

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN

Economic and social participation:

The experiences of women who have migrated to Australia in the last 15 years

Grace Ka Yee CHIANG

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the Honours degree of Bachelor of

Psychology Science

School of Psychology

The University of Adelaide

October 2020

Word count: 9229

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
List of Figures.....	5
List of Tables.....	6
Abstract.....	7
Declaration.....	9
Contribution Statement.....	10
Acknowledgements.....	11
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	12
1.1 Overview.....	12
1.2 Terminology.....	13
1.3 Background.....	14
1.3.1 Economic and Social Participation of Migrants.....	14
1.3.2 Economic and Social Participation of Migrant Women.....	16
1.3.3 The Economic and Social Participation of Migrant Women in Australia.....	17
1.4 Social Identity Theory.....	18
1.5 The Current Study.....	19
Chapter 2: Method.....	20
2.1 Participants.....	20
2.2 Procedure.....	22
2.3 Analysis.....	24
Chapter 3: Results.....	26

3.1 Work.....	29
3.1.1 Positive aspects of work.....	29
3.1.2 Negative aspects of work.....	33
3.2 Friendships.....	37
3.2.1 Positive aspects of friendship.....	37
3.2.2 Negative aspects of friendship.....	38
3.2.3 Learning aspects of friendship.....	41
3.3 Personal.....	42
3.3.1 Barriers to participate.....	42
3.3.2 Predisposition to positivity.....	45
3.4 Community and Social Participation.....	50
Chapter 4: Discussion.....	60
4.1 Overview.....	60
4.2 Work.....	61
4.3 Friendship.....	63
4.4 Personal.....	64
4.5 Community and Social Participation.....	66
4.6 Strengths and Limitations.....	68
4.7 Implications and Future Research.....	70
4.8 Conclusion.....	71
References.....	72
Appendices.....	78
Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet.....	81

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form.....81

Appendix C: Interview Schedules.....83

List of Figures

Figure 1: Thematic map representing relations between themes and subthemes	28
Figure 2: Arriving in Adelaide: my first day	35
Figure 3: My social participation experience at Henley Beach	48
Figure 4: My first experience of watching a footy match	53
Figure 5: My first Christmas celebration in Australia	56
Figure 6: Attending my friend's Australian Citizenship Ceremony	59

List of Tables

Table 1: Demographic information of migrant women participants	21
Table 2: List of photos presented by participants when asked to show two photos that best represented their experience of social participation in Australia	58

Abstract

In response to the increasing number of women immigrating to Australia, there has been more research into understanding their settlement experience around employment and its benefits to their well-being and self-identity. However, the social participation of migrant women which is another major element for successful settlement, is still under-researched. Much of the available research is based on survey-based studies and quantitative-based data, with few studies examining their experiences at a personal level. Therefore, this study aimed to fill the knowledge gap by examining the economic and social participation experiences of migrant women in Australia. It also aimed to identify the barriers that they face living and working in Australia. Employing a qualitative interview design accompanied by photo-elicitation methodology, a sample of 10 migrant women of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, aged 21-47 years, were interviewed. An analysis of the data resulted in identification of four main themes: *work, friendships, personal* as well as *community and social participation*. The results suggest that through economic participation, migrant women develop their confidence, expand their social network, and improve their English proficiency which enable them to be more involved in social participation. The findings also suggest that migrant women faced challenges such as busy work commitments, a demanding home-maker role, and a lack of social network that limit their opportunities to social participation. In conclusion, there is a need for policy makers to develop programs designed to assist their employment opportunities and provide directions for settlement strategies to enhance their social and economic participation.

Keywords: Economic participation, social participation, employment, settlement, migrant women

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University, and, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published except where due reference is made. I give permission for the digital version of this thesis to be made available on the web, via the University of Adelaide's digital thesis repository, the Library Search and through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the School to restrict access for a period of time.

Grace Ka Yee CHIANG

October 2020

Contribution Statement

In writing this thesis, my supervisor and I collaborated to generate research questions of interest, design the interview questions and survey, and identify the thematic themes. Under my supervision's guidance, I conducted the literature search and completed the ethics application. I was responsible for all participant recruitment, data collection, data analysis and thesis write-up.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Aspa Sarris, for her support, guidance, and encouragement throughout every research stage. I have greatly benefited from her extensive knowledge and expertise in this research area.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and generosity of the management of Australian Migrant Resource Centre of South Australia in endorsing my pursuit of further study.

Special thanks are extended to my family - to my partner for always standing by me through ups and downs, to my children for their patience, and to my dear friends for their words of encouragement and advice.

Above all, I would like to express my humble gratitude toward our participants – the extraordinary women who have demonstrated their courage and resilience in contributing to this country. Thank you for sharing your invaluable insights and personal experience which are all so inspiring.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

According to the Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2016), 2.2 million permanent migrants arrived in Australia between 2000 and 2016. Overall, women constituted 52% of this cohort with more than half of them coming in through the skilled labour stream (53%), followed by family stream (38%) and humanitarian stream (8%). It is further reported that the proportion of women applying to the skilled visa stream is almost the same as that of men.

Traditionally, women migrated to unite with their families, but today, more women of all skill levels are migrating for work, often as sole breadwinners (Zlotnik, 1995). Migrant women in the skilled visa stream come with proficiency in English and around 70% of them hold an overseas Bachelor's degree or higher degree. Despite this, however, the employment rate of these women is merely 25% which is much lower than their male counterparts and around a quarter of these women are not in the labour force at all.

Women in the other two streams (the family stream and humanitarian stream) possess fewer or no qualifications and lower levels of English language proficiency and face greater challenges in entering the labour force. Australian census data has shown that only 23% of women in this cohort are employed compared to their male counterparts (64%), and that 45% of this group are not in the labour force at all (Australia Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

Research (Anthias, Kontos & Morokvasic, 2013; Butorac, 2014; Choudhry & Elhorst, 2018; Ho, 2006; Ogunsiyi, Wilkes, Jackson & Peters, 2012; Zlotnik, 1995) has shown that migrant women face different hurdles in their migration pathways and experience, including

additional barriers to: employment, such as downward occupational mobility in their new settlement countries, language difficulties, discrimination and additional problems in terms of their work experience and overseas qualification not being recognised in Australia. Research has shown that these employment barriers often impact adversely on their self-esteem and social identities while integrating in the host country, and in turn, negatively affect their community and social participation (Abdulrahim, 2017; Penman & Goel, 2017)

1.2 Terminology

The term migrant women, technically and legally, refers to women who were born in other countries and acquired permanent resident status in a host country through the process of immigration (George & Ramkissoon, 1998; Jaya, 2019). In this study, migrant women includes women who arrived in Australia over the last 15 years through the humanitarian stream, family stream or the skilled labour visa stream and are permanent residents in Australia.

Economic participation is a broad concept with multiple definitions in academic research and government policies. Under the Settlement Council of Australia (2015), economic participation includes all types of labour force participation through employment, entrepreneurship, self-employment or social enterprise. In the research literature, economic participation includes a migrant's income level, employment status and functioning in the host country's labor market (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974, 1977; Richmond, 1976; Schuchman, 1998). This study will use the definition from Schuchman's research (1998) for its inclusive way of defining economic participation as the level of functioning or "success" of the immigrant in the Australian labour market.

Social participation is typically defined by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs (n.d.) in its Settlement Engagement Policy as an indicator of successful settlement for migrants. Conceptually, Schuchman (1998) defined social participation as the extent to which migrants' social interaction reaches out beyond their former-country group to the host society, which has been shown to be associated with a sense of belonging and emotional ties to the host country. A commonly-used inventory of social participation (Levasseure, Richard, Gauvin & Raymond, 2010) includes the number of opportunities for interaction in mainstream community, the amount of contact with the mainstream group and how satisfied migrants are with their social participation. Consistent with Schuchman's (1998) framework, social participation in this study is defined as the ways that migrants can function socially in the mainstream community, be active contributors and achieve a sense of belonging and attachment to Australia.

1.3 Background

1.3.1 Economic and Social Participation of Migrants

Available research on the economic participation of migrants provides useful knowledge about its benefits to migrants' overall mental health (Khoo, 2010; Niemi et al., 2019), well-being (Manderson & Inglis, 1984), financial stability (Rynderman & Flynn, 2016), national self-identification (Butorac, 2014) and self-esteem (Ogunsiji et al., 2012). Much of the available research, however, is based on survey-based studies and quantitative-based data sets. Few studies have examined migrant experiences at a personal level in a way that contributes to our understanding of individual migrants' experiences and challenges. Research of this kind is needed to contribute to existing research and to assist policy makers and government programs.

Social participation of migrants is also an under-researched area. Although researchers (Anthias et al, 2013; Jaya, 2019) and policy makers (Carrington & Marshall, 2008) have begun to advocate for a holistic approach to boost the social participation of migrants arriving in Australia, there is a lack of in-depth research examining individuals' experiences and challenges. There is also a need for further research examining the relationship between economic and social participation among recently arrived migrants. Research of this kind is vital for the development of effective policies and programs in this area.

Studies undertaken by Goldlust and Richmond (1974, 1977), Richmond (1976) and more recently, Schuchman (1998) are among the first to highlight the extent to which economic and social participation of migrants are associated with a sense of belonging and emotional ties with the host country. The term social participation in their studies is defined as the number of opportunities for interaction beyond the migrant-country group and the extent of English language used to interaction with the mainstream community. Goldlust and Richmond (1974, 1977) and Richmond (1976), examined the acculturation and social integration for immigrants in Canada. They tested the correlation of economic and social participation respectively with sense of belonging for migrants in Canada and found that there is a positive correlation between economic participation and sense of belonging, and likewise for social participation and sense of belonging. The study suggested that further research is worthwhile to examine different combinations of variables other than from social and economic participation.

A study by Nicassio (1983) based on surveying 460 Indochinese migrants in the United States provided evidence that the number of friends, employment status, English proficiency and self-perception correlate positively with the migrants' degree of social integration and sense of belonging to the host country. The findings also concluded that those migrants who are not in

employment showed less social integration and adaptability in the host country. This is largely related to their limited opportunities to form friendships with the mainstream community, resulting in fewer opportunities to use English.

Finally, the study by Schuchman (1998) surveyed 249 adult migrants, examining the extent of their economic participation, social participation and sense of belonging to the host country, the United States, has provided results inconsistent with the studies of Goldlust and Richmond (1974, 1977) and Nicassio (1983). The results of Schuchmans's study showed a strong correlation between social participation and sense of belonging in migrants but no significant correlation between economic participation and sense of belonging, which contradicts the previous studies (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974, 1977; Nicassio, 1983). However, Schuchman's study provided the additional information that ethnicity has a direct impact on migrants' sense of belonging and social adaptability, with migrants coming from a non-English speaking ethnicity facing more challenge in social adaptation. It is therefore important in this study to examine the experiences of social and economic participation for migrants from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

1.3.2 Economic and Social Participation of Migrant Women

According to the World Migration Report 2015 (United Nation, n.d.), women constitute 48 per cent of the international migrant population. There are an estimated 164 million migrant workers of working age, between 20 and 64, with 79 million being women.

Research has shown that women experience more challenges and feel the impact of immigration more than men (Ogunsiji et al., 2012; Zlotnik, 1995). The social construction of women's role as homemakers and carers transcends across the borders and in a new country, more challenges are faced as many women lose support, including domestic support from their

extended family (Richter, 2004; Sinke, 2006). A few studies have also shown that women are more disadvantaged than men when it comes to employment (Ogunsij et al., 2012; Read, 2004; Wall & Jose, 2004). When women migrate to reunite with their husbands and families, even though many have professional qualifications, if they are migrating from developing countries to the developed world, they may be less prepared to join the labour market (Sinke, 2006).

Further research examining the settlement experience of migrant women is paramount. In particular, in-depth research examining women's experiences relating to employment and settlement is vital if governments and policy makers are to address the barriers to their full economic and social participation in the new country.

1.3.3 The Economic and Social Participation of Migrant Women in Australia

According to the Migration Guide to Statistics (Philips, 2017), Australia is considered one of the world's major immigration nations together with New Zealand, Canada and the USA. Currently, Australia's overseas-born resident population is estimated to be 28.2 per cent of the population which is considered high compared to most other OECD¹ countries.

Since 1945, Australian Migration Policy has shifted to focus on attracting economic and skilled migrants, which has markedly changed the source country of immigration from the United Kingdom to India and China, which contribute 13% and 11% respectively of the total migrant population. This is followed by the Philippines (5%), South Africa (4%), Vietnam (3%), Sri Lanka (2%), Malaysia (2%), South Korea (2%) and Iraq (2%). As for gender composition,

¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

migrant women in Australia have even surpassed the global statistic by 4% with 52% of migrant population being women.

In Australia there has been a shift in the source countries of immigration to predominately Asian countries over the last several decades, and this, together with the increase in the number of migrant women arriving in Australia, has shifted the priority of the Australian Settlement Program to the employment and social integration of migrant women. Taken together, as more than half of the population of migrant women are not engaged in paid work and are predominantly from a culturally and linguistically (CALD) background, research examining the challenges and barriers faced by these women is needed in order to help address their low employment rate and enhance their settlement experience.

1.4 Social Identity Theory

To consider multicultural issues, Social Identity Theory is being increasingly employed as a useful analytical tool by scholars and policy practitioners (Carrington & Marshall, 2008; Field 2003; Missingham. Dibden & Cocklin, 2006).

Social identity is defined as an individual's self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group, together with the value and emotional significance of that membership (Augoustinos, Walker & Donaghue, 2006; Tajfel, 1974). Previous studies applying Social Identity Theory to identify positive determinants of positive social integration have found that employment of migrants has a positive effect on their social participation in the community (Hochman, 2011), enhancement in language skills (Liang 1994) and development of friendships with the mainstream community (Constant, Gataullina & Zimmermann, 2007; Liang 1994).

Thus, using Social Identity Theory in this study is suitable in guiding the researcher to analytical data within the social psychological perspective while it also helps to avoid take-for-granted assumptions and unwarranted common-sense notions (Jackson & Mazzel, 2018; Leeming, 2018).

1.5 The Current Study

Research designed to contribute to our understanding of the economic and social participation needs of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who migrate to Australia is critically important. Hence, this study aimed to extend available research (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974, 1977; Richmond, 1976; Schuchman, 1998) by examining the complexities of migrant women's experiences and identifying the barriers and challenges to their full economic and social participation and settlement in Australia.

Ultimately, the findings of this study aim to contribute to policies and programs designed to enhance the work and life experiences of women migrating to and settling in Australia.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

2.1 Participants

Participants in the study were women from refugee ($n=2$) and migrant backgrounds ($n=8$). A total of ten participants were interviewed, with ages ranging from 22 to 47 years ($M=34.4$, $SD= 7.7$). Eligibility criteria for the participants included being a woman of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds for whom English is not their first spoken language, having arrived in Australia in the past 15 years; and having proficiency in functional conversational English. Participants came from nine countries of origin: the Philippines, Burma, Afghanistan, South Africa, India, Iran, Singapore, Armenia and China. All participants had tertiary level qualifications. The majority had overseas tertiary degree qualifications and one had an Australian diploma qualification. More demographic information about participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1**Demographic Information of Migrant Women Participants (n=10)**

Participant (pseudonym names)	Age	Visa	Years in Australia	Cultural Background	Marital Status	Caring Status	Highest Qualification	Work Status	Types of employment	Years in current job
Elaine	38	Partner	6	Filipino	Married	No	Overseas Degree	Employed	FT	3
Cindy	36	Partner	6	Burmese	Married	No	Overseas Degree	Employed	Casual	5.5
Flora	22	Humanitarian	7	Afghan	Single	No	Diploma	Employed	Casual	1
Linda	38	Humanitarian	14	Burmese	Married	Children	Overseas Degree	Employed	Casual	2
Alice	36	Partner	8	Sudan	Married	Children	Overseas Degree	Employed	Casual	<1
Rain	46	Skilled labour	14	Indian	Divorced	Parent	Overseas Postgrad	Employed	FT	11
Alex	47	Skilled labour	8	Iranian	Married	No	Overseas Degree	Employed	FT	8
Jenny	43	Skilled labour	15	Singaporean	Married	Children	Overseas Degree	Self-employed	FT	1.5
Alma	38	Skilled labour	9	Armenian	Married	Children	Overseas Degree	Employed	PT	3.5
Pauline	47	Student	5	Chinese	Divorced	Children	Overseas Postgrad	Unemployed	N/A	N/A

2.2 Procedure

The study was approved by the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee (H-20/58). All participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form (see Appendix A & B) prior to the interview and were briefed before the interview commenced. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and the confidentiality and privacy policy about their identities and interview data associated with the study. They were briefed that their participation was voluntary, and that they could leave the study at any time.

A purposive sampling method of recruitment was used to provide a diverse representative sample of participants with different cultural backgrounds and different ages. This was to ensure data provided was informatively rich (Patton, 2002) on the topic of interest (Braun & Clarke, 2013) that is appropriate for a study of this kind. Participants were recruited through the researcher's work network of women of migrant backgrounds and some were identified through a community migrant and refugee organisation in South Australia. All the selected participants met the inclusion criteria. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews accompanying photo-elicitation method. Interview questions were open-ended to encourage participants to offer authentic, detailed and reflexive responses exploring their experiences and feelings on the research topic. Photo-elicitation was used to facilitate the interview with more breadth and depth, especially for those participants who had lower English skills. This helped them to articulate their views and perspectives in greater depth and detail and was successful in eliciting expressions of their emotional feelings. Photo-elicitation is a research technique that has been used in many studies, (in particular Darbyshire, MacDougall & Schiller, 2005; Due, Riggs & Augoustinos, 2014, 2016; Newman, Woodcock & Dunham, 2006) as a flexible approach to allow participants to take photos according to a particular theme that relates to the research. In this

study, the researcher simplified the photo elicitation method by asking participants to bring to the interview two of their personal photos that could best represent their social participation experience. To a certain extent, the use of the photo-elicitation method as a visual method of communication, helped to strengthen the validity of data collected as it is suitable for use with participants who may not be highly proficient in the English language. This method has been used with success to deliver rich data from participants in similar studies using refugee population samples (e.g. Due et al., 2014, 2016; Smith, McCullough, Critchlow & Luke, 2017).

The interviews began with a short informal chat to build trust and rapport. In relation to personal reflexivity (Braun & Clarke, 2013), it is acknowledged that the interviewer is from a cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) background and had an instrumental role in the refugee and migrant community through her professional occupation which was known by all participants. Along with the similarity in gender and social locations (Charmaz, 2014), this may have meant that participants were voluntarily prepared to open up their thoughts and opinions around the interview topic, recognizing that the researcher could understand and relate well to their experiences.

Participants were then asked a series of demographic questions followed by a series of open-ended questions about their employment and social activities, and finally the two photos that each participant brought to the interview were presented and discussed.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face and one in person at locations convenient to the participants (e.g. their neighbourhood libraries and community hubs) between early July to mid-August 2020. Two pilot-run interviews were conducted to fine-tune the interview questions. As a result of the pilot run interviews, two extra questions were added to the interview to improve the gender-oriented questions (see Appendix C for the full interview schedule).

Participants received \$15 for their time commitment as stated in the information sheet. Interview times ranged from approximately 24 to 47mins ($M= 32.3$). Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher with the permission of the participants. Pseudonyms were used at the stage of transcription to maintain the anonymity of the participants. An audit trail with notes was maintained by the interviewer.

2.3 Analysis

In this study, data were analysed at both inductive and deductive levels using the thematic analysis approach, adopting Braun and Clarke (2013)'s six-stage framework. Thematic analysis was chosen as it gives flexibility to explore the data from the "bottom-up" to identify themes and meanings, as well as from the "top-down" to explore the participants' experience in a theoretical way using Social Identity Theory as described.

To analyse the data at an inductive level, a series of steps was undertaken. Firstly, the transcripts were reviewed repeatedly along with written notes from the personal audit trail. Secondly, the data was coded and then re-coded with initial ideas with reference to the research aim. This process was conducted by using NVivo V12 software and then manually selected and screened for relevant information. Thirdly, the codes were collated and categorised in the search for themes. Fourthly, a map of provisional themes and subthemes demonstrating the relationships among them was used to ensure each theme was reflective of the semantic content of the data set. The themes and subthemes were then defined and named and a thematic map was finalised (see figure 1 in Results). Finally, extracts were selected to represent the themes identified.

To analyse the data at a deductive level, the researcher revisited the data under each theme, running through steps 4 to 6 of the six-stage framework of Braun and Clarke (2013).

Employing a top-down approach, the researcher revisited the thematic map and the extracts of data collected to find patterns and relationships among the themes and subthemes. Finally, by applying Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1974) to the patterns found, the researcher examined the linkage of the participants' economic and social participation and explored the explanatory contents of these patterns. Extensive cross-referencing to previous literature ensured that the research findings of this study were meaningfully coherent (Tracy, 2010) or otherwise able to fill the research gap.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Analysis of the data resulted in the identification of four main themes and seven subthemes. As indicated in figure 1, the themes were: 1) *Work*, with the subthemes of *Negative aspects of work* and *Positive aspects of work*, 2) *Friendships* with the subthemes of *Negative aspects of friendship*, *Positive aspects of friendship* and *Learning aspects of friendship* and finally, 3) *Personal* with the subthemes of *Barriers to participation* and *Predisposition to positivity* and 4) *Community and Social Participation*.

Interrelationships were observed across the themes and subthemes. Three multidimensional factors, namely *Structural*, *Socialisation* and *Individual* factors were identified as the outcomes of migrants' involvement in different contexts (i.e. work, friendship and personal spheres). *Structural factors* in this study related to participants' work environments where actual opportunities and barriers were identified, including work colleagues' attitudes towards recently arrived migrants which ranged from "negative, rejecting, non-inclusive" to "acceptance, welcoming and encouraging". *Socialisation factors* related to participants' interaction with the mainstream community which ranged from "the forming of acquaintanceships" to "the forming of close friendships". Lastly, *Individual* factors related to the characteristics and experiences of individual participants and related to personal barriers and challenges faced throughout their settlement experience, and their pre-disposed perception of their migration experience which ranged from "open-minded, positive" to "negative and rejecting".

In addition, a two-directional flow between the themes *Work* and *Community and Social Participation* was identified which can be described as *Post-employment driven* and *Pre-employment driven*. These categories relate to the motivation or driving force of each participant

in regard to their engagement in *Community and Social Participation*. Pre-employment drive was associated with participants engaging in *Community and Social Participation* in order to increase their chances of employment. Post-employment drive was associated with participants engaging in *Community and Social Participation* in order to simply join a mainstream activity.

The quantitative counts of the data are indicated in brackets next to the themes (see figure 1). Although it is not the approach in this study to analysis the quantitative patterns of the data, the use of quantifying language gives some indication of the strength and consistency of each theme.

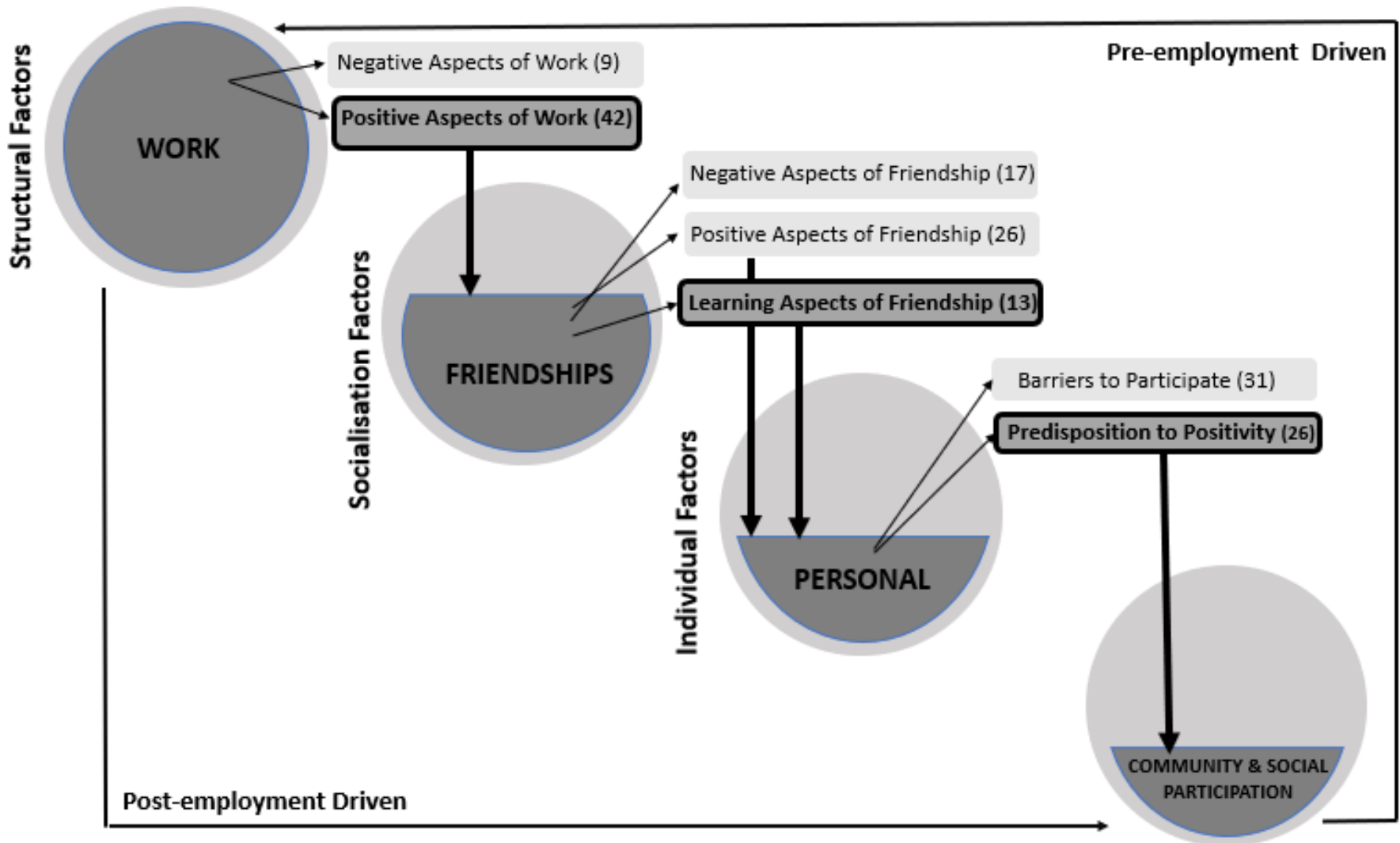


Figure 1. Thematic map representing relationships between themes and subthemes

3.1 Work

The theme *Work* captures the dimensions of the participants' experiences of economic participation that are further categorized into two subthemes, namely *Positive aspects of work* and *Negative aspects of work*. In the interviews, participants were asked for their experience of economic participation including paid employment and self-employment. Their responses reflected their multifaceted encounters, with more responses associated with positive aspects than negative aspects in relation to their work experiences.

3.1.1 Positive aspects of work

Most of the participants described their work as positive. Many reported that their employment experience has helped them to learn about the local culture, improve personal skills, gain confidence and build connections with the mainstream community.

In the aspect of learning the local culture and practice, one of the participants in her role as a care support worker talked about her personal experience when working with local Australians. She indicated that the standards of local Australians are much higher compared with the standards of her ethnic community. For instance, she stated that,

“if you have an appointment, you need to arrive 10 mins earlier. The locals also like to advance plan, and they plan very well. In our culture, we do things very spontaneously which is a different approach from the Australian way.” (Cindy, p.2, 59)

To most of the participants, the ways of communicating and the manner of local Australians are very different from their own cultures. Many responded in a similar way indicating that by integrating with local Australians, they were able to learn more about the

Australians' way of living and gain more opportunities to practise and improve their communication and language skills. This helped them to understand better how to engage with local Australians. Other participants indicated that they learnt about how to navigate the mainstream system through their workplace. For instance, Linda, who worked as a part-time interpreter for her community, said,

“I help with interpretation whenever we have guest speakers. Sometimes the guest speakers talk about the government services, such as Centrelink and women's health and this is also a way for me to learn about the local system.” (Linda, p.3)

At the individual level, many participants mentioned that through their work, they learnt to be more confident, which helped them to integrate to the mainstream community more effectively. Most participants agreed that their communication skills have improved, showing significant progress since they first arrived. Many indicated that they became more confident about their conversational English and felt comfortable to speak English in their daily lives. For instance, the following participant elaborate how she has improved her English through plenty of daily practice at work, and gained the confidence to speak fluently in English with local Australians outside of work. She said,

“I think my communication skills have definitely improved. An example of making phone calls, I wasn't very comfortable at first because other people do not understand my English (accent). Nowadays, I feel that I am ok. There is not much of an issue at all. I am

more confident about my English and I can comfortably use it in my daily life.” (Alma, p.6)

For some participants, work recognition built their self-confidence and reassured them about their personal abilities. A few participants indicated that through work, they have discovered more about themselves and what they are capable of. One participant who was working in a bank said,

“I have done some projects for the company which have been quite successful. Our company is using my projects which have been benefiting work efficiency a lot. It really gives me a lot of satisfaction”. (Rain, p. 6)

Many participants also reported that work allowed them to integrate better into the mainstream community and described their work experience as a learning curve for them that allowed them to communicate better with the locals. Some participants indicated that when they worked in the workplace, they were able to establish relationships with others and the skill took them beyond their workplace. This skill made them feel comfortable when they communicated with people in the mainstream community because they knew how to talk with other people at ease.

The opportunity to expand their social networks through work also assisted many participants to get involved in the mainstream community and to expand their social life. One participant explained,

“When I started my café, I got to know a new group of people. And that’s how (I

realise now) my social network has grown....” (Jenny, p.6)

In describing their work experiences in Australia, some women referred to the benefits of what they described as better gender equality in Australia. Many participants reported that there was no discrimination between genders at the workplace and that women were not viewed as being of a lower status. For instance, Rain said,

“I realized that women in Australia have the same level as men which is very positive. If I give my suggestions and input at work, people are very positive. Whereas giving suggestions back in India, it’s different, as a man’s suggestion will be considered more valuable than woman’s”. (Rain, p.40)

Finally, when asked about how one could improve their work participation, most participants considered English skills to be the answer. Other than that, they reported that understanding how to work in an Australian way is important as they felt that local Australians deal with things very differently compared to their ways. One participant explained:

“For example, the local people will tell you directly how they feel and what they want you to do. In China, most people don’t want to tell you directly. Rather, the Chinese will ask you indirect questions and you will have to guess what they exactly mean.”

(Pauline, p.8)

The subtheme *Positive aspects of work* thus highlighted the multi-dimensional aspects of participants' emotional feelings, attitude and behaviours being shaped by their experience when working with local Australians.

3.1.2 Negative aspects of work

Many participants referred to *negative aspects of work* from the pre-employment stage. The most common negative aspect of employment mentioned related to the English language and the lack of local work experience available to them. All participants reported that it was difficult to find a job when they first arrived as none of them would have any local work experience to start with. Being new arrivals, many participants felt disappointed about employment. One participant said,

“It took me 5 years before getting my first job. As a start, I have done a certificate III course. I then looked for jobs and didn't get any single interviews. Then I completed a Cert IV, and I applied for job. Again, no responses from any employers. If you see how many certificates I have obtained before I got this job, it's a big pile of certificates.” (Alma, p.6)

Some participants indicated that there was limited support from government for migrant women. She added,

“It is also challenging to find a job as a woman. I arrived through partner visa so I am not eligible for any support. No support from Job Active, TAFE English lesson, housing and I have to paid full fee for all the VET courses.” (Alma, p.7).

Figure 2 provides further information about Alma’s situation when she first arrived.



Figure 2: Arriving in Adelaide: my first day

“We came here with just two bags of stuff. We didn’t have any support. When we arrived, there was no settlement assistance for migrants, so we have to do our own research. It was challenging as we do not know anyone in Adelaide” (Alma, p.42)

Some participants referred to experiences of unfair treatment during employment such as not getting equal recognition for work performance and not being offered equal opportunities for career advancement and promotion. For instance, Elaine, who worked for the same company for more than five years but was never promoted, explained:

“I shouldn't be the one to ask for recognition, management should recognize my work. I think in a way I am still not having my work recognized when I am doing my job well. I was not paid properly. It is not fair.” (Elaine, p.11)

Some participants also referred to the language barrier as making it more difficult for them to have equal opportunity for career advancement. One participant said,

“As a migrant, I am still not sure if my English is good enough, that's why it limits me to aim high. I don't feel confident to move to the next level or to change job.” (Alma p.12)

Overall, participants reported more *Positive* than *Negative aspects of work*. Participants also referred to *positive aspects of work* as including the ability for them to learn about the Australian culture, the workplace and work procedures, as well as being respected and recognised as a co-worker. At an individual level, a range of *positive aspects of work* were identified, including gaining self-confidence, expanding social networks, improving English and appreciating meritocracy and gender equality. The *negative aspects of work* identified included feeling disappointed about limited employment opportunities and lack of career advancement, work performance not being recognised, and experiencing unfair treatment in the workplace.

Having said that, many participants reported that they have formed friendships or acquaintance relationships with the mainstream community either directly or indirectly through work. This is further discussed in the next section.

Notably, the results showed that *Work* often provided a structural environment for participants to learn the mainstream culture, to develop their personal skills and confidence, and to equip themselves to develop friendships with local people in the mainstream community.

3.2 Friendships

3.2.1 Positive aspects of friendship

Participants frequently alluded to positive aspects of friendship through their workplaces; saying that through friendship they gained a better understanding of the local culture and very often, cultural exchange happened both ways. For instance, when working together, there are more opportunities to mingle and communicate with work colleagues which allowed participants to have more contacts with local Australians. This provided chances to better understand people of different cultures and backgrounds in safe spaces. Some reported that interacting with local people in the workplace helped with developing a sense of belonging and feeling socially included. Many indicated that they felt welcome, safe and free to be themselves in the workplace. A young Muslim participant said,

“I used to have a friend at work who is not afraid to ask me questions. She asked if I wear my scarf when I go to bed. In fact, there are a lot of things Australians want to ask but they are worried that they will upset me. It is Ok to ask, but of course in a polite way.” (Flora, p.15)

Sustainable friendships and mutual caring were considered crucial to building trust and this even extended to developing a positive perception towards others in the mainstream. Many reported that at their workplaces, they felt comfortable to express themselves in an authentic way. Some talked about their workplace as an inclusive space that allowed conversations with one another to share and be heard. Linda stated that,

“I recalled when I first started my current job, I felt lonely, and thus I did not talk much. But my work colleagues were friendly and welcomed me and they encourage me to open up more. I am much happier now.” (Linda, p.15)

Similarly, Jenny, the café owner agreed that once trust was formed, local people were willing to connect with her. Over time, Jenny put in much time and effort to encourage cultural sharing with her customers. She organised a few fund-raising events at her café, not only to promote her cultural food but also to support her local community. At the same time, these events have created a socially and culturally inclusive space within her neighbourhood. She has thus developed close friendships with many local people. She said,

“At the beginning, it took a while for them to trust... But once we build the trust, they were just like your family friends.” (Jenny, p.16)

3.2.2 Negative aspects of friendships

Two participants reported their experience of negative aspects of friendship intrinsically and extrinsically, and for people with different religious backgrounds, this appeared to be more

frequent. Flora who was from an Islamic religious background and was proficient in English, described being socially excluded at work and study. She described that at her current workplace, she felt that a few of her work colleagues did not treat her the same as others. She felt that disparate attitude towards her was intrinsic. She also reported that some of her local work colleagues kept a distance from her and she felt that it might be due to her religion or her head-coverings. She said,

“I have a lot of work colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. They are from Cambodia, India, Afghanistan and etc. We talk and ask questions openly. But with Australian colleagues, they don't really ask about your cultural and religious background nor show interest to learn from you. They are like... it's OK to keep the distance, and that's why I don't have much friendship with the Aussie.” (Flora, p.14)

Another participant felt that it was hard to develop close friendships with work colleagues outside her workplace. She reported that the vast differences in childhood and life experiences did not provide any common talking topics with local Australian colleagues. She said,

“When I was young, we had no electricity, water, gas and heating. These are not the things that any Australian will feel comfortable to discuss. The different life experience shapes a different life value and priority and thus it is difficult to communicate and develop close friendships...” (Alma, p.23)

Often, the forming of friendship comes from both parties which also reflects the

involvement of social interactions between migrants and locals from the mainstream. The differences in culture and values make it challenging for each party to willingly devote effort to develop friendships outside the workplace. Some participants indicated that they had invested a lot of effort and time in trying to develop friendships with local Australians and that often the experience of passive rejection could be hurtful and unpleasant. Some might feel that the act of rejection carried judgement about them. Alma said,

“I used to organise a few parties for my daughter and invited her classmates and a few of my colleagues’ kids. But what I experienced was that all the parents just left their kids with me and headed off. After the party finished, they came back to pick their kids up. I was disappointed that they didn’t think about me who is struggling with 12 kids. They left me alone without any help. I was open-minded at first, but not anymore. I have enough friends from my community, and I don’t need any more friends from the mainstream community. (Alma, p.41)

Another participant felt that if you are not an outgoing person, you will not be visible in social settings. One participant reported that she felt like she was an unpopular person in the Australian social context:

“I am a quiet person. In Australia, if you are quiet, you will be on your own. The Aussie will not ask you to join them as they think that you prefer to be alone. They never think or choose not to think that you are just too shy to join”. (Flora, p.20)

Similarly, Alma explained:

“I never refused any invitations, but no one has invited me at all. I think effort from both sides is needed to develop friendships. There was once when I stepped into a school event, no one initiated to talk to me. No one even said “how are you?” to me. It might be they also felt that it is difficult to communicate with me.” (Alma, p.40)

To some participants, the receiving of passive rejection such as getting excuses not to accept their invitations or not being included in the organisation of parties, might be interpreted as a declaration of being unworthy of friendship, which might be perceived as judgemental. Such acts might have adversely discouraged participants’ future opportunities to develop friendships with local Australians in mainstream community.

3.2.3 Learning aspects of friendships

Many participants referred to the extent to which migrants to Australia can learn from their friendships, including the Australian way of living, the food, the culture and the values. As Cindy said,

“I have learnt how to make toasts; sandwiches at my workplace and these are not common snack back in my home country.” (Cindy, p.2)

Another participant explained that,

“There is so much to learn... The locals are very environmental-friendly, say for example, the ops shop, we don’t have that in Singapore. We are grateful to the locals for

teaching us so many things that we in Singapore don't get to try or don't even know about it." (Jenny, p.16, 27)

Overall, participants reported more *positive aspects of friendship* and *learning aspects of friendship* than *negative aspects of friendships*. *Positive aspects of friendship* included being able to develop trust and ask questions openly as well as experiencing good friendships and support. In terms of the *learning aspects of friendship*, participants frequently referred to the food and culture and gaining better understanding about Australian values.

3.3 Personal

There were two subthemes identified under the theme *Personal*, namely *Barriers to Participation* and *Predisposition to positivity*. These themes mirrored the second objective of the study: to explore the barriers and challenges to migrant women's social participation in Australia.

3.3.1 Barriers to participation

Some participants acknowledged that there were numerous barriers and challenges presented to them that hindered their social participation. Many participants also referred to a lack of time as one of the key issues. One participant indicated that it took up a lot of time and effort to learn and adopt the new local culture and concurrently, to keep up with her own ethnic culture. She said,

"I have to watch two sets of TV programs, the local one and the Dari one. When we go to our Hasaras events, we talk about the Dari programs, not the Australian ones. So you need to watch and continue to be able to share with them. To continue your relationships with the Aussies, you have to watch the local programs. So now that I have

to work and study, life has been very busy and it is impossible to catch up with the social connection from both cultures.” (Flora, p.21)

Another participant said that feeling homesick is one of the reasons that many of her community members feel like hanging on to their own culture and network. She reflected that she had mixed feelings about being in a new country, and she felt emotionally comfortable to remain closely attached to her own ethnic community and family back in her home country.

Alice said,

“I’m happy to be with my partner but at the same time (sad) to leave my parents and siblings back in my home country.... Yeah, so meeting with new people from the same place where I came from is important. I missed home from the first day I came, I was like...wanting to go back home and have been ringing my parents and friends every day.” (Alice, p.40)

Participants also referred to the extent to which society’s expectations of women are demanding. Many indicated that they were overwhelmed with work and household duties and reported about the extent to which they played multiple roles and had many responsibilities. In their pursuit of balancing their multiplicity of roles (e.g. parenting role, domestic duties, caring for a spouse, being a diligent worker and breadwinner etc.), a few participants also reported that it was hard to prioritise social participation in the mainstream community. Alma, who has two school-aged children, said the expectation has never changed, even after they migrated to Australia. She said,

“It’s the same in our country, it’s the cultural expectation that women are very strong and they can cope with multiple roles and responsibilities. But after a long workday, there’s hardly any energy left to participate in any social activities”. (Alma, p.41)

Women’s busy schedules with work was identified as a common barrier to their social participation. Alex, who had no caring responsibilities, explained:

“Because I am busy with work, during the weekends I would rather stay at home, just be with my family and relax or maybe go shopping. So I don’t have much time to get involved in different local clubs. And because I don’t have small kids, that’s why my life is limited to my close family.” (Alex, p.36)

When asked if they would like to participate in mainstream activities if opportunities were provided, participants’ responses provided different perspectives about their priorities and their motivations to participate. It was noted that the differences in cultural and life experiences might be the bottom-line obstacle. For example, Alma said,

“Frankly, I can tell that there is still barrier, maybe it is my English. Of course, I could chat with other parents about how grumpy the teenagers are, but this is not friendship. Friendship is from someone who is close to your heart. It’s someone who you can call on whenever you need. So this is my understanding, and I don’t see that there is a reverse connection with the locals. Probably their friendship experience is difference.

I don't know. I don't know anyone yet who is genuinely wanting to develop friendships with me." (Alma, p.23)

Another participant also reported that the differences in cultural experience and the obligation to maintain her ethnic practice and values made it difficult to adapt to the local Australian culture. She responded that,

"My mum always says that I can go to talk with the Australians and do whatever they do, work and study with them. But she doesn't want me to become an Australian. So, in order not to become so Australian, I have to maintain my own cultural thing as well. It is very hard, every time when you go out with Australian friends, and then it's like arr... mum's advice is echoed, and I'm reminded not to go too far." (Flora, p.22)

Alex, who is from Iran, gave a different insight. She said,

"Sometimes, people are strange, you don't feel comfortable to get close to them as you are worried that they may come with a purpose.... when I find a friend, I would want to share everything with them." (Alex, p.22)

3.3.2 Predisposition to positivity

One of the key factors impacting on their level of social participation is participants' *predisposing perception to positivity* which is related to their willingness to socially participate.

Predisposing perception can be comparative. For instance, many participants made comparisons between their experience in Australia and their experience in their home country. Elaine explained:

“My first impression of Australia is that it is fascinating, there are so many different cultures and languages. Coming from a rural area, it’s an eye-opener for me. The possibility of what I can achieve, no matter what job I could get, is absolutely amazing.” (Elaine, p.2)

Rain, coming from India, said

“When you have more knowledge, men don’t feel shy to come and ask you for advice. Whereas in India, if you have more knowledge, men make it a point not to come to you. But here in Australia, they don’t see you as a woman, they see and treasure your capability and expertise”. (Rain, p.25)

In general, the majority of the participants displayed a positive attitude toward social participation and showed that they were motivated to participate in mainstream activities. Many participants also expressed that in order to enjoy successful social participation, it is important to keep open-minded, have a curiosity to learn, and embrace and appreciate cultural differences. A few examples demonstrated this. One participant displayed her curiosity to learn by attending a Church service, saying,

“I didn’t belong to any church but I remember one year at Christmas I went to a church and I joined the activities, as I want to know more about the local culture.”

(Pauline, p.27)

Another participant displayed her appreciation for cultural difference:

“The locals are very supportive, and they are happy that you bring up any ideas. I think this is a country with a lot of people who are compassionate, helpful and caring.”

(Jenny, p.32, 41)



Figure 3: My social participation experience at Henley Beach

“I love the beaches in Australia. It’s something like if you are depressed, just go to the beach and have a nice walk. Enjoying the sunset. It has the feeling that yesterday was over and tomorrow will be a better day. I can feel the positivity and inspiration to go further.” (Alma, p.27)

In contrast, two participants reported negative attitudes about their intentions to participate in mainstream activities. Flora said,

“I am not really interested in any social participation. Language is different, culture is different, hobbies are different. There is no point for me to go for the mainstream activities.” (Flora, p.35)

It is noted that for some participants, the differences in ethnicity and religious practices put extra barriers in the way of their social participation. She added further,

“the locals think that Asians are not really good people. They don't really like them. European is Ok, even they are migrants as they speak English. Particularly being a Muslim woman, first of all, this head scarf, they don't really like it. They don't even want to talk to you or even say hello. It's only some of the people who are educated and they have some knowledge about Muslims, that will be different.” (Flora, p.38,39)

Another participant mentioned that she had been volunteering in the Council before, but she felt that the so-called friendship with the Council staff was superficial. Alma said,

“They are friendly to all the volunteers but doesn't mean that they are really your friends. It is more like a work-related relationship.” (Alma, p.37)

Despite these two participants expressing negativity about participating in mainstream social activities, they also showed their aspirations to Australian values and appreciation of the country's natural beauty. When asked to describe the photos that best represent their experience in Australia, coincidentally, both showed photos of Australian beaches. They described Australian beaches as a metaphor for carefree, safe, peaceful, clean and relaxing feelings. An example is shown in figure 3.

3.4 Community and Social Participation

Employing the inventory of social participation (Levasseur et al., 2010) in this study, the theme *community and social participation* was measured by the participants' involvement in neighbourhood groups, volunteering in mainstream organisations, attendance at local churches, and involvement in social hobbies or sports. Several questions were asked around these aspects.

All in all, half of the participants reported that they were involved in mainstream social participation which include volunteering and organising social events, church going and participating in social hobbies. Three of the participants reported that they were not involved in this kind of social participation, but revealed that if there were a chance, they would like to be involved in mainstream social activities. Two participants responded that they did not like to attend any mainstream activities. But still, when asked about their best social experience in Australia, they showed aspirations to Australian values, for example, admiring the intrinsic values of peacefulness, being a safe country, and relaxing environment.

An example of social participation as reported by some of the participants is:

“We organised festive celebration occasionally. On mid-autumn festival, we

served dumpling and we taught the locals how to enjoy our cuisine. We organize a lady lunch at my café and all the gifts and money that we raised from the event donated to the homeless people.” (Jenny p.17)

One of the participants reported that she pro-actively looked for social activities from the mainstream, for instance joining the Rotary Club in which the majority of members are local Australians. She also became actively involved in the mainstream by volunteering in the community. Pauline said,

“Most of the activities that I joined are popular for the locals. For instance, the art lesson that I attended, it is just my daughter and I are non-Caucasian. I joined the Rotary Club because my neighbour is the member of the Club. I also volunteer at Adelaide Airport as an international Ambassador. The program allows me to meet with the locals as I work closely with the border Quarantine team.” (Pauline, p.18, 19, 22)

Involvement in Australian sports is one of the most effective ways to participate in the mainstream community. One participant talked about her first experience watching a footy match, which helped her to better understand and involve in the local culture and values. Rain said,

“Footy here is like, part of their culture and lifestyle. Majority of my work colleagues talk about footy. And I used to be very quiet as I know nothing about it. Then one day my boss gave me a pair of footy tickets because his business travelling clashes

with the game date. I went with my friend and the whole experience was beautiful. After the first quarter, I start to sing with everyone the Port Adelaide song and when they clap, I clap. All the supporters could never know that this was my first game. The sharing and laughing were just so much fun. After the second quarter, I started to understand what the game is all about. That was a good experience and I really like it” (Rain, p.27) (See figure 4)



Figure 4: My first experience of watching a footy match

“Now I understand why Australian is so engross with footy. It is the joy and the feeling of togetherness that brings people closer.” (Rain, p.27)

Volunteering in the mainstream community is an active way to reach out and be part of the community. One of the participants explained that she volunteered to cook and serve food for older people:

“We do special lunches for older people for a healthcare organisation. Every fortnight, we cook Bhutanese or Vietnamese food where most of the clients are Italian. Everyone just mixes together and enjoys the cultural food.” (Linda, p.29)

Many participants reported that they started volunteering before their employment, as it gave them good opportunities to learn about the local culture and increased their employability. One participant reported that volunteering helped her to gain confidence with work and improve her skills. The feeling of being treasured and valued as a volunteer also helped with her self-esteem. She said,

“Because coming from overseas, I am not familiar with a lot of things, but volunteering can help to improve myself and help others too. More importantly, I met many local people through volunteering.” (Pauline, p.34)

Another participant also indicated that doing volunteering work helped her to gain employment:

“I did some volunteering work before I started my current job. My first volunteering was at pre-school, I help the staff over there to supervise and play with the kids. Then I came to my current employer to volunteer and they employ me. (Alex, p.32)

Many participants agreed that involvement in social participation, for example volunteering and joining local clubs, gave them a sense of belonging and being part of the bigger community. Pauline said,

“I volunteer for St John Ambulance and I learnt a lot. It was nice to be invited to celebrate Christmas in a foreign country. It is very important for me. We have our Christmas lunch with other volunteers and clients, and I felt like I am part of the organisation.” (Pauline, p.33) (See figure 5 for more).



Figure 5: My first Christmas celebration in Australia

“Christmas is the biggest festival in Australia, and I found that all older people are very happy even though they don’t know each other. Because of St John, they can connect with each other and as a volunteer, I can help them. I feel good even though I am just a volunteer. St John treats me very well and invited me to attend many other activities.” (Pauline, p.33)

Interestingly, when asked to show the two photos that best represented their social participation experiences in Australia, the responses of those who were not involved in any mainstream social activities revealed key Australian events and values. (See Table 2 for the list of the photos that the participants revealed as their best social participation experience in Australia.) Participants reported that Australian beaches featured the most frequently as their best experience. They also made reference to the extent to which Australian beaches were symbolic of peace, safety, and freedom. These are the values that they said reflected their appreciation of and feeling for the connection with their own values.

Respondents reported that their best social participation experiences included going to Australian beaches, visiting the Sydney Opera House and Parliament House in Canberra, and participating in the Australia Day Festival and the Australian Citizenship Ceremony. They expressed their feelings of a sense of belonging and togetherness through this social participation (see Figure 6 for more extracts).

Table 2:

List of the photos presented by participants when asked to show two photos that best represented their experience of social participation in Australia

Participant	Photo 1	Photo 2
Elaine	Sydney Opera House	Henley Beach
Cindy	Sydney Opera House (with spouse)	Indoor Kids Play Centre (first workplace)
Flora	Cradle Mountain in Tasmania	Semaphore Beach
Linda	Sydney Opera House (with family)	Parliament House in Canberra
Alice	International Women's Day Event	Adelaide Airport (on her first arrival)
Rain	Watching a footy game ²	Henley Beach
Alex	Citizenship Ceremony ³	Australia Day Festival at Torrens River
Jenny	Lunch event at her Café	Farewell lunch at her Cafe
Alma	Arriving in Adelaide: my first day ⁴	Henley Beach ⁵
Pauline	Christmas Celebration at St John ⁶	My university - Flinders University

Note:

² Refer to figure 4: My first experience of watching a footy match

³ Refer to figure 6: Attending my friend's Australia Citizenship Ceremony

⁴ Refer to figure 2: Arriving in Adelaide: my first day

⁵ Refer to figure 3: My social participation experience at Henley Beach

⁶ Refer to figure 5: My first Christmas celebration in Australia



Figure 6: Attending my friend's Australian Citizenship Ceremony

"I attended one of my friends' citizenship ceremony. I wanted to support her as she has no one here. When you get your citizenship, it is a great feeling, you know. In the ceremony, you experienced the feeling of sense of belonging and the enjoyment of different cultures." (Alex, p. 37)

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

The aims of this study were to examine the economic and social participation experiences of migrant women in Australia. It also aimed to identify any barriers and hurdles that they face living and working in Australia. A thematic analysis of the interview data resulted in the identification of four main themes: *Work, Friendship, Personal*, as well as *Community and Social Participation*.

Consistent with previous research (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974, 1977; Richmond, 1976; Schuchman, 1998), the results of this study indicated that the identified range of *positive aspects of work* reported by participants, include understanding Australian culture, values and ways of communicating and increasing their opportunities to develop friendships with local Australians.

In describing how their work experience has impacted on their ability to develop friendships with local Australians, most participants discussed the extent to which work experience played an important role in helping them to develop positive perceptions and trust of local Australians. As found in previous research (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974, 1977; Richmond, 1976; Schuchman, 1998), migrants' experiences of social and economic participation have a direct impact on their perceptions and attachment to the new settlement country.

Seen through the subtheme *predisposition to positivity* under the theme *Personal*, participants described the extent to which they were accepted by the mainstream community, which reinforced their positive attitudes and behaviours in relation to *community and social participation*. This finding is important as it demonstrates the plausible link between the theme *Work, Friendship, Personal* to *Community and Social Participation*.

In relation to *negative aspects of work* and *negative aspects of friendships*, this study indicated that participants are adversely influenced by their negative experiences, such as unfair treatment at work, language barriers, and feeling rejected and unwelcome, all of which led to negative outcomes of friendship development and trust-building with the mainstream community.

It is noted that the themes *Work*, *Friendship* and *Personal* interacted with each other in a multi-faceted way and are inter-related, giving participants their individual experiences of the flow from economic participation to social participation.

4.2 Work

One of the most important findings of this study is that migrant women indicated that economic participation as seen through the theme *Work* has strong implications for their self-confidence and self-esteem. This is because recognition of work performance reflects on their personal abilities and capacities. Participants frequently referred to the extent to which employment helped them to learn Australian ways of communicating, improve their English skills, expand their social networks, and appreciate the notion of gender equality, which in turn helped them to establish their self-identity through recognition, confirmation and resultant feelings of being competent and valuable. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Khoo, 2010; Ogunsiji et al., 2012) which argued that the advantages of economic participation to migrant women have significant impact on improving their overall mental health and well-being, as well as establishing their national-identification and self-esteem. This findings is important as it indicates that positive experiences in workplace settings and with work

colleagues are likely to improve migrant women's settlement experiences, because they see themselves as part of the workforce and feel a sense of belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1974).

In relation to positive aspects of work, many reported that apart from improving their personal skills and knowledge, and building their confidence, more importantly, employment provided a practical avenue for migrant women to learn how to navigate mainstream systems and services. This is important to reinforce their knowledge and awareness about services and resources available in the mainstream community.

It is noted that participants spoke about *negative aspects of work*, including lack of career advancement and limited employment opportunities, which are all related to their low English language proficiency. This is supported by previous research (Butorac, 2014) showing that language plays an important role for migrant women in employment market entry and social inclusion. It was also reported that both *positive* and *negative aspects of work* contribute to migrant women's learning experience in gaining knowledge about Australian workplace practices, work ethics and organisational cultures. It was observed that economic participation, as seen through the theme *Work*, provided the structural basis within which opportunities and barriers were identified. This is fundamental for migrant women to gain understanding about Australian values and culture that will help them with friendship development as seen in the theme *Friendship*.

The findings of the theme *Work* provide insight that English language and positive work experience have influenced migrant women's settlement experiences, and it is therefore important for policy makers to ensure that employers provide workplace environments that seek to increase cultural diversity and address discrimination risks.

4.3 Friendship

In general, participants referred more frequently to positive than negative aspects of friendship. The *positive aspects of friendships* as reported by participants, included being accepted and encompassed socially, experiencing a sense of friendliness, and having the opportunity to develop friendships with local Australians. On the other hand, *negative aspects of friendships* included social exclusion due to differences in values and cultural background, as well as feelings of discrimination due to differences in language and ethnicity. The findings also showed that the forming of friendships comprised two components: the “participants themselves” and the *socialisation factors* of the new settlement country.

The “participants themselves” refers to the participants’ attitudes and their willingness to learn. It is seen through the subtheme *predisposition to positivity* under the theme *personal*. Participants frequently described their positive attitudes towards learning the Australian culture and their open-mindedness to embracing and appreciating cultural differences. *Socialisation factors* in this study, refers to the process of learning group norms, habits and ideals. Many participants reported that through different social occasions, they learnt about Australian culture, way of life, habits and behaviours and attitudes toward each other. To many migrant women, the learning process through socializing with local Australians allowed them to gain a first-hand and in-depth experience of Australian culture.

When work relationships between participants and work colleagues developed into a friendship outside of work, it was reported by participants that this had a positive effect on their self-identification and hence continued to motivate them to gain social acceptance. Participants also reported that the acceptance and recognition offered by their work colleagues helped them to strengthen their self-esteem and sense of belonging.

In addition, the findings show that the power of friendship served not only to bridge the gap between participants and local Australians, but it also helped migrant women to adapt to Australian values and cultures. It is observed through the theme of *friendship* that the more frequent the contact between participants and local Australians, the better the outcomes and quality of the friendships was. This supported previous research (Abrams, McGaughey & Haghghat, 2018; Nielsen, Paritski & Smyth, 2012) which found that the power of contact had a positive effect on improving attitudes towards the other group.

Despite some participants reporting experiences of negative aspects of friendship, they were able to identify that it was the difference in cultures and values that made it hard for others to understand them. They also reported that their initiatives to participate and join in mainstream activities played an important role in immersing themselves in the local culture.

In relation to this finding, it is important to understand that the two components, “participants themselves” and *socialization factors*, both contributed to advance the settlement experiences of migrant women. It is suggested that supporting migrant women to access mainstream activities and services and to increase their opportunities and exposure to a broader community apart from merely their work network, will further enhance their local experiences.

4.4 Personal

In relation to the second aim of this study, to examine barriers and challenges of migrant women’s social participation in Australia, the theme *Personal*, comprising of the subthemes *Barriers to participation* and *Predisposition to positivity*, was identified.

The major barriers and challenges to participation that participants frequently reported were busy work commitments and a lack of time due to juggling between their ethnic community

group activities and mainstream activities. Others reported that demanding parenting and homemaker duties and a diminishing social circle due to children growing up were other common barriers to social participation. These barriers can be categorised as hurdles associated with external circumstances.

It is also noted that apart from the barriers related to external circumstances, barriers associated with individual sentiments and cultural norms could be detrimental to migrant women's motivation toward social participation. For example, participants expressed that their close linkage to their own ethnic communities made it difficult for them to adjust to new social and community norms. Some participants said that it became like making a choice between "maintaining their cultural identity" and "adopting new Australian values and norms".

Apart from that, barriers associated with participants' family cultures was another hurdle that hindered social participation for migrant women. For example, participants discussed how their family culture is traditionally constructed, in that female follows a patriarchal structure that expected them to bear full responsibilities of the homemaker and caregiver roles in the family. Participants reported that this traditional expectation has not changed, regardless of their professional careers or in the context of new Australian values.

Reflecting on the subtheme *Predisposition to positivity*, the findings demonstrated that despite numerous barriers and challenges that were faced by participants, many continued to display positivity towards social participation. Participants discussed that their positive attitude was associated with personal motivation and encouragement from local Australians. Many reported that they had good experiences interacting with local Australians and that they experienced feelings of friendliness and a sense of belonging from the mainstream community.

As noted above, barriers and challenges were numerous for the participants, but it is also observed that their positive experiences of social participation have driven them to continue investing time and effort into further social participation. This finding is important to demonstrate that migrant women's positive attitudes, together with their positive experiences, outweighed the barriers to social participation.

It is therefore suggested that providing appropriate community activities and support that allows migrant women to preserve their own culture, whilst linking to the new Australian culture and values, will enable them to preserve their cultural identity and at the same time, find personal spaces and connections through which they can form a sense of belonging within the communities of their new settlement country.

4.5 Community and Social Participation

In relation to the theme *Community and Social Participation*, participants displayed high levels of involvement in mainstream activities, volunteering in mainstream charitable organisations and becoming involved in social hobbies and events.

In general, the identified themes provide support for previous research in this area (e.g., Goldlust & Richmond, 1974, 1977; Schuchman, 1998) which showed that economic participation for migrant women had a positive impact on their social participation. The findings also contribute to our understanding of their experiences of economic and social participation at an individual level.

When participants were asked about the two selected photos that best represented their experience in Australia (see Table 2), Australian beaches featured the most frequently.

Participants made reference to the extent to which Australian beaches were symbolic of peace,

safety, and freedom. Participants further revealed that the iconic events in the presented photos, such as International Women's Day, the Australian Citizenship Ceremony, the Australian Day Festival, a Port Adelaide Footy Game, and a Christmas Celebration at St John, reflected their emotional connection to the new settlement country and their sense of belonging to Australia. Participants also indicated that iconic places in the presented photos, such as the Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Airport, Flinders University, and Parliament House in Canberra, reflected their positive feelings for and positive relationship with their new settlement country.

It is suggested that community activities that promote cultural and national identity, as well as encouraging participation with the broader Australian society, enable migrant women to have a richer understanding of Australian culture and values. For example, participation in sports or spectating at sports events are ways for migrants to understand the sporting culture in Australia, which is highly reflective of its national values.

Many participants also reported that social participation, for example by volunteering in mainstream organisations, has enabled them to meet and work with local Australians, thus gaining a deeper understanding of Australian workplace culture and at the same time increasing their employability. This finding indicated that social participation also occurred prior to economic participation, as it offered participants more opportunities to gain local work experience and therefore improve their prospects of gaining economic participation. Participants' employment experience also gave them avenues to build friendships, to expand their social networks and hence to increase their opportunities for social participation. It is observed that the two-way flow between economic participation and social participation has provided insights into how migrant women's motivation and incentive has driven them to engage in social participation.

This finding is important for policy makers to take into account when designing community programs that are effective, culturally embracing and socially inclusive. Taking into consideration migrant women's underlying motivations for social participation, it is suggested that community activities that aim to help them gain employment skills and knowledge, which also focus on activities that are of interest to them and reflect their identities and values, will be an effective approach to encourage them toward social participation. Examples of such community activities include collaborating with mainstream NGOs⁷ to host important cultural festivals, and inviting prospective employers to showcase their services and products. It is important also to consider the situation of migrant women when planning such events, for example by holding social activities on the weekend to accommodate working migrant women, and by ensuring activities are inclusive of migrant women who are faced with household burdens, for example by providing free Creche⁸ facilities to support migrant mothers with younger children.

4.6 Strengths and Limitations

Using qualitative research methods enabled the opportunity for this study to capture a richer and deeper understanding of this complex topic of migrant women's experiences of economic and social participation. The vast differences in cultural, language, and socio-economic backgrounds, and the fact that each participant has their own unique life experience has contributed much to this research. Conducting face-to-face one-on interviews, together with the photo-elicitation method, is a powerful and effective way to enable migrant women's voices

⁷ Not-for profit Organisations

⁸ A nursery where babies and young children are cared for during the working day

to be heard. In particular, when asking participants about their best experience in Australia, using the photo to facilitate questions helped them to recall their memories vividly and brought out their emotional sentiments and feelings with richer elaboration (Crivello, Camfield & Woodhead, 2009). As the photos were selected prior to the interview, this also enabled participants to review the interview guide and better prepare themselves for the interview questions. It was unexpected that the participants were very enthusiastic about the photo-elicitation approach, which provided an open and rich narrative of their emotional feelings, which made the interpretative process more collaborative (Crivello et al, 2009).

To the researcher's knowledge, this study is one among a sparse body of research to explore the relationship between migrants' economic and social participation using a qualitative approach within the context of Australia. The qualitative methods enabled the exploration of migrant women's experiences in economic and social participation, thus adding knowledge to previous studies (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974, 1977; Nicassio, 1983; Schuchman, 1998) because of its ability to examine the meanings behind participants' narratives. This is especially important when working with people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Capturing first-hand data from the participants in this way allows the researcher to ask questions and clarify the meanings of their narratives with the participants to ensure accuracy and precision of data collection.

Though it may be argued that the data presented in this study are derived from a relatively small sample of migrant women, it is important to note that using a qualitative research method with purposive sampling allows careful selection of participants who will provide rich information data (Patton, 2002; Sarris, Augoustinos, Williams & Ferguson, 2019). As such, the sample size and methodology employed were appropriate for this study.

4.7 Implications and Future Research

This study addresses the gaps in existing research (Butorac, 2014; Goldlust & Richmond, 1974, 1977; Khoo, 2010; Manderson & Inglis, 1984; Nicassio, 1983; Niemi et al., 2019; Ogunsiji et al; 2012; Rynderman & Flynn, 2016; Schuchman, 1998) examining the settlement experiences and challenges of migrant women arriving in Australia. As noted above, the findings highlight that economic participation plays an important role in improving migrant women's self-esteem and confidence. The findings also indicated that the *negative aspects of work* generated negative perceptions and feeling of unfairness, which are detrimental to migrant women's settlement experiences. Taking this into consideration, it is suggested that employment programs that seek to increase awareness of workplace diversity and address common barriers experienced by migrant women will be beneficial to ensure culturally inclusive workplaces and to facilitate sustainable employment outcomes. Putting such safeguards in place will encourage migrant women to engage in the Australian community and facilitate their active and effective social participation.

In terms of future research, it is recommended that further studies using a longitudinal approach to examine migrant women's experiences over time, while gathering information-rich data using qualitative methods alongside statistical quantitative studies, would be useful to increase our understanding of settlement needs.

In the present study, the purposeful selection of migrant women with better English skills meant that the selected participants have come from better educational backgrounds. Therefore, it will be useful for future research to include migrant women who have low English proficiency and less education, as they are the most vulnerable group of migrants who are in urgent need of support.

Finally, much of the research, including the current study, does not differentiate between migrants with refugee backgrounds and ordinary migrants. While migrants with refugee backgrounds face many challenges in common with migrants, they often have different experiences particular to their own situations. It may thus be problematic to group them together, as the application of research findings to policies and services may be inappropriately generalised in ways that do not address the real issues for migrants with refugee backgrounds.

4.8 Conclusion

With the heightened focus from the Australian Federal Government to increase women migrants' rates of employment and social participation, the findings of this study lay the foundation for further research examining the economic and social participation, as well as the barriers and challenges faced by migrant women arriving in Australia. A greater understanding of migrant women's experiences at work and in the community is vital if policy makers are to address the settlement needs faced by migrant women.

Historically, Australia has been the recipient of waves of immigrants, beginning with early settlers from Europe and Southern Europe, followed by immigrants from Vietnam and Southern China. Recently Australia has received immigrants from other countries (such as Sudan, Bhutan, Burma, Nepal, Congo, Afghanistan). Effective policies and services to support the social inclusion, economic and social participation of these individuals is essential and further research of this kind is needed if migrant women's employment opportunities, and their social participation is to be improved.

References

- Abdulrahim, S. (2017). Educational attainment and economic participation in Palestinian women living in Lebanon: analysis of data from the Labour Force Survey among Palestinian refugees. *The Lancet*, 390, S17-S17. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(17)32018-4.
- Abrams, J. R., McGaughey, K. J., & Haghightat, H. (2018). Attitudes toward Muslims: a test of the parasocial contact hypothesis and contact theory. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research: Interracial Communications: A Global Phenomenon in Diverse Socio-Political Contexts*, 47(4), 276-292. doi:10.1080/17475759.2018.1443968
- Anthias, F., Kontos, M., & Morokvasic, M. (2013). *Paradoxes of Integration: Female Migrants in Europe* (Vol. 4). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Augoustinos, M., Walker, I., & Donaghue, N. (2006). *Social cognition : an integrated introduction* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- Australia Bureau of Statistics (2016). *Understanding Migrant Outcomes – Insights from the Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset*, Australia, 2016. Retrieved August 1, 2020, from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/understanding-migrant-outcomes-insights-australian-census-and-migrants-integrated-dataset-australia/latest-release>
- Australian Government Department of Home Affairs (n.d.). *Settlement Engagement and Transition Support Program*. Retrieved August 1, 2020 from <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/sets-program>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London, UK: Sage Publications Limited.
- Butorac, D. (2014). 'Like the fish not in water' : how language and race mediate the social and

- economic inclusion of migrant women to Australia. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 37(3), 234-248.
- Carrington, K., & Marshall, N. (2008). Building Multicultural Social Capital in Regional Australia. *Rural Society*, 18(2), 117-130. doi:10.5172/rsj.351.18.2.117
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd edition.). SAGE.
- Choudhry, M., & Elhorst, P. (2018). Female labour force participation and economic development. *International Journal of Manpower*, 39(7), 896–912.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-03-2017-0045>
- Constant, A., Gataullina, L., & Zimmermann, K. (2007). Naturalization Proclivities, Ethnicity and Integration. IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc.
- Crivello, G., Camfield, L., & Woodhead, M. (2009). How can children tell us about their wellbeing? Exploring the potential of participatory research approaches within Young Lives. *Social Indicators Research*, 90,51–72.
- Darbyshire, P., MacDougall, C., & Schiller, W. (2005). Multiple methods in qualitative research with children:More research or justmore? *Qualitative Research*, 5, 417–436.
doi:10.1177/1468794105056921
- Due, C., Riggs D. & Augoustinos, M. (2014). Research with Children of Migrant and Refugee Backgrounds: A Review of Child-Centered Research Methods. *Child Indicators Research*, 7(1), 209–227. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-013-9214-6>
- Due, C., Riggs D. & Augoustinos, M. (2016). Experiences of School Belonging for Young Children With Refugee Backgrounds. *The Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, 33(1), 33–53. <https://doi.org/10.1017/edp.2016.9>
- Field, J. (2008). *Social capital* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

- George, U., & Ramkissoon, S. (1998). Race, Gender, and Class: Interlocking Oppressions in the Lives of South Asian Women in Canada. *Affilia*, 13(1), 102–119.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/088610999801300106>
- Goldlust, J., & Richmond, A. H. (1974). A Multivariate Model of Immigrant Adaptation. *The International migration review*, 8(2), 193-225. doi:10.2307/3002781
- Goldlust, J., & Richmond, A. H. (1977). Factors associated with commitment to and identification with Canada.” In W. Isajiw (Ed.), *Identities: The impact of ethnicity on Canadian society* (pp. 132-153). Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited.
- Ho, C. (2006). Women crossing borders: The changing identities of professional Chinese migrant women in Australia. *Portal (Sydney, N.S.W.)*, 3(2), 1–16.
- Hochman, O. (2011). Determinants of Positive Naturalisation Intentions among Germany's Labour Migrants. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(9), 1403-1421.
doi:10.1080/1369183X.2011.623615
- Jackson, A.Y. & Mazzei, L.A. (2018). Thinking with theory: A new analytic for qualitative inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th Ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Jaya, P. (2019). Living and Working in Ethno-Cultural and Multicultural Communities in Ottawa: South Asian Immigrant Women's Journeys. *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, 13(1), 65-156.
- Khoo, S.E. (2010). Health and Humanitarian Migrants' Economic Participation. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 12(3), 327-339. doi:10.1007/s10903-007-9098-y
- Leeming, D. (2018) The use of theory in qualitative research. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 34 (4), 668-673

- Levasseur, M., Richard, L., Gauvin, L., & Raymond, É. (2010). Inventory and analysis of definitions of social participation found in the aging literature: Proposed taxonomy of social activities. *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), 71(12), 2141–2149.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.09.041>
- Liang, Z. (1994). Social Contact, Social Capital, and the Naturalization Process: Evidence From Six Immigrant Groups. *Social Science Research*, 23(4), 407–437.
<https://doi.org/10.1006/ssre.1994.1016>
- Manderson, L., & Inglis, C. (1984). Turkish migration and workforce participation in Sydney, Australia. *The International migration review*, 18(2), 258. doi:10.2307/2545950
- Missingham, B., Dibden, J., & Cocklin, C. (2006). A multicultural countryside? Ethnic minorities in rural Australia. *Rural Society*, 16(2), 131–150.
<https://doi.org/10.5172/rsj.351.16.2.131>
- Newman, M., Woodcock, A., & Dunham, P. (2006). “Playtime in the Borderlands”: Children’s Representations of School, Gender and Bullying through Photographs and Interviews. *Children’s Geographies*, 4(3), 289–302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733280601005617>
- Nicassio, P. M. (1983). Psychosocial Correlates of Alienation: Study of a Sample of Indochinese Refugees. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 14(3), 337-351.
doi:10.1177/0022002183014003007
- Nielsen, I., Paritski, O., & Smyth, R. (2012). A Minority-status Perspective on Intergroup Relations: A Study of an Ethnic Chinese Population in a Small Italian Town. *Urban Studies*, 49(2), 307-318. doi:10.1177/0042098010397396
- Niemi, M., Manhica, H., Gunnarsson, D., Stahle, G., Larsson, S., & Saboonchi, F. (2019). A

- Scoping Review and Conceptual Model of Social Participation and Mental Health among Refugees and Asylum Seekers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(20). doi:10.3390/ijerph16204027
- Ogunsiji, O., Wilkes, L., Jackson, D., & Peters, K. (2012). Beginning Again: West African Women's Experiences of Being Migrants in Australia. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 23(3), 279-286. doi:10.1177/1043659612441018
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Penman, J., & Goel, K. (2017). Coping and resilience of rural and regional Australian immigrants: imperatives for successful settlement. *Rural Society*, 26(2), 178-193. doi:10.1080/10371656.2017.1339406
- Phillips, J. (2017, January 18). Migration to Australia: a quick guide to the statistics. https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick_Guides/MigrationStatistics
- Read, J. G. (2004). Family, religion, and work among Arab American women. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 6, 1042-1050.
- Richter, M. (2004). Contextualising gender and migration: Galician immigration in Switzerland. *International Migration Review*, 38, 263-286.
- Richmond, A. (1976). Language, Ethnicity, and the Problem of Identity in a Canadian Metropolis. In *Ethnicity in the Americas* (Originally published 1976, pp. 41–72). DE GRUYTER MOUTON. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110803501.41>
- Rynderman, J., & Flynn, C. (2016). 'We didn't bring the treasure of Pharaoh': Skilled migrants'

- experiences of employment seeking and settling in Australia. *International Social Work*, 59(2), 268-283. doi:10.1177/0020872813519659
- Sarris, A., Augoustinos, M., Williams, N., & Ferguson, B. (2020). Caregiving work: The experiences and needs of caregivers in Australia. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 28(5), 1764–1771. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13001>
- Schuchman, K. (1998). Social structure and immigrant identification: Impact of race, economic participation, and social participation. In: ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Settlement Council of Australia (2015). National Settlement Services Outcomes Standards. Retrieved August 1, 2020, from http://scoa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SCOA-National-Settlement-Services-Outcomes-Standards-2016_final.pdf
- Sinke, S.M. (2006). Gender and Migration: Historical Perspectives. *The International Migration Review*, 40(1), 82–103. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2006.00004.x>
- Smith, J., Mccullough, R., Critchlow, C., & Luke, M. (2017). Proposing an Initiative Research Methodology for LGBTQ+ Youth: Photo-Elicitation and Thematic Analysis. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 11(4), 271–284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2017.1380557>
- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*, 13(2), 65-93. doi:10.1177/053901847401300204
- Tracy, S. (2010). Qualitative Quality: Eight “Big-Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837–851. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>
- United Nation (n.d.) World Migration Report 2015. Retrieved August 1, 2020 from https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/statcom_2015/seminars/migration/default.html

Wall, K. & Jose, J. S. (2004). Managing work and care: A difficult challenge for immigrant families. *Social Policy & Administration*, 38, 591-621.

Zlotnik, H. H. (1995). Migration and the Family: The Female Perspective. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal : APMJ*, 4 (2-3), 253 - 271.

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

PROJECT TITLE: The Experiences of Economic Participation and Social Participation for Migrant Women in Australia

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL NUMBER: H-20/58

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: xxx

STUDENT RESEARCHER: xxx

STUDENT'S DEGREE: Honours degree in Psychology

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

This research project is about understanding how the experiences of economic participation of migrant women migrants in Australia has impacted on their social participation in the mainstream community. Economic participation is defined as having a job, being involved in business activity and/or social entrepreneurship. Social participation is defined as social involvement in the mainstream community, such as participating in volunteer activities, community events or being a member of an association/club.

It is expected that the results of this project may provide useful insights into how the experiences of economic and social participation has impacted on successful settlement for migrant women in Australia.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by xxx and will form the basis for the Honour degree of Psychology at the University of Adelaide under the supervision of xxx.

Why am I being invited to participate?

You are being invited as you met the inclusion criteria, which includes, being a woman of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds for whom English is not the first spoken language migrant, in the age range of 21 to 50 years, and with a period of residence (up to 15 years).

What am I being invited to do?

You will be invited to an interview with the following interview schedule:

1. A quick questionnaire asking for your demographic data, follow by a few questions asking for your experiences of economic participation and social participation in Australia.
2. You will also be asked to show me 2 photos (during the interview) that represent your experience of social participation in Australia. The photos can be of any themes/topic that best explain how you feel about your social participation experience in Australia e.g. photo of your favourite places, people, events, hobbies in Australia
3. The interview will be conducted at a time that is convenient for you. It will be either a face-to-face interview at a community place/public area or online interview.
4. Audio recording will be used during the interview to assist the researcher, if possible.

How much time will my involvement in the project take?

Your time involvement in this project will be approximately 45mins in total with

- 5 mins on the questionnaire and
- 40mins on the interview

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

The project has no foreseeable risks, side effects, emotional distress, discomforts, inconveniences or restrictions associated with participating in this project. Should there be any potential risk, it will be very low. For example, you may feel uneasy with sharing personal experience that can bring up unpleasant memories, but you will have the choice for not sharing any experience if you do not feel comfortable with. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any stage if you feel uncomfortable.

What are the potential benefits of the research project?

The knowledge gained from this project may assist any settlement service providers and the government funding bodies to better support women migrants with their social participation in Australia. The benefits of this research will not have direct advantage to the participants. It is the recommendation of the study that may benefit collectively the migrant women cohort if the result of the final report is being adopted by any settlement service provider. However, this benefit cannot be guaranteed.

You will also be receiving \$15 cash (sponsored by the researcher) for your time commitment.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time (up until the submission of the thesis) and non-participation or withdrawal will not affect your relationship with the research team and/or the University of Adelaide.

- For University of Adelaide students: Participation, non-participation or withdrawal will not affect your ongoing studies or relationship with The University of Adelaide.
- For participants not affiliated with the University of Adelaide: Participation, non-participation or withdrawal will not affect your relationship with the research team.

What will happen to my information?***Confidentiality and privacy:***

Anonymity/confidentiality of your identity and your data will be ensured during the reporting of research results. Only non-identifiable data will be made publicly available. Pseudonyms name will be used in the report. Interview content will be reviewed to ensure any contents that can identify you will be de-identified to protect your identity.

All information provided is treated as confidential and will not be released by the researcher to a third party unless required to do so by law.

Storage:

Storage of the information collected for, used in, or generated by this project will remain the property of the University of Adelaide, and as such will remain secured on the premises. The data will be stored electronically in non-identifiable (anonymous) format with password access and in securely stored computer device guided by the research team.

Data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years according to section 2.1 of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Access to the research data will be strictly limited to the named contacts in this information sheet.

Publishing:

No individual will be identified by name in any future publication or presentation. You will not receive any unwanted communication from any third party as a result of taking part in the interview.

Sharing:

There is an option for the participant to access to the transcripts of their interview once transcription is completed. Your information will only be used as described in this participant information sheet and it will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except as required by law.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

Primary Contact: xxx
 Email: xxx
 Mobile: xxx

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Adelaide (approval number H-20/58). This research project will be conducted according to the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 (Updated 2018). If you have questions or problems associated with the practical aspects of your participation in the project, or wish to raise a concern or complaint about the project, then you should consult the Principal Investigator as above.

For any questions concerning the ethics of this project, please contact the convener of the Subcommittee for Human Research in the School of Psychology, Dr Paul Delfabbro on
Phone: +61 8 8313 4936

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

If I want to participate, what do I do?

If you wish to participate in this project, please send an email to xxx on xxx_ to express interest. You will be contacted within 1 business day with instruction to return your signed consent form before arranging for a survey and an interview.

Yours sincerely,

xxx
xxx

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form



Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)

CONSENT FORM

1. I have read the attached Information Sheet and agree to take part in the following research project:

Title:	To understand the experience of employment (including unemployment, self-employment and social entrepreneurship) of migrant women in Australia and how it helps them with engaging in the mainstream Australian community.
Ethics Approval Number:	H-20/58

2. I have had the project, so far as it affects me, and the potential risks and burdens fully explained to my satisfaction by the research worker. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the project and my participation. My consent is given freely.
3. I have been given the opportunity to have a member of my family or a friend present while the project was explained to me.
4. Although I understand the purpose of the research project, it has also been explained that my involvement may not be of any benefit to me.
5. I agree to participate in the activities outlined in the participant information sheet.
6. I agree to be:
Audio recorded Yes No
7. I provide consent for the use of the photos presented during the interview to be published in a journal article/conference presentations/website/report etc.
Yes No
8. I understand that as my participation is anonymous, I can withdraw any time up until submission of the survey/completion of the interview.
9. I have been informed that the information gained in the project may be published in a journal article/conference presentations/website/report etc.
10. I have been informed that in the published materials I will not be identified and my personal results will not be divulged.
11. I agree to my information being used for future research purposes as follows:
Research undertaken by these same researcher(s) Yes No
Research undertaken by any researcher(s) Yes No

12. I hereby provide 'extended' consent for the use of my data in future research projects that are:
- (i) an extension of, or closely related to, the original project: Yes No

 - (ii) in the same general area of research: Yes No
13. I understand my information will only be disclosed according to the consent provided, except where disclosure is required by law.
14. I am aware that I should keep a copy of this Consent Form, when completed, and the attached Information Sheet.

Participant to complete:

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Project Title: The Experiences of Economic Participation and Social Participation for Migrant Women in Australia

PART 1: Questionnaire (5 minutes)

1. In what year did you first arrive in Australia to live here? _____
2. On which visa? (e.g. Humanitarian, skilled labour, business, partner) _____
3. In which country you were born? _____
4. What is your cultural background? (e.g. Chinese, Vietnamese, etc) _____
5. What is your Age? _____
6. **Do you speak a language other than English at home?**
 - No, English only.
 - Yes. Please specify _____
7. **What is your Marital Status?**
 - Never Married
 - Widowed
 - Divorced
 - Separated but not divorced
 - Married
8. **What is your Caring Status?**
 - Caring for children
 - Caring for loved one (e.g. parents, spouse)
 - Do not have any caring responsibility
 - Others Please explain: _____
9. **What is the level of the highest qualification you have completed?**
 - No formal education
 - Primary School
 - High school (year 12 or equivalent)
 - Trade Certificate
 - Diploma
 - Bachelor Degree or above
 - Post-grad Degree

10. What is your current Work Status:

- Employed
- Unemployed (Skip Q11 & Q12)
- Self employed
- Running a charitable organisation

11. If you are currently in paid employment, on what basis you are working?

- Full Time (Skip Q13)
- Part Time
- Casual

12. What is your current paid occupation in Australia? _____**13. If you are currently unemployed or on part-time/casual, would you prefer to work more or less?****14. What is your length of time in which you have been employed in this current job?**

PART 2: Interview Guide (30-40mins)**Economic Participation:****Currently Employed:****1) Describe the best aspect of your paid employment?**

- *Tell me more about that*
- *How did that make you feel?*

2) What aspects of your job could be improved?**Currently unemployed:****3) Would you like to be employed?****4) What may see as barriers to you becoming employed?****5) Do you make any local friends from your workplace?**

- a. *If Yes, Do you meet each other outside work?*
- b. *How often do you meet each other outside work?"*

6) How satisfied you are with your current job?**7) How could your job be improved?**

Social Participation:

- 8) **Do you belong to any clubs, neighbourhood association or groups (e.g Rotary Club)?**
- *If Yes, Do you attend their meetings regularly, sometimes or rarely?*
 - *Have you made any local friends from attending?*
 - *If don't, would you like to attend? And why?*
- 9) **Do you volunteer in any mainstream organisation? (including volunteering at children's school)**
- *If Yes, Do you volunteer regularly, sometimes or rarely?*
 - *Have you made any local friends from volunteering?*
 - *If don't, would you like to attend? And why?*
- 10) **Do you attend Church or other religious congregation? (including mosque and temple)**
- *If Yes, Do you attend regularly, sometimes or rarely?*
 - *Have you made any local friends from attending?*
 - *If don't, would you like to attend? And why?*
- 11) **Do you involve or participate in any sports? (including engaging in children's weekend sports)**
If no, would you like to participate? And why?
- 12) **Do you have any social hobbies (or regular spare time activities)?**
If no, would you like to participate? And why?
- 13) **How has your job (paid work) impacted on your social experience in Australia?**
- *Tell me more about that*
 - *How that made you feel?*
- 14) **What are the challenges of being a woman in employment? In social participation?**
- 15) **Describe the best aspects of photo 1**
What does it mean to you?
What it represents?
- 16) **Describe the best aspects of photo 2**
What does it mean to you?
What it represents?
- 17) **Do you have any other comments?**
- 18) **Or anything that I have missed out that you believe it should be asked?**

Thank you very much for your participation.