and adaptation (Strober, 1994) as well as to ethnic identity (Rubenstein et al., 1994). The mixed marriage situation of the refugees, which impacts on the support available to them, further indicated a need to include ethnic identity in the research.

These processes are an important part of settlement and contribute in various ways to the refugees' mental health. They are often interlinked and their consideration is necessary in order to understand more fully the process of settlement. These processes generally happen independent of the government assistance provided and outlined in Section 2.2, however, material and social assistance received may facilitate these processes and are therefore included in the data collection.

The other main objective of the research is to review the material and practical assistance provided to refugees arriving in Perth, Western Australia as this is also an important part of refugee settlement.

Chapter 3. Refugee Adaptation and Acculturation

3.1 Refugee adaptation

The settlement services described in the preceding chapters are designed to assist refugees to adapt to their new environment. As discussed, a common way to conceptualise settlement is in terms of achievements and outcomes, such as the acquisition of language, employment and a home. Another way to understand settlement is to view it as a process or series of processes. Adaptation to the new land, its people and way of life is a process that all refugees experience after arrival and one that is often researched by social scientists. Adaptation refers to the changes that take place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demand and may take place immediately or over a long period of time (Berry 1997). Theorists have addressed how conditions prior to leaving affect ensuing adaptation and more broadly, the psychological process of adaptation after arrival in the new land. The impact of being a refugee has been researched independently of migrant research as the refugee experience is qualitatively different to that of voluntary migrants.

Kunz (1981) provided a framework for understanding the refugee process prior to migration. The key to his model is the idea that rather than leave voluntarily as other immigrants do, refugees are pushed out of their homeland and they are usually not poor, nor “failures” but successful, prominent, and well integrated individuals who flee because of fear of persecution. Two types of refugees are suggested by Kunz, those who flee in anticipation of conflict and those who flee when pushed out, due to bombing and so forth. Those who have been pushed out have not generally planned or prepared for their move and have limited or no choices as to where to settle, usually

moving to a place organised by an international aid organisation. Kunz also made a distinction between those who identify with the majority within their homeland, who often ache for the homeland and who want to go back, and those who are minorities and are keen to seek new identity. It is suggested that those who do identify with the homeland are much more likely to find it difficult to acculturate.

Keller (1975) suggested further differentiation between early and late leavers. He suggested that those who leave late often have a more traumatic flight that leads to three residual characteristics. The first is guilt for those they have lost or those who have been killed, imprisoned or injured due to delayed flight. The second is invulnerability, due to having escaped the worst, and the third characteristic is aggressiveness, which is a reaction to both the guilt and invulnerability.

Resettlement and adjustment after arrival is complicated and multifaceted. Stein (1986) suggested the two key variables are what actually happens to refugees and what the refugees' expectations are, as their expectations have a large impact on their settlement. The pattern of adjustment of refugees over time can be analysed and summarised into four stages:

1. The initial arrival period of the first few months. At this time the refugee is confronted by the reality of what has been lost including a loss in their status (often from well respected professional to non-entity). There is also a loss of culture, and every action must be considered and relearned. At this stage there are strains at home, often due to loss of sex-role (for men), and loss of filial piety. Nostalgia, depression, anxiety, guilt, anger and frustration set in and many refugees at this stage think about going home.

2. The first and second years. In this stage there is a marked effort to rebuild

their lives and a feeling that some of the loss can be ameliorated through time, acculturation, language acquisition and so forth. The qualities that made them successful at home can be seen to work for them in the new country as well. The refugee experience can make them more motivated and innovative. At this stage there are reportedly also many family problems and mental dysfunction.

3. After four or five years. At this stage the refugee has completed the major part of adjustment. If they have not achieved something by this stage, then there is a tendency for them to become discouraged and to look towards the next generation for success.

4. A decade or more later. After 10 years there is a certain stability. The recovery of loss will have continued albeit at a reduced rate. (Stein, 1986, pp. 14-15).

The resettlement behaviour of refugees is often characterised by high expectations. They often feel that they are owed something by someone and as they can seek no redress from their persecutors, they have overly high expectations of government agencies. These expectations are often not met, causing conflict and lead to disappointment, bitterness and resentment on both sides. Understanding of this phenomenon can assist in service provision. It should be recognised that the refugee must negotiate a whole new culture and lifestyle and often requires some guidance in this (Stein, 1986).

A distinction is made within the literature between psychological and sociological adaptation with the first referring to internal psychological outcomes including personal satisfaction, personal identity and mental health. Sociological adaptation refers to a set of external psychological outcomes such as the ability to deal

with daily family, work and school problems. A third adaptive outcome, economic adaptation has been suggested, which refers to the degree to which employment is obtained and is satisfying (Berry, 1997).

3.2 Refugee acculturation

The process of acculturation has also been widely researched by social and cross-cultural psychologists. Acculturation is a useful tool for understanding the settlement process because it allows us to understand the level at which migrants interact with the host society, both psychologically and instrumentally. Closely linked with acculturation is the process of adaptation as acculturating individuals usually adapt in some way to their new cultural context (Berry 1997). Acculturation is widely accepted to mean the changes which groups and individuals undergo when they come into first-hand contact with another culture (Williams & Berry, 1991). At a group level acculturation involves a number of changes, such as economic, technical, social, cultural and political changes. Psychological (or individual-level) acculturation refers to changes in the behaviour, values, attitudes and identity of an individual within the group and that change may differ to that of others within the group (Birman, 1994; Williams & Berry, 1991). Acculturation research addresses the general acculturative situation and the personal outcomes experienced by the individual at the psychosocial level.

The work of Berry (1986a, 1986b, 1994, 1997) provides a theoretical framework in which to understand the acculturation process of individuals and groups. He noted a number of features of the acculturation process. The first is the nature of acculturation, which requires contact of at least two autonomous groups with a

resulting change in at least one of the groups. Generally one group tends to dominate and cause change in the other and the domination of one suggests that there may be conflict or difficulties. The second characteristic is the course of acculturation, which is usually in three stages: First there needs to be contact between the groups (physical or symbolic). Second comes conflict, which is probable, and third there is adaptation, which is inevitable and may ameliorate the conflict. The third characteristic of acculturation is the level at which acculturation occurs, which may be either an individual or group level.

For refugee groups the pre-contact situation may be more important than the contact situation. Nearly all refugees are exposed to disaster and the psychological impact of this exposure will affect the level and type of contact the refugees have with other groups. Once contact has occurred, there is often an initial period of relief which may delay ongoing psychological contact with the host group (Berry, 1986a).

Different adaptive strategies are used to reduce conflict in the acculturative process, including adjustment, reaction and withdrawal (Berry, 1986a). When adjustment occurs, changes are made which make cultural or behavioural features more similar to the other culture in order to reduce conflict. When there is reaction, conflict reduction is achieved through retaliating against the source of the conflict. In withdrawal, conflict is reduced by moving away from the source. Berry's model provides four adaptive options or acculturative strategies available to non dominant groups during acculturation, through asking the questions "Are positive relations with the dominant group valuable?" and "Is my cultural identity of value and to be retained?" (see Figure 1).

		Valuable to maintain culture and identity	
		YES	NO
Valuable to maintain positive inter-group relations?	YES	Integration (biculturalism)	Assimilation
	NO	Separation	Marginalisation

Figure 1. Adaptive options available to non-dominant groups during acculturation (Berry, 1986a)

The individual can be highly or moderately acculturated into both host and refugee group, neither, or just one of the groups, resulting in four possible acculturative strategies: assimilation, separation, marginalisation and integration (also referred to as biculturalism) (Berry, 1986a; Birman, 1994). Integration means the maintenance of cultural integrity as well as becoming part of the dominant society. Integration has also been referred to as biculturalism (Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980). Assimilation implies that the person or group relinquishes their cultural identity and joins with the dominant society. Separation occurs when the person remains attached to their own culture and avoids positive intergroup relations. Marginalisation implies that one is part of neither group (Berry, 1986a).

Initially acculturation was conceived of as a one-way process, with the acculturating individual or group assimilating into the host society (Szapocznik et al., 1980). More recently the literature has viewed acculturation as a two-way process with changes occurring in the dominant group as well (Berry, 1986a; Birman, 1994; Helms, 1984). More specifically the biculturation model, which has been developed to

assess the immigrant-refugee experience, looks at the ability of the individual to participate in both the old and new cultures. Not only does this require acceptance by the individual of both groups but also skills to interact in both groups (Szapocznik et al., 1980).

Biculturalism suggests that culturally distinct groups benefit by maintaining an allegiance to their culture of origin as well as by participating in the host culture. To learn about the new culture is adaptive but to disregard the old culture is maladaptive and leads to psychological maladjustment (Szapocznik et al., 1980). A number of researchers have attempted to test the biculturalism model. They have not always used the same definition, however, nor operationalised their definitions in the same way, which makes comparisons difficult (Birman, 1994).

Generally individuals have a preference for one particular acculturation strategy, though this may vary according to one's location (e.g., public sphere vs. private sphere) (Berry 1997). According to Berry, the broader national context may also affect the strategy chosen, for example, an integrationist strategy may be chosen in a society (such as Australia) that permits the expression of various cultural identities. He also suggests that individuals may explore various strategies over time and settle on the one that suits them best.

Birman (1994) in a review of the acculturation models suggested that there is a need to look at oppression when researching acculturation, as an emphasis on cultural competence overshadows the effects of discrimination and oppression on the possibility of achieving biculturalism. She also suggested that researchers need to look at the behavioural aspects of the process rather than merely the psychological aspects. She argued that it is not possible to understand the acculturation of the individual

without understanding the acculturation experiences of the group, as the group itself may be subject to oppression, thus influencing the acculturative styles of its members. Birman suggested that there is not necessarily one endpoint in the acculturation process, and that researchers must make sure not to favour one style of acculturation. Rather, they should recognise that each person does what he/she thinks best or is able to do. Whilst marginalisation may be maladaptive for one individual or group, it may be adaptive for another. Birman differentiated between different types of biculturalism, suggesting that some acculturative styles may be more instrumental, to suit the context, or more psychological, and for others the acculturative style might be integrated, that is, both behavioural and psychological. Integrated biculturals have a sense of identity of their culture and are highly behaviourally involved in both cultures.

There are a large number of variables which influence the process of acculturation and affect an individual's adaptation. It is suggested by Berry (1997) that the following variables be included in research that looks at acculturation in migrants:

1. The society of origin; politics, economy and demographics.
2. Group acculturation processes; physical, biological, social, economic and cultural.
3. The society of settlement; attitudes, host and ethnic society social support.
4. Moderating factors prior to acculturation; age, gender, education, migration motivation, personality, pre-acculturation status, cultural distance and expectations.
5. Moderating factors during acculturation; length of time, attitudes and behaviours towards acculturation, coping strategies and resources, social support, and societal attitudes.

Williams and Berry (1991) also provided some suggestions and caveats for research in acculturation. They stressed three points. The first is the necessity for researchers to understand and accept the culture of the acculturating group on its own terms. Second, there is a need to recognise that the acculturation process is the result of interaction between the cultures rather than merely change in the acculturating group. Third, there will be wide differences between individual experiences and outcomes even within the same acculturative situation.

Much research on acculturation has addressed the issue of acculturative stress, which is a particular type of stress resulting from acculturation and often leading to a “particular set of stress behaviours that include anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms and identity confusion” (Williams & Berry, 1991, p. 634). Acculturative stress is often associated with adverse physical, psychological and social health, though it is important to note that acculturation does not inevitably bring social and psychological problems (Berry 1997). Whilst an understanding of acculturative stress and its pre-determinants and outcomes is important, this research will not investigate this stress per se, rather it will focus on acculturation, support and identity in order to assist with understanding what can aid in preventing stress.

Chapter 4. Refugee Ethnic Identity and Ethnicity

4.1 Ethnicity and ethnic identity - definitions

Ethnic identity and ethnicity are two concepts which are closely tied in with the process of acculturation, adaptation and social support. These concepts are widely researched in the refugee and migrant literature and are as complex as they are interesting. The relationship between ethnicity and ethnic identity and the impact of these elements on the refugee experience is crucial to the current research. During the wars in what was Yugoslavia thousands of people were persecuted and made refugees based on their ethnicity, regardless of whether they identified with their ethnic heritage. The current research is concerned with the continued impact of the participants' ethnicity and ethnic identity on their settlement.

In order to understand the complexity of the interaction between settlement, ethnicity and ethnic identity, a thorough understanding of these concepts is required. Rather than limit the discussion to one definition or to one discipline, a number of definitions and theories about these concepts are provided. This enables a richer discussion and reflection on the issues and allows the interaction between the context and the issues to be fully examined. As with the other psychological processes considered, there is a need for any discussion of ethnic identity or ethnicity to be embedded in context, as noted by Hirsch and Banks (1995) who asked:

What does it mean to talk about racial or ethnic or any form of identity, if the conditions are not specified? All social phenomena are, after all, embedded in social and political structures and any research that hopes to be remotely connected to reality must consider these an

integral part of the conceptual framework. (pp. 117-118)

The need for discussion around identity to be located in context and the need for a cross-disciplinary perspective has also been put forward in the literature (Edwards, 1992). Edwards is not alone in arguing for a broad analysis of the area, nor alone in pointing out the potential for opening Pandora's Box when attempting to resolve matters to do with ethnicity. Phinney (1990) warned against research that lacks conceptual and methodological clarity, a situation which Breakwell (1986) argued has resulted in a field full of unconsolidated thoughts where there are still no agreed definitions across and within disciplines.

Within the theoretical literature, ethnicity and ethnic identity have often been used interchangeably (Liebkind, 1992), and within different social science disciplines different emphasis has been placed on the extent to which a person's ethnic identity is independent or operationally different to that person's ethnicity. An ethnic group is often defined as a group united on the basis of common, biological, linguistic, cultural or religious criteria (Liebkind, 1992).

Ethnicity is different to race in that racial groups are traditionally defined by biological differences or similarities whilst ethnicity has been referred to as a "culturally defined communal group" (Oommen, 1994a, p. 89). Whilst members of an ethnic group have a common ancestry and display some similar cultural patterns, not all members necessarily identify with their ethnic group (Liebkind, 1992).

In what was Yugoslavia, ethnic distinction was drawn primarily on religious grounds, as ethnicity was synonymous with religion, to the extent that Muslim was considered an ethnicity under law. Other linguistic and cultural differences were also

apparent, for example the use of three different scripts (Cyrillic, Arabic, and Roman). Whilst the above definition of an ethnic group unites people on the basis of apparent objective criteria, Edwards (1992) defined ethnicity based on a sense of group identity resulting from real or perceived bonds such as language. Edwards failed to make a clear distinction between ethnicity and ethnic identity but rather discussed common themes which emerge in theories of ethnicity and ethnic identity which he draws from a summary of definitions, collated by Isajiw (1981).

The first commonality is the equating of ethnic groups with minority groups, and the reluctance to identify the dominant group with an ethnicity. In what was Yugoslavia, minority status in terms of numbers did not necessarily translate to a minority in terms of economic and political power. In Kosovo the Serbian population, whilst comprising only approximately 5% of the population, has political, military and economic power disproportionate to their numbers. Whilst in other parts of the globe dominant groups in society do not often identify as an ethnic group (such as whites in the United States), in what was Yugoslavia the Serbs, who held power prior to the conflict, clearly did. Ironically, it was often other Yugoslavs who did not identify with an ethnic group (Croat, Muslim, Serb). Instead many identified as Yugoslav (up to 8% in some republics). Indeed some Yugoslavs did not know what their ethnicity was until the war (personal communication with Bosnian refugee, May 1998). Census data from 1961 to 1981 show variations in the identification as "Yugoslav" across Yugoslavia, with the greatest proportion of people identifying as Yugoslav in heterogeneous areas such as Bosnia and Vojvodina (Sekulic, Massey, & Hodson, 1994).

It is suggested that part of the reason people identified as Yugoslav was to avoid either assimilating into one or other of the dominant groups or to avoid being

classed as a minority, as the term “Yugoslav” was seen as a neutral. The number of people identifying as Yugoslav dropped between 1961 and 1971 particularly in Bosnia, where there is a large Muslim population, as there had been no Muslim category until 1971 and many Muslims did not identify with another ethnicity (Sekulic et. al, 1994). There was however an increase in identification as Yugoslav between 1971 and 1981, which is explained by Sekulic and his colleagues as due to (a) a defensive strategy for minorities, (b) a move away from identifying with the less positive aspects of Yugoslavia’s past, (c) increased urbanisation, (d) increased party political membership, and (e) nationally mixed parentage. Younger people also identified more strongly as Yugoslav.

It is useful also at this point to discuss the difference between ethnicity and nationality. Both are defined by culture, however, a distinction is made based on whether culture and a homeland exist simultaneously (Oommen, 1994a). Nationality exists when both territory and culture exist together, a nation being the homeland of a people sharing a common culture. Oommen suggested that ethnicity occurs when no such union of land and culture exists, such as occurs from conquests, colonialisation and immigration. Having a nation, that is, having a moral claim on territory does not necessarily mean that the members of the nation would establish a one nation state. Therefore it is possible to have a many nation state. Yugoslavia prior to the conflict was said to be a multi-nation state with each nationality staking a moral claim on overlapping parts of the territory. Until 1991, no one nation had taken steps to exclude other nationalities. Whether what was Yugoslavia was a multi-nation state or a multi-ethnic state is debatable, depending on whether one accepts that any or all of the nations residing there are conquerors or immigrants. For the purposes of the current

research, this political dimension to the debate is not important and the terms multi-ethnic and multi-nation shall be considered interchangeable. The term citizen, however, is different in that it is a purely political reference, and is a recent (19th century) phenomenon. A citizen is a member of a state with full political rights and a person with no citizenship is considered "stateless" (Oommen, 1994b).

Another feature of ethnicity relates to objective versus subjective definitions. The argument in favour of an objective basis for ethnicity sees a person's membership to an ethnic group as involuntary and linked to an historical common bond, regardless of a common socialisation. However, this definition fails to account for continuing ethnic boundaries in the face of radically changing social contexts. In this instance a more subjective definition is useful, such as Weber's (1968) definition which sees ethnic groups as having a subjective belief in their common descent regardless of whether an actual blood tie exists. Subjective notions include a sense of peoplehood and shared values (Isajiw, 1981).

The final ingredient identified by Edwards is symbolic identity, which gives importance to symbols and does not require traditional ethnic culture or institutions. In what was Yugoslavia, prior to and during the wars, symbols such as pre-1948 flags and centuries old myths were used to raise ethnocentric sentiment. Oommen (1994a) provided a different perspective on symbolic ethnicity, recognising the impact of unequal power and economic situation of different ethnic groups. He differentiated between instrumental ethnicity and symbolic ethnicity, suggesting that symbolic ethnicity is basically the construction and sustenance of socio-cultural boundaries. It is a search for one's identity that is carried out by most groups even when they are not economically or politically deprived. Instrumental ethnicity is geared to fight material

and political inequality and is therefore qualitatively different. The relative economic situation of the different nationalities in what was Yugoslavia prior to the conflict is complex and is beyond the scope of the current research. Many historians have noted that the economic and political situation differed greatly between provinces and republics and that this disparity was a major precipitator of the conflict (Magas, 1989; Blackburn, 1993). It is therefore possible that the ethnicity or identity was based on different things.

Edwards (1992) concluded his summation of the common themes of ethnicity with a definition incorporating the above:

Ethnic identity is allegiance to a group - large or small, socially dominant or subordinate - with which one has ancestral links. There is no necessity for a continuation, over generations, of the same socialisation or cultural patterns, but some sense of a group boundary must persist. This can be sustained by shared objective characteristics (language religion, etc) or by more subjective contributions to a sense of "groupness", or by some combination of both.

Symbolic or subjective attachments must relate, at however distant a remove, to an observably real past. (p. 133)

Whilst identification of ethnicity by others, by "outsiders", is downplayed by Edwards (1992), in what was Yugoslavia the identification by others had an enormous impact on people's lives in the 1990's conflicts. Even those who identified as Yugoslav were forced into one or other ethnic category and in the cases of the participants in this research became refugees because of their ancestry. Whilst Edwards mentioned language as a shared objective criteria, he does not believe that

language is an essential part of ethnic identity. His view is counter to the view of many other theorists who claim that ethnic identity is intrinsically connected with language (Lange & Westin, 1985 cited in Liebkind, 1992; Giles & Johnson, 1981) and indeed may be the single most important component of ethnic identity. For the participants in this study, it was often their name that made them recognisable as a member of an ethnic group. Regardless of the extent to which language is entwined with ethnic identity, it is often the most salient feature of ethnic groups (especially when there are no superficial distinguishing features such as skin color) and language acquisition is an important element in the settlement process.

Edwards (1992) suggested that his definition of ethnicity cited above can easily be expanded to a larger entity, nationalism, which he defines as ethnicity with a (total or partial) desire for autonomy added. Nationalism is closely related to ethnocentrism, which is where a person views their own ethnic group as the centre of everything and where the group nourishes its own pride and vanity, and in extreme forms claims superiority and regards outsiders with contempt (Liebkind, 1992). Both nationalism and ethnocentrism are important factors related to the onset of the conflict in what was Yugoslavia (Magas, 1989, 1993) and may well continue to impact on a person's settlement if nationalistic or ethnocentric sentiments exist in or develop in the new country of settlement.

Edwards is not alone in conflating ethnic identity and ethnicity. Smith (1991) defined an ethnic group as "a reference group called upon by people who share a common history and culture, who may be identifiable because they share similar physical features and values and who, through the process of interacting with each other and establishing boundaries with other, identify themselves as being a member of

that group.

Other authors have attempted to make a clear distinction between the two concepts. The definition of ethnic identity provided by Nesdale, Rooney, and Smith (1997) clearly focuses on an individual's choice and subjective identification: "ethnic identity involves the extent to which a person retains the attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviours of their ethnic group as their own" (p. 570). Birman (1994) made a clear distinction between ethnicity and ethnic identity though she fell into the trap of seeing ethnicity as related to minority status. She argued that ethnicity is the collective culture of a minority cultural group, ethnic origin is based on one's biological ancestors and ethnic identity is the extent to which individuals choose to include their particular ethnic classification into their sense of self. Ethnic identification is therefore subjective, a matter of degrees and a person can highlight or obscure their ethnic identity in relation to other social identities (Liebkind, 1992).

The subjective/objective distinction is a common theme in ethnicity studies and is paralleled by the primordialism/situationism explanation of the phenomena of ethnicity. Proponents of primordialism view ethnicity as a deep seated allegiance to kin, religion or territory (McKay, 1982) and is seen as a primordial tie which implies that unity and solidarity are more important than internal divisions. Proponents of situationism at the other end of the spectrum see ethnicity as a "false consciousness", which obscures class inequality and is consciously used as a strategy for pursuing the political and economic goals of particular ethnic groups (Liebkind, 1992). Situationism therefore sees ethnicity as a response to pragmatic and social pressures. It is most useful to explain fluctuations in ethnicity but less able to account for the persistent values inherent in ethnicity (McKay, 1982).

4.2 Social Identity Theory

Liebkind (1992) noted that within social-psychology, ethnic identity is clearly linked with the identity process and ethnicity is concerned with a structural relationship between ethnic groups. Much of ethnic identity theory grew from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) which emphasised the importance, to individuals, of their identity with particular social groups. Social identities are the aspects of an individual's self-concept derived from that person's knowledge of being a member of a group, alongside the value and emotion attached to being a member (Tajfel, 1981). The theory suggests that simply being a member of a group provides individuals with a positive self-concept derived from a feeling of belonging. The formation of social identities occurs through three psycho-social processes. The first is social categorisation, which is categorisation based on any social or physical characteristic that is meaningful in the given social context. The second underlying factor in social identity construction is social comparison, which follows characterisation and is the natural tendency of people to compare themselves to each other. Finally psychological work, both emotional and cognitive, attempts to achieve a positive sense of distinctiveness. This distinctiveness is commonly fulfilled through feeling good about the groups into which individuals have been categorised and is often prompted through being a member of an undervalued group. A strong identity is often associated with marginalised, victimised groups and rarely with the dominant group, for example, blacks often have a strong identity as blacks though whites do not often identity as whites. Members of non-valued groups require the most negotiation and psychological work to achieve a positive identity (Tajfel, 1978, 1981).

Hurtado, Gurin, and Peng (1994) noted the extensive use of Social Identity

Theory in psychological research and its usefulness in understanding the change immigrants experience in a new country. They argued, however, that Tajfel and Turner's (1979) framework pays scant attention to historical and structural conditions that would determine what the social characteristics and group memberships might be. Hurtado et al. (1994) tied together both macro-social and micro-social features of the environment to explain the differences in migrant adaptation. When considering the complex situation in which refugees from what was Yugoslavia migrated and adapted, both the changes which occurred in Yugoslavia and the social context into which they arrived, it is clear that the macro environment cannot be ignored at any stage. A view of acculturation as a linear process in the host society is inadequate, as the refugees may have had competing social and ethnic identities prior to leaving and may have changed their ethnic identification to suit the environmental conditions on arrival. Whilst this change may have only been nominal, even this may have affected their latter experience.

Chapter 5. Refugees' Social Support and Social Networks

An integral part of successful adaptation is the development of social support networks appropriate to the needs of the refugee. Social support networks have been linked with acculturation processes and psychological outcomes (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok 1997; Jayasuriya, Sang & Fieding, 1992; Kim, 1987; Lipson, 1991). Research which addresses refugees' social support has covered a variety of aspects of support but has largely failed to take the socio-cultural or socio-political context into consideration (Rubenstein et al., 1994). Notwithstanding this, a review of the literature is warranted as it outlines the various components of social support which require investigation in cross-cultural research involving refugees.

Social support has been described in the literature as the provisions from social relationships which meet the needs of individuals (Aroian, 1992) and a distinction is made between emotional and instrumental support (Thoits, 1982). Instrumental support provides a means to an end, offering coping assistance throughout preventing, changing or managing stressful situations (Thoits, 1986). Emotional support is considered to be both a means to an end and an end in itself, buffering stressful emotions but also enhancing positive emotions and self-esteem (Aronian, 1992; Thoits, 1986).

Wilcox and Vernberg (1983) in a review of research questions relevant to social support, discussed the need to look at the various components of social support. These components include: what social support is, the types of support, what type of problems could be ameliorated by support, who is the source of support and the personal characteristics of the recipient of the support. House and Kahn (1985)

recommended that within research at least two of the following aspects should be addressed: (a) The existence and quantity of the social support, (b) the structure of the support network, and (c) the function and quality of the support relationships.

Although research findings regarding social support have not always been conclusive, research has linked support to various health and mental health outcomes. Many immigrants do not have adequate support networks on arrival, which leaves them in a highly uncertain and stressful situation (Kim, 1987). Social support is needed to lessen the stress of immigration and enable a fit between the immigrant and their new environment. Strober (1994) found that immigrants who had more readily available and reciprocal family and community social supports had lower psychological distress and higher levels of acculturation adjustment. Loneliness, anxiety, and depression in refugees was also found to decrease with increase in social networks (Jerusalem, Hahn, & Schwarzer, 1996). Other researchers suggest that social support may buffer against stress, noting however that there are many factors which will impact on the outcomes and effects of the support.

In a review of empirical research on social support in the elderly, Rubenstein et al. (1994), stressed the complexity of social relations. They suggested that within social network research, attention must be given to the cultural background of people, due to differences in family configuration and ethnic identity, and to whether traditional ways of support can be transplanted across societies. Rubenstein et al. noted that social relations occur within context, including the cultural context. They also pointed out a distinction made in the literature between "natural social networks" such as the nuclear and extended family, and constructed networks, which usually occur at times of special need. Constructed networks are ones which do not develop

through familial links but are constructed to meet a particular purpose or to replace naturally occurring networks. Refugees may develop networks with other, non-related refugees of the same background or with members of the host community, to facilitate their settlement. Many of the refugees from what was Yugoslavia, arriving in Australia, have few or no contacts (family or friends). Others have relations who may have migrated up to 50 years prior to their own arrival and may not even speak their language.

For refugees arriving without family or relatives it is therefore probable that any networks developed are constructed ones. Jerusalem et al. (1996) noted that the consequences of widespread network disruption due to migration are not well documented. Jerusalem and his colleagues investigated loneliness and social bonding in 235 East German refugees during a two year study. They found the breakdown of social networks after migration to be an added stressor to factors such as unemployment, financial insecurity and lack of housing. They found that “active networking represents an instrumental way of coping with a social crisis” (p. 241) and suggested that it would be more difficult for refugees who have to cross language and cultural barriers. They suggested there is also a need for more detailed information regarding socialisation subsequent to migration, “the frequencies of social contacts, ratings of social distance and perceptions about the roles friends played in the coping and adaptation process” (p. 241). Further they suggested a need for more detail regarding the quality of interpersonal relationships.

A number of researchers have investigated the impact of various types of support networks in refugees. Studies of South East Asian refugees have found better psychological adaptation in those who have developed close links with non immigrant

members of the host society (Kim, 1987). This is due to them being better able to understand the host society through communication with its members. Kim reported that immigrants are most likely to seek support with other immigrants in their ethnic community especially when the community is well established and when they are married to someone of the same ethnic background. Contact with the ethnic community is often the preferred option on arrival due to cultural and linguistic similarities and is thought to be adaptive in the short-term (Kim, 1987).

A number of studies addressing adaptation to acculturation have investigated the role of support networks with either members of the heritage culture or host culture. Most studies have found supportive relationships with both cultures to be predictive of successful adaptation (Berry et al., 1987).

Whilst most social support research has focused on and measured individual support, some recent work has addressed the importance of considering groups as social networks (Felton & Berry, 1992). Felton and Berry proposed an expanded notion of support, which encompasses group membership, behaviour settings and communities. Felton and Berry argued that the sense of community within the relational community, "characterised by the social cohesion that develops with close interpersonal ties" (Heller, 1989, p. 6) is similar to emotional support.

The concept of a "psychological sense of community" ("PSOC") (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sarason, 1974) is widely researched in community psychology and was developed initially by Sarason (1974). Sarason suggested that PSOC includes:

The perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is

part of a larger dependable and stable structure. (p. 157)

Although sense of community has traditionally focused on geographic boundaries, more recently there has been a move toward viewing sense of community as a function of friendship, esteem and tangible support (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984). Sarason (1974) suggested that a high level of involvement in one's community and experience of social support correlates with a strong sense of community, and through having social support people may get involved in their community which in turn enhances their psychological well being. More recent research has also noted psychological, social and instrumental benefits of group membership and involvement in one's community (Berry 1986a; Smith, 1991).

People belong to more than one community (Heller, 1989; Sarason, 1974), though they will often have a primary community that provides them with values, norms and a sense of history (Smith, 1991). Often this primary community is ethnically based, providing members with cultural knowledge and systems of meaning (Sonn & Fisher, 1998). A number of authors have demonstrated that ethnic and racial groups provide members with a sense of belonging that is psychologically important (Berry 1986a, Smith, 1991) and some researchers have suggested the need for ethnically homogenous support groups (Berry, 1986a; Cox, 1989).

An examination of group support may provide a richer description of network structures, which would in turn assist in identifying all possible avenues of support. Further identification of group support processes will enable a better understanding of the role of informal group and organisational group support, including failures within the group process (Felton & Shinn, 1992). For refugees who settle in Perth, group

support through organised church and voluntary organisations (DIMA, 1997) is often the major initial form of support. Therefore, consideration of the development of social networks relate' to the group's structures is warranted.

Whilst there is no research literature regarding social networks of refugees within Perth, the author's discussions with service providers indicate that refugees of mixed marriages may have difficulty developing networks within the established "ethnic" communities, due to ethnic tensions. The Yugoslav communities are fairly small. Approximately 1400 people in Perth identified as Bosnian in the 1996 census (Visser and Beer, 1998) and are not located in enclaves in the metropolitan area. The consequent lack of choice of people to socialise with, together with transport difficulties may also hinder network development. It may be that these refugees will develop networks within the wider Australian community or other non-Yugoslav refugees who are accessible. However, this process may be hampered by low English proficiency or personal trauma.

The social support literature suggests that social support is a useful concept for investigation as it relates to mental health outcomes. The research literature, however, is not conclusive, suggesting that some support may have negative consequences (Patel, 1992). It is therefore important for researchers and policy makers to have a greater understanding of the nature of and roles played by social support for immigrant groups within the context of their immigration.

Chapter 6. Summary - The Context and Process of Settlement

The literature described above provides a rich basis for researching the settlement process of refugees from what was Yugoslavia. The importance of locating research within the sociopolitical and sociocultural context is emphasised by researchers across disciplines and within all fields reviewed. The context of the refugees' migration, that of war and oppression based on ethnicity impacts not only on their initial experiences as refugees, but will continue to impact on their acculturation and settlement in the future. It is important therefore, that there be a greater understanding of the interaction between context and process so that appropriate service provision can occur and that the experiences of one group will not be assumed to be synonymous with those of another group.

The interaction between acculturation, adaptation, social support, ethnic identity and ethnicity has been described across disciplines. Research that considers the groups of people as well as the individual level adds to a rich literature on social support and may assist in developing a broader range of support options for isolated people.

This research explores the acculturation process of refugees within the sociocultural and sociopolitical context of their immigration. Particular attention is paid towards the refugees' experience with, and attitudes towards their ethnic communities and mainstream Australians and how this influences their acculturation process. The development and existence of support networks will be explored within this context, with a view to understanding what assists refugees in developing the appropriate support networks in their new land.

6.1 Research aims and objectives

The current research will explore the following questions:

- 1) What is the link between the sociopolitical and sociocultural context and the acculturation process of mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia?
- 2) How does the sociopolitical and sociocultural context affect the development of social support networks of the refugees?
- 3) What barriers and conduits to the development of social support networks exist and in what ways can community psychologists and others in the welfare sector assist refugees in developing support networks?

An examination of the support networks that refugees from what was Yugoslavia bring with them and those they develop will be undertaken. This will include both material and emotional support and the contextual influences on the development of support networks. The support investigated will not be limited to individual support but expanded to include notions of support by communities or groups as articulated by the participants.

- 4) How does the sociopolitical and sociocultural context affect the ethnic identity of the refugees?

The question of the ethnic identity of the refugees who arrive from what was Yugoslavia is complex. This research will investigate the extent to which participants identified as “Yugoslav” prior to and subsequent to the conflict compared with identification as Croatian, Muslim, Bosnian or Serbian (or other). The impact of oppression and the wars on the participants’ ethnic identity and the extent to which they have developed an Australian identity will also be addressed. In order to allow for a thorough investigation of the experiences of the participants, no one definition of

identity will be used, rather the various concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter will be applied as appropriate.

The aim of this research is not to try to develop or verify existing definitions, rather to add to the diversity of thoughts regarding ethnicity, which will continue to evolve as society becomes more complex and multicultural and becomes aware of the differences associated with ethnic group membership.

Chapter 7. Method

7.1 Methodology and Design

This research is located within the sociocultural, sociopolitical and sociohistorical context of the participants' experiences as outlined in chapter 2. It draws on a systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Lewin, 1951; Kelly, 1966; Murrell, 1973; Plas, 1986; Vincent & Trickett, 1983), in which individuals are located within a series of social systems that are interdependent and changing.

A systems approach to research encourages the researcher to consider a broader range of environments as important and influencing the social world of participants, which in turn assists with understanding the experiences of the participants. A systems perspective allows for the wider political and social environment to be taken into consideration. In this research the political situation in what was Yugoslavia, the established ethnic communities and the mainstream Australian communities as well as the family and individual psychological process were all deemed important and inter-related.

This research is implemented within a social constructionist and community psychology framework. A social constructionist orientation assumes that reality is socially constructed, multiple and dynamic (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998; Burr, 1995; Dockecki, 1986, 1992; Gergen, 1985; Harding, 1987; Kuhn 1970; Mulvey, 1988; Prilleltensky, 1989) and is consistent with the principles of community psychology. Community psychology recognises the inherent subjectivity of the research process and argues that phenomena should be studied in their sociopolitical

and sociocultural contexts (Polkinghorne, 1983; Rappaport, 1984; Sheehan, 1996; Trickett, 1996; Trickett, Watts, & Birman, 1993, 1994; Vega, 1992; Veno & Thomas, 1996).

Proponents of both social constructionism and community psychology argue for the use of multiple methods in research, including the use of qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews and oral histories. These methods allow for an understanding both of the phenomena in context and of the particular subtleties of the various levels of the environment in which the research takes place. Only through investigating phenomena in their various contexts is it possible to understand which elements of the phenomena are universal and which are culture-context specific or only occur within a given historical moment (Trickett, 1996).

This research is located itself solidly within the context of the refugees' migration and settlement experiences. It recognises that the participants' ethnicity and ethnic identity are more than merely demographics. Rather, they are social constructions inherently loaded with cultural, political and psychological meaning. These constructions are changing and dynamic, altering through interaction with others. For example, the meaning attached to being "Yugoslav" changes as the political situation in what was Yugoslavia changes and as the participants interact with mainstream Australians and other people from what was Yugoslavia.⁵ Likewise

⁵ As the author was working on her final drafts in April/May 1999, NATO was in the process of bombing Serbia. (Data were collected before the bombing started). This change in roles, whereby the Serbs were being bombed rather than bombing others, meant that for Serbs being 'Serb' had a new meaning, that of being victims and a nation under siege. During this time the self-identity expressed by the participants, a number of which the author continued to have contact with, changed.

notions of social support are also socially constructed and may vary from person to person.

This study employs a multiple-case research methodology using conversational interviews (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998). Multiple-case research uses the researcher to bring a number of individual cases into conversation with one another, in order to construct a shared reality (Rosenwald, 1988). The stories told are complex, multifaceted and often contradictory and it is the researcher's task to integrate them into a meaningful shared reality and to develop theories that are solidly grounded in the participants' stories (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998). Conversational interviews use a process that is interactive and through which questions from one interview are built on responses from previous interviews. A strength of the process is that the same topic is revisited in subsequent interviews, allowing the participant to build on what they have said, to clarify issues for the researcher and to reject or accept the interpretation of the issues made by the researcher.

The strengths of multiple case research using conversational interviews are essentially that it builds convincing and useful theory, based on the detailed knowledge of individuals' lives, and that it provides rich and deep data. This theory is not only convincing to the researcher, but also to the participant and others in the community of interests, who are actively involved in its formation.

Rather than entering into the research with set ideas regarding the domains or themes to be investigated or with a "tabula rasa" as espoused by supporters of grounded theory (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) this research employed a "focused conceptual development" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995) approach. This approach involved using preliminary interviews to narrow the scope of

the research from one broad theme, settlement, into a number of conceptual domains for investigation.

The research was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved interviewing critical participants familiar with the population under investigation. The purpose of these interviews was to develop the substantive domains in which to locate the research. Following this, scoping interviews were held with a small number of refugees to confirm the domains of the research. The second stage formed the main part of the research and involved interviews with another group of refugees. The purpose of these interviews was to provide rich data for analysis.

7.2 Stage 1 - Preliminary studies - Critical participant and scoping interviews to identify conceptual domains

The critical participant interview sample constituted a purposive sample. The participants were chosen because they had knowledge of refugee settlement issues, and had worked with mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia. Critical participants included migrant workers in the On-Arrival Accommodation program, migrant workers from what was Yugoslavia who were located at Migrant Resource Centres and other community workers who had contact with refugees from what was Yugoslavia. A number of these interviews formed part of an On-Arrival Accommodation evaluation project which was carried out by both the Fremantle Migrant Resource Centre, Perth and the Northern Suburbs Migrant Resource Centre, Perth. The scoping interviews also were part of this project.

In the critical participant interviews, no questionnaire was used. Rather the interviews took place as informal discussions about settlement issues facing mixed

marriage refugees. In each of these interviews hand-written notes were taken. Results from these interviews indicated that the issues associated with settlement for this group included social support development, ethnic specific services and provision of material support and general settlement outcomes. There was mention of difficulties that the refugees had in accessing services and supports that were sensitive to their mixed marriage status, and the stress these difficulties placed on their relationships. Critical participants indicated that the refugees were not able to socialise within the established communities from what was Yugoslavia due to their being in a mixed marriage. These interviews clearly identified acculturation and adaptation, social support, ethnic identity and ethnicity as central psychological issues for understanding the settlement experience. Linked to these were also the role of ethnic communities and general settlement service provision.

Participants for the scoping interviews were a purposive sample chosen on the basis that they were refugees from what was Yugoslavia. There were five participants at this stage (four female and one male) and they had been in Australia between 10 months and 4 years. All identified as being in a mixed marriage. Two were respective members of a couple, but were interviewed separately. All participants were over 18 years and were contacted through the welfare and social workers at the Fremantle Migrant Resource Centre. Four participants were interviewed in English and one in Croatian, with the assistance of the Croatian Welfare Worker.

These interviews were derived from the results of the critical participant interviews and explored the concepts identified in these earlier interviews. The interviews were semi-structured and based on the questions outlined in Appendix A. Examples of questions asked include:

“Do you see people from Australia? In what situations - where did you meet them?”

“What sort of social network or social support would you like to have ideally?”

“Do you feel part of a community here in Australia?”

“Tell me about the community.”

“How important do you think it is to adopt an Australian way of life?”

These interviews were analysed thematically using the steps outlined in Miles and Huberman (1994). The findings from the scoping interviews suggest that both ethnic identity and attachment or lack of attachment to the established ethnic communities are important issues to consider when investigating social support in this population of refugees. Rather than form links with an established ethnic community on arrival, a number of participants chose to avoid contact with the community from the outset and only associate with “Australians” or non-Yugoslav refugees. This appeared to be because a number of participants had had negative experiences with members of the various established ethnic communities. Whilst the instrumental aspects of settlement were prominent in the interviews (English proficiency, education, employment, material help etc), a strong link between settlement supports and the politics within the ethnic communities was also evident.

Participants indicated that a link with mainstream Australians was needed in order to understand Australian habits and culture, as well as to improve their English. English proficiency and employment were often mentioned as useful ways of establishing contacts and necessary for successful settlement. Success in establishing networks was tied in with their feeling of being Australian, as those who wanted to meet Australians also indicated a strong sense of being Australian.

When asked about their sense of community, comments were made regarding

the cultural differences between the Australian community and the community in their country of origin, such as the way people socialise. No-one reported a strong sense of community, though a number reported being “Australian” regardless of their community attachment. A number of participants linked the strength of their support networks to personal attributes such as positive attitude. Development of support networks was often attributed to personal factors such as “outgoingness”.

After these interviews, as part of the focused conceptual development, the results drawn from the data were again discussed with a number of critical participants who provided verification of the conceptual domains identified. The domains identified within the scoping interviews were acculturation and adaptation, social support, ethnic identity and ethnicity. Within these domains a number of issues arose: (a) social support network development and its relationship to ethnicity and personal factors, (b) the need for and difficulties with developing links with mainstream Australians, and (c) the development of a feeling of being Australian.

7.3 Stage 2 - Main interviews

7.3.1 Participants

Participants for the main interviews were again purposively chosen on the basis that they were in a mixed marriage, had sufficient English to be interviewed without an interpreter, and had been in Australia longer than two years. Eight women and four men who identified themselves as being from what was Yugoslavia, and who identified themselves as being in a mixed marriage were interviewed. Half worked as professionals when living in what was Yugoslavia prior to the conflict. All had been in Australia for longer than two years and were over the age of 18. All couples had

children. The ages of the children ranged from early school age to early 20's.

Participants were again recruited through service providers currently working with refugees as well as other participants. Some participants knew each other, which limited the breadth of experiences as some were resident at the OAA at the same time. All interviews were carried out in English.

For the final round of interviews, five of the participants interviewed in the scoping or main round of interviews were interviewed a second time (1 male and 4 female) and one participant (female) was interviewed three times. Only participants with a reasonable command of English were chosen for these final interviews, due to the complexity of the themes discussed.

The number of participants was within the range (8-20 participants) recommended by Burgess-Limerick and Burgess-Limerick, (1998). However, participants were only interviewed at most three times rather than up to 10 times as suggested. Additional interviews would again increase the breadth and depth of the data, however, due to time constraints only this amount was possible. It was felt that the data received was sufficiently rich to lead to the results drawn and the process of verifying results with the participants ensured credibility.

7.3.2 Procedure for the main interviews

As noted earlier, this study employs a multiple-case research methodology using conversational interviews (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998). Interviews began with a rapport building stage including introductions, explanation of the research and sufficient time for the answering of questions related to the research. Explanations covered the purpose of the research, the methodology, ownership of the

data, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity issues, and was adapted from Glesne and Peshkin (1992) (See Appendix B).

A letter of disclosure in English and Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian was sent to all participants for the main interviews and a consent form was signed prior to the interview (see Appendix C). Following the initial introductions, background information was collected, which also assisted in developing rapport. This was followed by the main body of the interview. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and three hours including the rapport building stage.

During the rapport building stage and ensuing conversational stage of the interviews, the researcher disclosed her reasons for undertaking research with refugees if asked or if it fitted in naturally with the conversation. This included her background as a daughter of European migrants and her work and educational history. The researcher conducted all the interviews herself in order to maximise consistency in questioning.

The interviews centred around the concepts that emerged from the preliminary studies. These concepts were acculturation and adaptation, social support, ethnic identity and ethnicity, and community. The interviews were conversational in nature and the list of questions found in Appendix D was used as a prompt.

Examples of questions asked included:

“What has/hasnot helped you to meet people here in Australia?”

“What sort of services do you think the Migrant Resource Centres and other services might provide to assist new arrivals to meet other people and to settle?”

“What are your thoughts about your ethnic community?”

“How has that impacted on your social network development?”

“Do you feel comfortable around Australians or do you feel comfortable around people from your own country?”

All interviews were tape-recorded with prior permission of participants. These interviews were later transcribed by the author. At each stage of the interviews data were analysed according to the analytic procedures outlined in chapter 8.

Following this round of interviews a number of participants were interviewed again. These interviews were based on the results of the previous interviews and incorporated questions and statements for clarification regarding emerging themes and theory about the settlement process of the refugees. Again the interviews were conversational in nature and the list of questions and statements were merely a prompt for the researcher. The main ideas in these interviews were selected and transcribed, rather than the whole interview. Examples of questions asked and themes referred to include:

“Tell me about wanting to be part of Australian community.”

“Is there a difference between being part of the community and a citizen?”

“What does it mean for your identity to have no place in Yugoslavia?”

“Mixed marriage couples understand each other and stay together.”

“Feeling of belonging to Australia and feeling of being Australian is different to feeling Yugoslav. Feeling Yugoslav was a deep emotional thing bound by history, ethnicity and experience of growing up there.”

“Ethnicity - this is not important in Australia so much? However it is important for support and determines who one sees.”

“Yugoslavia is about the past, Australia is about the future.”

“What did your community look like at home?”

In these interviews the researcher both presented general ideas and theories about what was occurring for mixed marriage couples as a group and sought to verify information presented to her in the previous interviews. The participants were explicitly asked to counter any theories that the researcher put forward if they did not agree with her, and to add any other suggestions. Generally the participants indicated that they thought the theories made sense and that the researcher had understood them.

At each stage the process was fluid. Whilst the question list was referred to and all areas covered in each interview, additional questions were asked as they came to the researcher and if the previous participants had indicated something interesting that the researcher wanted to follow up. Rather than this being a contamination of the data, this is consistent with the changing, reflective nature of multiple case interviews (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998).

Chapter 8. Results

8.1 Analytic process

The process of analysis used involved a number of the steps outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), Patton (1990) and Henwood and Pidgeon (1995). Employing these techniques ensured analysis of the data in a manner that was rigorous and meaningful.

Firstly the researcher looked for plausible and common patterns and themes (or domains) within the data and sought verification of these. These themes were identified and coded according to the domains under investigation (acculturation, ethnic identity, ethnicity, social support, initial settlement experience and material support) as well as other domains, such as citizenship. Instances that related to these common themes were counted to check that they were not isolated cases. When there appeared to be contradictions within or across themes, questions related to these areas were included in the final interviews. Connecting and mediating variables were also sought which provided a link or a source of distinction between themes. At each stage the researcher remained open to the possibility that the themes would be disconfirmed.

The themes identified were noted and the tapes were listened to a number of times to note instances of conversation which concurred with or disagreed with the findings. The researcher did not attempt to compress the data into one or two outcomes but rather recognised that multiple and conflicting meanings were possible. For example, some participants viewed their stay at the On-Arrival Accommodation flats as positive and supportive and others did not. The process undertaken also involved constant referral back to the original source (transcripts and tapes) for

verification in the data of theory and description of experience extracted.

In order to verify the authenticity and meaningfulness of the data the interviews were discussed with a number of critical participants. The process of referring the outcome theories back to the participants for verification in this process was more convincing and useful than counting the number of times the same word was repeated or analysing the words repeatedly. English was not the participants' first language and parts of their conversation were ambiguous and needed clarification. Also, to do a simple word analysis was not useful, given the limited vocabulary of the participants and the complex nature of the concepts under investigation.

Verification of the results was primarily through the final interview stage, whereby the results were presented to the participants and comments solicited. For each of the themes, ideas and arguments presented in the final results, quotes from the participants are supplied as reference points. The results and discussion section of the thesis was also given to one of the participants to read, at her request. She indicated that the results were to the point and had captured the experiences of the group very well. She also said that the results were informative and interesting to her as a participant and refugee.

The processes outlined above enabled the researcher to develop credible results rather than merely representing what she imagined was being said. This ensured that the results were 'trustworthy' (Nagy and Viney, 1994). Multiple-case research provides a unique method of trustworthiness in that emerging theory is discussed with the participants in order to determine whether it is meaningful and also to check the reporting of data by the researcher. Conversational interviews are preferred to quantitative questionnaires or to structured interviews due to the complex nature of the

circumstances resulting in the experience as refugees. The use of critical participants and reference to a broad range of theoretical perspectives to explain the same data, assisted in developing credibility. The results are dependable as they were fed back to the participants and critical participants for verification. The use of quotes and reference back to relevant literature within the results and discussion sections also aided in enhancing the dependability of the data as the reader can decide whether the raw data is reflected in the interpretations and whether the process is adequate. The research is transferable to the extent that there is a clear documentation of the research context, allowing for replication of the study in future research.

Issues of bias were addressed through the open research methodology employed, which meant that each stage of the research design and analysis was open for inspection by a number of colleagues and the participants themselves. Efforts were made by the researcher to identify and address specific biases as they arose, through challenging them and articulating them with colleagues and the participants. Each interview was reviewed by the researcher to specifically reflect on value judgements and assumptions and these were addressed with participants.

The results are reported thematically, using the processes discussed in the introductory chapters (settlement process, acculturation, adaptation, ethnicity/ethnic identity and social support) and with a reflection on the context of the refugees' settlement. The results begin by describing the initial settlement experience which "sets the scene" for later experience.

As the section develops, description of the context is integrated into meaningful themes.⁶

Throughout the results section, for ease of reading, mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia are referred to as “mixed marriage refugees”. Some interviewees also used the term “Bosnian” to refer to mixed marriage refugees and refer to their community as the “Bosnian community”. The term “Bosnian” within quotes, unless otherwise stipulated, also refers to mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia and was often used by the participants.

The data were checked for gender differences and the only difference was that more women than men participated. This was because a number of men declined to be interviewed. It was suggested by one critical participant that this reluctance to be interviewed may be due to the men’s experience of trauma during the wars, and ensuing reluctance to discuss anything to do with the war.

It is likely that the settlement experiences of people who suffered trauma before arrival is different to that of refugees who did not suffer any significant trauma. It was not possible, however, within the scope of the current research to examine the effects of trauma on settlement.

⁶ The quotes in the results section are taken direct from the transcripts of the interview, however, in some instances the words are changed slightly in order that it reads smoothly. Three dots... represents a gap in speech or the removal of filler words such as ‘you know’. Any identifying information such as the gender of the participant is omitted as the community is so small that there is a risk of them being identified by others. As there is a slight chance that participants might be recognised in one quote, to minimise the possibility of their words being cross-referenced, no identifying information accompanies the quotes.

8.2 Initial settlement experience - On-Arrival Accommodation (OAA) and Community Resettlement Support Scheme (CRSS)

From the moment refugees arrive in Australia, they begin the processes of psychological, sociological and economical adaptation to their new environment (see Berry, 1997). The participants described their initial settlement as both stressful on the one hand and positive on the other. A recurring theme was the friendliness of the Australian people as a whole and particularly the staff whom they dealt with at various migrant services. One participant described their initial experience,

I found people friendly... I felt very relaxed (here) after what had happened in our country. I was very, very happy, I thought maybe I would have a new life.

The initial settlement experience was important for later settlement and there was a marked difference between the experience of those in the OAA program who stayed at the flats and those who were supported by community and church groups as part of the CRSS program. Generally the CRSS group had a much easier time in the first few months and appreciated the contact with Australians that the scheme provided. One couple commented on the visits by the church on their first day and the continued visits by the parishioners and the priest,

We know people are thinking about us. Especially we were very happy because Australian people are visiting us.

Another recipient of CRSS support commented,

They were Australian and very helpful... It was warm contact you know, what was most important for me, it wasn't too formal and it was warm and friendly.

so it is what I wanted, it's what was important for me.

A number of the participants also commented that they were surprised at the level of support received, not only emotionally but also materially, and that the volunteers basically did everything they needed in the first few weeks,

My first experience was very nice, it really surprised me.

The only negative comment regarding the CRSS program was that the volunteers and family were not matched in age or interests, which limited the types of social activities they participated in. However, the participant who made this comment was not critical of the actual volunteers and was also appreciative of their support.

The settlement experience at the OAA flats was generally regarded as more stressful. Whilst there were no complaints about the staff, it was noted that they were often overworked and were not able to attend to everyone's problems. Those refugees with some English were generally left to their own devices. In comparison to the CRSS recipients, the initial few weeks at the flats was considered the most stressful time since arrival and one participant suggested the government needed to find a way to provide an "easy settlement, not a stressful one". The stress felt was articulated by a number of participants.

The problem with me was that I was so tired when I came here, physically and psychologically, so tired and after 15 days we started school and went here and there and had problems to solve and I was thinking I would die because I needed rest physically and psychologically. I needed time without anyone, one or two or three months, only to leave me alone, though better perhaps with some duties... it was the hardest time since we came.

She (OAA worker) was really nice, she supported us with everything, you know, psychological things when you were upset or nervous. Because you don't know English, she was very helpful. But others who stayed with CRSS got along much quicker.

You need time to feel that you are safe... you are still under a great pressure of that war trauma... and you are forced into everyday life at the same time.

A major concern of the participants at OAA was that the information presented at the information sessions was not clear or relevant at that particular time, and that the residents were disoriented and needed many months to actually find out what was going on. One participant recounted filling in many forms, but not having any idea what they were for. Many commented that whilst things were explained, they really did not understand what was said. Others commented that they found out later on about services, which might have been useful early in their stay.

One participant described feeling like a "dog on a leash" and another described moving in to a flat in a suburb after wandering for hours only to discover that the flat she was looking for was directly behind the OAA flats.

We had a lack of information, although they gave us heaps of information. But we didn't have the opportunity to look around... they said "you've got the white pages" but we did not have the white pages at all "where can I get the white pages?"... and the yellow pages? When I heard about the yellow pages, I thought "what the hell are the yellow pages, who is going to tell me?" ... We only had one woman who facilitated all the families, I think 20 families, so she couldn't help everybody with each particular problem, so we relied on each other.

Participants also felt that it took time to undo the decisions made through incomplete or irrelevant information presented at the flats.

There is a heap of information, you can't gather or separate what is important at that moment, you have to go step by step, you can't give all information at once, because I won't understand it... so we got a heap of information and we were overloaded with information and when you are overloaded with information, you know nothing.

I must say I was very disappointed with the accommodation really... everything was good actually, but the problem is when you come, you don't know what to ask, we had too much information in a short time, we didn't have enough time to select it, but it was helpful.

Others complained that they were given incorrect information, before arrival, by Australian representatives overseas. One couple was told overseas that they could not use their qualifications, which they later found out was untrue. Others said that relying on other refugees was also fraught with difficulties, as they often inadvertently gave incorrect or out of date information. Overall the difficulties experienced in obtaining the required information caused great stress and often exacerbated their financial burdens, through missed opportunities for work or for grants.

Tied in with a lack of appropriate information was often a feeling of gratitude toward the government and a feeling that they could not ask for more, even when in need. A number of participants said that they did not expect anything and that they received what they needed to survive. Most commented on their gratitude at being able to receive social security, while at the same time they would rather have been working and were frustrated at not having a job.

I didn't expect anything when I came here, everything we had was helpful, I was very appreciative...I didn't go anywhere to ask for help, I had problems, I needed many things and I was thinking that I must accept that, while on the other hand, other people I know went to immigration to ask... but we didn't

even know that it was existing (help).

For example, they send you for training which you don't want, but you don't want to say no, meaning it would be ungrateful of you to say no, as they are paying for it, but really you don't like it.

Whilst this initial settlement time was often a strain, the friendliness of the receiving community was somewhat of an antidote. One person said that they no longer felt like a refugee once they were in Australia and no-one ever said "bloody Bosnian".

The initial experiences recounted by the participants is consistent with Stein's (1986) theory of settlement which suggests that there is often a discrepancy between what actually happens and the expectation of what will happen. The main expectation that appears not to have been met was an expectation that they would find jobs easily. A number of participants claimed, though, to have no prior expectations, which is possibly due to a lack of knowledge about Australia prior to arrival.

The experiences of this group also fit with the stages of settlement described by Stein (1986), who views the first few months as very stressful and as a time of extreme loss. The initial few months were often described as the hardest and a number of the participants said that they had thoughts of going home. Only one participant indicated they still wished to return to Bosnia whilst a number said they had thought of returning but, after visiting Bosnia, they had changed their minds as things were still very bad there and the society had changed.

In the second stage described by Stein (1986), encompassing the first couple of years, the refugees start to rebuild their lives, working very hard to reduce the feeling of loss. For the participants this was a very active time as they learned English, trained

in Australian tertiary institutions and built or bought a home. Few had reached the third stage of settlement (4-5 years), which is characterised by discouragement. Most participants were still actively engaged in building a career and life for themselves, even though they indicated that the future here rested mainly with their children.

The initial settlement experience during which the refugee familiarises herself with her new environment was categorised by stress. The determinants of this stress were lack of appropriate information, psychological overload, information overload, a lack of English, a feeling that they were left to work things out alone and a feeling of dependency on the government. Many of the immediate needs of refugees outlined by Cox (1987) and Pittaway (1991), such as employment, orientation and information, and accommodation were mentioned as a cause of stress. This stress was reportedly much worse for the refugees in the OAA program than for those in the CRSS program who reported feeling much more supported, both materially and psychologically.

8.3 Acculturation

During and following the initial settlement stage described above, refugees begin a process of acculturation. Acculturation refers to the changes which groups and individuals undergo when they come into contact with another culture (Williams & Berry, 1991) and may be determined by asking individuals about the value they place in maintaining their culture and identity and maintaining positive relationships with the larger society (Berry, 1986a). The acculturation process is different for each individual and group and is determined by a number of social and psychological factors (Berry 1997).

In order to examine this process in the participants, they were asked about the

extent to which they had or were envisaging taking on the Australian way of life, way of thinking and customs and the extent to which they were maintaining their own culture and customs.⁷

One couple, when asked whether they intended keeping their cultural habits from Yugoslavia or embrace the Australian way of life, replied,

Only Australia, I lost my country so now I am Australian, only Australian.

Our children are happy in Australia and I am happy because of that.

We want to become Australian, for our future and for our children's future... we don't want to think about the past, only the future.

These comments indicate that these participants saw value in developing relationships with the larger Australian society. However, it was not always easy to embrace the Australian way of life as factors such as English language moderated the extent to which the participants could participate. One person when asked if they wished to adopt this way of life responded,

Yes, it is very important but very difficult, but all the time I am thinking about my English, I think that if I can speak English well, I will not have any problems.

Other participants also spoke of the difficulties they had in developing links

⁷ Whilst a number of the questions asked may appear to be assimilationist in tone, this was not the intention of the researcher and no assumption was made regarding the acculturative outcomes or processes of the group. Questions that focused on the development of ties with mainstream Australians and on adopting Australian cultural habits were asked as critical participants indicated that these were issues for the participants.

with mainstream Australians. When asked whether they “felt part of the mainstream Australian community” that is, not any Yugoslav community, most participants responded in the negative or with uncertainty. Many indicated, however, a desire to be part of the Australian community, suggesting that they placed a value on mixing with mainstream Australians.

So far I have done every thing I could to be part of it, it doesn't really matter if I am, but I want to feel part of it.

I feel that I have lost my country, that I have no ground under myself... and here I feel much better... we didn't choose the situation, but we chose to start a new life here so we have to do everything to cure ourselves, and to be part of the community as much as we can.

Some participants indicated that they did not think they would ever be fully part of the community, but that their children will be. Their children, they said, understand the nuances of the society, such as the jokes and were much quicker to participate at all levels in the community. One participant commented,

My daughter will be a part of the community in the full sense of the word.

The process of individual acculturation was tied in with the process of group acculturation as suggested by Birman (1994). As a group, mixed marriage refugees are effectively stateless, not being able to return to any part of what was Yugoslavia for political reasons (this was not true for one of the participants). This forced them to seek ties with Australia in concrete ways, such as in taking citizenship and learning the language. There was also, however, an “across the board” acceptance of Australia and

its way of life. This process was ongoing. A number of people mentioned how strange they thought some Australian habits were when they arrived, such as the relaxed way of dressing, the barbecue and the notion of "bring a plate", a custom which would be offensive back home. Gradually, they adopted these habits and now enjoyed them.

As a group, however, they also saw the value in maintaining their identity and characteristics and continued to identify with what was Yugoslavia and to maintain their language and cultural traditions, such as feast days. The most clearly articulated identification with their former homeland was a desire for their children to keep their language and know where they are from. All participants spoke of maintaining their language and a number expressed regret that their children were losing their language. Only one person indicated that they wished to return to Yugoslavia and he/she was also the only person who felt it would be possible, politically. Most of the participants spoke of the pain that they had endured prior to migration and indicated that this moved them towards embracing Australia.

Everything that happened there was so sad, so sad, that you would like to forget everything, so it is better for myself to not have anything....but I do feel something because my mother is there... and I can't rub out half my life... it is not easy but I will try to accept this country as mine because I know one day my children will be really Australian, they will not be Bosnian.

The acceptance of Australia appears to be in part due to the pain of remembering what happened and what is continuing to happen in what was Yugoslavia. So whilst economic migrants might remember fondly their homeland, this was not possible for this group. Acceptance of Australia was expressed in terms of

gratitude, of respect and as an inevitable outcome given their political situation.

Generally the group was working towards an outcome of biculturalism (or integration), which is the maintenance of cultural integrity as well as the movement to be part of the dominant society (Berry, 1986a). Biculturalism suggests that culturally distinct groups benefit by maintaining an allegiance to their culture of origin as well as by participating in the host culture. Biculturalism requires acceptance by both communities (Szapocznik et al., 1980) and whilst the group clearly did not feel accepted by the established ex-Yugoslav communities, they felt accepted by other mixed marriage refugees and spoke of this group as a community.

There appeared to be no conflict reported in embracing the Australian culture and maintaining their Yugoslav culture and no participants indicated that they did not wish to embrace Australian society. One couple suggested that they would like to put Yugoslavia totally behind them, and to solely embrace Australia, however, they wished to keep the language so their children could speak with their relatives.

The distinction between instrumental and psychological biculturalism drawn by Birman (1994) may assist in understanding this couple's acculturation process. Aspects of the old culture such as communication appeared to be maintained solely for instrumental reasons. Psychologically, however, this couple has rejected Yugoslavia and is seeking assimilation into mainstream Australia. Therefore, whilst for other people maintenance of language might be seen as indicating an outcome of integration, this may not always be the case.

Other participants appeared to be both psychologically and instrumentally acculturated, being involved in both the mixed marriage community and the mainstream Australian communities, and having a sense of identity of their culture.

This outcome is consistent with Birman's (1994) integrated bicultural outcome, which is defined as having a sense of identity of their culture and being highly behaviourally involved in both cultures. One participant likened their being Australian to being reinvented,

It is not hard for us to accept a new way of living. it's another life, it is a change to start again, as if you were born again. really literally as if you were born again.

From the data collected in the current research it is not clear what the acculturation outcomes of the participants are or will be. Currently the refugees appear to be moving through a process of integrating into the Australian society, whilst maintaining values and traditions from their former homeland, however, they may in time move more towards embracing their original culture and rejecting the Australian culture. It is clear that pragmatic concerns (statelessness, their children's futures, and need to learn English and find work) have influenced the extent to which the participants have embraced Australia. The pain encountered due to the loss of their country has also influenced the degree to which they maintain allegiances to what was Yugoslavia. It may not be possible to speak of final acculturative outcomes, rather it is more appropriate to speak of the process of acculturation which may have a variety of outcomes.

8.4 Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity and ethnicity were also explored in the context of acculturation as it is the value of maintaining one's identity which is questioned during the acculturation process and because the participants' ethnicity influenced their migration

and settlement experiences (Berry, 1997).

8.4.1 A Yugoslav identity

Due to the political and social situation in what was Yugoslavia prior to and during the conflict it was not assumed that the participants would express the same ethnic identity. As part of the investigation into acculturation, therefore, participants were asked about their ethnic identity. There was generally a strong Yugoslav identity expressed with most participants referring to themselves as Yugoslav. Only two of the participants expressed an identity which was not Yugoslav, but related to one of the nationalities within Yugoslavia. As noted in the introduction, the participants were made refugees on the basis of their ethnicity and not their identity.

It is interesting that the participants continued to identify as Yugoslav, as the Yugoslavia they lived in no longer exists in the same form and they are therefore identifying with a country that no longer exists. This is not inconsistent with theories of ethnic identity (see Edwards, 1992; Liebkind, 1992) which view identity as a subjective phenomenon, based on allegiance to a group based on shared history and/or values rather than solely an allegiance to geographic region or political entity such as a nation state. Many participants also spoke of being Bosnian or interchanged the two and a number mentioned that they will always be Yugoslav. One participant expressed her identity as such,

Some people say "How can you feel Yugoslav when it doesn't exist any more?", but I don't know, for me what is there now doesn't exist for me, and so it (what was Yugoslavia) just exists in my head.

The Yugoslav identity was articulated as a deep emotional thing bound by

family and cultural history, ethnicity and the experience of growing up there, which is consistent with theories of ethnic identity (Edwards, 1992; Liebkind, 1992; Smith, 1991). One person who said they were Bosnian rather than Yugoslav, said that this was because their family had been in Bosnia a very long time. Interestingly this person also said they were Yugoslav, and explained this as like being both Australian and a Queenslander. This participant was also the only person who said that they had the possibility of returning to Bosnia to live as their partner was neither Croat nor Serb. Whilst both identities (Bosnian or Yugoslav) are related to common biological, cultural and linguistic criteria, the differences in the two identities for this group appears to be geographic, with Bosnia being a region within what was Yugoslavia.

Further research might attempt to understand more fully the process of identification by monitoring changes in allegiances based on political changes in what was Yugoslavia in persons living there and emigrants. This information might assist researchers to better understand how identities develop and change.

8.4.2 An Australian Identity

As part of the investigation into acculturation, participants were also asked about their development of links with Australian culture and feelings of identification with Australia. Feeling Australian and having an Australian identity is for this group, as for most groups a gradual process.

I don't still feel Australian, I can have a passport and it is a good feeling... (but) I think, three years I have been supported by the government makes me sometimes think something is wrong with the system.

I feel everyday more like... you accept the way of life, it's normal, you

spontaneously accept that. I feel comfortable around Australian people.

One person when asked what would make them feel Australian replied,

I think time is really the most important factor.

One participant, when asked what it means to be a part of community said, it meant to be a citizen, and to want to be here in Australia and to want to stay. They said that until recently they had wanted to go back to Yugoslavia and that this was not conducive to feeling a part of the community.

I don't have any feelings so strong that I can say that I am part of Yugoslav community or part of Australian community. I am between... I would like to have more relationships with Australians than with my community (Yugoslav) because we had lots of bad experiences with our people.

Feeling Australian was linked with being comfortable with mainstream Australians. One participant suggested that once they feel accepted or anticipate acceptance by the community then being part of the community will be a more attractive option. Others suggested that being welcomed by mainstream Australians and not being treated as a refugee or a statistic, as they were in Europe, but as another "Aussie" made them feel like they belonged here. Feeling Australian was also about participating fully in society rather than just being here. The participation related generally to jobs and their children. Again, some suggested that they felt Australian because Australia wanted them when no-one else did and because Australians were friendly and accepted them.

In the first few days... I had one thought, "How are the Australians going to accept me as a Bosnian?"... Are they going to say "Why are you here, who are you?" and so social interaction with an Australian family in the first days would help to understand that they are looking at you as a normal person.

Feeling Australian appears not only to be a gradual process, but also one which requires emotional investment. This again takes effort, an effort that not everyone was able or willing to make immediately. When asked if they felt Australian, one person replied,

Only for the last year, but the first two years we didn't have the chance to feel Australian, when we came here there were so many duties, I didn't have the time to feel anything we were so busy... this year I felt (Australian) but not 100%.

When asked how they would describe feeling Australian, one participant replied that they now cheer for Australia when watching sport, that they are happy here, have nothing bad to say about Australians and are appreciative of Australia 100 times over.

It is not easy, I try to accept this country like mine because I know one day my children will be really Australian, they will not be Bosnian, so it is much more easy if you accept that... I think I will never feel so strong feelings like before the war, we have spent all our feelings for Yugoslavia, it was so big a love, we really liked that country... we had everything there... we had such strong feelings before and I am afraid to have those now because I was so upset... if you love something too much, after it is worse.

I would love to accept everything (here) but not with such strong feelings... I would like to calm down feelings, to survive.

I will always feel Yugoslav, subconsciously in my mind.

I think I feel Yugoslavian in the bottom of my heart. I can never forget this country... we had no where else to go and we have everything here, we can buy a house, that for our people is most important.

The Yugoslav identity is evidently strong and continues regardless of an emerging Australian identity. It appears that the things that the participants are most able to identify with are the symbolic Australian icons such as the barbecue and sport. One person suggested that they first sought to find similarities with Australians and the easy things to identify with. Later when they were comfortable in the society, they were able to look for and acknowledge the dissimilarities. When asked how the Australian community was different to their community back in what was Yugoslavia, participants said that they were basically the same, holding the same values, habits and customs and this has assisted them with their settlement. One woman suggested that whilst they could see that people basically did the same things here in Australia they were not participating yet in these activities.

Whilst the refugees did not have a shared history with mainstream Australians upon which to base their identity, they articulated a shared value system, therefore reducing the cultural distance between them and assisting in the adaptation process (see Berry 1997).

The participants did, however, see a distinction between the values of their community back home and that of the older established Yugoslav communities here in Australia. In what was Yugoslavia their community was young, educated and modern and the people they had met here (mainstream Australians) were the same. On the other hand, members of the established ethnic communities were seen to be still living

in past decades and not modern in their values.

Future research might also address the particular effect of being ostracised or at least not welcomed by the established ethnic communities. This ostracism is partially the basis of the shared identity which the mixed marriage group has. It may be that for individuals within the group and for other groups, oppression or a negative identity may be inhibitive to the development of a strong community or identity.

8.5 Citizenship

The issue of citizenship arose when the participants were asked about whether they identify as Australian or Yugoslav. Citizenship appeared to be associated both with identity and with sense of community. Having Australian citizenship gave the participants a country with which to identify. When asked about the significance of citizenship many participants spoke of Australia as their new homeland.

Now we haven't got any country, we haven't got citizenship, we haven't got a home... Australia is our new home, my new country.

I really feel that Australia is my country now, I never think of returning to my country, because I know what is there.

I feel the same about Australia as I felt about Yugoslavia before war... similar countries.

I tried to be an Australian but it is difficult I know, it is very difficult for people of my age... but for my children I am thinking about my children's future, I think they will have a future here, a good chance... one they couldn't have in Bosnia being from a mixed marriage.

For these participants, citizenship was a security for their future, and not

necessarily connected with feeling Australian. Most participants had either taken out citizenship or were in the process of doing so. Most mentioned that they applied for citizenship because they had no other option. Australia wanted them when no-one else (politically) would take them and they were grateful to Australia for this. They also indicated that they had no wish to return to a country which was full of so many painful memories. For many citizenship was solely a physical security, but for others it was also an emotional security and enhanced their sense of connectedness to Australia.

I've got citizenship and I am proud of it, really honestly speaking because I have a country to live in and I can say, "This is my country!"

One participant, when asked how they think he/she will feel after taking out citizenship replied,

I think I will feel better. Then we will have a country... I lost my country and now I don't have a country, I don't have citizenship. It's for me a big thing... I will be happy.

And later,

There is no place for my family there (Bosnia), especially as we are mixed, I am feeling stronger to be Australian.

This sentiment was expressed by others also,

I haven't that feeling, I honestly have to say for Australia, but I am trying to be here, to be citizen of the country.

One person described citizenship merely as a piece of paper and recalled that many people they knew had taken it out but really want to go back to their home country. Interestingly, they said that these people were generally not in mixed marriages and so have the opportunity to go home. As refugees from mixed marriages, the participants interviewed do not presently have this opportunity. Citizenship therefore, was tied largely to security. For some it was merely instrumental necessity, though for others it was a symbol of their new life and of being Australian.

8.6 Developing social networks

The development of social support networks is an integral part of the adaptation process of refugees (Berry 1997; Falk, 1993; Kim, 1987; Lipson, 1991). The social network development of the group was generally characterised by a sense of a lack of assistance in finding appropriate supports, particularly for those in the OAA program. Meeting people and making friends was hard and slow work in all cases though the network development differed according to which community network was involved.

8.6.1 Meeting mainstream Australians

All participants articulated a desire to meet mainstream Australians. This was not necessarily an easy task and a number of barriers to meeting people were mentioned. For the CRSS group, meeting Australians was much easier as they had a ready link.

They (CRSS group) had much better opportunities to meet people... At the

flats you are really isolated and you feel disadvantaged.

Some people were visited by church volunteers in the flats and appreciated this and kept up these friendships. When the HeARTS scheme was suggested to them by the researcher, almost everyone thought that this would be a good idea. The HeARTS scheme is a volunteer program which links refugees with volunteers, who provide social support and information.

The best idea would be when someone is coming as a migrant, to find an Australian family to meet them at the airport, to start talking and to become friends from the first moment... not to put some guys in the flats and that's it, tomorrow you will have social security officer and you talk to him for one hour and then you are on the streets and no-one even shows you how to take money from the ATM.

One person commented that they would not have wished a relationship imposed that demanded anything of them, as they had met a number of people who asked for things in return for "friendship", such as baby-sitting. Others suggested that they would not have had time to participate in such a program, that they had no time to meet people and were just trying to survive. The challenge of any such volunteer program would be to provide a service which lessens the stress of the refugee, rather than to add to the stress.

The main barrier to meeting mainstream Australians was language.

English is the biggest problem but gets better everyday.

The first year I didn't have many opportunities to speak English really because I was a little bit afraid... When you are not confident you don't like to speak

too much, but after one year I had a neighbour, a very good neighbour, and she always spoke with me and her family ... they were a big help especially to practice English.

Whilst meeting Australians was difficult, making friends with Australians was more difficult again.

Now, after three years (the process of interacting with Australians) is more emotional, to see how they feel, how they think, to know each of them better, because if I want to become an Australian... to know how it breathes, I have to have friends from mainstream Australia... you need to learn the patterns of behaviour.

It's hard (to meet Australians), that is my opinion, I mean it's not hard to talk or have a beer, but really to become friends, to socialise its much harder than I expected.

But it is not easy (to meet Australians), probably from my experience it is not easy because I haven't a job, if you want to meet Australians, you need to be in the office environment .. everyone is smiling (friendly), but I think there is a certain limit after that... until he decides he doesn't want you in his company... so you can talk up to a point, but to become friends is another thing.

The situations where the participants did meet Australians were varied and included sporting activities, schools, neighbours, on the bus, and at work. Many suggested that the best place to meet Australians would be at work, but without English or friends it was difficult to get work. English is needed to be a part of society, and without basic knowledge of skills and habits, it was difficult to get work. One participant described how they had applied for hundreds of jobs and whilst their English was grammatically perfect, it lacked the nuances and local understanding to make him stand out to employers. In this situation the difficulties of getting a job, learning English and making friends compounded each other and were articulated by

almost everyone.

If you want to find a job, a proper job, you need to know how to act in the society... to know the rules of the society, to reach the goal and the goal in the first place is the job.

Another barrier to developing networks with Australians were seen to be the way in which Australian society is structured, which is more in the home and less on the streets and in cafes, where they would meet friends back home. There was also a fear that people might think you were stupid, due to poor language. Nobody, however, reported any disrespect based on their language and a number told quite moving anecdotes relating to the friendliness of others when they realised they were newly arrived migrants.

Whilst all participants agreed that meeting people was not easy, they expressed a great determination to meet Australians. Many made extra efforts and were purposeful in their endeavours to meet others.

You can't wait in the house for people to come and to speak with you, you must go out and try and find people.

Participants' reports of their endeavours at developing links with Australians are consistent with the literature on the development of social networks in refugees. As noted by Kim (1987) refugees are often placed in highly uncertain and stressful situations, due to inadequate social support networks. The networks which they ordinarily have (family and friends), and which buffer against stress are destroyed and must be rebuilt. Developing social networks can buffer against this stress and provide

the information needed to understand the host community.

The participants in this study all expressed a desire to meet Australians and actively sought contact with mainstream Australians. The barriers to meeting Australians were firstly language as well as a lack of understanding of Australian culture. The degree of stress expressed was lower in those with links to volunteer supports which enabled a fit between the immigrant and the new environment. The networks developed with other mixed marriage refugees also served as buffers to the stress of migration as discussed in the next section.

8.6.2 Developing links with other mixed marriage refugees

The development of social networks and support was largely determined by the participant's ethnicity and the context of their settlement. As mentioned, although there was a clear desire and attempt to mix with mainstream Australians, this was difficult. Initially therefore, the participants mostly mixed with other mixed marriage refugees. This was, in the first instance, due to the common language and also because they were often residing together at the flats, had arrived together and/or studied English together. None of the participants interviewed at this stage indicated that they wished to avoid other refugees from what was Yugoslavia.

You still want to remain friends with the Bosnians, but like I said, I don't want to spend all my life in Australia with Bosnians, because you learn nothing. You talk about Bosnia or Croatia. I must say I don't understand very well yet (the Australian way of life), that is the reason, because we still don't have an Australian family that we are visiting or can talk to and exchange experiences.

The reasons that the participants generally socialised with others in mixed marriages was because they had a shared understanding of what they had been through.

of their situation of being in a mixed marriage and because they felt safe to express themselves with others in mixed marriages.

People from mixed marriages usually stick together because they can understand each other. Better than others.

One participant, when asked whom they socialised with, responded,

Mostly people from my country, most (migrant people) socialise with people from the same country, because of language, only because of language, but I tried to associate with Australian people..... most of our friends from Bosnia are in mixed marriages, because we understand each other and we have the same things... the same experience and difficult time in wartime.

However, not all participants only socialised with couples in mixed marriages.

Oh we have lots of friends, mainly they are Bosnian, but also Australian and other (nationality) friends... I have some who are not but generally they (Bosnians) are in mixed marriages, but I must say I like more to have relationships with people who are in mixed marriages because they have the same problems, the same opinions about everything... people who are not in mixed marriages, I don't feel very confident with them, I feel that they are not frank, they always have reserved stories, they always have one story when I am with them and one story when they are with people like them (not mixed marriages).

Yeah, we have many, many friends which are mixed marriages and we have many people who aren't in mixed marriages, for us there is no problem.

The networks that were developed were not necessarily permanent, though a number of long lasting friendships had evolved out of the early connections. A number of participants, for example, celebrated on the anniversary of their arrival, when they were "born Australians". Others suggested that their friendships had

changed and were now more based on similarities rather than circumstance.

Most of these friends (ones they made initially) are from our background (Bosnia) and all are mixed marriages... and even though most of the people are very nice, it was only by accident that we met, and the only common thing is our background... and I don't think you can have a good relationship based on that, so most of these friendships, they disappeared, we were there in the beginning, you know, calling each other, helping each other but we are really completely different with different interests. They are nice, really nice people. ... but it is just that we had different pastimes, and that's it.

Another participant suggested that once they were not forced to live together they were more selective about whom they saw.

When we moved (out of the flats) then people visited us who wanted to visit us and we visited people we wanted to and the others were just lost (to us).

Whilst interactions with others in mixed marriages appeared to be the norm, this was not expressed as being due to any discrimination against others based on ethnicity. Rather, they avoided contact with people not in mixed marriages because of the threat of discrimination against themselves. Only one person mentioned that they had encountered problems due to being in a mixed marriage prior to the wars. Mostly the problems started only after the conflict began.

A couple of participants recalled instances where their being in a mixed marriage had caused a negative response from people from what was Yugoslavia living in Australia. In neither of these instances was the person a migrant or welfare worker, but another refugee. The participants generally stated that they had no problem with other people because of their ethnicity, though they were aware that others were interested in nationalism and avoided them because of this.

We are afraid about people who hate other nationalities, we don't like people who divide people from different nationalities. I think people are good, it doesn't matter what nationality.

I like everybody, no problem which religion they are.

It's much easier, you can speak freely. Sometimes I don't say I am in a mixed marriage because I don't want trouble... people from my country they maybe look at you with other eyes.

Yeah, even those in mixed marriage. I can see a lot of people are changed because of the war, they live with another religion, another nationality, but they are also in the mood of nationalism.

Whilst the participants tended to mostly socialise with others in mixed marriages, they did not shy away from using the ethno-specific migrant services or seeing community workers who were of a different ethnicity. No participants indicated that they wouldn't use a service for these reasons and a number had used these services and were pleased with the service provided. The ethno-specific clubs were, however, much less utilised, and only a couple of participants said they had been to a club. The reasons why they would not use the clubs were three-fold. Firstly, they suggested that this sort of entertainment (folk-dancing, cards, etc.) was not what they would enjoy anyway and that they would rather go to the pub with friends, or have a barbecue, or go to the beach. Secondly, a few mentioned that they would not fit in, that either one of the couple would be the "wrong" nationality and not welcome. Thirdly, they suggested that the clubs, even the Yugoslav clubs, would be full of nationalistic talk, which they wished to avoid. It was suggested that the clubs suit

people who liked clubs and politics but that the participants would rather talk about the future than re-live the past.

There was some mention of starting a club for people from mixed marriages where everyone could attend, regardless of ethnicity. This club would not be based around traditional activities such as folk dancing but rather have barbecues, modern music and so on. Presently, there is no place for mixed marriage refugees to meet.

Bosnians would like a club that is not nationally coloured, that is problem because there is no one club.

The establishment of a club would provide a venue for people to meet and socialise in a similar way in which they socialised back home. Rubenstein et al. (1994) suggests that attention must be paid to whether traditional ways of support can be transplanted across societies. For the participants, support back home was through extended families, which they do not have here, and in a more outdoor, cafe/street setting. This lifestyle centred around cafes and bars does not exist in Perth as is does in Europe. The establishment of a club would provide a step towards recreating that lifestyle and helping the mixed marriage refugees to establish networks.

There was also mention of the mixed marriage refugees being a community, though this was still an emerging community. As noted above, the reasons that the participants generally socialised with others in mixed marriages was because they had a shared understanding of what they had been through, of their situation of being in a mixed marriage and because they felt safe to express themselves with others in mixed marriages.

It's a strong community, which has no place to meet, but very strong... a huge community of people with same feelings, same fears, nobody to turn to in the community even for simple advice, (so now you) have to go to Muslim club, but (you) have to be Muslim.

Not all participants, however wanted to be part of the mixed marriage or other Yugoslav communities and strove to be part of the Australian community.

(We are) mainly oriented to Australian society, because the Bosnian community, the people are still under pressure and discussions are still... around the war... maybe after a few years then people settle a bit more they will start to think another way and maybe I will join them.

The participants in this study generally mixed with other mixed marriage couples or non-Yugoslavs in the first years after arrival. The reasons for this contact was due to ease of meeting others from mixed marriages and a shared understanding that made them feel safe with other mixed marriage couples. Not all participants wished to continue to mix with other refugees and throughout the early years of settlement expanded their social networks to include others.

For all refugees the networks developed are constructed, due to need, rather than being naturally occurring ones, based on family and community (Rubenstein, 1995). To construct these ties active networking is necessary (Jerusalem et al. 1996). This networking took place in both the mixed marriage and mainstream communities. In the next section the roles of these networks and how they interact to meet the needs of the mixed marriage refugees are analysed.

8.6.3 The development of social support - linking the Bosnian and mainstream Australian networks back to theory

The development of social networks has repeatedly been found to be a buffer against the stress of settlement (Jerusalem et al., 1996; Kim, 1987; Strober, 1994). The development of social networks is closely tied in with the sociocultural and sociopolitical context of settlement (Rubenstein et al., 1994). Both emotional and instrumental support (Thoits, 1982) are provided by the social relationships developed with Australians and mixed marriage refugees. Instrumental support was provided by way of housing, social security, clothing, information, and so forth, from the government and volunteers. Other mixed marriage refugees also provided information sharing and at times material or economic support. This support assisted the refugees to move through the initial stressful few months as financial security was and still is a big worry for them. Many reported that they were often without food or money during the war years and felt that Australian social security was a blessing as they were able to feed their children.

Emotional support is characterised as a means to an end and an end itself. It is a support that provides an enhancement of self esteem and a buffer against stressful emotions (Aronian, 1992). Whilst the established communities might be presumed to be appropriate providers of this support as they provide a cultural and linguistic reference, in this context they were not seen as a source of support. Due to the political situation in what was Yugoslavia and the refugees' circumstance of being in a mixed marriage, the communities, represented by the clubs, were often exactly what the refugees did not seek. Instead, social interaction with other newly arrived mixed marriage refugees provided a chance to interact with like-minded people and to

socialise in an environment in which it was safe to share emotions.

The beginnings of a mixed marriage community described by the refugees is consistent with Heller et al.'s (1984) community of persons, united by circumstance rather than geography, which sees communities as based on friendship, esteem and tangible support. There are also some parallels with components of Sarason's (1974) sense of community. Sarason refers to a perception of similarity and the participants spoke of other refugees having the same experiences in war and speaking the same language as themselves. They also spoke about wishing to socialise with like minded people. The participants also referred to a concept of interdependence, as noted by Sarason, stating that they needed both the instrumental and emotional support provided by other mixed marriage refugees.

It is not possible to say whether these characteristics uniting the group will lessen in time, as the group integrates into the mainstream society, or whether they will form the basis of an ongoing and strong community. The "larger, dependable and stable structure" suggested by Sarason was not yet apparent, though this may come in time. It is possible that the two networks (Australian and mixed marriage) are complementary and the existence of both networks facilitates positive adaptation as suggested by Berry et al. (1987). Whilst the mixed marriage network provides less of the main instrumental needs (English and information), it provides the self-esteem and positive emotions needed to actively network in the wider community. Wider networking in turn provides information and resources which can be fed back into the mixed marriage network. Understanding this interaction between various networks, as suggested by Wilcox and Vernberg (1983) and House and Kahn (1985), rather than merely the quantitative aspects of social support may help in developing social

programs which assist the settlement process. Further research should consider barriers and aids to successful networking and an analysis of the development of the reciprocity and interdependence of the networks.

Whilst individuals provided support in various ways, groups such as the CRSS groups also provided support and may be considered as social networks (Felton & Berry, 1992). Whilst this support is in many ways tangible (such as in the furniture provided), less tangible is the emotional support of being "given a hand" and being "thought of" by a group of people. It appears from the data that the CRSS group provided substantial support, merely through "being there", and the emerging community of mixed marriage refugees also provided support through being a safe contact. It is possible that the emotional support provided by a group is more than the sum of the support of the individuals, as a group also provides a sense that there a collective and widespread caring for and acceptance of the refugees. Group support also provides a community with which to identify, which is psychologically beneficial. For a group such as mixed marriage refugees, this identification with a group may be of particular importance as its members have lost both their family networks and their country (Yugoslavia), and are not able to identify with the established ethnic communities. The extent or impact of the emotional support provided in merely being a member of the mixed marriage community, or any other community or group with shared values, needs consideration within future research.

The people interviewed actively networked in the Australian community and mixed marriage communities as a way of coping. This networking was purposeful. By purposeful it is meant that the participants have chosen with whom to develop friendships. Friendships with other couples in mixed marriages developed because

they are "easy" and do not bring trouble. Creating networks in this community is functional in that it meets the requirements of the participants at that stage of their settlement: through the provision of a common language and a common understanding of their experiences and current situation. Similarly networking in the mainstream Australian communities provided cultural information not available from other refugees.

Being characterised as functional does not imply that others are exploited in any way or that the friendship is non-genuine, rather that the choice of who to associate with is a conscious choice, rather than a coincidence. Whilst in all relationships and social networks, there is an element of instrumentality, this may not be articulated or recognised by the people involved. In this situation, it was clearly articulated. Networking was seen as necessary following acceptance that friends do not just come to you, that it makes sense to spend time with other mixed marriage couples to share experiences and that Australian contacts are necessary. This links with the understanding that Australia is now for many the only choice and that they can not go back.

Future researchers might wish to address barriers to successful networking and to follow the participants' networking strategies into later stages of settlement. This would help to understand the ongoing process of network development and the assistance which these networks give in the absence of family ties. Future researchers should also consider whether links with both communities are adaptive as suggested by Berry et al. (1987) and in what circumstances.

8.7 The settlement of refugees in context

Throughout all the interviews, the context of the refugees' experiences was vitally important. First the context of the participants being refugees, and of having experienced war, meant that many of the participants would not wish to return to what was Yugoslavia even if they could. Most of the participants had no option but to settle abroad, and for many, Australia was the only option for citizenship. The context of their being in a mixed marriage dictated who they saw in Australia and the networks and supports they developed.

An understanding of the context of the refugees' experiences has also assisted in making a distinction between the concepts of ethnicity and identity. In the example outlined in this research a distinction between ethnicity and ethnic identity is clear as the participants were made refugees on basis of ethnicity and not their identity. Those in power who created the situation that forced them out of what was Yugoslavia were not interested in their identity but rather in their ethnicity. Within this research, to try to correlate measures of identity with other factors such as social support, without taking into consideration the participants' ethnicity, would make little sense as ethnicity is linked to the refugees' experiences. Similarly to interchange the concepts ethnicity with ethnic identity within this research would be equally misleading. The ethnicity of the participants is immutable, whilst their identity is more fluid and also, for some, multifaceted.

The group in this research is subjectively constructed as members of the group had the choice whether to identify as being in a mixed marriage and therefore to socialise with others in mixed marriages. Whilst certain members of the group are identifiable as belonging to a particular ethnic group by their names, this was not

always the case. Their identification as Yugoslav or Bosnian, rather than Croat, Serb and so forth, was a choice made by the refugees and therefore to some extent a subjective identification. Therefore to view identity as purely objective would belie the fact that participants in this research do create their identity to suit their circumstance.

There is also an argument from this research for viewing refugees as distinct from voluntary migrants. A large part of their experience is related to their refugee status due to war, rather than to their being migrants. As refugees the participants are stateless, often can not return to their homeland, often have suffered trauma during the conflict and usually arrive in Australia with very few possessions. These circumstances affect how the refugees view Australia and their commitment to participating in the Australian community. A number of the refugees expressed gratitude towards Australia for accepting them and viewed Australia as a source of security, which they would not experience in what was Yugoslavia. Further research that addresses the impact of forced migration and trauma prior to migration on the settlement experiences of refugees is also warranted as the effects of trauma might heavily influence the settlement processes of refugees.

8.8 Reflection on the methodology: Developing convincing and useful research

Upon reflection on the principles upon which this research is premised, a number of methodological limitations were apparent. First was the possibility that the researcher's English speaking background would bias the research and may have inhibited some participants from participating in the way which is most comfortable and suitable for them. Second, the researcher was continuously aware of the power

imbalance between researcher and participant, and the impact this might have had on the participants' responses.

The researcher attempted to minimise these problems in the following ways:

1. By providing information regarding the research to participants in their own language.

2. By spending a substantial amount of time building rapport at all interviews and conducting the interviews at the location of each participant's choosing.

3. By asking the participants to challenge any comments or interpretations of their words that they were not happy with. The researcher attempted to validate their comments from the outset and encouraged comments which were not explicitly relevant but which the participants wished to make.

4. When the researcher's ideas were questioned, she asked the participants for their interpretation of the data. The researcher then reflected this back to the participant in her own words to check that she had understood the interpretation being made. In subsequent interviews the researcher would put all interpretations to the participants in order to determine the merit of each. In doing so, the researcher was acknowledging that more than one interpretation of the data was possible.

5. By avoiding the use of jargon or technical terminology.

6. By making explicit to participants the researcher's own cultural heritage and sharing with participants her own story, as part of rapport building as well as when specifically asked.

7. By explaining to participants that it is their story in their words which is important and not somebody else's interpretation of their lives and that each person's story is different and unique and equally valuable.

These steps were important in establishing an environment where participants felt comfortable with the interviews and validated in their experiences. Feedback from participants (which was provided voluntarily and not solicited) indicated that they felt comfortable with the interviews and the terminology. A number of participants indicated that they felt the process far more acceptable than for other research they had participated in.

A limitation of the research was the use of only those refugees who spoke English. It is acknowledged that the experiences of refugees who have not yet acquired English would be different to those who could speak fluent English. It is likely that refugees who have had an easier time settling are also those who have been able to learn English. It is therefore possible that refugees who have not acquired English have had very different and less positive experiences. It is hoped that future research will incorporate refugees who have not yet acquired fluent English.

The higher rate of female than male participants was not addressed in this research and remains a flaw in the sampling design (see Chapter 7, Method). The over-representation of women, however, did not threaten the integrity of the research, primarily as gender differences were not of particular interest to the study.

Chapter 9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the research illustrate the diversity of experiences of the participants as well as a commonality resulting from their being in a mixed marriage. The settlement experiences of the participants were linked closely to the context of their migration, and the complex interaction between the settlement processes and the context was revealed through the detailed exploration of their stories.

The participants generally made substantial efforts to understand the Australian way of life and participate in Australian society. This was due in part to the fact that they could not return home, partly due to a feeling of gratitude for having a country to live in and also because they saw their children's futures in Australia. Most still wished to maintain some elements of their culture, notably their language. The participants appeared to be moving towards an acculturation outcome of bi-culturalism. Many described the pain of losing their homeland and how Australia was now their country. The majority have taken out Australian citizenship, are proud of and grateful for it and saw it as a security for the future. Generally, however, the participants suggested that they did not and would never feel the same way, in their heart, about Australia as they did about Yugoslavia.

Feeling part of the Australian community was a process that was taking time. Most participants indicated that they wouldn't be part of the mainstream Australian community until they could participate in the community as they once had in what was Yugoslavia. This involved being able to converse in English, as well as having a job and therefore giving something back to the community rather than just receiving help. A number of participants stated that they would not be fully part of the Australian

community, although they felt their children would be. This is perhaps because they felt that their children will experience a close emotional attachment to Australia and will also have shared memories of Australia, which they will not experience. They did not see the Australian community as very different from the Bosnian community before the conflicts. Both communities they viewed as young, modern, and educated.

A number of participants expressed a feeling of connectedness with other mixed marriage Bosnians and some had begun to organise a venue in which to meet on a regular basis. This connection with other Bosnians springs partly from their rejection by the established ethnic communities as well as a shared identity, shared understanding, and a feeling of mutual support and security. This was related to their being refugees, to having experienced war and to understanding each other's situation here in Australia.

The participants described their ethnic identity as either Yugoslav or Bosnian and generally said that they would always feel this identity, even if the country no longer exists. Whilst maintaining this identity, being Australian was also important and there was no conflict expressed between being an Australian citizen and feeling Yugoslav or Bosnian.

The participants' ethnicity played a major role in determining their experiences. Most obviously, it determined whether they were in a mixed marriage and therefore whether they were eligible to come to Australia as refugees. It also determined whether they would have contact with the various established ethnic communities. Despite this the participants did not articulate an identity with their ethnicity, but rather with Yugoslavia or Bosnia, both which are politically determined regions, rather than regions encompassing an ethnic group. This indicates a clear need to make a

distinction between ethnicity and ethnic identity in identity theory and research.

The importance of social support provided by individuals was verified by the data and supports existing social support theory. Support was also linked strongly to a feeling of belonging in Australia. Further, the importance of support provided by a group rather than an individual was identified in the data. The development of social networks was characterised by a desire to meet mainstream Australians and also a continuation of contact with other mixed marriage Bosnian refugees. The participants indicated a desire to meet Australians to assist with English and to help them negotiate the Australian way of life. Meeting Australians was not easy, partly due to a lack of English and also because the participants were not sure where to meet them. However, they all reported actively seeking contact rather than waiting for Australians to make contact. A commonly reported problem was that it was difficult to meet Australians without first having a job and without having fluent English but difficult to get a job with no contacts and no English and difficult to learn English without a job or contact with English speaking people. The CRSS program again benefited those involved as they had ready contact with Australians who had contacts and spoke English.

The participants generally socialised with other mixed marriage refugees as they felt comfortable and safe with them and because they met them at the flats. They generally avoided non mixed marriage people from what was Yugoslavia and have begun to build a community of mixed marriage Bosnians. Not all participants wished to continue contact with other mixed marriage couples, indicating that it was useful in the beginning as a source of emotional and instrumental support but now that they were more settled, they wished to expand their networks. The contact with others in mixed marriages provided much needed emotional support in the initial months, as few

refugees had friends or family here and their networks had been disrupted.

Mainstream Australians provided more instrumental support, and both these forms of support were important.

The initial settlement experience of the mixed marriage refugees from what was Yugoslavia who participated in this study is characterised by stress. The stress of settlement has been widely reported (Allotey, 1996; Cox, 1987; Jupp et al., 1991; Pittaway, 1991) and for this group was characterised by a lack of English, difficulties in finding work, and difficulties in meeting people who would assist in understanding Australian society and learning English. The early months were emotionally draining and overwhelming, due in part to what the participants had been through in their homeland but also due to the pressures of settlement. Whilst government agencies sought to alleviate these stresses through the provision of information, this information was often not useful or timely.

Whilst the refugees were grateful for the assistance, they also had a number of complaints and felt their initial settlement could have been better orchestrated. Any social support provided by the Australian public was generally appreciated and most participants reported that Australians are friendly and helpful. In general, those refugees who went through the OAA program felt less supported and more stressed than those who went through the CRSS program. The CRSS program offered refugees a chance to meet Australians as well as providing better material assistance. The results suggest a number of recommendations that would ameliorate the stress of migration (Appendix E). The recommendations centre around the provision of timely and thorough information, an expanded settlement program that meets all the immediate needs of the refugees, maintenance of the CRSS program, the provision of

social contacts and emotional support, and the provision of material aid to newly established community and ethnic groups.

The constructs referred to in the research (acculturation, social support, ethnicity, and ethnic identity) are multi-dimensional, are linked in complex ways and have proved useful for understanding the refugees' settlement experiences. It was the use of conversational interviews that allowed the links between themes to emerge. Locating the settlement experiences within the context of being a refugee and the war, assisted in developing an understanding of the choices the participants made with regard to network development.

The process of social support development is clearly tied to ethnicity and to ethnic identity. Both ethnicity and identity determined which people from what was Yugoslavia the participants socialised with. The wish to identify with Australians and become part of Australia also encouraged the participants to socialise with mainstream Australians, which in turn enhanced their connectedness with Australians. The links described above illustrate the importance of considering multiple concepts within research and how the various processes of settlement are interlinked and interdependent.

The use of conversational interviews provided a rich source of information, which may have been lost within questionnaires that often view psychological constructs as uni-dimensional, acontextual, and apolitical. The interviews provided data that was not limited to the already defined boundaries of the various concepts and allowed for exploration of links between the concepts that was more in-depth than merely correlating them. What is needed is broader use of methodologies that allow a greater and broader understanding of a sense of community, identity and social

support. Conversational interviews allow for a stronger look at the context of the development of these concepts and view the concepts as dynamic, as multiple and not something that it must adhere to our existing definitions.

All new groups of refugees bring with them an understanding of the world and prior experiences that shape the way they see Australia, its society and community. Each new group has needs that are linked to the context of their settlement and to their pre-migration life. Future research might look at other groups of refugees, locating them in their sociopolitical and sociocultural histories in order to better understand their settlement and how the structures and programs that governments provide, meet their needs and assist or restrict their settlement. Without exploring the stories of newly arrived refugees and without understanding their histories, policy makers will not be in a position to provide the best support.

The research outlined in this thesis lends support to the advocates of multiple-case, conversational interview methodology. This method proved useful in obtaining rich data regarding the settlement of refugees from what was Yugoslavia and in drawing out the links between the various concepts explored. It highlights the stressful elements of settlement and points the way towards strategies that are likely to reduce this stress. This is done through recommendations that can be applied to current or future settlement programs. The rich data provides a basis for future research into the refugees ongoing adaptation and acculturation and suggests links between various concepts that are yet to be fully explored.

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Appendix A

Interview schedule - Scoping interviews

Background questions

Which country are you from?

What is your first language?

Where were you living in your country? City/country?

What was/is your profession?

How long have you been in Australia?

How long have you been in Western Australia?

Who did you arrive with?

Did you know any one here when you arrived?

Did you know any English when you arrived?

Did you learn it since arriving?

Social Networks

Tell me about your social networks?

Tell me about your support networks. Are these the same?

Do you see people from Australia? In what situations? Where did you meet them?

Do you see people from your own country? In what situations?

Are you happy with who you see? the level of support?

What sort of social network or social support would you like to have ideally ?

What things would help this?

What has helped you to meet people here in Australia?

What has made it difficult to meet people?

How do you feel about Australia and living here?

Sense of community

Community means different things to different people.

Do you feel part of a community here in Australia?

Tell me about the community.

What do you like about the community?

What do you dislike about the community ?

Do you feel at home in the community?

Are there people in the community you can turn to for assistance?

What would a perfect community be like for you here in Australia?

What does the word community mean to you?

Australia

What are your feelings about Australia?

Do you feel comfortable around Australians? or, Do you feel comfortable around people from your own country?

Do you think it is important to read the news from your own country?

If you were to chose to bring up your children, would it be more Australian like or like from your own country?

Does it matter if your children only grow up speaking English?

Do you think that people from your country should stick together or be with people

from Australia?

How important do you think it is to adopt an Australian way of life?

Moving to Australia: What is the thing about moving to Australia that is most important to you - good or bad?

Appendix B

Background Questions for main interviews

- 1) Length of residency in Australia?
- 2) Year arrived and with whom?
- 3) Family / friends in Australia and Western Australia when arrived?
- 4) Country of Origin?
- 5) Place of origin (country v city)?
- 6) Profession (in country of origin and Australia)?
- 7) Level of English proficiency on arrival?
- 8) Level of English attained?
- 9) Where stayed when first arrived? (On-Arrival Accommodation, friend, family)
- 10) Connection with CRSS? (Community Resettlement Support Scheme)

Adapted from Glesne and Perkins (1992).

Appendix C

Disclosure form and consent form

Disclosure form - sent to refugees in their own language

Dear,

My name is Monique Keel and I am currently researching the settlement experiences of refugees who came to Australia between 1990 and 1996. I would like to offer you the opportunity to be interviewed as part of this research.

These interviews form part of my Masters research project, which I am doing at Edith Cowan University. The research is looking at social support development of refugees and will investigate how refugees make contacts once they arrive in Australia. The research will be looking at the things that have assisted new arrivals to meet people and things that have made it difficult. It will also look at the role the various ethnic communities have in assisting people and the type of contact new arrivals have with and wish to have with these communities and the "Australian" community. Finally, the research will look at how new arrivals feel about being in Australia and feelings of belonging to Australia. I am interested in your experience and recognise that each person's experience is different and that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

It is hoped that this research will assist workers in the Migrant field to understand the

situation of new arrivals and help them to provide better settlement services.

The interviews will last about 2 hours and will be carried out in English. They will take place either at your home or at the Fremantle Migrant Resource Centre, or at the Northern Suburbs Migrant Resource Centre, whichever is more convenient. If you wish to have child-care, then this can be arranged at my expense. Interviews will be taped with your approval or hand written notes taken. Once the interviews are completed, they will be typed and analysed to see what the similarities and differences are in the responses.

No names or identifying information will be recorded and if you wish to have part or all of their interview erased, you are most welcome. You are also welcome to look at the results at any time and a final copy of the research will be at the Fremantle Migrant Resource Centre to look at for anyone who is interested. The results may be published but no identifying material will be used.

This interview is totally voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. If you do not wish to participate, this will in no way affect your access to services through the Migrant Resource Centre or any other service. Also, as the interview is voluntary, you may ask to leave or stop being interviewed at any time. You do not need to give any explanation.

As the research involves asking participants about their experiences in Australia, it is possible that this might be upsetting for some people. If you wish to speak with

someone after the interview, there are counsellors at ASSET's to speak to, Ph. 9325 6272. Alternatively you may speak to a Croatian speaking counsellor at the Catholic Migrant Centre, Ph. 9221 1727. These services are free.

If you are interested in participating and/or have any questions regarding the research, please contact me, either directly on 9431 7138 or through _____ on 9.....

I look forward to meeting you.

Monique Keel

Researcher: Monique Keel,

School of Psychology , Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Ph: 9400

5014

Fremantle Migrant Resource Centre , Ph 9335 9588

Supervisor: Neil Drew,

School of Psychology , Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Ph: 9400

5541

Consent form

Provided prior to interview and signed by my self and the participant . Participants will be asked if they have any questions regarding the interview. A copy of the letter (in their own language) will be provided again to the respondent this stage to ensure that they have the contact details of Neil Drew, counsellors and myself.

I _____ have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time without any explanation.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

Participant _____

Date _____

Researcher _____

Date _____

Cijenjena gospodo/gospodine,

Moje ime je Monique Keel. Trenutno istražujem iskustvo smještaja i snalaženja doseljenika sa statusom izbjeglica koji su došli u Australiju između 1990 i 1996. Želim Vam ponuditi da kao ispitanica/ispitanik, sudjelujete u ovom istraživanju

Intervjui su dio mog magistarskog rada koji radim na Edith Cowan University u Perthu. U okviru projekta želim istražiti formiranje podrške društvene zajednice doseljenicima/izbjeglicama i načine kako doseljenici/izbjeglice ostvaruju kontakte kada dosele u Australiju. Projekt će istraživati što je novim doseljenicima pomoglo u upoznavanju ljudi, a što je proces upoznavanja otežavalo. Također će istraživati ulogu različitih etničkih zajednica u pomaganju ljudima i načine kontaktiranja koje novi doseljenici imaju i žele imati s etničkim zajednicama i s australskom zajednicom. U projektu također želim istražiti kako se novi doseljenici osjećaju u Australiji i utvrditi njihov osjećaj pripadnosti Australiji. Mene zanima Vaše iskustvo. Svjesna sam činjenice da su iskustva različitih ljudi različita i da nema ispravnih i neispravnih odgovora na takva pitanja.

Ja se nadam da će ovo istraživanje pomoći radnicima u području migracija da razumiju situaciju novih doseljenika i pomoći im da doseljenicima pruže bolje usluge tokom procesa smještaja i snalaženja.

Intervju će trajati oko dva sata. Intervju može biti organiziran u Vašem stanu ili u jednom od Centara za doseljenike, onako kako Vama više odgovara. Ukoliko je potrebno organizirati čuvanje djece za vrijeme razgovora, to može biti organizirano i ja ću snositi troškove. S Vašim dopuštenjem intervju će biti snimljen ili će biti vodene bilješke. Kada razgovor završi, biti će pretipkan i analiziran da se uoče sličnosti i razlike u odgovorima.

Imena i slične informacije o ispitanicima neće biti zabilježene. Intervju je potpuno anoniman. Ukoliko Vi kao ispitanik želite da se dio ili cijeli intervju izbriše, to će biti učinjeno. Također možete imati uvid u rezultate istraživanja u bilo kojoj fazi, a završna verzija istraživanja biti će dostupna svim zainteresiranim u Centru za doseljenike u Fremantleu. Rezultati će možda biti objavljeni, ali bez bilo kakvih identificirajućih podataka o ispitanicima.

Intervju je potpuno dobrovoljan i Vi nemate nikakvu obavezu sudjelovanja. Ukoliko ne želite sudjelovati, to ni na koji način neće utjecati na dostupnost usluga kroz Centre za doseljenike ili bilo koje druge usluge. Obzirom da je intervju dobrovoljan, Vi možete zahtijevati da se razgovor prekine i završi u bilo koje vrijeme. Za to ne trebate dati nikakvo obrazloženje.

Obzirom da istraživanje uključuje pitanja o Vašim iskustvima u Australiji, moguće je da neka pitanja za neke ljude budu uznemirujuća. Ukoliko želite razgovarati s nekim nakon intervjua, možete kontaktirati savjetnike u ASeTTS. Broj telefona je 9325 6272. Sa savjetnicom u Katoličkom centru za doseljenike možete razgovarati na Vašem jeziku. Broj telefone je 9221 1727. Ove usluge su besplatne.

Ukoliko želite sudjelovati u istraživanju i/ili imate bilo kakva pitanja u vezi projekta, molim Vas da me nazovete, direktno na broj 9431 7138 ili preko _____ na broj telefona _____.

Srdačan pozdrav i nadam se skorom susretu.

Monique Keel

Istraživač: Monique Keel
School of Psychology
Edith Cowan University, Joondalup
tel: 9400 5014

Fremantle Migrant Resource Centre
tel: 9335 9588

Mentor: Neil Drew
School of Psychology
Edith Cowan University, Joondalup
tel: 9400 5541

Ja, _____ pročitao/la sam ove informacije i na sva postavljena pitanja dobio/la sam zadovoljavajuće odgovore

Prihvaćam sudjelovanje u ovom istraživanju, podrazumijevajući da se mogu povući u bilo koje vrijeme bez posebnog objašnjenja.

Slažem se da rezultati istraživanja budu objavljeni ukoliko ja nisam identificiran/a.

Sudionik _____ Datum _____

I _____ have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time without any explanation.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

Participant _____ Date _____

Researcher _____ Date _____

Appendix D

Interview schedule for main interviews.

These questions were used as prompts only and may not have been asked in the order shown.

General Settlement Experience

Tell me about your arrival to Australia?

What things have made it easy for you to settle?

What things have made it hard for you to settle?

What things would have made it easier?

What sort of services do you think the Migrant Resource Centres and other services might provide to assist new arrivals to meet other people and to settle?

Social Networks

Tell me about people you have met since your arrival? Where you met them, who they are....?

Do you see people from Australia? In what situations? Where did you meet them?

Do you see people from your own country? In what situations? Where did you meet them?

Are there people in the community you can turn to for assistance?

Are you happy with who you see?

Are you happy with the level of support you received on arrival?

What sort of social network or social support would you like to have ideally? What

things would help this?

What has helped you to meet people here in Australia?

What has made it difficult to meet people?

Ethnic Identity and ethnicity

Tell me about your ethnic community?

How has your ethnicity (being Bosnian etc) impacted on you social network development?

Are the people you see socially from the same ethnic background? (specify)

Do the people you see have the same ethnic identity? (E.g., are they also Yugoslav?)

Community

What makes you feel like you belong to a particular ethnic community?

How would you explain you sense of belonging to your own ethnic community?

What did your community look like at home in (Bosnia)? How does this differ from how you see your community here in Australia?

Have you taken out citizenship? How does this make you feel?

Is there a difference between being part of the community and a citizen?

Tell me about wanting to be part of the Australian community.

Acculturation

In what language do you communicate with your children? Why?

Do you think it is important to maintain your language, customs, traditions and so forth, and transfer them to your children?

If yes, why? If no, why not?

Do you think it is important to adopt an Australian way of life?

If yes, why?

If no, why not?

Do you think it is important to maintain your own way of life? Can you explain why, why not?

Australia

What are your feelings about Australia?

Do you feel comfortable around Australians?

Do you feel "Australian"?

Appendix E

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

Future On-Arrival Accommodation (OAA) refugee settlement programs should allow newly arrived refugees more time to settle and adjust psychologically before information programs begin. The current system requires their attendance at detailed information sessions the day after arrival. It would be preferable to provide only essential information at the outset, for example, social security and banking information, and then allows some adjustment time before providing more detailed information.

Recommendation 2.

Refugee settlement programs should be expanded to provide refugees in the OAA program with more assistance in finding long term accommodation, and explaining issues to do with employment and training. These two issues were of greatest concern and the refugees require more assistance in these areas than is currently provided.

Recommendation 3.

The Community Refugee Settlement Scheme (CRSS) program should be maintained and supported as a model for settlement and expanded to cover all new refugees. The provision of settlement assistance by well-trained volunteers within the Australian community has many advantages. It allows a greater number of people to have contact with the refugee family and provides individual service to the one family. The contact can also be provided in a less formal manner than is possible for paid

Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs staff who have many clients to attend to. Informal contact provides the family with an opportunity to learn how society works and to make friends who can continue to assist them after the initial settlement period.

Recommendation 4.

All settlement programs should incorporate social contact with mainstream Australians from the time of arrival to assist with developing an understanding of Australian society and to assist with English language acquisition. Most importantly, a social support component to the OAA program should be incorporated into the program. This could take the form of the HeARTS program, which links refugees with community members. This would assist the DIMA funded workers, as the support persons would be a secondary source of information and provide the refugees with contacts outside of the flats and in addition to paid workers.

Recommendation 5.

That funding be provided to newly established and establishing migrant communities, particularly where no established community exists, to foster their communities and networks. The composition of these communities should be determined by the communities themselves.