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June 2008
The experiences of international and New Zealand women in New Zealand higher education

Vivienne Anderson

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

December 2008
Abstract

This thesis reports on an ethnographic research project that explored the experiences and perspectives of a group of women in New Zealand higher education, including international and New Zealand students and partners of international students. The study had two aims. The first was to disrupt the inattention to gender and to students’ partners and families in New Zealand international education research and policy. The second was to problematise Eurocentric assumptions of (predominantly Asian) international students’ ‘cultural difference’, and of New Zealanders’ homogenised sameness.

The theoretical framework for the study was informed by a range of conceptual tools, including feminist, critical theory, post-structural, and postcolonial perspectives. In drawing on feminist perspectives, the study was driven by a concern with acknowledging the importance and value of women’s lives, looking for women where they are absent from policy and analysis, and attending to the mechanisms through which some women’s lives are rendered invisible in internationalised higher education. In considering these mechanisms and women’s lives in relation to them the study also drew on post-structural notions of discourse, power, and agency. It explored how dominant discourses in internationalised higher education reveal and reproduce historically-grounded relations of power that are intentionally or unintentionally performed, subverted and/or resisted by women and those they encounter. Using Young’s (1990, 2000) approach to critical theory, the study also considered alternative ways of constructing internationalised higher education that were suggested in women’s accounts.

As a critical feminist ethnography the study was shaped by my theoretical framework (above), critical literature on heterogeneous social groups, and feminist concerns with relationship, reciprocity and power in the research process. Fieldwork took place during 2005 and 2006 and involved two aspects: the establishment and maintenance of an intercultural group for women associated with a higher education institution, and 28 interviews with 20 women over two years. Interviewees were recruited through the group and included eight international students, nine New Zealand students and three women partners of international students.

Study findings challenged the assumption that international and local students are distinct and oppositional groups. They also highlighted the importance of recognising the legitimate presence of international students’ partners and accompanying family members at all levels in higher education. International and New Zealand women alike found the intercultural group a useful source of social and practical support and information, and a point of access to other sources of support and information. Women reflected on moving between many different kinds of living and learning contexts, highlighting the importance of: clear processes and pathways for accessing information and practical support when experiencing transition; teaching that is engaging, effective, and responsive; and opportunities to develop connections with other people both on and off campus. Rather than revealing clear patterns of difference or sameness across women, the study highlighted the importance of policy, research, teaching and support practices that are open and responsive to women’s actual viewpoints and needs, and that neither re-entrench difference nor assume sameness.
Acknowledgements

I am indebted to my academic supervisors, Dr Karen Nairn and Dr Jacqueline Leckie. Their support, guidance and mentoring over the past four years have made the journey sustainable, and their responsive critique and insistence on communicative clarity have taught me much in the process. Permission to use Women Across Cultures as both a name and a concept was granted by the West Virginia University Office for International Students and Scholars. Support from the University of Otago International Office and Otago University Students’ Association made conducting the project possible. Funding was provided through the Tertiary Education Commission in the form of a Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarship and later the BRCSS (Building Research Capacity in the Social Sciences) Network in the form of a Doctoral Completion Award. Without my family’s unstinting encouragement to “keep going” the thesis would never have been finished. It is their accomplishment too. Finally, I am grateful for the generosity, trust and warm encouragement of the women who took part in the project. This thesis is dedicated to them, with thanks.
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List of abbreviations

ESANA  Students from Europe, South America, North America, and Australia
EXCS  Exchange student
FFPS  Full-fee paying student
ISP  International student’s partner
NZ  New Zealand
O week  Orientation week
PRC  People’s Republic of China
UK  United Kingdom
USA  United States of America
SECTION A – LOCATING THE THESIS
Chapter 1 – Project overview and introduction

1.1 Introduction
This thesis is underpinned by two broad aims. The first is to disrupt the inattention to
gender and to students’ partners and families in New Zealand international education
research and policy. The second is to problematise Eurocentric assumptions of
(predominantly Asian) international students’ ‘cultural difference’ in New Zealand, and
of New Zealanders’ homogenised sameness. These aims are political, in that they involve
questions of power, agency and representation. As such, this thesis joins a growing body
of research that conceptualises ‘internationalised’ education not as an innocent or neutral
endeavour, but as embedded within unequal relations of power that it may in turn disrupt
and/or reproduce.

Broadly-speaking, the thesis addresses three questions. These are as follows:
1. How does the international/local student binary underscoring much research, policy
   and practice in internationalised higher education relate to the material lived realities
   of ‘international’ and ‘local’ women students?
2. How might research that centres women (including international and New Zealand
   students and partners of international students) foster new insights in terms of policy,
   research and practice in internationalised higher education?
3. How might an ‘intercultural’ social group interrupt an international/local binary for
   women involved in it? What are the (im)possibilities of developing and maintaining
   such a group?

---

1 My use of scare quotes here signals my understanding of ‘internationalisation’ as a contested notion that
is discursively produced rather than a “prediscursive fact” (Lamer, 1998a, p. 600). Chapter Two elaborates
on this point, and Chapters Two and Three provide a full account of the body of work that I refer to here.
2 I problematise these terms below.
3 I put ‘intercultural’ in scare quotes to signal its limits as a way of framing the group that was developed
(Women Across Cultures) or any group that involves the meeting of people from different historical and
cultural traditions. In Chapter Ten I discuss more fully how many complex differences and similarities
emerged within the group as it unfolded, not just those that can be understood in terms of ‘culture’.
In using the terms ‘international’ and ‘local’ I refer to how students are categorised by their educational institutions for enrolment and funding purposes, based on citizenship or visa status. I note however, that these categorisations are like all categorisations, slippery. For example, local (or New Zealand) students include new or recent migrants and long-time New Zealand citizens. International doctoral students are regarded as local students for enrolment purposes, but international students in terms of Ministry of Education statistics and healthcare provision. International and local are also problematic descriptors since they denote a situated assessment of people as belonging or not belonging to a particular socio-geographic location. Thus, who is international and who is local can be judged differently depending on who is judging and where they position themselves (Madge, Raghuram, and Noxolo, 2009). Throughout the thesis, I use the terms ‘international’ and ‘local’ while simultaneously problematising their use. ‘International women’ refers both to international women students and women partners of international students. ‘International students’ refers only to those who are themselves enrolled in a course of study. ‘Local’ or ‘New Zealand students’ are those with Permanent Residents’ visas or New Zealand citizenship. Where referring to the women in the project in general terms, I use the broader descriptors, ‘women’ or ‘participants’. I elaborate below on my use of language in the rest of the thesis.

1.2 Background to the project: why this research, and why me?
Before outlining the project, some background information is necessary as to my own involvement. I am a Pākehā New Zealander and a local student, and therefore, an insider to New Zealand higher education; able to study for domestic fees, oblivious to the shifting minutiae of education policy. As a former primary school teacher I have long been interested in questions of teaching and learning, but my interest in internationalisation and education is more recent. This began when I lived for three years in Morgantown, West Virginia, as the partner of an international postdoctoral fellow.

---

4 I use the term ‘Pākehā’ in reference to ‘white’ New Zealanders (Mohanram, 1998), firstly in acknowledgement of the right of indigenous Māori to name those who came after them (Alton-Lee, Densem, Nuthall, and with Patrick, 1993; Spoonley, 1993), and secondly of the ongoing privileges in New Zealand associated with ‘whiteness’ (Mohanram, 1998; Zodgekar, 2005). At the same time I note the contestability of the term and the diversity subsumed within it (see Chapter Two).
Our move to the United States of America from Christchurch, New Zealand, occurred when our first child was eleven weeks old and involved many transitions. For me these included a shift from employment to unpaid work as a stay-at-home mother; from having a strong support network to knowing no-one except my nuclear family; and from career prospects to having no work visa. My husband faced transitions too, but in shifting from doctoral study to his first research job, found a ready-made group of new contacts and colleagues. It was with relief that I discovered on our arrival a social group for women associated with West Virginia University, Women Across Cultures.

Women Across Cultures was jointly run by an international adviser from the University’s Office for International Students and Scholars, Adriana Velasquez; and the partner of an academic staff member/community member, Elizabeth Finklea. At the time I became involved, the group had been established as a community/university joint initiative for ten years thanks to the initial vision and advocacy of three women: Barbara Alvis and Meg Moran, earlier advisers in the West Virginia University Office for International Students and Scholars; and Janis Gunel, a community member whose partner had come to work at the university from Turkey. The group met weekly in a university hall of residence on a no-fees basis, and all women associated with the university, including those with preschool children, were warmly welcomed.

Group meetings revolved around food and drink, conversation and sometimes a combined activity or low-key presentation. Women shared information, photos and/or food from their ‘home’ countries, and local or visiting speakers spoke on various topics and led craft and other activities. Sometimes, the group was hosted in people’s homes, or went on outings. The group facilitators had published a booklet entitled ‘A Guide for International Newcomers to Morgantown’, and had established a gear locker from which fixed-term staff families or students could borrow household equipment, children’s toys etc. About twice a year, large evening ‘pot-luck’ meals were held to which women could bring other friends and family members.

At Women Across Cultures dis-location was the main point of commonality. The women who attended came from all regions of the world and spoke many different

\[\text{Shared meals where everyone present contributes food or drink.}\]
languages. Some had American citizenship; others, like me, were associated with the university through our partners; and others were international students/scholars themselves. We were different to each other in many respects (including age, ethnicity, linguistic background, country/ies of citizenship, professional or occupational background, and life stage); but from my perspective, the group served as a vital contact point for support, friendship, and information. *Women Across Cultures* was a site for learning about ourselves, each other and the world, and a springboard for the formation of other social groups, such as a weekly playgroup for women with small children.

I cannot overstate the significance of *Women Across Cultures* for me during our stay in Morgantown. It was a strategic forum for networking with both international and local women in a context where I was a newcomer, and for finding other women who were, like me, new mothers. The playgroup that evolved from the group came to function as a kind of family-substitute for those of us without wider family living nearby. We shared babysitting, milestones, illnesses, laughter, and times of sadness; and checked up on each other via the telephone if any one of us was absent or unwell. In total, we spoke seven languages to our own and each others’ children (Dutch, English, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Tamil, and Polish), and misunderstandings were often a source of bewilderment and hilarity. The group remained a cohesive source of mutual support regardless, and some of us (and our children) remain in contact years later.

Upon our return to New Zealand, my family and I moved to a small city in the central North Island, where we were again, newcomers. Perhaps because we were new to the region, and also because of our positive association with *Women Across Cultures* in West Virginia, we became involved in a community organisation that offered informal support to international students and students’ families who were, like us, associated with the university. This was my first introduction to internationalised education in the New Zealand context, and my first encounter with the challenges of studying and living here as an international student or student’s partner. As had been our own experience, opportunities to link with social networks and to access information about the local environment were highly valued by the international students and families we became involved with.
After living for two years in the North Island, we moved again, this time to a city on New Zealand’s South Island. At this point I returned to academic study, and as part of a postgraduate research essay decided to explore literature on internationalised education with women in mind. In particular, I considered whether and to what extent women featured in this literature, and more specifically whether or to what extent women who are partners of international students were also considered (Anderson, 2004). In summary, I found that women featured little in New Zealand research and policy concerned with internationalised education, and that women partners of international students were almost entirely invisible (I discuss this further in Chapter Three). In addition, I found that very often, ‘market’ discourses framed the consideration of educational or human concerns both in internationalisation policy and research literature; and that international and local students were positioned largely as distinct and oppositional groups. Further, although social and academic benefits were clearly associated with positive interaction between local and international students in New Zealand and elsewhere, research suggested that in most cases, such interaction occurred little unless actively promoted and facilitated. Few scholars had interrogated the assumptions inherent in the terms ‘international’ and ‘local’ (or ‘New Zealand’), or considered initiatives for including partners or families of international students in campus-related social activities.6

1.3 An overview of the project
My doctoral research project was conceptualised in response to the gaps I perceived in existing academic and policy literature, and built on my previous experiences as an international scholar’s partner in the USA, and as a community member involved with international women students and women partners of international students in New Zealand. The research itself took place from February 2005 to December 2006, and involved two aspects. The first was the development and evaluation of a social group for international and New Zealand women students and women partners of international

6 For details on this literature and for further discussion on existing international education literature and its gaps see Chapters Two and Three.
students associated with three public tertiary education institutions in a small city on New Zealand's South Island. The West Virginia University Office for International Students and Scholars granted permission for me to borrow the group concept, and also the name *Women Across Cultures*. The second aspect of the project involved 28 in-depth interviews over two years with 20 women contacted through the group.\(^7\) The project had eight key objectives. These were:

i. to document the process of establishing a social group for local and international women associated with a tertiary student community;

ii. to explore the specific adjustment needs and experiences of international women students, and women partners of international students associated with public tertiary institutions;

iii. to explore parallel living and study experiences of New Zealand women students;

iv. to consider whether an intercultural social group is a helpful way of supporting international women students and women partners of international students;

v. to consider whether an intercultural social group may facilitate a sense of connection for women who are international students or international students' partners;

vi. to consider how involvement in an intercultural social group may influence the perspectives of New Zealand women towards international students and their partners;

vii. to evaluate the intercultural group as a means for promoting social interaction between New Zealanders and international women on campus; and

viii. to interrogate the international/national binary in relation to the research participants and their complex subjectivities (Brooks, 2004).

The project was undertaken with the initial and ongoing support of international office staff at one of the educational institutions involved, and meeting space and storage facilities were provided by the local students' association on the same campus.\(^8\)

\(^7\) Eight women were interviewed twice, first in 2005 and again in 2006.

\(^8\) Student association facilities were formally available to students from all three public higher education institutions in the city where the project took place.
Although I situate the study broadly as a ‘critical feminist ethnography’ (see Chapters Four and Five), my theoretical framework was multi-faceted (after Sikes, 2006). With Sikes, I understand “social life [as] complex”, and “gaining understandings with a view to making things better [as demanding] complex, flexible, and adaptable theories” (p. 46). The project was therefore informed by a range of conceptual tools loosely described as belonging to the “critical tradition” (Sikes, 2006, p. 46), including feminist, critical theory, post-structural, postcolonial and ‘borderlands’ perspectives. I will briefly explain my understanding of each before proceeding.

In drawing on feminist perspectives, I was concerned with acknowledging the importance and value of women’s day-to-day lives (DeVault, 1990; Pillow and Mayo, 2007; Reinharz, 1992); looking for women where they are absent from policy and analysis (Flores, 2000; Loomba, 2003); and attending to the means through which policy, research and practice may render some women’s lives invisible (DeVault, 1990, p. 7; also see Flores, 2000). I drew on post-structural notions of discourse, power, and agency (see Davies, 1991; Hall, 1996; Lather, 2006a; Paechter, 2001): how language reveals and reproduces unequal relations of power; and how (as discourse) it is used to establish a “common ground for discussion [while] precluding other perspectives” (Monkman and Baird, 2002, p. 499). I also considered how people as “reflexively aware subject[s]” may perform, disrupt, and/or subvert the ways in which they are positioned through discourse (Davies, 2000, p. 139). My understanding of discourse, power, and agency was inflected by postcolonial scholars’ attention to historical, material and structural realities; how historically-grounded discourses (of nationhood, otherness, difference etc.) very often “become ‘real’ inside institutional life” whether or not they are intentionally performed, subverted and/or resisted (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 67; also see Ang, 2003; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres, 1991; Palumbo-Liu, 2002). The study was also informed by borderlands\(^\text{9}\) and other critical scholars’ dual suspicion of frozen identities and recognition that some ways of identifying people carry more “force” than others (Palumbo-Liu, 2002, p. 769; also see Fine, 1994; Fine, Weis, Weseen, and Wong, 2000; 

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\(^9\) I use this term in reference to work primarily by Chicana and Latina critical scholars in the USA, who theorise both the lived experience of negotiating socio-cultural and geographical borders, and of negotiating plural ways of being and knowing (for example, see Anzaldúa, 1987; Flores, 2000; Lugones, 1987, 2003, 2006). The term comes from Anzaldúa’s (1987) book ‘Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza’.
Flores, 2000; Hall, 1996; Lugones, 1987, 2003, 2006). Hall’s (1996) notion of identity/identification was especially useful for conceptualising this duality: identities/identifications as both slippery and forceful (also see Fine and Weis, 2005; Palumbo-Liu, 2002). I explain my conceptual framework more fully in Chapter Four.

Methodologically, the project was shaped by my theoretical understandings (see above and Chapter Four), literature on heterogeneous (or ‘intersectional’) social groups (Gibson-Graham, 2003; Lugones, 2003, 2006; Pratt, 2002), and feminist concerns with relationship, reciprocity and power in the research process (Fontana and Frey, 2000; Oakley, 1986; Pillow and Mayo, 2007). ‘Data’ was contextual, observational, conversational and introspective, and formal data was collected through participant observation (including the ongoing maintenance of a research journal) and interviewing. In analysing the research data I drew on Fine and Weis’ (2005) “compositional” approach (p. 65): attending to “modal forms” (or emerging themes) and variation or “outliers” (or contradictory evidence, p. 67); and connecting these with the research aims and questions, the theoretical framework, and the broader context within which the study was situated. My research methodology is discussed in-depth in Chapter Five.

In moving between the broad aims of the project, the specific research objectives, and women’s observations and conversations, this thesis attempts to do two things. First, it endeavours to stay close to the everyday lives of a small group of women in and on the periphery of internationalised higher education in a small city in New Zealand, and to attend to the “human scale” of internationalised education for some women in one place and time (Gillborn, 2006, p. 23). Second, it draws connections between these women, their immediate living and study environments, and the educational and larger “socio-political formations” within which they study and live (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 66). This is so that the women’s perspectives and experiences might “[refract] back” on the conditions and circumstances that help to shape them (p. 80), revealing the connections

---

10 My use of scare quotes around the word ‘data’ is to signal its limits as a scientific, positivist discursive marker (Evans, 1998). In contrast with a positivist view of research data, I do not consider the multiple insights and interpretations considered and re-presented in this research as discrete or separate from those who speak, live, see, read, and hear them. Since the data contained in this thesis was/is co-constructed, from situated, embodied locations, its ‘collection’ (creation?) and analysis was/is therefore not a technical task, but interpretive (see DeVault, 1990; Haraway, 1988). I explain this further in Chapter Five.
and disconnections between policies, discourses and women’s everyday lives, and highlighting possibilities for change (see Young, 2000).

1.4 A key dilemma: why women, and who are ‘they’?
There are several dilemmas inherent in the thesis that must be named at the outset. These have to do with my role as researcher, the politics of internationalised education, and of research in general. At the beginning of this chapter I stated that my second aim is to problematise the dominant use of difference in relation to (predominantly Asian) international students in New Zealand; or how Eurocentric representations of so-called ‘difference’ reinscribe racialised othering that is resisted, subverted, and/or performed in and through day-to-day lived realities. As a Pākehā New Zealander doing research in English, my ‘research gaze’ is unavoidably partial and limited. With this in mind, my stated intention of centering women in this thesis is also problematic. Many scholars have identified the “glossing-over” that the use of ‘women’ entails (Ang, 2003, p. 192); the reduction of multiple differences and multiple histories to one blanket term. My political agenda is therefore ironic. Given my partiality in relation to the research and my centering of ‘women’ as a category of analysis I risk reinscribing the same Eurocentrism that I want to contest.

In the establishment of Women Across Cultures, my project centres this dilemma, and as a consequence can be read in different ways. My use of an intercultural women’s group as a basis for the research can be read as revealing a naïve and benevolent notion of sisterhood, an attempt to reduce differences to sameness that in doing so risks the reproduction of the discourses it supposedly seeks to contest (Ang, 2003; Lugones, 2003). Alternatively, Women Across Cultures can be read as a continuation of the colonial research legacy that subjects ‘others’ to a white, academic gaze (Mohanty, 1991b). My own involvement as participant observer could be regarded as voyeuristic and harmful, or as a basis for “imperial translation” (Fine, 1994, p. 80; also see Lugones, 2003). Conversely, my project could also be seen as centering my-self under the guise of researching others; a confessionary self-preoccupation or a flawed attempt to correct the gaze mentioned above (Chow, 2003).
I contend that research is needed that attends to the ways in which “socio-political formations” in internationalised higher education shape women’s everyday lives (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 66; also see DeVault, 1990; Pillow, 2003). However, I recognise that risks are always inherent in thinking through ‘difference’ and engaging in research that (like all social research) is political. Throughout the thesis I am conscious of and respond to the possible readings of my research highlighted above. Indeed, at various times throughout the project, these shaped the project, in particular, the running of Women Across Cultures as a group and people’s responses to it. The remainder of the thesis is therefore a situated account that endeavours to explore the connections and disconnections between policy, practice and women’s lives in internationalised higher education, while holding tension (or multiple readings) central. It also considers how women’s situated perspectives shaped their relations with each other, and their agency and creativity in response to (and despite) broader structural and discursive realities. In Chapter Five I outline specific strategies that I used to keep multiple readings central while connecting them to the broader context within which the project took place. In particular I outline my use of a “reflexivity of discomfort” as a way of being accountable for my own interpretations while also “acknowledging the political need to [interpret,] represent and find meaning” (Pillow, 2003, p. 192).

1.5 Terminology

A further dilemma central to this thesis relates to my use of terminology. Although, as stated above, I write in part to disrupt discourses that ‘other’; in order to problematise associated ways of categorising people, I need to use language that categorises (see Kumashiro, 2006). I have already noted ‘international’ and ‘local’ as two such examples. Others include descriptors like ‘full-fee paying student’, ‘exchange student’, ‘white’, and ‘minoritised’; and national/regional identifications such as ‘New Zealander’, ‘Japanese’, ‘European’, ‘Asian’, and ‘Pacific’. In writing about women using words that

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11 I provide examples in Chapters Five and Ten.

12 I use the term 'minoritised' after Bishop (2005) and Gillborn (2006), in recognition that unequal relations of power rather than literal numbers underpin people’s relative status in any given context (see Loomba, 1998). In addition, I use it to acknowledge that unequal relations are not inevitable or definitive, but perpetuated, subverted and/or contested through institutionalised practices and human actors.
categorise I do what I also seek to trouble in my writing: freezing and homogenising complex people, despite my view of identities as fluid, porous, and shifting (see Fine and Weis, 2005).

In this regard I take as helpful Stuart Hall’s (1996, p. 1) notion of a deconstructive approach that uses concepts in order to put them “under erasure”, or perhaps more accurately, to problematise their use at the same time. In using certain categorisations and identifications throughout the thesis, I contend that they “cannot be used in the old way, but without [them] certain key questions cannot be thought at all” (p. 2). One such key question is how social categories continue to “become ‘real’ inside institutional life…even if resisted” (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 67); in other words, how they shape relations between people despite our best efforts to think beyond them. With this in mind the remainder of the thesis, is partially an attempt to interrogate how categories/identifications (including those that I use) come to “[organise] the world” (p. 67) in the educational context from which I write. At the same time, it is also a search for less alienating ways of writing and thinking about and through human differences (Ross, 2002, p. 427).

1.6 The thesis structure
The rest of the thesis proceeds as follows. Chapters Two and Three continue the introductory section of the thesis. Chapter Two includes a historical account of internationalised education in the New Zealand context in relation to shifting notions of internationalisation and nationhood, globalisation and neoliberalism, and the emergence of New Zealand’s ‘export education industry’. The chapter concludes by considering the recently released ‘International Education Agenda’ (Ministry of Education, 2007a) as a strategic policy text that contextualises the chapters that follow. Chapter Three outlines the literature this thesis draws on and speaks to, in relation to international and local student interactions, ‘difference’ and ‘distance’; teaching and learning in internationalised higher education; and women in higher education.
The next two chapters (Section B) provide a theoreto-practical framework for my research. Chapter Four outlines my theoretical framework, specifically, my use of critical feminisms and understandings of discourse, power, agency, and identity/identification. Chapter Five discusses my research methodology, outlining how and why I situate the study as a critical feminist ethnography, and provides a methodological account of the project from inception to dissemination as an introduction to the remainder of the thesis.

The following five chapters (Section C) provide a substantive account of the project. Chapters Six and Seven connect existing New Zealand policy (as discussed in Chapter Two) with the “material politics” revealed in women’s interview accounts (Mohanty, 1991a, p. 11). Chapter Six considers how static (Eurocentric) notions of nationhood were both revealed and problematised in interview conversations throughout the project; and Chapter Seven, how dominant ‘market’ discourses (see Chapter Two) were reflected and contested in full-fee paying students’ interviews. Both chapters problematise existing policy goals in the light of women’s interview accounts, noting that a strengthened sense of nationhood and the construction of some students and not others in terms of their dollar value risks reinscribing separation rather than understanding, respect and global citizenship skills (Ministry of Education, 2007a).

Chapter Eight considers the material politics of women’s study contexts, discussing women’s reflections on learning and teaching in both New Zealand and elsewhere. In this chapter, I use Lugones’s (1987) notions of ‘world-travelling’ and ‘ease’ as a basis for reading women’s accounts beyond assumptions of sameness and difference; highlighting factors women noted as making specific teaching and learning contexts more or less comfortable and more or less safe (also see Noble, 2005).

Chapter Nine considers the material politics of women’s active “place-making” (Dyck, 2005, p. 233), their reflections on material ‘home’ spaces and sense of feeling ‘at home’ or otherwise in their living contexts. This chapter affirms women’s creative capacity to negotiate new and unfamiliar living contexts, while noting factors that serve to disadvantage some women disproportionately.

13 This term is borrowed from Lugones (2003). I use it to foreground my understanding of theory, methodology, and praxis as inextricably connected.
Chapter Ten explores the material politics of *Women Across Cultures*, 'evaluating' the group in relation to the rationale and literature that informed its establishment and the expectations and experiences of the women involved. This chapter is included after the other data chapters because, in part, it explores the workability of earlier chapters' practical recommendations, and their relevance to the women involved in the group.

Chapter Eleven considers how the five data chapters answer, trouble, complicate, and/or speak to the research aims and questions (as outlined above), the contextual data in Chapters Two and Three, and the theoretical and methodological frameworks outlined in Chapters Four and Five. After highlighting three themes that emerged throughout the thesis, it concludes with some suggestions for future research, policy and practice in internationalised higher education.
Chapter 2 - Internationalisation, nationhood and the New Zealand context

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider the ideological, historical and policy context within which internationalised higher education in New Zealand is currently situated. More specifically, I trace the shifts in and connections between internationalisation and nationhood as historically-grounded, inter-related social imaginaries, in order to locate the academic literature and my own study considered in the following chapters. I use the term “social imaginary” after Rizvi (2006, p. 197), in reference to “a collective social force that is [both] specific to time and space [and] always multiple and highly contested within... and across communities” (p. 195). With Rizvi I understand social imaginaries as both “factual and normative”; a collective sense of ‘what is’ that also carries ideas concerning what ‘should be’ (p. 197). Social imaginaries are therefore “common understanding[s]” (p. 198) that are revealed and reproduced discursively through representations and implicit meanings, in stories, myths and mass media communication (p. 196). While through social imaginaries, people live together and make sense of their everyday lives, people often negotiate many different social imaginaries, not just those that are dominant in a particular time or place (p. 197). Dominant social imaginaries are therefore never simply dominant, but are also sites of individual, collective, and (as Rizvi notes), sometimes public struggle (p. 197, for example, see Flores, 2000; Lugones, 1987, 2003; Shain, 2000; Smith, 1999).

I take up Rizvi’s use of ‘social imaginaries’ for three reasons. The first is that it allows me to highlight how taken-for-granted ideas around the internationalisation of education are historically situated and have come to function as discursive and perceptual grids over time (also see Butcher, 2004a; Larner, 1998a, 2003). The second is to trouble a view of ‘internationalisation’ and ‘nationhood’ as coherent “prediscursive fact[s]”

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1 Rizvi’s conceptualisation of social imaginaries in relation to education policy builds on earlier work by other theorists, including Appadurai (2001), Taylor (2004), and Gaonkar (2002).

2 Ways of thinking, writing and re-presenting that both frame and (re)produce the complex and contradictory actions of human subjects.
(Larner, 1998a, p. 600) by looking for their contradictions, and how they have shifted and changed in relation to other intersecting (or oppositional) agendas (also see Robertson, 2006). The third is to “examine how [existing international education] policies are produced and legitimated within a broader framework” (Rizvi, 2006, p. 199, emphasis added), specifically, intersecting discourses of ‘internationalisation’, ‘nationhood’, and ‘neoliberalism’.

The rest of the chapter is organised into four sections. The first (section 2.2) historicises internationalisation as a social imaginary in New Zealand, considering its emergence in relation to British colonisation, dominant notions of nationhood, and shifting changes in immigration policies and flows from the early 1900s until the 1970s. The second (section 2.3) considers how imaginaries of internationalisation and nationhood shifted markedly in New Zealand during the 1980s, alongside other intersecting imaginaries and processes often referred to as globalisation and neoliberalism (see Rizvi, 2006). Section 2.4 discusses the subsequent explosion and development of New Zealand’s ‘export education industry’, outlining its material implications for public higher education. Section 2.5 examines related shifts in international education policy since the 1980s. Section 2.6 concludes the chapter by exploring how ‘The International Education Agenda’ (Ministry of Education, 2007a) as a key contemporary policy text illustrates contradictory ways of imagining internationalisation and nationhood that remain at play in New Zealand.

2.2 Internationalisation, nationhood and colonisation

The New Zealand Ministry of Education (2007a, p. 4) describes internationalisation as the process by which “international programmes, perspectives and activities” are implemented in educational contexts. In this thesis, my contention is that these ‘programmes, perspectives and activities’ and the contexts in which they are implemented are politically, historically and discursively located (see Chapter One). As Larner (1998a) argues, internationalisation in the New Zealand context is interwoven with the legacy of British colonisation, and with shifts in how nationhood has been
conceptualised since New Zealand’s establishment as a British colony in 1840.³

Larner’s (1998a, p. 602) conceptualisation of three “phase[s] of internationalisation” in New Zealand is a helpful starting point for considering the interconnections between internationalisation, nationhood, and international education provision. These are first, a view of New Zealand as “Britain’s farm” (p. 602); second, a view of New Zealand as a separate nation-state and education as crucial for “social coherence” and “national economic security” (p. 603); and third, a re-imagining of internationalisation in relation to “globalisation”, and New Zealand “as a node in the flows and networks of the Pacific Rim” (p. 607). I will consider the first two phases of internationalisation in this section of the chapter, and the third in section 2.3.

Larner (1998a) traces internationalisation discourses in New Zealand to the years immediately following the landmark signing of the Treaty of Waitangi,⁴ the subsequent influx of predominantly Anglo-Celt (or Pākehā)⁵ migrants, the introduction of capitalist infrastructure, and the alienation of indigenous Māori from ancestral lands (also see Spoonley, 1993). Until World War II, internationalisation in both trade and education was generally conceptualised in terms of New Zealand’s economic ties with Britain (Larner, 1998a): New Zealand was seen as “Britain’s farm” (p. 602); and in the words of Rizvi (2004, p. 34), universities were charged with producing “loyal colonial subjects” who would willingly serve “the Empire...anywhere in the world”. During this time, indigenous knowledges and perspectives were discounted in school curricula and academic scholarship (Bishop, 2005; Smith, 1999), and protestant Anglo-Celts were the preferred migrant population (Brooking and Rabel, 1995). Indigenous people and non-Anglo-Celt migrants experienced varying degrees of overt and institutionally-sanctioned discrimination (see Ip, 1995; Spoonley, 1993).

³ This argument is echoed on a more global scale by Rizvi, Lingard, and Lavia (2006), who state that globalisation (as a way of framing internationalisation, see later this chapter) “cannot be disassociated from its roots in the European projects of imperialism” (p. 255, also see Madge et al., 2009).

⁴ The Treaty of Waitangi was the founding document of New Zealand as a British colony, signed by Māori tribal leaders and representatives of the British Crown (Spoonley, 1993). While a landmark document in New Zealand’s colonial history, ongoing controversy surrounds both the interpretation of the Treaty, and its application in practical terms.

⁵ An explanation for my use of this term is given in Chapter One.
Following World War II, New Zealand began to look beyond Britain both economically and educationally (Larner, 1998a). One outcome was its involvement in the 1950's Colombo Plan, an “economic and social development programme” aimed at promoting “cooperative economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2001, p. 5). Under the Colombo Plan, a relatively small and select group of predominantly Asian international students were funded to study in New Zealand in the hope that they would promote stability in their respective countries during a period of Cold War politics and regional decolonisation (see Rizvi, 2004; Tarling, 2004).

Concurrent shifts also occurred in immigration policy, reflecting the growing labour needs of New Zealand's industrial sector. In particular, an increased need for semi or un-skilled labour in urban centres was filled largely by the movement of indigenous Māori from rural areas to cities from the 1950s onwards, and the recruitment of migrants from the wider Pacific region (Spoonley, 1993). Ironically (despite their importance in terms of the labour market), Māori and Pacific peoples remained racialised in public discourse, and positioned as something of an economic and social threat. It was not until the 1970s that Māori reassertion of indigenous rights began to challenge a Eurocentric view of nationhood and deficit discourses about non-European people that dominated in social policy, education, and research. As a result of Māori political and social action, by the mid-1980s, nationhood in New Zealand was imagined at policy level largely in terms of biculturalism, or partnership between Māori and Pākehā (Barclay, 2005; Brooking and Rabel, 1995; King, 1985).

Both the Colombo Plan and post-war shifts in migration flows and notions of nationhood in New Zealand usefully highlight the ironies and contradictions of internationalisation as a social imaginary. The Colombo Plan, for example, can be seen as signalling New Zealand's participation in a colonial (anti-communist) project, and/or in the education of a “powerful élite in Asia” and the Pacific region (Rizvi, 2004, p. 35). However, Tarling (2004, p. 9) suggests that the Colombo Plan can also be seen as standing for mutuality and reciprocity in international education provision: the

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6 Although Rizvi writes specifically in reference to the Australian context, his ideas are also applicable to New Zealand's involvement in the Colombo Plan.
development of bilateral relations between New Zealand and its partner countries, the development of more “personal and mutual” relationships, and a sense of New Zealand as also learning and benefiting from these relations. Although the Colombo Plan can be read in relation to colonial or capitalist concerns (see Rizvi, 2004), it can also be seen as exemplifying what Jones (1998, p. 143) refers to as a “pro-democratic logic of internationalism”: concerns with fostering “tolerance and...respect” across and in spite of differences (p. 150). Whatever its role in a local and regional sense, the Colombo Plan undoubtedly generated much goodwill towards New Zealand and New Zealanders (Butcher, Lim, McGrath, and Revis, 2002; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004). It was instrumental in facilitating the later emergence of New Zealand’s ‘export education industry’ (Butcher and McGrath, 2004), as I discuss in the following section.

While the emergence of biculturalism as a way of imagining nationhood was a significant response to “a glaring historical disregard” for Māori indigenous rights in New Zealand (Barclay, 2005, p. 120), it also highlights how notions of nationhood are shifting rather than stable. New Zealand society is not and has never been a simple mix of indigenous and British (or even ‘white’) New Zealanders, and partnership was not (and arguably, still is not) a political reality. Recent discussions around nationhood have sought both to disrupt comfortable notions of partnership, and to highlight the ways in which bicultural nationhood effectively excludes some New Zealanders even as it includes others (Barclay, 2005; Bishop, 2005; Ip and Pang, 2005; Mohanram, 1998; Smith, 1999; Zodgekar, 2005). Although being Pākehā has not always been a straightforward matter of whiteness versus non-whiteness in New Zealand (Brooking and Rabel, 1995; King, 1985; Pearson, 2005), Eurocentricity or white privilege (Diangelo, 2006) remains an ongoing (albeit shifting) feature of New Zealand society (Bishop, 2005; Mohanram, 1998; Spoonley, 1993). Official lip-service to biculturalism and shifts in migration flows from the 1960s onwards have done little to reduce the use of whiteness in public discourse as a kind of invisible norm, and the ongoing racialisation of indigenous and other ‘visible’ minoritised groups (Butcher, 2004b; Collins, 2006).

2.3 Internationalisation, globalisation and neoliberalism

The 1980s were marked by dramatic shifts in how internationalisation was imagined, in
immigration policies and flows, and (consequently) in the make-up of New Zealand’s population. These shifts are often described in relation to ‘globalisation’ and ‘neoliberalism’, two broad-brush terms that (like internationalisation) gloss over a range of localised and contradictory imaginaries and realities. While different people use each of these terms in different ways (Monkman and Baird, 2002), it is necessary here to outline some of the generalities with which they are often associated. I begin with globalisation, and then consider its connection with neoliberalism.

Globalisation is generally associated with dramatic increases in the global movement of people, capital and goods facilitated in part by increasingly sophisticated information and communication technologies; the increasingly global dominance of ‘Western’ capitalism and consumerism; the rise of supra-national forms of governance; and the ascendance of neoliberalism as an ideology shaping economic and social policy in many countries (Castles, 1998; Codd, 2002; Grierson and Engels-Schwarzpaul, 2004; Harvey, 2001, 2003; Jones, 1998; McBurnie, 2001; Rizvi, 2006). Lamer (1998a) argues that in New Zealand, internationalisation imagined in relation to globalisation is different to its earlier forms primarily because it disrupts the “territorial integrity of the national economy as an economic unit” (p. 604). ‘Neoliberalism’ as a “political economic doctrine” (Harvey, 2003, p. 157) has served as a dominant set of discourses for framing this disruption (see Larner, 2003).

While not new as its prefix suggests, neoliberalism received widespread acceptance following the 1979 election of Margaret Thatcher’s conservative government in Britain (Harvey, 2003, p. 157). Harvey explains that following the application of neoliberal ideology to economic and social policy in the United Kingdom and the USA, major shifts occurred in International Monetary Fund and World Bank policy frameworks. Thus, neoliberal and globalising processes became interconnected: “neoliberalism open[ed] economies to globalisation and globalisation [made] it difficult for governments to resist the ideas of neoliberalism” (Monkman and Baird, 2002, p. 502). The ideas that Monkman and Baird refer to included the primacy of ‘market’ concerns: that ‘the market’ functions best if left to itself; that people are self-interested individuals who cannot be trusted to

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7 I use scare quotes here since I see ‘Western-ness’ as a discursive construction (Said, 1978). I discuss this further in the following chapter.
“serve the common good” (Codd, 1999, p. 45); and that (because of this) human interference in ‘the market’ should be minimised (also see Jesson, 1999). The view that people cannot be trusted underpinned increased monitoring measures in the public service in particular, education included (Grierson and Engels-Schwarzpaul, 2004; Lewis, 2005).

The 1984 election of New Zealand’s fourth Labour government precipitated the application of a neoliberal imaginary to social and economic policy in New Zealand, not initially, as some kind of carefully thought-through or coherent programme, but as a series of responses to existing political problems at the time (Lamer, 1998a). Following the re-election of National in the early 1990s, however, neoliberal discourses came to serve as a more coherent “political rationality” involving primarily a “reconstitution of the object of economic governance” (p. 604). In Lamer’s words:

No longer [was] the national economy to be governed via interventions in the social domain. Instead, individuals, sectors, and regions [were] the new focus of economic governance, and policies and programmes [were] aimed at promoting entrepreneurial, competitive, and individualistic ways of being (p. 604).

A full account of the policy shifts that ensued and their consequences for education is beyond the scope of this thesis and available elsewhere (for example, see Butcher, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Higgins and Nairn, 2006; Lamer, 1998a, 2003). In summary, key government reports precipitated state sector reforms aimed at reducing state regulation and increasing competition in order to promote economic gain (Butcher, 2003). Universities were corporatised, and competition was introduced to the higher education sector. Under previous welfarist approaches to governance, education had been imagined as a public good necessary for “social coherence...a key condition for national economic security” (Lamer, 1998a, p. 603). Under the reforms of the 1980s it was re-imagined as a “private commodity”, and students as consumers in an education marketplace (Butcher, 2003, p. 160; see Hawke, 1988; The Treasury, 1987). In higher education, government subsidies per equivalent full-time student were reduced, making New Zealand students increasingly responsible for funding their own (public) education. As universities became more and more reliant on non-governmental funding, legislative changes in 1989 and

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1990 allowed public educational institutions for the first time to market their courses to, enrol, and keep the profit from full-fee paying overseas students (Collins, 2006; Tarling, 2004). This precipitated the birth and subsequent explosion of the “export education industry” (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 8), and a shift from “aid to trade” in international education provision (p. 24; Tarling, 2004). Full-fee paying international students quickly became “a crucial source of funding” for New Zealand’s public higher education institutions, effectively subsidising domestic education in an era of reduced state expenditure (Butcher, 2004b, p. 259).

Although in this thesis I am primarily concerned with the New Zealand context, the application of a neoliberal social imaginary to education is by no means exclusive to New Zealand. Rizvi (2006, p. 200) argues that the application of a neoliberal imaginary to education policy appears to have become globally convergent...showing an unmistakable trend towards an acceptance of similar policy solutions to educational problems by a wide variety of nation-states that otherwise have very different social, historical and economic characteristics.

Within a neoliberal imaginary, internationalised education is fundamental to the development of a ‘knowledge economy’ rather than to national social cohesion. Through internationalisation, education can meet the needs of both local and international consumers, and the purposes of the global marketplace. While all students are simultaneously consumers of the education product and tradable commodities within the knowledge economy, international students in general and full-fee paying international students in particular are especially “big business” (Haigh, 2002, p. 50).

To return to the New Zealand context, alongside significant changes in education policy and provision during the 1980s and 90s, simultaneous shifts occurred in immigration policy and flows. A major immigration policy review in 1986 culminated in the 1987 Immigration Act, which for the first time emphasised migrant selection based on skills rather than cultural background and country-of-origin (Brooking and Rabel, 1995). As Zodgekar (2005) notes, this shift effectively undermined the Eurocentrism evident in previous immigration policies and practices while also reflecting the dominance of neoliberal politico-economic concerns, namely, a desire to attract skilled migrants and those bringing with them investment capital. One outcome of the shifts in both immigration and education policy was a dramatic increase in both migrants and full-fee
paying international students from the Asian region (Butcher, 2004b; Collins, 2006; Zodgekar, 2005). As an outcome of changing migration flows, significant shifts also occurred in the make-up of the New Zealand population. While in 1986, 81.2 percent of New Zealanders identified as European, 12.5 percent as Māori, and 6.3 percent as ‘Other’ (Zodgekar, 2005, p. 145); by 2001 people identifying as European had reduced slightly (to 80 percent), while those identifying as Māori, Pacific, and Asian had increased (to 14.7, 6.5, and 6.6 percent respectively) (Ward and Lin, 2005, p. 157). Ward and Lin note a 133 percent increase in Chinese New Zealanders from 1991 to 2001, the largest increase across all ethnic groups (p. 157). Parallel changes were reflected in public higher education institutions. Ministry of Education (2007b) statistics show that in 2006, only two-thirds of students enrolled in public higher education identified as European (67 percent). Of the remaining 33 percent, the two largest minority groups were those identifying as Māori (17.5 percent) and Asian (12.3 percent). In universities alone during 2006, Asian students were the largest minority group, making up almost one-fifth (17.7 percent) of the local student population (Ministry of Education, 2007b).

While policy shifts in New Zealand during the 1980s facilitated the development of its ‘export education industry’ and parallel changes in the New Zealand population, these shifts must also be set alongside a long worldwide history of diasporas, migration, and movement across national borders for study purposes (Beaver and Tuck, 1998; Ip, 1995, 2005; Ong, 1999). Multiple ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors, relations of power, and human aspirations and desires have long intersected to shape people’s transnational movement for migration and study purposes (Habu, 2000; Ip, 1995; Larner, 1998a, 1999; Ong and Nonini, 1997; Rhee, 2006). However, the 1980s are notable for the scale of the increase that occurred in global movement for migration and education purposes. In terms of international education, Bennell and Pearce (2003, p. 217) describe a 60.8 percent increase in people moving overseas for study purposes between 1980 and 1995 (from 0.93 to 1.5 million respectively), although this increased movement was and still is by no means universal (Larner, 1998a, 2003; Rizvi, 2004). For example, of the 60.8 percent increase in movement for overseas study described above, 52 percent of those who

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Note that ‘New Zealanders’ in the census data used here are those who self-identify as such.
moved were from the Asian region, and 42 percent were from European countries (Bennell and Pearce, 2003, p. 217).

The shifts in education policy and provision that occurred in New Zealand during the 1980s have been frequently bemoaned in educational circles as disrupting the historic role of education as a way of fostering democratic citizenship and the wellbeing of the nation-state (Butcher, 2004b; for example, see Codd, 2003). Rizvi (2006, p. 200) contrasts a neoliberal imaginary in education with “an older imaginary” in which “education policies had an important role to play in articulating and working for the public good”. As Lamer (1998a) demonstrates however, and I have sought to show here, connections between education, internationalisation, and economic discourses are not at all new, and there was no innocent ‘before’. Although it would be naïve to minimise the effects of the changes that occurred in educational policy and practices during the 1980s and afterwards, nostalgia about education and social policy prior to this time is notably absent from the work of indigenous and other minoritised scholars (for example, see Bishop, 2005; Smith, 1999).

2.4 Internationalisation and ‘export education’
Since the 1980s, ‘export education’ has been central to imaginaries of internationalised education in New Zealand. By 2003, export education was estimated to be a 2.2 billion dollar industry, and among New Zealand’s five top export income earners (Butcher, 2004b). New Zealand has only an estimated 1.5% of the worldwide international education ‘market’ (Lewis, 2005) and its involvement in export education has been marked by ad hoc policy development and constant change (Tarling, 2004). However, New Zealand is notable as a national economy for its reliance on revenue generated through education exports (Lewis, 2005).

The initial aid to trade shift (Ministry of Education, 2001) involved a dramatic increase in the number of international students coming to New Zealand, a change in the conditions under which most of them came, and a change in international student ‘source countries’. To give an idea of the scale of the increase in international student numbers, in 1989 there were around 675 international students in New Zealand overall (Collins, 2006), but in 2006 there were 32,457 equivalent full-time international students (EFTS)
in public higher education institutions alone (Ministry of Education, 2007b). In terms of public higher education, international EFTS increased between 1994 and 2006 by 413 percent (from 5,371 to 27,536). This was alongside a parallel increase in local student numbers for the same period of only 44 percent (Ministry of Education, 2007b).

New Zealand international education statistics since the early 1990s reveal some key asymmetries. The first of these is the disproportionate number of students coming from the Asian region, and in particular, the People’s Republic of China (hereafter, the PRC); the second, that the majority of international students come to New Zealand on a full-fee paying basis; and the third is the different source countries represented in the full-fee paying and exchange enrolment categories. The first two asymmetries noted above are inter-related. The majority of international students in New Zealand since 1990 have always come from the broader Asian region, and an increase in full-fee paying students from the PRC especially underpinned the growth of international student numbers from 1999 to 2003 (Butcher, 2004b; Ministry of Education, 2007b). Although ‘export education industry’ growth has slowed significantly since 2004 and the number of international students from the PRC has declined, full-fee paying students from the PRC remain by far the largest proportion of international students in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2007b). Recent statistics indicate that in 2006, 91 percent of (onshore) international students enrolled for full-year papers in public higher education were full-fee paying (Ministry of Education, 2007c). In contrast, only five percent were enrolled as exchange students and one percent on the basis of foreign-aid scholarships.10 Although Asian students dominated across all enrolment categories with the exception of ‘exchange’ (Ministry of Education, 2007d), it is especially notable that 80 percent of full-fee paying students came from countries in the Asian region; the majority from the PRC (66 percent of full-fee paying students), followed by South Korea, India, Japan, and Malaysia. In contrast with this (and in terms of the third ‘asymmetry’, above), the majority of exchange students were from European countries (67 percent), mostly France and Germany (Ministry of Education, 2007c). Notably, since 2004 at least, numbers of

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10 The remaining students were research-based postgraduate students (two percent), international PhD students (two percent), and diplomatic or military students (less than half a percent). The numbers used here are rounded, therefore they do not add up to 100 percent.
men and women across the international student population have remained almost equal (Ministry of Education, 2005, 2007b).

2.5 ‘Export education’ and policy

It is richly ironic that despite the dramatic increase in international student numbers in New Zealand after the policy reforms of the 1980s, from the mid-1980s until 1999 international students as people were largely absent from government and education discourse (Butcher, 2003). Butcher describes this absence as both “pragmatic and politic”: a concern with the human complexities of export education may have simultaneously represented “interference in the vagaries of the market”, and highlighted the extent to which state funding had been withdrawn from state education (p. 162). As Butcher notes, while educational institutions were still required to be externally accountable to various regulatory bodies during the early 1990s, accountability was largely required in relation to policies and documentation, not teaching practice or student care. In line with a neoliberal retreat from state regulation (see Larner, 2003), institutions themselves were held largely responsible for their own compliance with codes and requirements relating to education provision (Butcher, 2003).

During the 1990s, the demise of a number of prominent private education institutions drew public attention to the absence of international students as people in New Zealand government and education discourse; to a lack of pastoral care and support for these students; and to their vulnerability when overseas agents and New Zealand educational institutions acted unscrupulously (Butcher and McGrath, 2004; Harakeke Group Ltd, 2004; International Education Appeal Authority, 2002). In an apparent attempt to address this, a voluntary Code for the recruitment, welfare, and support of international students was adopted in 1996. From 1999 a mandatory Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students was developed, becoming operative in 2002 (see Ministry of Education, 2002a). In 2001 the Export Education Strategy was launched by the then Minister of Education, and in 2003 the Export Education levy was introduced, intended in part to cover the cost of administering and auditing the new Code of Practice (Harakeke Group Ltd, 2004).
The Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (2002) was established in New Zealand under the 1989 Education Act (Ministry of Education, 2002a) and was revised in 2003 (see Ministry of Education, 2003). Since March 2002, only institutions that are signatories to the Code can legally enrol international students. ‘International students’ in terms of the Code include full-fee paying students, scholarship students, sponsored students and students studying as part of an exchange programme or reciprocal agreement. The Code excludes students with refugee status, permanent residency, Australian or New Zealand citizenship (Ministry of Education, 2008). Since April 2005 international doctoral students have been able to enrol as domestic students, and since that time, they too have not been covered by the Code (Mackie, 2007).

The Code outlines minimum standards required of educational institutions with respect to advice and care offered to international students (Ministry of Education, 2003). It explains the contractual and financial obligations of signatories, grievance procedures available for international students, and details regarding the Code’s administration and enforcement. Eight sections are included in the Code, covering: marketing, recruitment, and enrolment of international students; contracted agents; contracts and indemnity; provision for student welfare; accommodation; grievance procedures for international students; applications and monitoring of education providers; and administration of the Code. Code signatories are required to provide a copy of the summary Code of Practice to all international students upon their enrolment. This both summarises the Code and provides information regarding grievance procedures for students whose institutions breach it.

While the Code may be seen as a laudable attempt to recognise the rights of international students in New Zealand to be well-informed, safe, and properly cared for (Harakeke Group Ltd, 2004), it can also be critiqued on several levels. These include its evident concern with outcome indicators rather than the practice of care, and its failure to alter the structures and practices which made it necessary in the first place (McGrath and Butcher, 2003). Lewis (2005) describes the Code as a product of neoliberal governmentality (see Larner, 2003), a regulatory and managerial tool that leaves educational institutions with the burden of responsibility with respect to international
students, and little say in policy development (also see McGrath and Butcher, 2003). Also the voices of international students themselves have been notably absent from debates surrounding the development of the Code and international education policy and provision in general (McGrath and Butcher, 2003). To Lewis (2005, pp. 40-41), the Code is simultaneously an attempt to “[stitch] together the various states of post-neoliberalism,… to confront 15 years of neo-liberal destructuring”, and to “promote, regulate, protect, governmentise and industrialise the existing flows and practices of international education”. Lewis argues that the Code is “an exercise in neoliberal state-craft”, performing globalisation in New Zealand (p. 41). It constitutes export education as an industry that is separate from education provision more generally; constructs international students as “fully informed, choosing consumer[s]” (p. 34); shifts risk from the state to educational institutions and to students themselves; “define[s], regulate[s], and promote[s]” Brand New Zealand education (p. 36); and controls and delimits the political debates surrounding export education. As Butcher (2004a, p. 29) argues elsewhere, the Code can be seen as an attempt at protecting “perceptions of quality” rather than “the policy and practice of quality” per se (emphasis in the original). Although it requires educational institutions to maintain a degree of transparency in relation to fees, facilities, accommodation options, and enrolment requirements; it also functions as a kind of “marketing tool” (p. 29), doing little to challenge an emphasis on international students’ “dollar value” (p. 28).

The 2005 introduction of domestic fees for international doctoral students is a recent development that could be read as challenging a wholesale emphasis on international students as a source of revenue. It is premature however, to consider it as such. While the need to attract top research students is described by the Ministry of Education (2007a, p. 21) as recognising “the long term and less tangible benefits international students bring to New Zealand”, these ‘benefits’ remain couched in economic terms. For example, they are discussed in relation to the need to access “talent

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11 'Governmentality' simply refers to "a manner of governing" (Grierson and Engels-Schwarzpaul, 2004, p. 1). From a poststructural perspective, governmentality involves the enactment of power through specific institutional practices (Grierson and Engels-Schwarzpaul, 2004), in this case, the development of a 'Code of Practice' that officially shifted the responsibility of student care from the State to individual institutions (McGrath and Butcher, 2003).
in a tight labour market" (p. 21), to develop “international connections” for research and business purposes (p. 26), and to ensure the existence of “potential advocates” for New Zealand education internationally (pp. 21, 26). In other words, the need to attract top doctoral students is vital for New Zealand’s participation in the ‘global knowledge economy’¹² (see pp. 1, 26).

2.6 The contemporary policy context: ‘The International Education Agenda’
‘The International Education Agenda: A Strategy for 2007-2012’ is a Ministry of Education (2007a) policy document intended to set the direction for internationalised education in New Zealand for the next five years. (Hereafter I refer to this as the ‘Agenda’). The goals that it articulates are organised under two “overarching national priorities”: “economic transformation” and “national identity” (pp. 8-9). The Agenda, like other policy documents this decade, positions internationalised education in market terms, both as a source of export revenue and of “human capital” (p. 4) within the “global [knowledge] economy” (p. 2). However, its four key goals also reveal an intertwining of social and economic aspirations. For New Zealand students, promised outcomes include their increased “global knowledge”; “understand[ing]” and “respect” of “other cultures”; multicultural and multilingual skillfulness; and strengthened sense of national identity (p. 9). For international students promised outcomes include that they are welcomed and well-supported in New Zealand; academically successful; “well integrated” within educational institutions, communities, and the (New Zealand) labour market; and that they “become ongoing advocates” for New Zealand (pp. 9-10). While these outcomes are in some respects laudable, they are also contradictory in two respects. First, a strengthened sense of “identity as New Zealanders”, where New Zealand-ness is imagined as constructed through homogeneity or sameness, may preclude relations that are “understand[ing] and respect[ful]” (p. 13). Second, international students’ “enrich[ment]” and “integration into…our education institutions and communities” (p. 9) may be at jeopardised by their concurrent positioning both as “human capital” (p. 4) and a “source of revenue” (p. 28). In Chapter Six I discuss how for some women in my

¹² This term is used widely in education and other policy discourse in New Zealand. The ‘International Education Agenda’ (cited here) does not use the term explicitly, but is evidently shaped by knowledge economy discourses as discussed in the following section.
project, discursive separation between New Zealand-ness and otherness was played out in
day-to-day erasure, hostility, and sometimes, abuse. In Chapter Seven I consider how the
construction of some students in terms of their dollar value may result in students actively
taking up neoliberal subject positions, and/or finding themselves positioned as consumers
or commodities whether or not they want to be.

These contradictions are exemplified in the Agenda’s discursive construction of
international and New Zealand students. In places, the Agenda constructs New
Zealanders as heterogeneous; for example, suggesting that internationalised education
may promote New Zealanders’:

- openness, interest, and positive attitude towards cultural differences...[thereby].
- empower[ing] students who do not have the opportunity to develop such attitudes at home,
- and...engag[ing] students for whom cross-cultural navigation is a more frequent experience
  (p. 13, citing Fernando Reimers, Ford Foundation Professor of International Education and
  Director of Global Education at Harvard Graduate School of Education).

Elsewhere, however, “other cultures” are constructed as if outside New Zealand-ness (p.
13), and (raced, cultured) otherness is conflated with international-ness. For example, in
an illustration of internationalisation in an intermediate school setting, a “typical New
Zealand student eating their ham and salad roll” is contrasted with “a Korean pupil who
might be eating their noodles or rice with chopsticks” (p. 17, citing Madeleine East, Farm
Cove School Principal). Although the Agenda refers to the school in question as
including both Asian international students and Asian New Zealanders, Korean-ness is
constructed as outside (typical) New Zealand-ness. Similarly, “cultural training” is
deemed necessary for those “teachers and staff dealing with international students” (p.
21). Despite the increasing heterogeneity of New Zealand’s resident population (see
earlier this chapter), cultural diversity is constructed not as central to who “we” are as
New Zealanders, but as an issue that must be addressed in relation to the enrolment of
(culturally different?) international students. How the Agenda identifies international
students is similarly contradictory. It explicitly acknowledges international students’
heterogeneity:

There is huge diversity among international students in New Zealand...While this document
talks about ‘international students’ as a group, it is vital that providers, communities, and
government recognise the diverse nature of this group, and their individual needs and
aspirations (p. 18).
It also apparently conflates international-ness with cultural difference (see previous example) and constructs international students (not New Zealand students) as “a source of revenue” (p. 28). While espousing the importance of international students “feel[ing] part of our education institutions and communities” (p. 18), the Agenda also clearly constructs them as other to New Zealand students.

When read against the socio-historical context from which it emerges, the Agenda does not reveal a new imaginary for internationalised education in New Zealand, but rather, an uneasy combining of neoliberal concerns with historically-grounded if contested notions of nationhood. In the remainder of the thesis, I consider how a dominant imaginary in which New Zealand-ness is unitary and “others” are outsiders to nationhood and/or constituted as a source of revenue is at odds with the Agenda’s concurrent emphasis on the need to promote reciprocity and understanding between New Zealanders and so-called others and/or international students (see Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 13). Drawing on critical literatures and my own research, I also look for alternative ways of imagining internationalised education, New Zealand-ness, otherness and international-ness (after Robertson, 2006).
Chapter 3- Literature review

3.1 Introduction and review parameters

This chapter outlines existing academic literature relevant to my own research, and highlights the gaps in this literature that the thesis seeks to address. The chapter is organised into three sections. The first two consider literature on international and local student interactions (section 3.2) and teaching and learning in internationalised higher education contexts (section 3.3). The third considers literature concerning women students and partners of students in higher education (section 3.4). Throughout the chapter, I am interested in two things: first, the substantive issues highlighted in the literature considered; and second, how assumptions of ‘difference’ are revealed and/or contested in the literature. Academic literature, like policy, is embedded within and not external to specific socio-political locations and historically-grounded discourses (Dyck, 1997). Where possible, I draw on critical social theories⁠¹ to make these explicit and/or to consider “radically different” ways of discussing and imagining human social life (Rizvi, 2006, p. 200; also see Sikes, 2006).

The chapter mostly includes peer-reviewed journal articles published since 1990, and to a lesser extent, commissioned international education research reports written within the New Zealand context. I limit the research to a relatively recent timeframe since rapid changes in internationalised higher education in New Zealand and globally can make earlier research less relevant (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2004). Also, although my primary interest is with the New Zealand context, I emphasise literature from New Zealand and Australia where possible. This is because both countries are close geographically, and share similar historical trajectories as ‘white settler’ colonies in terms of the development of internationalised education. Other literature is also included where it speaks usefully to my own work, and/or where similar research from New Zealand or Australia is unavailable.

⁠¹ An explanation of my use of the term ‘critical theories’ is given in Chapter One.
3.2 International and local student relations, difference and distance

The desirability of social interaction between international and New Zealand students is an assumption evident in international education marketing, policy and literature. New Zealand as an international education destination is explicitly marketed on the basis of an image of New Zealanders as warm, friendly and welcoming, as this excerpt from the ‘New Zealand Educated’ website shows:

New Zealanders are a famously hospitable people with a lively interest in other cultures. An education here is frequently the beginning of lifelong friendships....New Zealanders are known as the world’s greatest travellers. We love to experience new cultures and we know what it’s like to be new in another country. We like to feel welcome when we’re overseas - and we return the favour to our international students (Education New Zealand, 2008).2

The previous chapter noted how New Zealand policy texts also imagine internationalised education as offering opportunities for the development of relationships between New Zealanders and “people from other countries and cultures” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 13). National and smaller-scale surveys have indicated that correspondingly, many international students expect and desire to make New Zealand friends (Deloitte, 2008; Ho, Li, Cooper, and Holmes, 2007; Ward and Masgoret, 2004).

In contrast, a lack of social interaction between international and New Zealand students is a key concern highlighted in many New Zealand research studies and literature reviews (Berno and Ward, 2003; Ho et al., 2007; International Graduate Insight Group, 2007; Ward, 2006; Ward and Masgoret, 2004). Barriers identified to interaction between international and local students include both groups’ preference for interacting with similar or ‘co-national’ peers; expectations of communication difficulties, disparate interests, and understandings; and negative or ethnocentric stereotypes in relation to the other group (Ho et al., 2007; Holmes, 2005; Volet and Ang, 1998). However, a 2003 national survey of international students across all education sectors in New Zealand found that 70 percent of participants indicated that they would like more ‘local’ friends, and 35 percent said that they had none (Ward and Masgoret, 2004, p. 10). One in three students surveyed expressed a belief that discrimination is targeted at international students, and that New Zealand students are a key source of negative treatment (p. 10). In a repeat survey in 2007, 61 percent of international students surveyed indicated a desire

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2 Education New Zealand is New Zealand’s official international education industry body.
for more New Zealand friends, and almost a third perceived New Zealanders as disinterested in friendship with international students (Deloitte, 2008, pp. 81-82). Only a quarter of international students indicated that they had never experienced discrimination from New Zealand students (p. 83), and international students identified both community members and New Zealand students as significant sources of negative treatment. In a 2006 survey of international university students, a lack of New Zealand friends was the most significant cause of dissatisfaction for survey respondents (International Graduate Insight Group, 2007). In contrast, ninety percent of the survey participants expressed a high level of satisfaction at the number of “similar friends” that they had in New Zealand. Notably, the survey did not explore participants’ criteria for judging ‘similarity’ or ‘difference’.

Some international education scholarship highlights positive outcomes associated with interaction between so-called international and local students. For international students, positive interactions with local students are associated with greater wellbeing, or in Berno and Ward’s (2003, p. 16) terms, “better psychological, social and academic adaptation”. Specifically, in the 2003 national survey of international students, students who reported increased contact with New Zealanders also reported more positive impressions of New Zealanders, a lower perception of discrimination, a greater sense of inclusion in classroom contexts, greater access to and satisfaction with social support, greater “life satisfaction”, better academic progress and satisfaction, fewer “academic difficulties”, and more positive impressions of the towns in which they lived (Ward and Masgoret, 2004, p. 56). Writing from the Australian context, Ramsey, Jones and Barker (2007) suggest that local-international student interaction may be especially helpful in assisting international students with negotiating and understanding a new cultural milieu, and providing access to information relating to their new locale. This suggestion was borne out in the results of the 2007 national survey of international students in New Zealand, where interactions with New Zealand students were identified as helpful for allowing international students to access local information and address language issues (Deloitte, 2008). As in the 2003 survey (see Ward and Masgoret, 2004, earlier),

3 Later in the chapter I discuss how the use of terms like ‘adaptation’ reveals a discursive positioning of New Zealand-ness as a norm from which ‘other students’ are read (Madge et al., 2009).
friendships with New Zealanders were also associated with better life satisfaction.

Much less research has considered the implications for local students of social interaction with international students. In their research project involving the establishment of mixed (Australian and international student) classroom groups in an Australian university, Volet and Ang (1998) found that Australian students’ negative assumptions about international students’ supposed language difficulties were challenged, and they reported coming to see international students as individual people rather than as culturally different others. Both international and Australian students involved in the project spoke of their interactions as having overcome their initial stereotypes, having found “a temporary lack of cultural-emotional connectedness” to be “manageable” (p. 19), and having their fears around language issues disrupted. Volet and Ang note that although both international and local students were largely positive about having worked in mixed groups, neither group indicated that they would purposefully choose to work in such groups again. With this in mind, Volet and Ang call for future research that attends to “the social dynamics” of such groups, and explores how group participants’ perspectives may change after their involvement in group activities (p. 20). This is an aspect of my project (see Chapter Five).

In this thesis I contend that it is problematic to consider patterns of interaction in higher education solely in relation to an international/local student binary; first, because the use of ‘international’ and ‘New Zealand’ (or ‘local’) as oppositional categories homogenises both groups of people; and second, because it precludes attention to similarities across them (see Madge et al., 2009). In addition, in much New Zealand research, concerns are expressed about international students’ (not New Zealand students’) ‘adaptation’, ‘integration’ etc. (for example, see Berno and Ward, 2003; Ward and Masgoret, 2004); revealing an ethnocentric construction of New Zealand-ness or locality, and of others as different (and/or deficient).

Attention to the diversity of so-called international students highlights rather more complex patterns of dissatisfaction, discrimination, interaction, and friendship. Ward and Masgoret’s (2004) national survey for example, found that Chinese students expressed the most dissatisfaction and the highest perception of discrimination on the part of New Zealanders. Asian international students reported feeling “less included” in classroom
contexts than international students from Europe and North America (p. 42). In the 2007
survey also, ESANAs\(^4\) students reported a greater sense of cultural inclusion in their
educational contexts than students from the Asian region, and students from North and
South America reported spending more social and academic time with New Zealanders
than with other international students, including those from their home countries

In the survey reports written by Ward and Masgoret (2004) and Deloitte (2008),
Asian students’ reported lack of inclusion in classroom contexts is explained as “not
surprising” given that “acceptance and adjustment...is a function of cultural distance”
(Ward and Masgoret, 2004, p. 42). ESANA students are by implication constructed as
‘not distant’, and New Zealand-ness is constructed as if a transparent, homogenous norm
against which cultural distance is read. This is problematic given the diversity subsumed
within descriptors such as ‘ESANA’, ‘Asian’, and ‘New Zealander’. That Asian
international students are homogenised as culturally distant (to New Zealanders) is
especially problematic given that in New Zealand universities alone, almost one fifth of
New Zealand students also identify as Asian (see Ministry of Education, 2007b, previous
chapter).

One report that considers New Zealanders’ heterogeneity in relation to local–
international student interactions was written by Ward, Masgoret, Ho, Holmes, Cooper,
Newton, and Crabbe (2005). Ward et al. report on five studies that involved surveys and
interviews with New Zealand students and teachers in secondary and post-secondary
education contexts across New Zealand, and community members in four New Zealand
cities. The study authors report that of the New Zealand students included in the study,
those who spoke two or more languages or who had lived or studied abroad appeared to
be more willing to engage “across cultural boundaries” than others, and were more
competent at doing so (p. 25).\(^5\) They also note study findings that confirm international
students’ uneven perceptions (see Deloitte, 2008; Ward and Masgoret, 2004, earlier). For

\(^4\) Students from Europe, South America, North America, and Australia (Ward and Masgoret, 2004).

\(^5\) In a study exploring the attitudes of American students in higher education, Mehta and Ruby (1997, p.
144) similarly found that “ethnic minority” American students were more positive towards international
students than ‘white’ American students.
example, North American and European international students were viewed more favourably by the New Zealanders involved in the study than those from other regions (Ward et al., 2005, p. iv); and in centres with higher numbers of international students, community members voiced concerns over international students’ perceived “lack of integration” in their communities (p. vi). Ward et al. state that in these centres, “visibly different” students were also viewed less favourably than others (p. vi). Study findings reveal how differences between New Zealanders apparently shaped their perceptions of and interactions with international students, but Ward et al. nevertheless use the term ‘visible difference’ only in relation to international students (see above). As in the studies cited earlier (Deloitte, 2008; Ward and Masgoret, 2004), the ascription of visible difference (like cultural distance) to (predominantly Asian) international students and not New Zealanders reveals and reproduces an ethnocentric construction of New Zealandness as a homogenous (white) norm.

Collins (2006), who considers dominant media representations of Asian international students in the Auckland region, notes that the discursive construction of (some) international students as (distant or different) ‘others’ is problematic, since “it is difficult to distinguish between who is legally an international student and who is not” (p. 228). Collins’ point is a crucial one both when reading existing New Zealand research on international-New Zealand student relations and in terms of my project. While New Zealand research to date has both echoed and problematised the construction of New Zealand-ness as a (homogeneous) norm from which so-called others are read as culturally or visibly different or distant, very little New Zealand research has explored the complex and reciprocal ‘identity work’ that takes place in (international) education as it shapes the expectations, experiences of, and relations between students across an international/New Zealand binary (Butcher, 2004b; and Collins, 2006, are exceptions). Collins (2006) alone acknowledges the impossibility of judging by sight who is and who is not an international student or a New Zealander. A re-reading of research findings with Collins’ point in mind may produce somewhat different conclusions. For example, international students’ ‘culturally similar’ friends, may well include New Zealand students (see International Graduate Insight Group, 2007, earlier), and ‘visible international students’ who some New Zealanders consider less favourably than others may not have been international
students at all (see Ward et al., 2005). Rather than taking so-called difference or distance as given, Collins (2006) points to the importance of considering how difference or distance is ascribed to ‘others’ in the New Zealand and by whom (also see Ang, 2003; Jiang, 2005; Rhee, 2006).

To question how ‘difference’ and ‘distance’ are used in international education scholarship is not to minimise the significance of human differences in shaping interactions between people. As critical scholars argue however, these differences are multiple and complex; both historically-entrenched (Ang, 2003; Mohanty, 1991b) and constantly shifting (Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007). Lugones (1987) suggests that an ability to interact with others across differences (of any sort) requires an openness both to unfamiliar ways of being and seeing and to self-reinvention. She also argues that in this regard, people who travel across social worlds as part of their everyday lives (including international students) may be advantaged, or necessarily skilful. Lugones’ contention problematises the static notion of New Zealand-ness implicit in constructions of (some) international students as different and distant others. Indeed, as Sensoy (2007) suggests, the disruption of static (and hierarchical) notions of self and other and attention to so-called others as active, complex subjects is a vital precondition to mutually respectful and non-reductive relations (also see Lugones, 1987, 2006; Singh, 1998).

Madge, Raghuram and Noxolo (2009, p. 43) call for a rejection of “an endless (longing) search for difference” in higher education pedagogy and research, and advocate instead for “an acceptance of the possibility of both commonalities and differences at all times”. To this end, this thesis explicitly interrogates the oppositional use of international-ness and New Zealand-ness as a basis for considering and fostering interactions between women in higher education. Specifically, it explores how international and New Zealand women identified themselves and each other and how their active identity work shaped their relations with others and each other in New Zealand (Chapters Six, Seven and Ten). It also describes women’s encounters with others’ use of difference (Chapters Six and Seven) and possibilities women’s accounts

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Footnote: Although the women in this thesis were living in the same city at the time of the project, during interviews they also reflected on their experiences in other places. The reflections included in this thesis relate not only to the context in which the project took place but also to other contexts in New Zealand and elsewhere.
suggest for “overcom[ing]” dominant discursive framings in order “to establish relations beyond [them]” (Madge et al., 2009, p. 44, see Chapters Six to Eleven). Chapter Ten explores the possibilities and complexities of an ‘intercultural’ women’s group as a deliberate strategy for disrupting the binary separation between international and New Zealand women in a higher education context (see Chapters Five and Ten).

3.3 Teaching, learning and difference

Critical scholars note that education contexts and classrooms are sites in which dominant discursive framings (Western/Eastern, us/them, same/different, local/international) are very often revealed and reproduced (for example, see Bishop, 2005; Doherty and Singh, 2005; Madge et al., 2009; Rizvi, 2004; Rizvi, Lingard and Lavia, 2006). Equally, they also argue that in educational contexts, static notions of self and other and associated discourses of ‘difference’ can also be strategically disrupted (Haigh, 2002; Madge et al., 2009; Singh, 1998). In this section I consider first how ‘cultural difference’ is used in New Zealand and other literature on teaching and learning in internationalised education. I then discuss critical literatures that trouble its use.

In their comprehensive New Zealand-based review of education literature on managing cultural diversity in the classroom, Ho, Holmes and Cooper (2004, p. 39) argue that “culture, education and communication are closely intertwined”, and that “understanding culture and its impact on education and communication is a necessity in the multicultural classroom”. A framework that they suggest may be useful for “understanding culture” rests on the construction of an East-West, collectivist-individualist, dialectic-dialogic binary distinction (p. 39, also see Ho et al., 2007; Holmes, 2004, 2005). Bullen and Kenway (2003) note the dominance of this framework in learning and teaching literature beyond the New Zealand context (also see Doherty and Singh, 2005).

Within an East-West, collectivist-individualist, dialectic-dialogic construction of cultures, so-called Eastern cultures are understood as exhibiting a concern for group harmony and interdependence; characterised by a large power differential between teacher and pupil; and emphasising teacher-direction, memorisation, and knowledge recall (see Choi, 1997; Ho, Holmes and Cooper, 2004; Samuelowicz, 1987; Scheyvens,
Wild, and Overton, 2003). In contrast, Western cultures are described as valuing independence and self-expression; exhibiting less formal relations between teachers and students; and placing greater emphasis on argument, debate, and critical thinking (see Choi, 1997; Ho et al., 2004; Holmes, 2004, 2005; Scheyvens et al., 2003).

While suggesting the usefulness of an East-West (collectivist-individualist) framework for understanding “the deep value orientations underlying the beliefs and behaviours of different cultures”, Ho et al. (2004) caution against using it as a basis for “stereotyp[ing] cultural behaviour” (p. 4). They acknowledge that the complexity of human behaviour surpasses the explanatory usefulness of neat categorisation and that cultures are never static (p. viii). In addition, they argue that although dominant educational approaches in New Zealand may more closely fit the Western, dialogic, individualistic side of the binary (p. 5), New Zealanders are not and have never been simply ‘Western’ (p. 7). Beaver and Tuck (1998) caution that in attributing international students’ teaching and learning issues to cultural difference, we may risk overlooking the significance of differences within and across particular cultures, as well as other factors that shape teaching and learning (for example, students’ attitudes and teachers’ pedagogical approaches).

Critical scholars argue that fixed notions of both culture and cultural difference are not only risky (see above) but problematic (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Crowley and McConaghy, 1998; Doherty and Singh, 2005; Kenway, Willis, Blackmore, and Rennie, 1994; Koh, 2007; Madge et al., 2009; Qin and Lykes, 2006; Rhee, 2006; Rhee and Subreenduth, 2006; Sensoy, 2007; Takayama, 2008). Firstly, a preoccupation with difference overlooks the many factors that intersect to shape teaching and learning, and human interactions in teaching and learning contexts. Such factors might include structural and economic realities (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Madge et al., 2009; Takayama, 2008); students’ expectations, desires, and prior and current living situations (Habu, 2000; Rhee, 2006); and teacher perceptions, expectations, effectiveness or ineffectiveness (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Kenway and Bullen, 2003). Secondly, difference constructed in binary terms homogenises or simplifies both sides of

7 For example, Ho et al. (2004) describe Māori and Pasifika pedagogies as problematising a view of New Zealand as a Western teaching/learning context.
the binary. As Doherty and Singh (2005) argue, the construction of Western teaching and learning approaches as a pure academic tradition requires the concurrent construction of so-called Eastern-ness (also see Said, 1978; Sensoy, 2007). The result is a ‘freezing’ of much more complex human realities, and the reproduction of monolithic, racialised assumptions about international students, particular groups of international students, and (by implication) some ‘local’ students (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Chalmers and Volet, 1997; Collins, 2006; Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Rhee, 2006). Thirdly, the use of binary constructions of difference in teaching and learning literature is not neutral but hierarchical. It reduces human plurality and (whether explicitly or implicitly) positions so-called Eastern teaching/learning approaches in deficit terms (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Chalmers and Volet, 1997; Doherty and Singh, 2005; Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Kobayashi and Peake, 1994).

Chalmers and Volet (1997) identify five common misconceptions about students from south-east Asian countries studying in Australia that have grown out of a preoccupation with Eastern-Western difference in teaching/learning literature. These include that south-east Asian students are: rote learners who employ surface learning techniques; passive and non-participatory class members; people who keep to themselves and avoid mixing with locals; lacking in the skills required for critical thinking; and people who have difficulty adjusting to the Australian context (for example, see Ballard, 1987; Samuelowicz, 1987). Chalmers and Volet (1997) argue that rather than leading to superficial learning, strategies like memorisation are used effectively by many south-east Asian students as a first step towards in-depth understanding in a second, third, or fourth language context. While acknowledging that students' silence may sometimes result from language or communication issues or a sense of intimidation, Chalmers and Volet also contend that quietness in classroom contexts does not necessarily indicate passivity. For example, some international students may simply prefer to discuss ideas in informal study groups rather than classroom contexts. Broader educational research on quiet students in classroom contexts suggests that listening and watching may be conscious, active learning strategies utilised by many students (Nairn, 1997). Like Beaver and Tuck (1998), Chalmers and Volet (1997) also highlight the need to consider local students' attitudes before making assumptions about south-east Asian international students'
supposed approaches to learning. They argue that the overwhelming success of south-east Asian students in Australian university contexts in relation to their Australian counterparts suggests that they are in fact “motivated, effective and strategic learners” (p. 96).

In New Zealand literature, binary constructions of difference are predominantly used to explain ‘Asian’ or ‘Chinese’ international students’ learning strategies and/or perceptions of New Zealand classrooms (for example, see Deloitte, 2008; Ho et al., 2007; Holmes, 2004, 2005; Ward and Masgoret, 2004). Ironically however, in both the 2007 and 2003 national surveys, international students from the PRC reported having the least difficulty with academic tasks in New Zealand relative to other groups of international students (see Deloitte, 2008; Ward and Masgoret, 2004). Mok (2006, p. 131) describes as an “east-Asian learner paradox” the discursive framing of east-Asian teaching/learning approaches in deficit terms, despite east-Asian learners’ academic success internationally. Drawing on observations and interviews that explored teacher-student exchanges in a Shanghai classroom, Mok argues that constructions of teaching and learning approaches (for example, as more or less teacher-centred or learner-centred) are not grounded in what actually occurs, but in powerful discourses that perpetuate a perception of how (student or teacher-centred) learning should look. Similarly, Paton (2005, p. 1) describes as “cultural chauvinism” the assumption that critical thinking is solely a “preserve of Western culture”, arguing that in ancient Chinese writing in some areas of science, critical thinking predates evidence of critical thought in so-called Western countries. In addition, Paton notes that difficulties with critical thinking are not exclusive to particular groups of students, but characteristic of many first-year university students’ work (also see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Chalmers and Volet, 1997).

In a striking parallel to Mok’s (2006) article (above), Doherty and Singh (2005) argue that constructions of East-West difference in relation to university classrooms are grounded in an historical imaginary of a pure Western academic tradition that is not real. They argue that “‘cultures’ have never been pure, stable and discrete – rather hybridity and change wrought through contact with Others is how cultural identity and cultural

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8 Such explanations are used both in relation to ethnic Chinese students, and students from the People’s Republic of China.
differences come into being, and then are sustained or reinvented over time” (p. 56).

Doherty and Singh note the paradox that while espousing the relative value of critical thinking and student-centred learning, teachers in so-called Western university contexts still rely heavily on teacher-centred “chalk-and-talk” (p. 66). The image of a Western education projected in marketing rhetoric and academic research (as progressive, interactive, critical etc.) is therefore in many cases, false. Doherty and Singh argue that the assumption that students’ adjustment to Western teaching and learning approaches is desirable simultaneously reproduces a nostalgic construction of (pure) Western pedagogy, and “belittles] the other” (p. 67). In the New Zealand context, the idea that universities necessarily emphasise critical thinking or deep learning is certainly questionable. Especially at undergraduate level, large classes often preclude the possibility of active discussion, and assessment approaches often reward superficial memorisation (Paton, 2005).

Critical scholarship emphasises pedagogical and institutional responsibility rather than cultural difference as a framework for considering teaching and learning in internationalised higher education contexts (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Madge et al., 2009; Skyrme, 2007). Skyrme (2007, p. 357) states that when “students who do not share the academic, cultural or language background” of those for whom an academic system was “broadly designed” enter its classrooms, adjustments may be required by all concerned. She notes that despite the necessary adjustments of students as they negotiate new academic contexts, universities are often less willing to examine and adjust their practices to cater to students’ teaching and learning needs. Skyrme describes the “differentiated experiences” of two international students from the PRC as they negotiated new academic identities in a New Zealand university context (p. 357). While noting how the two students’ coping strategies differed, Skyrme highlights as deeply problematic the “do-it-yourself” approach to teaching and learning that they encountered at first-year level (p. 357). Skyrme connects the students’ difficulties to their lecturers’ dialogic approach to teaching, and failure to provide supporting handouts or opportunities for in-class discussion and review. She explains that for both students, teacher guidance was limited to “brief, sporadic appointment[s]” outside class time (p. 367), necessitating that they access guidance from more experienced students who had completed the
courses previously (a strategy that proved effective for one student but not the other). Noting the privileging of autonomy in New Zealand universities, Skyrme emphasises the “role of the teacher in guiding the student to adopt the practices [autonomy] entails, or negotiating the conditions to encourage it” (p. 370). (This is further discussed in the following section.)

Echoing Skyrme (2007), Bullen and Kenway (2003) highlight a lack of teacher/supervisor guidance in postgraduate teaching and supervision in Australian universities. They describe this as revealing a “pedagogy of indifference” (p. 45, citing Johnson, Lee, and Green, 2000, p. 136), a privileging of autonomy that assumes that postgraduate students are already-autonomous scholars. Bullen and Kenway (2003) argue that in their study, staff representations of postgraduate international women students as desiring extra guidance, deferential to supervisors, and lacking assertiveness may have had less to do with “cultural difference” than “what happens when this ‘difference’ meets the ‘pedagogy of indifference’” (p. 46).

Skyrme (2007) argues that educational institutions that recruit and enrol students must take responsibility for setting appropriate pre-entry criteria, providing accurate pre-entry information, and ensuring that timely pedagogical guidance is available to students as they negotiate new academic contexts. Haigh (2002) adds that if educational institutions have no intention of ensuring the effectiveness of pedagogy and support for all students, then they have a moral responsibility to make their position clear to prospective students. In contrast, Madge et al. (2009) suggest that “engaged pedagogy and responsibility” in internationalised higher education demands recognition of the limits to one’s ability to teach and/or support students effectively (p. 1); if necessary, refusal “to take (yet another) international... student in order to ‘bolster’ recruitment targets” (p. 13).

While from a critical perspective, it is problematic to consider teaching and learning issues only in relation to static understandings of culture and cultural difference, it is naïve to downplay the particular challenges associated with studying in an unfamiliar socio-geographical, socio-linguistic and/or academic context (Beaver and Tuck, 1998; Chalmers and Volet, 1997; Choi, 1997; De Verthelyi, 1995; Scheyvens et al., 2003; Skyrme, 2007; Tofi, Flett, and Timutimu-Thorpe, 1996). For example, studies highlight
the amount of time taken to understand course content, complete course requirements, and access resources when the context and/or language of study is unfamiliar (Myburgh, Niehaus, and Poggenpoel, 2002; Scheyvens et al., 2003). They acknowledge the difficulties for second-language students of understanding lecturers’ speech due to speed, pronunciation or use of local idiom and colloquial language (Kirkness and O'Rourke, 2005). Studies also highlight the difficulties associated with producing academic writing when writing conventions are different to those in one’s previous academic environment or teacher expectations are relayed with less clarity (Kirkness and O'Rourke, 2005; Skyrme, 2007; Strauss and Walton, 2005). Other studies note how student dissatisfaction can result from a mismatch between educational realities and prior expectations (Berno and Ward, 2003; Ho et al., 2007). However, unfamiliarity, multilingualism, and challenges around transition are not the sole preserve of international students. Many academic issues are common to all students as they move between previous and new learning and teaching environments, and across disciplines and levels of study (Chalmers and Volet, 1997; Kirkness and O'Rourke, 2005; Paton, 2005; Ramsey et al., 2007).

Ramsey, Jones and Barker (2007, p. 250) suggest that international students tend to experience a “magnification of common student problems” (emphasis added). They suggest that such problems may include doubts about personal ability, academic difficulties, isolation, homesickness, and distance from existing support networks. Ramsey et al. identify four types of support necessary for coping with common student problems. These include emotional support, or a sense of being valued by others; practical support, or receiving “material assistance” from others; informational support, or having sources of “cognitive guidance and advice”; and social companionship support, or opportunities to engage in leisure activities with others. Ramsey et al. describe how in a survey of 280 international and local young and mature-aged first-year students in an Australian university, international student participants saw themselves as less well-adjusted than local students, but well-adjusted international and local students alike reported high levels of “social companionship support” (p. 259). Also, although international students expressed a greater need than local students for extra “emotional, practical and informational support” (p. 260), approximately half of all students surveyed indicated a desire for more “informational and social companionship support” (p. 259).
Ramsey et al. conclude that a key focus of first-year programmes and support provision on university campuses should be the facilitation of peer and social networks for all students, since these are an important source of multiple forms of support. In particular, they argue for the importance of facilitating a “sense of community” among students (p. 262, also see Wilcox, Winn, and Fyvie-Gauld, 2005), a suggestion that juxtaposes the privileging of independence and autonomy in higher education identified by Bullen and Kenway (2003) and Skyrme (2007).

Research on teaching and learning issues and international students raises questions concerning how to teach and support all students well (Butcher, 2004b; Chalmers and Volet, 1997; Kirkness and O’Rourke, 2005; Paton, 2005; Strauss and Walton, 2005). Kirkness and O’Rourke (2005) for example, argue for explicit teaching on academic writing conventions for all first-year students. They also advocate for student-centred teaching practices where teachers facilitate and respond to feedback from students and adjust their teaching accordingly, for introducing new tasks in a step-wise, non-threatening fashion; and for developing a friendly and safe classroom atmosphere (also see Saito and Eisenstein Ebsworth, 2004). Kirkness and O’Rourke (2005) stress that in English-language based teaching contexts, all students from non-English-speaking backgrounds benefit from a ‘sheltered approach’ to teaching (see Friedenberg, 2002), in which teachers take care to face the class; write clearly on the board; regulate their speaking pace; give clear and simplified instructions; and avoid using “local references and slang” (Kirkness and O’Rourke, 2005, p. 42). Friedenberg (2002) cites research indicating that such teaching approaches are also preferred by students from English-speaking backgrounds in classroom contexts in the USA.

While Devos (2003) notes how in Australian public discourse, the presence of international students has sometimes been associated with reduced academic standards, Haigh (2002, pp. 53-54) argues that internationalisation of curricula requires “raising the standard of teaching above the parapet of a narrow local agenda” (also see Koh, 2007). Haigh (2002, pp. 53-54) suggests that the internationalisation of higher education in practice requires teachers to become aware of their own ways of seeing and

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9 This term is not used by Kirkness and O’Rourke (2005), but borrowed from Friedenberg (2002) to describe the teaching approaches that they advocate.
conceptualising the world; to recognise the limits of their perceptual ability, knowledge and experiences; and to be emotionally, perceptually, and cognitively open to having their own understandings challenged. He suggests graded levels at which pedagogical responsibility for all students might be enacted in higher education. The lowest level involves providing adequate “consumer protection”; for example, being open about a refusal to modify course content or pedagogy. The second level involves examining teaching processes and ensuring that they recognise and cater for multiple identities and ways of being. The third level involves allowing students to “be taught in language they can understand”, for example, by using sheltered approaches (see Friedenberg, 2002) or centering multilingualism in course and/or student support provision (Haigh, 2002, p. 58; also see Kirkness and O’Rourke, 2005). The fourth level involves ensuring that course content does not advantage some students over others; and the fifth, ensuring “stay-at-home” students receive “cross-cultural training” and exposure to multiple perspectives across their entire course programme (Haigh, 2002, p. 59).

Madge et al. (2009, p. 43) argue that engaged pedagogy and responsibility in internationalised higher education demands attention both to teaching practices and everyday practices of caring and responsiveness beyond the classroom, in order to understand how historically produced political structures, institutional cultures and policies shape international [and I would add, local] students’ experiences and recruitment (emphasis original).

Attending to both teaching practices and everyday practices beyond the classroom is a key focus in the rest of this thesis. Chapter Six considers how everyday practices around international student marketing and enrolment shaped the experiences of women in my study differently. Chapter Eight addresses everyday practices within classroom and educational institutions as discussed by international and New Zealand women students, and by highlighting similarities and dissimilarities in their experiences and perspectives endeavours to think beyond static notions of cultural difference (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Madge et al., 2009, earlier). Chapter Nine attends to everyday practices beyond the classroom by considering women’s accounts of ‘home’ and feeling ‘at home’ in New Zealand and elsewhere. By using a compositional approach throughout the thesis (Fine and Weis, 2005, see Chapter Five) I also explicitly situate women’s accounts in relation

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10 Haigh (2002) suggests that a ‘consumer protection’ approach indicates only a very minimal commitment to student welfare and pedagogical responsibility.
to the broader policy and social context in which they live and study to consider “the discourses, power hierarchies, and social relations that shape international [and local] students’” experiences similarly and differently in New Zealand (Madge et al., 2009, p. 37).

3.4 Women, difference and (internationalised) higher education

A key aspect of the socio-political context in which women live and study and that I consider in this thesis relates to gender, and the construction of gendered ‘difference’. Feminist scholars highlight how gendered assumptions in higher education normalise the discursive construction of students as male and/or autonomous (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Johnson et al., 2000); position women as other to men (Acker, 1980; Bullen and Kenway, 2003); construct and ‘other’ some women through the use of homogenising categories (Ang, 2003; Crowley and McConaghy, 1998; Mohanty, 1991b; Rhee, 2006; Sensoy, 2007; Shain, 2000); or render students’ partners, families and home lives, invisible (Duncan, 2000; Norton, Thomas, Morgan, Tilley, and Dickens, 1998). While considering internationalised education and broader critical feminist scholarship here with a view to centering women, I note that critical perspectives also problematise gender, like culture, as an interpretive framework; rejecting assumptions of women’s sameness and highlighting the slipperiness of any and all categories, ‘women’ included (Ang, 2003; Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Mohanty, 1991b; Rhee, 2006, see Chapter One).

I use the term ‘women’ cautiously in this chapter and throughout the thesis, but it is nevertheless instructive to begin by considering broad issues relating to gender and higher education highlighted by feminist scholars. Feminist scholars argue that universities as “the protected space of autonomous judgment” (Johnson et al., 2000, p. 140) are grounded in “Western rationalist philosophy”\footnote{Philosophical and intellectual debates arising out of historic and social events occurring in Western Europe (Henry, 2000; Scheurich and Young, 1997).} that contrasts rationality with irrationality, autonomy with dependence, and masculinity with femininity (Bullen and Kenway, 2003, p. 46; Johnson et al., 2000). Johnson et al. argue that the (idealised) “rational, autonomous” scholar in higher education is established through the rejection of “emotions, embodiment and human dependency”, and is therefore a problematic
construction for those required to negotiate day-to-day dependency concerns (p. 140).

Leathwood (2006, p. 630) argues that the valorisation of independent learning in university teaching in the United Kingdom (and I would add, New Zealand) reveals a "masculinist myth; what suits (some) men is defined as the ideal that all should be striving for, whilst men’s dependence on others remains hidden". For example, independence is seen as the optimal outcome of any extra learning support that is offered; and institutional practices reveal "the dominance of the (male, white, middle class, able-bodied and domestically unencumbered) independent individual" in their disregard for those with care-giving responsibilities, for example, through timetabling practices. Bullen and Kenway (2003) and Johnson et al. (2000) link the valorisation of independence in higher education with postgraduate and doctoral pedagogies that assume students are already autonomous (independent) scholars, and if not, construct them as deficient (see previous section). Johnson et al. argue that pedagogical "indifference" in postgraduate supervision is perhaps inevitable when autonomous scholarship is the desired endpoint (p. 136).

Acker (1980) argues that the historic masculinisation of knowledge production (and hence, the academy) has consequences for women at all levels in academia. In particular, she argues that since both universities and families are "greedy institutions", women who tend to carry the burden for care work in the family context must juggle conflicting pressures in the private domain and public (university) context (p. 82, citing Coser, 1974; also see Duncan, 2000; Scheyvens et al., 2003). While acknowledging that both men and women may enjoy the autonomy and independence associated with higher education, Leathwood (2006) argues that for those who do not or (for reasons of ill-health, disability or care-work responsibilities) cannot enjoy it, the valorisation of independence is deeply problematic.

Wilcox, Winn and Fyvie-Gauld (2005) show how the valorisation of independence and autonomy in higher education may be played out through institutional disregard for the significance of students’ living contexts and access to social support networks. Wilcox et al. note that research in relation to student retention issues has traditionally

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12 Such as childcare or the maintenance of a household.
focussed on teaching and learning approaches. They describe how in their own research, first-year university students' decisions to continue studying were shaped primarily by the extent to which they had developed a sense of connection and belonging, while matters relating to teaching and learning were a secondary consideration. Wilcox et al. state that students' sense of connection and belonging was facilitated through making contacts on campus (who may or may not later become friends), being in socially supportive living situations, finding safe spaces in which to “negotiate their new identities as university students” (p. 713), and building emotionally-supportive friendship networks. Although secondary to students' sense of social connection with peers, staff approachability and availability, willingness to listen, and fostering of small-group work were also helpful in allowing students to develop a sense of “integration into university life” (p. 720). Although Wilcox et al. do not explicitly relate their research findings to gendered discourses of independence in higher education, their study highlights the importance of considering students' needs as social and interdependent (rather than necessarily autonomous and independent) beings. It also suggests that the (gendered) reification of independence and autonomy may preclude attention to “pedagogical engagement...beyond the classroom” (Madge et al., 2009, p. 43, emphasis original).

In their research with 'mature' students in a British university, Norton, Thomas, Morgan, Tilley and Dickens (1998) found that the privileging of independence in higher education had particular implications for women students with domestic responsibilities and social/familial relationships outside the academic institution. Women students expressed more concerns than men about managing household responsibilities while studying, and were less satisfied with partner support after having studied for two years. Norton et al. reiterate the call by Madge et al. (2009, p. 43) for attention to “everyday practices of caring and responsiveness” beyond classroom contexts per se. Norton et al. (1998) argue that orientation and social support programmes offered by higher education institutions should optimally extend to students' partners and families to ensure students' successful course completion as well as students' psychological and relational wellbeing during their course of study.

New Zealand literature concerned with internationalised education generally
privileges enrolment status, ethnicity, and/or culture as categories of analysis, with
gender considered only in passing or as a secondary concern. Bullen and Kenway (2003)
note that the same pattern is also characteristic of international education literature
globally. Issues raised in the New Zealand literature concerning international women
students include the constraint, burden, or distraction of family responsibilities (Howes,
2001), the “double burden” of one’s own and the family’s adjustment to a new living and
learning context (Scheyvens et al., 2003, p. 317), and apparent levels of anxiety over
approaching lecturers or asking questions in class (Beaver and Tuck, 1998). Ward and
Masgoret (2004) report that in the 2003 national survey of international students, women
students felt less included in their classroom environments than men; although in
contrast, the 2007 survey is reported as indicating no significant differences between
women’s and men’s perceptions of educational contexts and activities (Deloitte, 2008).
The report on the 2007 survey does note some differences in women’s and men’s
perspectives however; namely, international women students reported having less New
Zealand friends than men and trying harder than men to develop friendships with New
Zealanders. They were also more likely than men to view New Zealanders as
disinterested in friendship.

Howes’ (2001) study is the only published article from the New Zealand context
that exclusively foregrounds international women students. Howes emphasises
international women students’ disadvantage in classroom environments and relationships
with male staff, landlords and fellow students; identifying “Asian females” as especially
disadvantaged due to their “lack of assertiveness” (p. 29).14 In another New Zealand
study Scheyvens, Wild and Overton (2003) consider the perspectives and experiences of
international women postgraduate students as part of a broader research project involving
men and women international scholarship students, and key academic and support staff.
As Norton et al. (1998) found in their research with mature students generally (see
earlier), Scheyvens et al. (2003) found that issues surrounding family support were
discussed almost exclusively by women students, including matters relating to housing,

13 ‘International’ versus ‘local’.

14 Notably, Howes (2001) echoes staff-representations of Asian international women students reported in
Bullen and Kenways’ (2003) Australian study (see previous section).
managing finances, negotiating healthcare services, and finding childcare. Echoing Howes' (2001) representation of Asian women students (above), Scheyvens et al. (2003, p. 319) state that staff saw women partners of international students as “particularly isolated”, both because of their “shyness and lack of independence” and because they were “‘stuck away’ at home”. Notably, neither Howes (2001) nor Scheyvens et al. (2003) connect some women’s apparent disadvantage with institutional practices or broader political structures that may serve to disadvantage them (see Madge et al., 2009).15

**Research and international women students**

To date, New Zealand international education literature has paid little attention to the heterogeneity of international women students, or to the connections between practical issues highlighted in research with women and economic, gendered and/or racialised realities that structure internationalised education and higher education more broadly. Although some researchers have noted the implications of deficit discourses and racialised assumptions in relation to international students in general (for example, see Ho et al., 2004; Scheyvens et al., 2003), no New Zealand research to date has contested the use of deficit assumptions in relation to women international students or partners of students; either through reflexive, close attention to women’s accounts of themselves and others or attention to the gendered and cultured practices that mark internationalised higher education provision. As a result, women are represented as if belonging to homogenous sociological categories: ‘Asian’, ‘international’, ‘partners’ etc. No research has explored possible similarities and dissimilarities across so-called international and local women in New Zealand higher education contexts.

Internationally, a growing body of critical qualitative scholarship considering women’s experiences and perspectives in internationalised higher education has usefully countered essentialising discourses of gendered, cultured ‘difference’ (for example, see Ichimoto, 2004; Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Rhee, 2006). In research exploring her own and two other Korean women’s accounts of living and studying in Korea and the USA,

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15 For example, pedagogical practices that privilege monolingual students, pedagogical indifference (see previous section), and/or the exclusion of students’ partners from on-campus supports and activities (see Norton et al., 1998, previous section).
Rhee highlights the complex and contradictory intersections between women’s fantasies and expectations of studying in the USA, different “re/membering[s]” of their lives in Korea; and colonial, entrepreneurial, competitive, and gendered discourses in both countries (p. 595). Rhee argues that the complexity of the three women’s accounts reveals both the inadequacy of “monolithic and monologic discourse[s] of international students, Korean women, migrants and/or others”, and of "pure categories and static hierarchy" (p. 609). She stresses the importance of recognising that women’s lived and political realities “always surpass a researcher’s analytic focus and domain” (p. 609).

Like Rhee (2006), Ichimoto (2004) centres the transnationality and plurality of the women in her project, considering Japanese international women students’ changing sense of self as they negotiated movement between Japan and Australia. Ichimoto describes her research participants’ accounts of both “acting” and “being” themselves when moving between Australia and Japan (p. 262); and highlights their intentional, conscious manipulation, negotiation and contestation of multiple forms of “femininity and Japanese ness” across these two contexts (p. 264). Like Rhee (2006), Ichimoto (2004, p. 265) advocates a view of identities as “neither fixed nor static” but a complex interplay between complex structural realities and human agency. She argues that selves should be understood as plural rather than singular; socially and culturally-constructed, and also always in the process of active reconstruction. Ichimoto calls for “identity theorisations” that move beyond “essentialist views of racial, ethnic and cultural differences and...the hegemonic homogenisation of regional [and gendered] identities” (p. 265).

Kenway and Bullen’s (2003) research with heterogeneous international postgraduate women students in both Canada and Australia usefully highlights how multiple identities are always at play in internationalised higher education. For example, Kenway and Bullen describe how some ‘visible’ international women students in their study described encounters with overt and covert racism, but note that a white American student also experienced discrimination in Canada on the basis of her ‘Californian-ness’. Kenway and Bullen describe how the women’s responses to racism differed. While some spoke of seeking solidarity with other minoritised students; others described actively

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16 Unable to pass as part of the dominant white-settler majority.
performing and/or resisting particular stereotypes; and others (as in the case of the ‘white’ student above) responded by reinventing themselves in new ways. Similarly, women’s perspectives of overseas study varied, resulting in a new awareness of gendered and racialised stereotypes in their ‘home’ countries, an ambivalent sense of both belonging and not belonging in more than one ‘world’, and/or a new sense of freedom at the possibility of self-reinvention. Kenway and Bullen call for further “self-reflexive” research that better reflects women’s own “storylines”, and attends closely to their “lived experiences” in internationalised education contexts (p. 17).

Two research accounts that are both self-reflexive and concerned with women’s own storylines are provided by Bullen and Kenway (2003) and Mayuzumi, Motobayashi, Nagayama, and Takeuchi (2007). Bullen and Kenway (2003) consider how in their Australian pilot study involving ten international women postgraduate students and twelve staff members, staff representations of students differed “in crucial ways from the students’ own self-representations” (p. 38). For example, while staff described women using essentialist categories (for example, as oppressed, deferential and submissive), women actively resisted essentialist constructions, instead alluding to the unhelpfulness or unavailability of teaching staff in response to requests for clarification or assistance. Bullen and Kenway also note contradictions in staff representations of students, for example, their acknowledgement of the students’ high level of motivation and capability and construction of them in deficit terms. Bullen and Kenway argue that the use of gendered, Orientalist discourses as an explanation for students’ perceived difficulties or difference in Australian postgraduate study contexts may mask unequal power relations inherent in Australian postgraduate teaching and supervision. They call for consideration as to how knowledge might be shared in more reciprocal ways in internationalised higher education contexts, and “alternative perspectives” allowed to shape and change how teaching and learning occurs (p. 46).

Mayuzumi et al. (2007) provide a critical autoethnographic account of four women’s experiences of studying as international Japanese students in Canada. They describe being read in relation to dominant constructions of Japanese women as silent, passive, and shy; and Eurocentric constructions of international students as having inadequate English-language skills. They also express frustration at being read in relation
to Canadian constructions of commodified ‘Japanese-ness’ (for example, as sushi-eaters), and being expected to speak only in relation to things-Japanese. Mayuzumi et al. describe their intentional manipulation of dominant constructions of themselves, for example, speaking as the ‘Japanese expert’ in order to be heard in a classroom context. Equally, they highlight the frustration and pain associated with being frequently subjected to societal stereotypes of Japanese-ness (for example, as passive, good wives, and sushi-eaters) and academic stereotypes of international-ness (for example, as silent, shy, and academically-incompetent). Mayuzumi et al. contest staff members’ use of (gendered and cultured) ‘difference’, like Bullen and Kenway (2003) noting how by ascribing difference to some students, staff were able to disregard their own unreflexive and/or unsatisfactory classroom practices.

Research and women partners of international students

Very little academic scholarship internationally has attended to women partners of international students. In a political sense, this is not surprising given the valorisation of independence and autonomy in higher education generally and the consequent inattention to students’ family commitments and/or relational attachments (see Acker, 1980; Leathwood, 2006). Also from an ‘export education’ perspective, women partners of international students in New Zealand are of little direct interest to higher education institutions since they are not a source of revenue. My contention in this thesis is that a failure to consider the presence of women (and other family members) whose partners (children, parents etc.) are studying is a significant oversight at both a moral and a practical level. Morally, the active recruitment of people as students without concurrent attention to their “dependency concerns” (Kittay, 1999, p. 113) and location within networks of human relationships is a failure of care both to those with dependent or accompanying others, and to those ‘others’ who are therefore sidelined as invisible (see Madge et al., 2009). Also, at a practical level, some research has noted the important support that accompanying partners provide to international students (for example, see Ho et al., 2007; Sakamoto, 2006), and the stresses associated with the absence of partners.

17 Institutional and policy disregard for partners of international students is not exclusive to New Zealand (see De Verthelyi, 1995; Sakamoto, 2006; Schwartz and Kahne, 1993).
(Scheyvens et al., 2003). Even from a student-centric perspective therefore, inattention to students’ partners and families in policy and support provision is problematic since it risks jeopardising student retention and completion (see Norton et al., 1998).

Two studies that foreground women whose partners are international students were conducted by De Verthelyi (1995) and Sakamoto (2006) in higher education contexts in the USA. Both studies highlight the significant consequences of policy and institutional inattention to the presence of students’ partners, as well as the interplay between gendered and cultured relations of power and human agency in shaping women’s everyday lives. De Verthelyi (1995), whose study involved interviews with 49 women partners of international students, identifies both differences and commonalities across women’s accounts. Most women spoke of male partners as having initiated the move overseas and of a lack of orientation support and “loss of professional identity” upon arrival (p. 398). Most women also spoke of dealing with language issues; the challenge of trying to find work or having no work visa; a lack of a “clear-cut role or activity” in their new living context (p. 397); and (where both partners had been in paid employment previously) significantly reduced financial resources. Many women had experienced homesickness, loneliness and/or depression, although De Verthelyi notes that the degree to which they experienced these things depended partially on women’s success in establishing new friendships. Notably, very few women became involved in available campus support programmes even when these were intended to include spouses, due to uncertainty as to whether women partners’ involvement was appropriate, fears over being unable to communicate in English, and/or male partners’ failure to pass on information or desire not to become involved (where the programmes were open to couples). Women who were involved in on-campus programmes found them extremely helpful both initially and in an on-going way. Women described other women whose partners were studying as an important source of information about available support programmes. Although many of the women in De Verthelyi’s study had experienced loneliness or depression while living in the USA, “almost none” had information on available counselling services (p. 402). While most indicated a reluctance to take part in individual counselling sessions if they knew about them, over half indicated that they would wish to be involved in a “support group” if one were available (p. 403).
Importantly, De Verthelyi (1995) emphasises the resiliency and intentional coping strategies used by women in her study. She reports that most women felt more positive about their move to the USA after three to six months in the new context and finding “a role of [their] own” (p. 405), highlighting the development of “personal project[s]” (for example, personal study, language learning, or international travel) as a key coping strategy (p. 395). Also, De Verthelyi notes that women’s experiences varied depending on practical matters such as the availability or lack of pre-arrival and arrival information and women’s previous living or occupational situation and expectations of the future. She calls for educational institutions to provide detailed pre-arrival information relevant not only to students, but also to students’ partners and families; on-going orientation support and support groups for students’ partners; opportunities for women to develop “autonomous peer group activities”; and training for “local professionals” likely to work with students’ partners (pp. 405-406).

Sakamoto (2006) describes her research as including thirty-four Japanese “academic sojourners” (p. 559): international students, international students’ partners, visiting scholars and contract researchers. All of the eight students’ partners included in her research were women, and four of the students she interviewed had also initially moved to the USA as accompanying spouses. Like De Verthelyi (1995), Sakamoto (2006) notes that male partners’ aspirations were the primary reason for women’s migration but she also states that the women in her study “did not necessarily see themselves as victims of gender-based oppression” (p. 568). Like De Verthelyi (1995), Sakamoto (2006) describes women’s development of personal projects as a key coping strategy. While many participants in Sakamoto’s study spoke about a deepening of couple relationships while living in the USA some also alluded to an intensification of unequal gender-roles as a result of “enforced... dependen[cy] status” because of immigration policies, male partners’ intensified work and study commitments, and/or women’s loss of former employment (p. 569). Sakamoto notes that where women’s personal projects were at odds with their partners’ and/or co-national friends’ expectations of them as Japanese women, wives, or mothers, women were forced to

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18 This pattern is also noted in broader literature on women and immigration (for example, see Ho, 2006; Leckie, 1995; Yeoh, Huang, and Lam, 2005).
negotiate competing concerns. Sakamoto observes that for the women in her study, the presence of male partners often led to “dilemmas in work and personal lives” (p. 573), for example, the need to juggle personal aspirations and relational commitments or disjunctive expectations over appropriate ways of being and behaving. For men on the other hand, the presence of women partners tended to assist in the achievement of immigration goals. Rather than positioning the women in her study in relation to disadvantage, Sakamoto emphasises how women’s different aspirations in coming to the USA shaped their responses to new “gender-based arrangement[s]” differently (p. 569). For example, women who wanted a break from their former careers or “to experience life abroad” apparently saw intensified gender roles as less problematic than those who wished to fulfil their own career or study aspirations (p. 569). Sakamoto’s research highlights the importance of rejecting essentialising discourses of (some) women as necessarily disadvantaged in higher education. While recognising how unequal relations of power may serve to disadvantage and constrain some women, Sakamoto foregrounds women’s agency and intentional negotiation of political structures and everyday realities. Her study emphasises how many factors intersect to shape women’s accounts of studying and living in new higher education contexts (also see Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Mayuzumi et al., 2007; Rhee, 2006).

3.5 Relating the literature to the remainder of the thesis
This chapter has considered and critiqued academic scholarship concerned with relations between international and local students; teaching and learning in (internationalised) higher education; and women in higher education, especially international women students and women partners of international students. I have sought to highlight key issues that emerge in this literature and the discourses of difference that the literature reveals, reproduces and contests. The first section highlighted critical perspectives that trouble the use of static descriptors such as ‘international’ and ‘local’, and the positioning of local (or New Zealand) students as a homogenous, ethnocentric norm against which particular groups of students are read as culturally different others. The second section discussed literature that problematises “culturalist” discourses of difference as an explanatory framework for issues around teaching and learning (McConaghy, 1998, p.
345), and an associated disregard to higher educational institutions’ pedagogical and student support responsibilities. The third section addressed how feminist scholarship highlights the reification of independence in higher education, and its consequences for women in particular. It also discussed literature that contests the construction of women in relation to gendered and sometimes cultural difference, and the related invisibility of students’ partners and families.

The remainder of the thesis both draws on and speaks to the literature considered here. Specifically, after Madge et al. (2009) it considers commonalities and differences across a group of international and New Zealand women students and women partners of international students, and their experiences and perspectives in relation to “everyday practices” both inside and outside higher education classrooms (p. 13). It also attends to women’s identity work in relation to others and each other (see Chapter Six), connecting their ‘storylines’ to the broader discursive, political and social realities that structure their lives and studies in New Zealand (after Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Madge et al., 2009). Chapters Seven and Eight consider how women negotiate and make sense of their study contexts and Chapter Nine investigates their active “place-making” in New Zealand and elsewhere (Dyck, 2005, p. 233). Chapter Ten describes the development of *Women Across Cultures* as an ‘intervention’ aimed in part at affirming interdependence and sociality rather than independence in a higher education context, and disrupting the invisibility of women whose partners are international students (see previous section). In Chapters Six through Eleven I relate my own research to the literature reviewed in this chapter. First, I turn to the theoretical framework that informs the study and the methodologies employed in conducting the research.
SECTION B - A THEORETICO-PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK
Chapter 4 – Theory

4.1 Introduction

'Theory' for the purpose of this thesis refers to the conceptual thinking that frames my research, and the beliefs, assumptions and aims that underpin it. I do not see theory as an end in itself, but as a way of conceptualising human life and thinking that is grounded in both while risking their “containment” (Lather, 2006a, p. 36). Theory, like policy texts and academic scholarship (see Chapters Two and Three), is situated and partial. At worst it reproduces existing inequalities or fosters new ones. At best, it is a “site of being and becoming” (Lather, 2006a, p. 52); a basis for praxis that troubles closures while “thinking forwards” (Simpson, 2006, p. 91; also see Lavia, 2006). The theoretical perspectives outlined in this chapter are those that I find useful for reading and re-thinking contextual data (such as the policy and academic material outlined in the previous two chapters), considering women’s accounts of studying and living in New Zealand (see Chapters Six to Eleven), and reflecting on the research process (see Chapters Five to Eleven). They are also useful in a reconstructive sense, as a basis for considering the connections between policy, research, and human life in internationalised education, and suggesting alternative possibilities to the status quo.

This chapter is organised into four sections. The first section (4.2) outlines my use of critical theories in the thesis; that is, attention to the possibilities inherent in existing education policies and practices, but which are at present, lacking (after Young, 1990, 2000). The second and third sections discuss theoretical concepts that are central to my use of a critical perspective: discourse, power and agency (section 4.3); and identity/identification (section 4.4). In the final section of the chapter (4.5) I describe how Lugones' (1987, 2006) ‘double vision’ also informs this thesis as a way of using theory ethically. In addition, I outline the gaps in (international) education policy, practice and research highlighted in the previous two chapters before introducing my own research in the following chapters. In Chapter Five, I explain how the theoretical ideas in this chapter relate to my research methodology.
4.2 Critical theory(ies)

In this thesis, I bring a critical lens to policy and practice in internationalised higher education, relevant academic literature, and the research process itself. Iris Marion Young (1990, p. 5) defines critical theory as "[critical] reflection that is historically and socially contextualised." According to Young's definition, a critical theorist's stance is crucially ambivalent; she is embedded and implicated in the context under critique while also refusing to "accede to the given" in that context (p. 5). Rather than alluding to an overarching meta-theory or critique that is external to the context being studied, 'critical theory' in this thesis denotes a concern with areas of lack in existing human social life (education policy and everyday practices), and in alternative possibilities that are present, but only "intermittently, partially, or potentially" (Young, 2000, p. 3). In this, the thesis is a response to Robertson's (2006, p. 303) call for educational research that attends to both "absences and imaginings".

As explained in Chapter One, my use of critical theory in this thesis draws on a range of conceptual tools including feminist, poststructural, postcolonial, and borderlands perspectives. I find poststructural notions of discourse useful for illuminating areas of lack (see Young, 1990, 2000, earlier); namely, how taken-for-granted ways of thinking, talking, writing and behaving reveal and reproduce unequal relations of power (see Davies, 2000; MacLure, 1994, 2006). With feminist and postcolonial scholars however, I am also interested in how unequal relations of power are played out in everyday practices and material conditions: for example, how the historically-grounded status quo (in New Zealand higher education contexts) may serve the interests of some people and not others (see Davies, 2000; MacLure, 1994, 2006), serve people's interests unevenly (see Robertson, 2006), perpetuate us-and-them distinctions (see Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007; Haigh, 2002), and/or render some people's lives invisible (see DeVault, 1990; Flores, 2000). I find borderlands scholarship useful for its foregrounding of human agency, creativity, and plurality; and its emphasis on the need to think theoretically and practically beyond deconstruction to reconstructive possibilities (for example, see Flores,

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1 I use these names to signal the broad theoretical areas that I draw on, but I note that many of the scholars whose work I include resist codifying or classifying themselves as belonging to one area of scholarship or another. Sikes (2006) notes that this refusal to be 'boxed' is characteristic of critical scholarship.
2000; Lugones, 1987, 2003, 2006). Also, throughout the thesis I draw on critical scholarship marked by a political commitment to research as praxis: "committed, informed action" (Sikes, 2006, p. 45), and ethical, pedagogical and social responsibility (Lavia, 2006; Madge et al., 2009).

Since all research, including my own, is embedded in the context it purports to critique, my aim in the remainder of the chapter is to make explicit the frames of reference that inform my own use of critical theory (Sikes, 2006). In Chapter One, I briefly outlined some theoretical concepts that are central to my research methodology and research analysis: discourse, power, agency, and identity/identification. I now elaborate on each of these in relation to my use of critical theoretical perspectives, applying them more specifically to my research methodology in Chapter Five.

4.3 Discourse, power and agency

The term ‘discourse’ refers to the ways in which “bodies of ideas... produce and regulate the world in their own terms, rendering some things common sense and some things nonsensical” (Youdell, 2006a, pp. 35-36). Although in everyday parlance, people may be understood as “fully embodied, affective selves” (Clegg, 2005, p. 157), poststructuralist scholars argue that we only become acting, speaking subjects through discourses that ‘subjectivate’ us (Butler, 1997; Davies, 2000, 2006; Youdell, 2006a). This is a complex idea that requires further explanation.

‘Subjectification’ articulates how human agency is exercised only from within certain “conditions of possibility” (Davies, 2006, p. 428). It is how people are subjected to and through discursive regulation: that is, they become acting, speaking subjects in a given context only through being seen, read, or named in certain ways (Davies, 2006). ‘Regulation’ speaks of power, subordination and domination. To be subjectivated is therefore, in part, to be constrained both in how one is seen and how one sees others. It is how one’s intelligibility in a context depends on being named and recognised through discourses that are dominant in that context (Butler, 1990; Davies, 2000, 2006; Hall, 1996; Palumbo-Liu, 2002). It is also how one’s recognition of others is constrained by one’s discursive frame(s) of reference (Palumbo-Liu, 2002). Subjectification is crucially ambivalent however, in that in being subjected lies the possibility of becoming an
“agentic, speaking subject” (Davies, 2000, p. 147). Davies explains this ambivalence in the following two quotes:

The speaking/writing subject can go beyond the intentions of powerful others and beyond the meanings of the discourses through which they are subjected while necessarily and at the same time being dependent on their successful subjection for becoming someone who can speak/write meaningfully and convincingly beyond the terms of their subjectification (p. 147).

Again:

In order to understand subjectification, we must grasp...this impossible doubleness of subjection: we are both acted on and we act...power can eclipse the original conditions of possibility – it can create something unintended in the dominant discourse at play (2006, p. 428).

Subjectification highlights how human agency “cannot be idealised as pure opposition to the order it opposes; it works both within that order and displays its own contradictions” (Loomba, 2003, p. 257). Human beings act “within/against” the regulations and relations (discourses) that frame both their acting and how others see their actions (Lather, 2006a, p. 41). In the next section of the chapter (4.4) I discuss how the doubleness of subjectification is exemplified in the use of racialised stereotypes, or historically-grounded assumptions about ‘others’ that precede an actual interpersonal encounter (Palumbo-Liu, 2002).

From a poststructural perspective, power is relational; not imposed from above or “emanating from one source”, but revealed and reproduced through institutional and discursive practices (Paechter, 2001, p. 43). Dominant discourses as naturalised ways of thinking about, naming, and regulating the world, reflect and protect the positions of those who are most powerful (Ballard, 2004; Smith, 1999). Through attention to discourses, their regulatory effects, and how they may also be contested, however, power is also revealed as contingent (Davies, 2006; Paechter, 2001; Youdell, 2006a). For this reason, I see poststructural notions of discourse, subjectification, power, and agency as usefully deconstructive and reconstructive. Attention to the ways in which discourses shape human subjectivities allows us to highlight the connections between discursive formations and their material effects in localised contexts (Paechter, 2001); to question taken-for-granted ways of naming and framing particular social (and policy) contexts and those that inhabit them (Sikes, 2006); and thereby, to open up new and different possibilities (Youdell, 2006a).
In this thesis, I consider both the conditions of possibility under which women studied or moved for their partners' study in New Zealand higher education (Davies, 2006), and how they acted and spoke “within/against” these (Lather, 2006a, p. 41). In signalling my use of poststructural notions of discourse, agency and power however, two caveats are necessary. The first is that (as postcolonial and borderlands scholars emphasise) all social contexts are framed within multiple and contesting discourses (not just those that I might perceive as dominant), and are marked by multiple forms of power or domination. Although I may highlight particular discourses as dominant in framing New Zealand higher education for example (such as neoliberal discourses, Eurocentric notions of nationhood, and those that valorise autonomy and independence), other discourses are also always at play (for example, how New Zealand higher education is constructed in other countries, or in a resistant sense by specific subjects within it). Ong (1999) and Rhee and Subreenduth (2006) caution that by privileging one form of power or one discursive formation over others, research such as mine risks reinscribing discourses that are dominant and/or (re)producing “hegemonic monolithic...discourses” about ‘others’ (Rhee and Subreenduth, 2006, p. 547). With these cautions in mind, Chapters Six to Eleven highlight multiple readings of women’s accounts of living and studying in New Zealand and elsewhere, as well as “the transnational and complex interplay of subjugation, complicity and resistance” suggested in their accounts (Rhee and Subreenduth, 2006, p. 547; also see Fine and Weis, 2005; Lugones, 2006).

The second caveat concerns my understanding of discourses not only as revealed through language, power and representation, but also as intrinsically linked to women’s material lived realities (see Youdell, 2006b). This has two implications for this thesis. The first is that in Chapters Five to Eleven, I consider how “the effects of language range far beyond the purely linguistic” (Paechter, 2001, p. 42). As Paechter argues:

> The discourses in which we operate affect how we behave at a very visceral and physical level. Discourses, for example, can be inscribed on the body – that is to say, the ways in which bodies are used reflect the discourses in which that use takes place (p. 42).

I discuss this point in the next section of the chapter (4.3). The second implication is that while I see discourses and ways of categorising people that arise from them as “central

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2 The importance of recognising ‘resistant readings’ of human social worlds is emphasised by Lugones (2006). I elaborate on her ideas in the following section.
sites of political contestation”, my attention to discursive realities in this thesis is “grounded in and informed by the material politics” of internationalised higher education (Mohanty, 1991a, p. 11). This is not to reinstate “an unmediated and transparent notion of the subject or identity as the centred author of social practice” (Hall, 1996, p. 2), or to suggest that “concrete experience is [necessarily] the final arbiter” in relation to human social life and how we should think about it (Lather, 2006a, p. 44). However, in seeking to connect discourses in higher education with the material politics that they contest or perpetuate and from which they arise, I recognise discourses as historically located, and as often having real effects (Fine and Weis, 2005; Gillborn, 2006). I turn now to ‘identities’ to further explain my understanding of discursive formations and embodied realities as inextricably intertwined.

4.4 Identities, identifications, differences and the use of difference
The construct ‘identity’ is used throughout this thesis and illustrates my understanding of discursive realities as grounded in and connected to the material politics of everyday life (Mohanty, 1991a). In one sense, I see identities as “naturally occurring ecologies” (Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007, p. 706); how people identify with particular ‘cultures’ or ways of being as a basis for belonging. In another sense however, I also understand identities, or rather, identification as discursive; a process of articulating perceived commonalities and differences that even if apparently natural is always “too much”, or ‘too little’ – an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality” (Hall, 1996, p. 3). In this sense, although they are often used as if fixed and natural, identities are fundamentally unstable. They involve not just perceived differences but also the use of difference; the “binding and marking of symbolic [inside/outside] boundaries” (p. 3, also see Ang, 2003).

While this thesis emphasises identities as unstable rather than natural, it also notes that they are “profoundly political ways of organising the world” (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 67). This is because identities draw on historically and ideologically grounded narratives (or discourses) about selves and others that are well-established and sometimes
central to the functioning of particular social worlds\(^3\) (Hall, 1996). For example, Ang (2003, p. 199) argues that “the hierarchical binary divide between white/non-white and Western/non-Western [is] a master grid framing the potentialities of, and setting limits to, all subjectivities and all struggles”. Noting that historically-grounded identities/identifications create and perpetuate stubbornly solid barriers between people, she cautions against naively ignoring these, or “rushing to break” them down “in the name of idealised unity” (p. 193).\(^4\) Palumbo-Liu (2002) notes that Eurocentric discourses about ‘others’ are so historically and discursively forceful that they very often function as stereotypes; bases for identification that ‘stick’, whether or not they are intentionally or unintentionally performed, subverted or resisted by those subjected to/through them (p. 767, also see Lugones, 1987). In the previous two chapters I argued that historically-grounded Eurocentrism is evident in existing policy and research concerned with the internationalisation of higher education in New Zealand. In Chapter Six I discuss how Eurocentric assumptions about New Zealand-ness and otherness were also revealed, contested and disrupted by women involved in my project.

Although profoundly political ways of organising the world (see Fine and Weis, 2005, above), dominant discourses as a basis for identification are never ‘all there is’; and although some discourses may carry more discursive force than others, recognising the instability of all discourses is vital if we are to avoid simply reproducing them (see Ong, 1999; Rhee, 2006; Rhee and Subreenduth, 2006). Lugones (2003, p. 200) argues that “resistance and oppression vie as constructions of everyday life”; in other words, people who are subjectivated to or through forceful identifications are also active in identifying themselves and others (also see Lugones, 1987; Mayuzumi et al., 2007). They may inhabit and move between many different social worlds, each of which is marked by many forms of power and many different (dominant and resistant) ways of identifying others/being identified (Ichimoto, 2004; Lugones, 1987, 2006; Ong, 1999).

Lugones (2006, p. 79) affirms “double vision” as a way of recognising both dominant and resistant constructions. In double vision, she notes the “impossible

\(^3\) I use the term ‘world’ here after Lugones (1987, p. 9), who describes as a world any context “inhabited by flesh and blood people”, whether a “whole society”, or a smaller context within a society.

\(^4\) Ang’s caution is central to my account of *Women Across Cultures* in Chapter Ten.
double vision foregrounds the plurality of discourses through which a person may be subjected, whether or not she is conscious of her own and others' plurality. In double vision, Lugones also suggests a useful basis for thinking about theory and its connection to praxis.

4.5 Lugones' 'double vision' and my use of theory in this thesis

To Lugones (2006), double vision is both a necessary skilfulness and an optimal approach to human interaction. In terms of the former, it is a creative survival strategy that allows a person to identify those who dominate her as not just dominant (1987). In terms of the latter, it is also an openness to others' plurality, and to the limits of one's ability to see, hear and comprehend social realities. Lugones (2003) suggests that the ability to see (at least) double is necessary for ethical theoreti-co-practical engagement. In this sense it is a way of seeing and engaging with people and their lives that refuses to reduce or simplify; recognises the limits to one's ability to know; recognises both the deadliness of domination and its instability; and affirms the subjectivity, intentionality and agency of those who are subjected to discursive and material politics marked by domination (also see Lugones 1987, 2006).

My use of theory in this thesis is an attempt to exercise double vision both in relation to internationalised higher education as it is currently imagined and enacted in New Zealand, and women's lives in a higher education context. Specifically, I am interested in how "structurally entrenched" discourses, relations of power and material realities shape women's lives in similar and dissimilar ways (Ang, 2003, p. 197); and in how these are also shown to be shifting, unstable, and/or contested in women's accounts (after Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007; Ichimoto, 2004; Mayuzumi et al., 2007; Rhee, 2006). The thesis is also an exercise in double vision in that it is both critical and "aspirational" (Lavia, 2006, p. 281); attending to areas of lack while looking for alternative possibilities (after Robertson, 2006; Young, 1990, 2000). Also, Chapter Ten discusses Women Across

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5 In her book 'Pilgrimages Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions', Lugones (2003) uses the term 'impurity' in reference to an epistemological stance that is characterised by a commitment to seeing double.
*Cultures* as a deliberate attempt that, in part, fostered women’s double vision in relation to each other.

The previous two chapters highlighted some areas of lack that I see in existing internationalised education policy and scholarship. These serve as a starting point for the account of my research that follows. They include:

1. discourses of difference that position international-ness as outside nationhood and New Zealand-ness (or local-ness) in relation to (‘white’ or Eurocentric) sameness;
2. the representation of ‘others’ (those positioned as outside nationhood) in deficit terms;
3. the disjuncture between marketing rhetoric/policy promises in which internationalised education is imagined as fostering interaction and understanding between people, and the discursive positioning of (some) international students as different or distant others and/or a source of institutional and national revenue (Ministry of Education, 2007a);
4. the sidelining of gender and privileging of culturalist discourses as a basis for research and analysis in internationalised education (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; McConaghy, 1998);
5. the convergence of gendered and racialised discourses of difference for some women in higher education, and the related invisibility of women partners of international students;
6. the privileging of an international/local student binary in efforts to promote and understand interaction between students in higher education; and
7. inattention to the complex identity work that might shape both interactions between people and how they/we understand and re-present these interactions.

I recognise that others might identify different areas as lacking, or construe those that I note here differently. This thesis is nevertheless a situated conversation (see Young, 2000) that I hope will contribute to broader conversations about education policy, practice and research in New Zealand and elsewhere. My hope too is that it will open up and complicate existing conversations about internationalised education, and serve as a useful basis for naming and framing women students and partners of students in new ways.
Chapter 5 – Methodology

5.1 Introduction
In this chapter I connect the academic, historical and theoretical literature discussed in the preceding chapters with the account of my project that follows. As a methodological overview, the chapter outlines both what the actual research process involved and how it was informed by and speaks to the literature discussed in Chapters One through Four. I begin by situating my study as critical feminist ethnography, discussing and problematising ‘reflexivity’ as central to critical feminist ethnographic research (section 5.2). I then provide an overview and rationale for the study (section 5.3), situating Women Across Cultures in relation to Gibson-Graham (2003), Lugones (2003, 2006) and Pratt’s (2002) understanding of ‘communities’ or intersectional social sites. Next I provide a methodological account of my project in the light of critical and feminist scholarship on ethnographic research: specifically the ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ of access (Subedi, 2007), data collection, data analysis, representation (including writing), and ending the research (section 5.4). In section 5.5 I conclude the chapter by outlining the remainder of the thesis.

5.2 Critical feminist ethnography: foregrounding reflexivity
In situating this study as critical feminist ethnography, I draw on anthropological understandings of ethnography and ethnographic research, and critical scholars’ view of research as discursive and politically-embedded praxis. I also signal a feminist commitment to recognising women’s lives as important (Reinharz, 1992, p. 240), attending to the “diversity of actual women’s lives and the ideological mechanisms that have made so many of those lives invisible” (DeVault, 1990, p. 7; also see Flores, 2000), and “develop[ing] critical and analytic perspectives that include women” (p. 688).

To critical and feminist scholars, ethnography is like all research “a view from somewhere” (Alexander, 2006, p. 205; also see Haraway, 1988; Stacey, 1988); partial, situated in time and space, and accounted for from a particular embodied location (Fine et al., 2000; Pillow and Mayo, 2007). Social life is not a ‘truth’ to be mined or discovered
but is socially-constructed within larger “sociopolitical formations” and structural constraints (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 66; also see Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000). As an exercise in naming the world (Dyck, 1997) it has a long history of collusion with colonisation and other forms of domination through its (re)inscription of dominant and dominating explanations, understandings and agendas in relation to ‘others’ (Bishop and Glynn, 1998; Mohanty et al., 1991; Smith, 1999, 2005). For this reason, critical and feminist scholars stress the need for researchers’ reflexive awareness of their own “frames of reference” (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000, p. 303; also see Fine, 1994; Flores, 2000). They also emphasise the importance of considering the discursive and practical legitimacy and implications of a research project to all those affected by and involved in it, from its inception to dissemination and use (Bishop, 2005; Fine et al., 2000).

‘Reflexivity’ refers to a researcher’s self-conscious attention to her location in relation to the research project, the research participants, evaluative judgments made, and the effects of the research (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2006; Pillow, 2003, 2007; Tedlock, 2000). To borrow a phrase from Haraway (1988, p. 583), it is a concern with how to be “answerable for what we learn how to see [and hear]”, and for the implications of our seeing, hearing, and re-telling (Fine et al., 2000). At the same time, and as critical scholars also note, being answerable (or reflexive) neither mitigates the slipperiness of research nor necessarily does away with the ethical dilemmas inherent in it (see Lather, 2006a; Patai, 1991; Stacey, 1988). Indeed, some argue that by foregrounding one’s personal accountability (through being reflexive) a researcher can mask the dilemmas inherent in a research project, provide an appearance of having addressed them while carrying on regardless (Ang, 2003; Lather, 2006a), re-centre oneself in relation to the research (Fine et al., 2000; Pillow, 2003), or “collapse into a process of value analysis at the expense of the substantive issues” that prompted the research in the first place (Gewirtz and Cribb, 2006, p. 149; also see DeVault, 1990). In addition, reflexive attention to the researcher’s location risks overlooking how social research is always jointly constructed through participants choosing what to say or do and what to withhold or distort as they perform, resist, subvert, refuse and/or challenge the researcher’s assumptions (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2000; Fine, 1994; Fine and Weis, 2005; Fontana and Frey, 2000; Oakley, 1986; Stage and Matson, 2003; Subedi, 2007).
I find Pillow’s (2003, p. 192) “reflexivity of discomfort” helpful as a way of centering the tensions inherent in reflexive research, writing, and representation. To Pillow, this recognises research as involving many competing and complementary interests and perspectives, and the interplay of multiple positions. A reflexivity of discomfort requires a researcher to be accountable for what she states and does by foregrounding rather than hiding the complexity, ambivalence and messiness of her research. This is different from a search for resolution or transcendence, or a confessional preoccupation with the researcher’s subjectivity (see Ang, 2003). As noted in Chapter One, Pillow (2003) describes a reflexivity of discomfort as an ongoing process of challenging “the representations we come to while at the same time acknowledging the political need to [interpret,] represent and find meaning” (p. 192, also see DeVault, 1990; Subedi, 2007).

With Pillow’s (2003) definition of reflexivity in mind, in the remainder of the chapter I endeavour to do two things. First I provide an account of an ethnographic research project; namely, my participation, observation, interviewing, and representation in/of/with a small group of women in a higher education context in New Zealand’s South Island (see Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995). Second, I grapple with the “messy actualities” of ethnographic research (Lamer, 1998b, p. 13) and the contentions central to critical feminisms (Pillow, 2003, 2007); my negotiation of shifting and blurring researcher/participant identities; intersecting interests, voices, concerns, and audiences; and the ongoing dilemmas of representation and accountability.

5.3 Women Across Cultures: a rationale

In Chapter One I described an intercultural group for women (Women Across Cultures) as central to my research methodology. I explained that this group was open to women who were international and New Zealand students and whose partners were international students. Women Across Cultures was central to the project in that data collection largely took place within or in relation to it¹ through participant observation during group

¹ I say ‘largely’ because I also consider as data the contextual material contained in Chapters Two to Four, and because three of the women interviewed were not involved in Women Across Cultures prior to our interviews (see section 5.4). In Chapter One (section 1.3) I explained my caution concerning the use of the term ‘data’ throughout the thesis (also see section 5.4).
meetings and 28 interviews with 20 women over two years. It was also central to the project as an attempt to address some substantive issues highlighted in existing academic scholarship (see previous chapters). Although the idea of developing *Women Across Cultures* came from my own experiences as the partner of an international scholar in the USA, the rationale for the group was multi-faceted, informed by practical, political and academic concerns. These included the overwhelming invisibility of international students’ partners and families in higher education policy, research and support provision in New Zealand and internationally (see De Verthelyi, 1995; Scheyvens et al., 2003); the inattention to gender in much research on internationalised education (Bullen and Kenway, 2003), especially in the New Zealand context; research evidence of a disjuncture between international students’ expectations and experiences of social interaction with New Zealanders (Ho et al., 2007; Ward, 2006; Ward et al., 2005); and calls for ‘interventions’ to foster intercultural interaction between international and local students in New Zealand (Ward, 2006; Ward and Masgoret, 2004). My rationale for developing *Women Across Cultures* also grew out of a theoretically-informed suspicion of frozen categories as bases for research, explanation and analysis (Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007; Fine, 1994; Hall, 1996), of (inter)culturalism as analytical framework (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Coulby, 2006; McConaghy, 1998), and of shared ‘womenhood’ as a point of commonality (Ang, 2003). I initiated the group conscious of its openness to multiple readings (see Chapter One), and of the possibility that it might ‘fail’.

Although I initiated the development of *Women Across Cultures* as part of this research project, it was modelled on a group by the same name which I had been involved in previously. Methodologically-speaking, the group was intended to do three things. First, it was a site in which to “[work] the hyphen” between international and local women students and partners of students in a higher education context (Fine, 1994, p. 70); a space in which to explore similar and dissimilar experiences of living, moving and engaging in higher education in New Zealand (see research questions one to three, Chapter One). Second, it was a trial ‘intervention’, an exploration of the limits to and

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2 Eight women were interviewed twice: once in 2005 and once in 2006.
possibilities of an intercultural group as a means for fostering supportive networks, interaction and/or friendship between differently-positioned women (see research question three, Chapter One). Third, *Women Across Cultures* was a pragmatic attempt to establish an ethical and open research field that was accessible not only to students but also to women with small children and women who were not studying (Subedi, 2007). I hoped that by developing and maintaining an interactive, co-constructed social group as central to the project, opportunities for collaboration, reciprocity, mutual learning, and engaged discussion would be fostered over time; that women could choose to be involved in the project at a level that suited them; that those who chose to participate in the project at any level would find it helpful and beneficial; and that women who wished to could withdraw or come and go at will. I also hoped that if ‘successful’, the group would be sustainable beyond the duration of the project as an ongoing means for supporting and connecting women across higher education campuses in the city. These hopes and expectations were openly discussed with women who enquired about the group.

*Women Across Cultures* was not developed as a support group, discussion group, or focus group but drew on elements of all three. Although not a support group in an intentional, therapeutic sense, I hoped that the group would foster social connections and therefore multi-faceted forms of support for the women involved, whether local or international students, or partners of international students (Ramsey et al., 2007). Depending on who became involved, and the extent to which women engaged with each other, I anticipated that these connections would be multiple; for example, between international and local students and partners of international students, and between students and staff involved with the group. Also like Carr, Koyama and Thiagarajans’ (2003) ‘support group’ *Women Across Cultures* was open to women’s comings and goings, and its weekly programme was established in conjunction with the women involved. Although I did not establish *Women Across Cultures* with focussed ‘dialogue’ in mind, I hoped that it would be a context in which conversations would occur (Gibson-Graham, 2003) and therefore, where women could share practical issues and information, and common and contrasting experiences (Carr et al., 2003; Mahalingam and Reid, 2007). In addition, I hoped that as a conversational space it would facilitate learning for all involved; the challenging of assumptions and stereotypes, moments of exchange, and
the development of broader views of ourselves, others, and each other (Dey, 2005; Haigh, 2002; Mahalingam and Reid, 2007; Volet and Ang, 1998). Although not a ‘focus group’ as such, *Women Across Cultures* was established as a site in which women’s living and study experiences could be informally explored through group and peer discussion (Kitzinger, 1994). I anticipated that data that emerged from participant observations (and conversations) in the group would augment, clarify, and complicate the data obtained through research interviews.

Although *Women Across Cultures* was partly established as an opportunity for women to build “social and communal networks through regular contact in a comfortable context” (Rosenthal, Russell, and Thomson, 2007, p. 81), I was wary of both ‘communality’ and ‘comfort’ as ideals. This is because apart from being a higher education based women-only space, *Women Across Cultures* was not developed on the basis of common ground, or of real or perceived homogeneity. Neither was it aimed at fostering homogeneity, or the adaptation of some women to an implicit or explicit ‘norm’. Three authors whose work I found helpful for theorising/articulating this ambivalence were J.K. Gibson-Graham (2003), María Lugones (1987, 2003, 2006), and Mary Louise Pratt (2002). I will briefly describe how each informed the development/maintenance of *Women Across Cultures* before continuing to outline my research methodology.

Gibson-Graham (2003), Lugones (1987, 2003, 2006), and Pratt (2002) emphasise both the positive possibilities and the contested-ness of social (intersectional) spaces grounded in difference, as well as the homogenising dangers of communality or community. Each highlights the significance of the location from which communality or community is imagined, constructed, or fostered. Lugones (2003), mindful of the dominating possibilities of groups developed across differences, centres the importance of maintaining multivocality and contention, or constructing and imagining community as “impure” (p. 194). Similarly, Gibson-Graham (2003) advocates for community-building as a way of enacting an “ethics of the local” (p. 49), but understands communities as crossroads where strangers come together. To Lugones (2003) and

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3 Gibson-Graham (2003) describes a local ethic as recognising “particularity and contingency” in relation to broader realities (such as internationalised education), building local capacity in response to these, and fostering “respect [for] difference and otherness” both between and within localities (pp. 52-54).
Gibson-Graham (2003), intersectional spaces as (impure) communities offer possibilities for resistance to homogenisation or assimilation; social fragmentation; and to discourses that separate, categorise, and downplay alternative possibilities. They are also, potentially, sites for learning, but not through transparent understanding or the reduction of “difference into otherness and otherness into sameness” (Lugones, 2003, p. 201). Lugones (2006, p. 81) explains that learning in intersectional sites requires “a significant extension of [one’s] own intercultural [or interpersonal] journey”; recognition of others’ complexity and plurality (1987, 2006); and a willingness and ability to see and be in new ways (also see Gibson-Graham, 2003).

Gibson-Graham (2003) emphasises that learning in intersectional sites takes time, multiple opportunities to be together, and shared activities that allow the cultivation of engagement, openness, and generosity in the place of ‘natural’ suspicion and/or hostility. For those facilitating such sites, she notes the necessity of planning events likely to bring people together; valuing any and all who become involved; and remaining open, generous and willing to learn. Lugones (2003, p. 201) adds the importance of intentionally countering reductive assumptions about others with what she calls the “impure epistemological shift”. She describes this as involving a refusal to reduce others to one’s own understandings or assumptions, and a contentment with understanding others incompletely.

Pratt (2002, p. 1), conceptualises intersectional social sites not as communities but “contact zone[s]”. Her use of the word ‘contact’ acknowledges that engagement in such sites involves the meeting of different, sometimes conflictual histories. To Pratt, interaction across differences can be difficult and risky, marked by “moments of wonder and revelation, mutual understanding, and new wisdom” perhaps, but also by pain, bewilderment and misunderstanding (p. 15). Pratt argues that alongside contact zones, “safe houses” are important; spaces of retreat in which “groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogenous, [and] sovereign communities,….construct shared understandings”, and where necessary, heal (p. 15). In contrast with Lugones (2003) and Gibson-Graham (2003), Pratt prefers to use the term ‘community’ in reference to the (constructed) homogeneity of safe houses, not sites in which interaction occurs across differences.
In terms of this project, Lugones (1987, 2003, 2006), Gibson-Graham (2003) and Pratt’s (2002) ideas are helpful both epistemologically and practically. First, together they foreground and demand a reflexivity of discomfort (Pillow, 2003), highlighting the significance of the location or rather, locations from which an intersectional site (in this case, *Women Across Cultures*) is imagined. Second, they emphasise that suspicion, hostility, discomfort and/or confusion are to be expected wherever people engage across differences (see Gibson-Graham 2003; Lugones, 2003). Third, they offer practical guidelines: for example, that strangers are unlikely to come together without the ongoing intentional creation of sites in which to do so, and that the cultivation of generosity, openness, and (opaque) understanding takes time and ongoing commitment (see Gibson-Graham 2003; Lugones, 2006). Fourth they offer ethical guidelines: the importance of resisting reduction and assimilation through a search for transparent understanding (Lugones, 1987, 2003, 2006); and the need for openness to change in one’s sense of self, and to others’ plurality and incommensurability (Lugones, 1987, 2003, 2006; Gibson-Graham, 2003). Although as I discuss in Chapter Ten, Pratt’s (2002) oppositional use of ‘contact zones’ and ‘safe houses’ was both reflected and problematised in *Women Across Cultures* as it unfolded, her comparison of the two is helpful, highlighting the different but equally legitimate purposes that different kinds of social spaces might serve. Also helpful is Pratt’s lack of linearity. While Gibson-Graham (2003, p. 68) argues that the bringing together of strangers can lead to an “awakening of a communal subjectivity” over time, Pratt (2002) is more cautious; emphasising partiality and moments of understanding rather than static or final endpoints (also see Lugones, 2006). I turn now to how these ideas informed my development of *Women Across Cultures* and the project in a practical sense. I discuss them further in Chapter Ten.

5.4 A methodological account

The remainder of the chapter is a comprehensive methodological account of my project in the light of the literature considered to this point. My aim in this section is to make explicit both what I did in conducting the research and the evaluative judgments behind what I did (after Fine et al., 2000; Pillow, 2003). Although this section is divided broadly into five sections (gaining access and considering locations, the day-to-day running of
Women Across Cultures, data collection, data analysis and representation, and ending the research), to discuss each as separate aspects of the research process is in some respects to draw false distinctions. For example, gaining access, data collection, data analysis, and representation occurred throughout the project and at multiple levels, as I explain below (see Emerson et al., 1995; Subedi, 2007).

**Gaining access and considering locations**

At all levels, my project was informed by feminist concerns with relationship, reciprocity, and power (Fontana and Frey, 2005; Oakley, 1986; Pillow, 2003). Although formal ‘access’ was sought through initial consultation with a university international office and students’ association, and through participants’ ‘informed consent’ as required by university ethical requirements, access was also sought and granted in an ongoing way throughout the project (Subedi, 2007). In a formal sense, I first sought approval for the project in late 2004 from international office staff at the educational institution where Women Across Cultures was hosted. I also (and at their suggestion) sought approval from the local students’ association, since the use of student association facilities would be necessary for the project to proceed. Both international office and tertiary student association staff were positive about the idea of the project and assured me of their ongoing support. I therefore sought ethical approval from the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee which was granted in February 2005.

The process of ‘gaining access’ to participants, initially by publicising Women Across Cultures, began in mid-February 2005 and continued until mid-2006. Although publicity was ongoing (through posters and word-of-mouth), key occasions for publicising the group were at the beginning of each academic year, and to a lesser extent,

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4 These ‘stages’ are drawn loosely from Subedi (2007).

5 The ongoing seeking and granting of access was at all times in line with the terms of the project’s ethical approval and with university policies regarding ethical research. I differentiate between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ consent to acknowledge that consent (and therefore access to participants) is not just a one-off event, but ongoing throughout a project (see Subedi, 2007).

6 I did not actively publicise the group beyond this point as I was unsure as to whether or not it would be continuing in 2007 (I discuss this later in the chapter).
at the beginning of the second semester each year. All promotional material distributed or displayed explained who Women Across Cultures was for, what it would involve, where it would meet, and dates and times for regular meetings. Also included was my contact information, and a statement explaining that the group was being run in conjunction with international office staff and as part of a broader research project.

The question of ‘location’ was central throughout the establishment of Women Across Cultures and indeed throughout the project. Lugones (2003) articulates some critical questions in relation to the location/s from which intersectional spaces (or ‘impure communities’) such as Women Across Cultures are imagined, planned, established, and represented. These questions are helpful for interrogating the process by which I established Women Across Cultures as a means for gaining access to participants:


I initiated Women Across Cultures with the expectation that it would ‘move’ (shift, change, fluctuate) in terms of its planning, day-to-day organisation, and whose voices were part of the process. While in its initial planning, the predominant ‘voice’ was my own, this was also augmented, checked, and challenged by others: my academic supervisors, collaborating international office staff, international and local students with whom I discussed the project, and the women I remained in contact with from the West Virginia University Women Across Cultures group. Since Women Across Cultures was part of my project and was not developed in relation to any existing group of women on campus, it was not (in a formal sense) planned or established collaboratively with the research participants, but as an open access group, it was nevertheless collaborative. Although I initiated the group, women’s involvement was voluntary, and the group’s

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7 In Appendix II I provide a full list of avenues through which Women Across Cultures was publicised.

8 Women who were international and New Zealand students and partners of international students, as well as their preschool children if relevant.

9 See Appendix III for examples of promotional material.
direction beyond the initial stages depended on ongoing collaboration between me, international office and student association staff, and the women who became involved.

Not surprisingly, throughout the project I received varied responses to the idea of *Women Across Cultures* and my perceived location in relation to it. I outline some of these responses in Chapter Ten. Notably, neither my location, nor people’s responses to either me or the project were static. Some people who expressed caution as to why I (a Pākehā New Zealand student) should be developing an intercultural group, were much less cautious after I described the project as having grown out of my experiences as a new mother ‘out of place’ in West Virginia. Some, who were initially enthusiastic or who expressed anticipation, came to group meetings once or twice and did not return, or expressed disappointment after being involved in the group (see Chapter Ten). Still others indicated suspicion and/or refusal, or expressed interest and regret that they were unable to be involved due to other commitments. Women who expressed an interest in the group were invited to add their name to a group email list. I managed this list, and used it to advertise upcoming group meetings and events. By the end of February 2005, thirty seven women had granted a degree of access by adding their names to the email list. By the end of the first semester in 2005, this had increased to about one hundred. Although women’s names were added or removed throughout the project as they moved to or away from the city and/or were no longer interested in receiving group information, the number of names on the email list remained relatively constant (between eighty and one hundred). Many of these women did not attend group activities at all, or did so only sporadically.

A core group of fifteen to twenty women over the two years of the project granted access beyond emailing. These women came regularly when possible to organised activities and events, and participated in planning the group and organising group activities. Sixteen women then agreed or in some cases, asked, to take part in research interviews. A further three women who took part in research interviews found out about the project through other women involved in *Women Across Cultures*, or in one case, through a male partner who knew about the project. Two of these women became involved in group activities after our interviews, while one received group emails but was not involved in the group at all.

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As Subedi (2007) found in his research with Asian teachers in the USA, in my project, access was granted, refused, and/or challenged throughout the course of the project, not just initially. This was partially because *Women Across Cultures* was open to women’s comings and goings. It was also because tertiary education environments are inherently transient spaces so that women came and went as they began or concluded their studies. In addition the interactions in the group were ongoing, and in group meetings and research interviews, interactions between myself and the other women involved were constantly subject to negotiation.

‘Locating’ the women who became involved in *Women Across Cultures* and in the project more broadly is problematic (see Lugones, 2003). Women identified themselves in multiple ways, in relation to ethnic and/or national affiliations (New Zealander, Japanese, Korean, Swiss, Fijian, American, Indian, Taiwanese, Chinese, Malaysian, Norwegian, Canadian, Irish); broader regional affiliations (Asian, European, Pacific Islander, North American); transnational or transethnic affiliations (including Chinese-Malaysian, Korean-New Zealander, American-Fijian); enrolment status (international, New Zealand, exchange and/or full fee-paying students); course of study (for example, in humanities, science and commerce programmes); family status (as daughters, partners, sisters and mothers); age or study level (as ‘mature’, undergraduate, postgraduate, Masters and/or PhD students); religion (including Muslim, Christian, Catholic, and Buddhist); and a sense of being an outsider to New Zealand-ness (for example, as ‘international’ or ‘migrant’), even if for enrolment and citizenship purposes, a New Zealander. In later chapters I trace how these shifting and multiple localities played out in women’s accounts of themselves, others and each other (Chapter Six) and in relation to *Women Across Cultures* (Chapter Ten). For now, I include a table that introduces the women who took part in research interviews by codename, enrolment status, level of study, and the national affiliation(s) with which they self-identified. Note that all New Zealand students who also referred to other national affiliations had lived in New Zealand for seven years or less. All codenames listed were either chosen or approved by the women concerned.
Table 1: Interviewees by enrolment status, level of study, and national affiliation(s)\textsuperscript{10}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Enrolment status</th>
<th>Level of study</th>
<th>National affiliation(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deanna*</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>International FFPS</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Canada/Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukiko*</td>
<td>International FFPS</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violet*</td>
<td>International FFPS</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki</td>
<td>International FFPS</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miho</td>
<td>International FFPS</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>International EXCS</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frances</td>
<td>International EXCS</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>PRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xena*</td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita*</td>
<td>ISP</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>ISP/International FFPS</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>Gulf region\textsuperscript{11}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakuwaku</td>
<td>NZ student</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Japan/NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura*</td>
<td>NZ student</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>USA/Fiji/NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexis*</td>
<td>NZ student</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>NZ (Pākehā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>NZ student</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>NZ (Pākehā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>NZ student</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>USA/NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella*</td>
<td>NZ student</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>South Korea/NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arui</td>
<td>NZ student</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>PRC/NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ianice</td>
<td>NZ student/ISP\textsuperscript{12}</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>NZ (Pākehā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roja</td>
<td>NZ student/International FFPS</td>
<td>Postgraduate/Undergraduate\textsuperscript{13}</td>
<td>India/NZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* These women remained in the city for the duration of the project, so were interviewed twice (once in 2005 and again in 2006).

In Chapter One I noted the irony that in writing to trouble static and essentialising ways of categorising/identifying people, I am stuck with language that categorises (Kumashiro, 2006). Although this table gives some sense of the different “location[s]” at play in

\textsuperscript{10} When drawing on women’s interview accounts throughout the thesis I refer back to these identifications (see section 5.5).

\textsuperscript{11} Rose’s national affiliation is not identified in order to protect her anonymity. In 2005 Rose had been enrolled as a full-fee paying student in another New Zealand city, but during 2006 she returned to be with her husband and at his suggestion agreed to take part in an interview. Rose’s name was on the Women Across Cultures emailing list from mid-2006, but she did not attend any group activities.

\textsuperscript{12} Although a New Zealand-born New Zealand student when involved in the project, Janice was also married to an international student.

\textsuperscript{13} When Roja became involved in my project she was studying as a postgraduate New Zealand student. During our interviews however, she reflected also on her earlier experiences as an undergraduate full-fee paying international student.
Women Across Cultures and in the project more broadly (Lugones, 2003, p. 194), it is dangerous to read them too rigidly. The remaining chapters explore the significance, inadequacy, and the force of these and other identifications for expressing the complexity of women’s multiple ‘selves’ and everyday lives.

The day-to-day organisation of Women Across Cultures

Gibson-Graham (2003, p. 68) suggests that “being together...[is] both the ground and the fullness of community”. In practice however, (and as Gibson-Graham also notes) whether conceptualised as a community, contact zone (Pratt, 2002), or neither, any meeting of strangers requires the initial and ongoing development of shared activities. In the case of Women Across Cultures, shared activities included regular fortnightly meetings and twice-yearly pot-luck meals, as well as other informal events that women attended together. Group meetings took place during academic semesters only: seventeen in 2005, and sixteen in 2006. In 2005, pot-luck meals were initiated in response to women’s suggestions, and held in April and July (during mid-semester and mid-year breaks). In 2006 they were held during the first and second Orientation weeks (February and July), an arrangement that proved very successful for welcoming newcomers (and their families, friends and flatmates) and drawing a crowd.

Fortnightly Friday meetings were held from 10am to 11am in a room in the local university students’ association centre. Although group meetings were advertised as running from 10 to 11am, the room was booked for a two-hour slot. This proved fortunate as after most group meetings, some or all of the women present would sit around talking and drinking tea or coffee. Although each group meeting was a unique

14 This expression is explained in Chapter One.

15 Examples in 2005 and 2006 included events organised by international student clubs, a charity concert to raise funds for tsunami relief work, a dance festival, a mid-winter festival, and international film festivals.

16 Although popular, some complexities emerged around pot-luck meals. For example, some women (especially those in residential halls) did not have cooking facilities, or felt unable to prepare food. When whole flats and families came, they sometimes did not bring enough food to share. Also, since the concept of a pot-luck is of course not universal, it was necessary to explain on advertising material what this term meant. I learnt to make ‘easy food’ suggestions when advertising the meals (for example, fruit, drink, bread, etc.), and to bring copious quantities of extra food (including gluten and dairy free, halal and vegetarian). After the first pot-luck meal, a gold coin donation (six dollars maximum per family) was requested to contribute towards the cost of providing extra food.
occasion, our general pattern included refreshments (tea, coffee, juice, biscuits and crackers) and introductions (names, course of study/occupation, where we have previously lived and how long we have lived in our present locale), followed by a presentation or activity. Chairs were arranged in a circle, and either an international office staff member or I would start by welcoming everyone and initiating introductions. At its outset, international office staff had offered to “run the group” while I “do the research”. I saw this arrangement as positive, since it offered the best chance of ensuring the group continue long-term. However, in practice, its day-to-day organisation fell to me so that I was often facilitator as well as participant observer.\(^\text{17}\) This blurring of roles presented some practical challenges but was no surprise, given that the staff involved were already working to capacity, and that the work of maintaining Women Across Cultures in West Virginia had warranted the funding of one additional half-time staff position. Also blurred roles and contesting demands are not unique to this project, but often characteristic of ethnographic research projects in which the researcher’s embedded participation is central to data collection (see Evans, 1998).

The actual content of regular group meetings was organised jointly by me, the international advisers, and the women involved in the group. At the first group meeting in 2005, women were invited to record their suggestions for the group programme on paper which were then used as a framework for forward planning.\(^\text{18}\) Although I had been unsure how willing women would be to co-facilitate group meetings, from the first meeting onwards, women volunteered readily to either arrange a presentation of some kind or to organise a group activity.\(^\text{19}\) Where gaps occurred in the programme I informed women via email that a space was available, and if no-one volunteered to fill it I organised an alternative activity or guest speaker using women’s initial suggestions as a guide. Every second Wednesday prior to the Friday meeting, I sent out a group email announcing that

\(^{17}\) I explain my understanding of this term below.

\(^{18}\) Suggestions included walks and outings to local landmarks; sharing national foods, recipes, traditions, and photographs; listening to speakers (about child development, New Zealand history and politics, local issues/traditions, and travel experiences); sharing information on local events and activities (such as festivals, markets, local tramps, pub nights); sharing dance, games and music; sharing arrival experiences; learning New Zealand traditions (such as knitting, baking, and soup making); and holding pot-luck meals.

\(^{19}\) For the full 2005-2006 programme, see Appendix IV.
week’s programme and highlighting upcoming Women Across Cultures and other social events. I also actively followed up email enquiries, and sometimes met in person with women who requested information about the group.

**Data collection**

Like gaining access, data collection was ongoing throughout the project and occurred at multiple levels. In line with Fine and Weis’ (2005, p. 65) “compositional” approach to ethnography, data considered throughout the thesis takes in “the varied depths of the field” (also see Robertson, 2006), and includes the historical, contextual, policy, and academic material considered in Chapters Two and Three; my recorded observations and reflections; and conversations, both informal (that took place in group meetings and via email), and ‘formal’

30 (individual in-depth interviews). Like Fine and Weis (2005), in considering this multi-layered data I am interested in how it is inter-related, or how women’s “making sense” connects with and/or exceeds the historical, social and material politics of their everyday lives (p. 67, also see Robertson, 2006; Young, 1990, 2000). In Chapter One I described data collection and analysis as interpretive rather than technical tasks (see DeVault, 1990; Haraway, 1988). With this in mind, I explain three aspects of data collection that are relevant to this project: participant observation, interviewing and triangulation.

**Participant observation**

Participant observation for the purposes of this project involved a combination of spontaneous and pre-arranged conversations, participation, observation, and reflection (Angrosino and Mays de Pérez, 2000; Evans, 1998; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). In Evans’ (1998, p. 201) terms, my stance as participant observer was both “reflexive” and “critically interpretive”. It was an “interpretive process” of examining women’s multiple situated perspectives on Women Across Cultures and their broader study and living contexts, as well as the research process itself (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 16). I note that

30 Organised interviews were formal only in the sense that they were pre-arranged. I describe them further below.
recorded in written form, participant observation is also open to others’ situated observations and interpretations (Evans, 1998).

My seeing and hearing (and failure to see and hear) was like the project more broadly, shaped by my location (see Fontana and Frey, 2000; Haraway, 1988): including my prior experiences, political commitments, theoretical and academic frames of reference, and broader understanding of the contexts in which the research took place. It was also shaped by the locations of those that I saw and heard; women’s interpretations of their own study and living experiences and their decisions concerning what to reveal, challenge or suppress (see Scott, 1992; Subedi, 2007). My participant observation was therefore not an attempt to dispassionately report on human realities, objective ‘truth’, or to look for one accurate viewpoint either on *Women Across Cultures* or women’s broader experiences in New Zealand and elsewhere.

In practical terms, my participant observation involved attention to both the study’s context and those involved in it. As a participant in the study, participant observation was also “the observation of [my] participation” (Tedlock, 2000, p. 471), and ongoing critical attention to the study itself. My observations were recorded in a research journal, and included theoretical, methodological, ethical, and practical reflections on *Women Across Cultures*, the project more broadly, the day-to-day interactions of those involved in the project, and broader societal events and policy initiatives that were relevant to the study or the women involved in it. The research journal was both a descriptive space, and a space in which to consider the “ambiguity, complexity, [and]...unsettling nature of continuous inquiry” (Holly and Mcloughlin, 1989, p. 268). It was also a space in which I could explicitly explore the links between theory and (research) practice, so that each could shape the other (see Laws, 2004).

From April to August 2005 and April to August 2006, I recorded systematic fieldnotes in the research journal after each *Women Across Cultures* meeting or activity. These notes were recorded as soon as possible after each meeting or event, and when immediate recording was difficult, I would record quick jottings as a basis for full fieldnotes later (after Emerson et al., 1995). A number of complexities inherent in recording fieldnotes included the issue of gaining or maintaining ‘informed consent’, my
contradictory location as both participant and observer, and the matter of what and how to observe or record. I will discuss each of these briefly.

In terms of gaining consent, my ethics application had stated that women would be informed in group meetings that the group was part of a project and offered the opportunity to sign consent forms. Although information and consent forms were formally distributed at a group meeting before each observation period, in practice, women arrived at meetings at different times, different women were present from week to week, and there was not time or opportunity to formally solicit consent from women present at every group meeting. After sensing some confusion or disinterest when I spoke about the project at the first group meeting (no women gave “being part of a research project” as a reason for joining the group), I developed a habit of approaching newcomers informally while refreshments were being served to ensure that they understood the group’s relationship to my project. I also asked women’s permission before recording verbatim in my research journal anything they had said during group meetings.

Although initially I worried about my researcher role in Women Across Cultures, it was clear from recruitment onwards that those involved were neither passive nor necessarily vulnerable as research participants. For example, the right of refusal lay with them in that they could and did come and go. Also, some women chose actively to have their stories, ideas, discussions, and experiences told beyond the immediate group, interrupting conversations to request that I “write about” certain details or record their interpretations of events. In terms of informal encounters and conversations that occurred between group meetings, where these involved group members I explicitly asked permission before recording any details in my research journal. At no stage was permission denied, and as with group observations, women also sometimes spontaneously requested that I record details of our conversations. On some occasions I

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21 See Appendix IV.

22 I acknowledge that participants may have felt very vulnerable when interviews elicited the recollection of negative or difficult experiences and emotions. I discuss power and vulnerability specifically in relation to interviewing in the following section.

23 When asked to record a woman's observation or account of an event I did so as requested. I discuss my use of this and other data later in the chapter.
recorded details of conversations relevant to the project where those involved were not
group members or project participants. I include details from these conversations as
contextual data only (Mathison, 1988), with all identifying details removed.

As noted earlier, the role of participant observer is inherently contradictory (see
Emerson et al., 1995). It involves both engaged participation (in my case, conversations,
co-facilitation of group meetings, welcoming and introductions, and organisation and
distribution of refreshments) and a degree of detachment (observation, listening,
recording). Sometimes my participation was so absorbing that I forgot to observe, and
sometimes I would observe (or hear) one aspect of a group activity and be aware (or
unaware) of having missed others. Deliberate strategies that I employed in order to
observe as fully and reflexively as possible included recording descriptive and reflective
fieldnotes, mundane and exceptional details; and considering my own seeing and hearing
as data (after Fine and Weis, 2005; after Fine et al., 2000).

Interviewing
Like participant observation, interviews for the purposes of this project were not “neutral
tool[s]” for the collection of objective and transparent ‘truth’ (Fontana and Frey, 2005, p.
695) but conversations that involved the intentional co-construction and exploration of
meanings (Fontana and Frey, 2000, 2005; Kvale, 1996; Oakley, 1986). Interviews were
intersectional, interactional, and indeterminate, involving the articulation, clarification,
and negotiation of meanings in relation to specific and shifting issues (Scheurich, 1995).
Interviews involved speaking, recording and understanding as well as silences and
misunderstandings. The interview data in this thesis therefore re-presents meanings
“accomplished at the intersection of the interaction[s]” between me as interviewer and
participant observer, and the women I spoke with and listened to (Fontana and Frey,
2005, p. 717). While I hope that this data offers insights into, complicates, and calls into
question the material, academic, socio-political, and discursive context(s) within which
we spoke, heard, and wrote (Fine and Weis, 2005), it is neither objective nor a final
account of human social life in a higher education context. Neither is it intended to be
necessarily generalisable to all women or to higher education contexts elsewhere (Stacey, 1988).\footnote{This is not to suggest that the project’s conclusions are weaker or less robust than they may have been had my approach to interviewing been different. With Fontana and Frey (2005, p. 696), I consider claims of neutrality and objectivity in relation to interview (and other social research) data as “mythical”.}

As discussed already, interviewing throughout the project took place both informally (as emailed and face-to-face conversations) and ‘formally’ (as scheduled individual interviews). I have highlighted gaining or not gaining consent as an ethical issue when using informal conversations as interview data. Similarly, although I included some email conversations in my research journal (with the exception of email enquiries), I also treated these as contextual data (Fine and Weis, 2005; Mathison, 1988). The scheduled interviews took place between May and October in 2005 and 2006, initially commencing after Women Across Cultures had been established for three months. Women were offered the choice of pair, focus group or individual interviews, but all women involved chose the latter. The delay in starting interviews was intended to allow time for some degree of trust to develop between the women involved (me included), and for women to judge whether or not they were willing to talk about their experiences and perspectives with me in a more focussed situation. Where women had been involved in Women Across Cultures prior to the initial interviews, the already-established familiarity resulted (at least from my perspective) in a greater degree of conversational ‘ease’ (see Lugones, 1987). It also allowed me to adapt the broad interview format appropriately, as I explain below. Repeat interviews were also especially rich, and those involved in them seemed to be more frank after participating in the project for a year to eighteen months.

Although, as noted, three women had not been involved in Women Across Cultures prior to our interviews, I knew two (Miho and Frances) already through other women involved in the group, and the remaining woman, Rose, through her husband. Miho’s was a pilot interview that she then agreed for me to use as part of the project, and Frances and Rose were interviewed after they heard about the project and asked to speak with me about their experiences.

Interviews followed a loose format based on a list of broad questions about women’s previous and present living, study and/or occupational situations; their families;
things that they enjoyed or found difficult in their current living, study and/or occupational roles; their involvement with and perspectives of Women Across Cultures and New Zealanders or international students; and their hopes/plans for the future (see Appendix VI). This format was initially ‘tested’ in a pilot interview with Miho in May 2005, after which she affirmed the relevance of the questions I had prepared with the exception (for her) of those concerning Women Across Cultures. I initially prepared slightly different questions for international students, partners of international students, and New Zealand students, but as the project unfolded my assumptions concerning the distinctness of these three groups were deeply challenged. After the first few interviews I intentionally adapted the pre-prepared format for each interview to ensure it was as relevant as possible to women’s specific living and study situations.25 A week before each interview, I emailed a suggested interview format to the woman concerned, suggesting that they delete and change or add to it as they wished. No women altered the questions that I suggested prior to their interview, but some came with additional issues that they wanted to discuss or indicated while the interview was in progress where they found certain questions irrelevant. For the eight repeat interviews (with women who remained involved in the project over two years) I suggested pre-prepared questions that drew on the previous year’s interview. These included references to women’s families, wellbeing, living, and study or occupational experiences during the intervening year; their ongoing involvement with Women Across Cultures (where appropriate); what their advice would be for higher education institutions in terms of offering meaningful support; and what their ‘coping’ advice would be for other women in their current situation (see Appendix VI). Interviews were conducted in a place that the women chose; in most cases on the campus where they or their partner were studying (either in an available office space or in a group study room in the library). Two exceptions were Violet and Xena, who requested that both initial and repeat interviews take place in their homes.

25 Where women had been enrolled for study in New Zealand under more than one enrolment category, or if (in the case of New Zealand students) they had lived/studied in more than one country I adapted the interview questions accordingly. If women had not been involved in Women Across Cultures prior to the interview, I did not ask them about the group, but we sometimes talked about other social groups with which they were involved.
Although interviews were semi-structured in that they loosely followed a similar sequence of general open-ended questions (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003), they were also different from one to another. While women spoke spontaneously during most of the interviews, some also referred to notes that they had prepared beforehand or at times, read these out word-for-word. Also, interviews shifted and changed as women elaborated on specific questions or issues, introduced new issues, and as I asked questions to clarify women's meanings or to continue discussion around topics that they had introduced. Interviewer and interviewee roles were often blurred as women asked me questions, or elicited my responses to their comments. In these instances, I reflected on and responded to their comments and questions frankly from my own experiences (after Oakley, 1986). Where my response was not actively elicited or where women were speaking freely and with few pauses I tended to nod or use fillers (such as “mm”, “yes”, “yeah” etc.).

All scheduled interviews were taped using a small boundary microphone placed on a desk or low table. Not surprisingly, this often caused a degree of awkwardness at the start of an interview, and often after I turned the tape off the conversation would continue or become more frank or personal. Women also responded actively to the presence of the tape recorder; for example, joking about its presence by saying something in its direction while grimacing or making ironic facial expressions, or waiting to say certain things until it had been turned off at the ‘end’ of the interview. During three interviews I turned the tape recorder off: once to allow a woman to regain composure after she had recalled some particularly negative experiences; and twice in response to a baby’s need for attention. Where women chose to speak ‘off the record’, their comments are included in the thesis only if they granted permission for me to use them. Otherwise, as with email and other informal conversations, I include off-record discussions as contextual data, with names and affiliations removed and in general, not specific detail (after DeVault, 1990). All interview transcripts were returned to the women concerned for member-checking.

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26 This may have been read by some women as expressing agreement, an issue that I discuss in Chapter Six.

27 This is explained further on page 94.
The matters of relationship, reciprocity and power are never straightforward in an interview context even when the interviewer pays self-conscious attention to them (Fontana and Frey, 2005; Oakley, 1986; Subedi, 2007). In one sense, power during my research interviews was complex. Although I formulated the initial questions, as noted, women also interviewed me, chose what or what not to say and chose alternative topics to discuss (see Oakley, 1986; Subedi, 2007). However, when interviews elicited women’s recollections of very negative experiences I felt like a voyeur, hearing and seeing expressions of pain to which there was no suitable response. Despite my best efforts to acknowledge the significance of what women shared on these occasions, there was no comfortable way of ‘resolving’ the pain that they had expressed or of ending the interview. I worried about the degree of vulnerability inherent in such interviews, but women also problematised my anxiety; for example, expressing concern for how I was feeling, and apologising for having been “negative”. Also, most women expressed appreciation for the opportunity to reflect on and talk about experiences that they had not had the opportunity to discuss elsewhere, or that had been downplayed in another context.

**Triangulation**

This study did not use ‘triangulation’ in the sense of attending to multiple data sources to look for unity or neat coherence; but as attention to resonating themes, and inconsistencies and contradictions between and across these (Mathison, 1988). Added to this was the matter of perspective (my observations alongside participants’ reflections and participants’ reflections alongside each other); time (how women’s situated accounts changed, shifted or contradicted each other when considered over a two year period); and the connections or disconnections between women’s situated accounts and other contextual data. Mathison describes this way of triangulating as “embedding the empirical data at hand with a holistic [and I would add, theoretically-informed] understanding of the specific situation and general background knowledge about this class of social phenomena” (p. 17). It is akin to Fine and Weis’ (2005, p. 67) concern with drawing explicit connections between data, theory, everyday life, and the
researcher's interpretive decisions. I will now explain how this way of triangulating or embedding the research also shaped my analysis of the research data.

**Data analysis and representation**

Data analysis and representation (like gaining access, and data collection) occurred throughout the project both in an ongoing sense and at specific times (Emerson et al., 1995). Data analysis and representation are both distinct from each other and intertwined, just as they are distinct from and an extension of the broader research field-work (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In analysis and representation, questions surrounding authorship or authority come to the fore: whose interpretive judgments will form the basis for reading, writing and using the research. For this reason, some critical scholars emphasise the value of shared analysis and representation as a way of maintaining reciprocity in research and ensuring that researchers' interpretations accurately reflect the interests of research participants (for example, see Bishop, 1998; Bishop and Glynn, 1999). Others critique the notion that shared analysis and authorship removes the practical and ethical dilemmas inherent in analysis and representation, and emphasise that a researcher's retreat from interpretive judgment may create significant dilemmas (DeVault, 1990; Fine et al., 2000; Stacey, 1988). DeVault (1990, p. 12), in reference to feminist ethnographic research, cautions that a reluctance to take up textual authority is both delusional and perhaps indicative of a gendered reluctance to "[develop] a voice, make a statement, [or] intervene in the public world". She argues that a crucial question is not whether to take up authority, but how to deploy the authority that is inevitably exercised through interpreting human social worlds and writing about them: how to "write with strength, and clearly, about our encounters with others" in and through research (p. 13).

In my project, several factors limited both the practicability and desirability of shared analysis and authorship. These included that the research was undertaken as part of my graduate degree (requiring my ultimate responsibility for its analysis and representation); that the women involved in the project came and went throughout its duration and few were still physically present during writing; that the women were very differently situated to each other and their perspectives in relation to each other were no more innocent than mine (see Fine et al., 2000); and that they were all busy people with
their own academic, occupational, and family commitments. In addition, shared analysis and authorship was also problematic given my stated concern with explicitly theorising women’s interpretations and experiences in relation to the broader context in which the project took place. Few of the women involved were conversant with the political and historical context within which they lived and studied in New Zealand, and as with the research as a whole, I was unwilling to “re-present their stories as ‘transparent’” (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 66; also see DeVault, 1990).

Although in this study, I took primary responsibility for coding, writing and representing the research, I worked to maintain reciprocal relationships as much as possible throughout the research process, and to ensure the rigour of my interpretations through remaining open to others’ interpretations and their criticisms of mine. Specifically, I used the following deliberate strategies to open my analysis and representations to others’ critique and interpretation:

1. ‘Member-checking’ of interview transcripts prior to analysis
   Typed transcripts were returned to each woman for checking and comment. Occasionally women would ask that I alter the wording in a particular part of the transcript, change the spelling of place names etc., or remove fillers like ‘um’ to ensure clarity of meaning. Some women also asked me to mask the identities of people they had referred to or to leave them out of my thesis altogether. We discussed and agreed on ways of doing this, for example, by not including departmental identifiers; changing a person’s gender; or ensuring that aspects of the data were excluded from the thesis unless the interviewee had left the city.

2. Discussing my analysis and interpretation with critical readers and listeners
   Three women involved in the project remained in the same city prior to its conclusion and expressed an ongoing interest in its outcomes. (These included one New Zealand student and two international students). One of the women (an international student) was conversant not only with the project, but also its policy context and my theoretical lens. She became an important critical reader of my

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28 Recorded interviews were transcribed jointly by me and a paid transcription typist. I checked all transcripts against the original sound recordings before returning them to the women in question.
work and a critical listener as I grappled with issues around analysis and representation. Although I undertook data-coding on my own, she read my work before it was presented publicly, made comments, and in particular, urged me to stay close to women’s day-to-day lives. I reciprocated by reading her work. The remaining two women were from very different disciplinary backgrounds but were still important critical listeners. I frequently discussed the project with them over the telephone or over coffee, and they discussed with me their ongoing living and study situations. Like the first woman, these two offered an important counterbalance to my tendency to get overwhelmed with theory and the technicalities of writing. They were also a constant source of encouragement to “get the project out there”.  

3. Inviting research participants to attend and give feedback after oral presentations
During 2005 and 2006 I invited women who were part of the study to attend all oral presentations that I gave concerning the project. Many women came to these, sometimes bringing friends who were not involved in the study. Some women gave me oral and emailed feedback after the presentations, most of which was encouraging rather than critical. This may have signalled that the women were happy with my interpretations, or that they did not want to cause offence by critiquing conclusions I had already come to. In retrospect, it may have been more fruitful to have formally elicited feedback on my interpretations with women at the coding stage of analysis (see later this section).

4. Exploring perceived themes in repeat interviews
I was able during the eight repeat interviews to explicitly ask about some of the themes and contradictions that I had perceived in women’s initial interviews. This was very helpful for troubling or complicating some of my initial analyses, and indicating where I should look again at my preliminary conclusions.

29 I do not include the codenames of the women referred to in this paragraph in order to protect their anonymity.
5. **Presenting preliminary findings at Women Across Cultures**

At the end of 2006 I presented the preliminary findings of the project to women who were then involved in *Women Across Cultures*. Although this offered an opportunity to discuss with some women the contradictions and themes that had emerged through their/our accounts (Fine and Weis, 2005) it was also limited in its usefulness, since many of the women whose accounts were included had already left the city.

6. **Looking for contradictions and/or multiple readings of data**

After Fine and Weis (2005) and Kvale (1996), I made a conscious effort to look for contradictions and/or complicating evidence as I read, analysed and wrote about the research data (contextual, observational and conversational data included).

7. **Actively seeking peer review**

From December 2005, I submitted my writing and analysis for peer review both as oral conference presentations and in written form (see Appendix I). Oral and written criticism and feedback that I received from fellow postgraduate students and experienced academics was valuable for forcing me to constantly re-think my use of theory, research methodologies, interpretation of the data and my conclusions and reflections.

8. **Considering audiences or possible uses of the data**

When writing about the data I tried where possible to consider its implications for multiple audiences or stakeholders (after Fine et al., 2000). These included: people concerned with theory and/or educational research; policy-makers, teachers, and/or those responsible for student support; the women who appear in the thesis; and women in internationalised education more broadly.

In practical terms and as noted already, the data analysed in this project was contextual, observational, conversational, and introspective, and at all levels, shaped by the political and theoretical concerns that had informed the project (see Chapters One and Four). I applied critical and feminist perspectives to the data by looking for the discourses...
that emerged in women’s accounts; how women made sense of, resisted, and took up particular identities and identifications, and identified others “in relation to themselves” (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 67; also see Hall, 1996). I also looked for glimpses in women’s accounts of possibilities for and action towards social change (Fine et al., 2000; Sikes, 2006; Young, 1990). Simultaneously, I considered how the data “surpass[ed my] analytic focus and domain”; challenged my personal, political, and theoretically-informed assumptions; and resisted neat coding, analysis and conclusions (Rhee, 2006, p. 609; also see Scheurich, 1995).

After women had responded to interview transcripts, I developed a list of emergent themes on which I perceived women as agreeing, disagreeing, and/or contradicting each other (see Appendix VII). These were drawn from the interviews, contextual data (see Chapters Two and Three), and my research questions and objectives (see Chapter One). Coded data was then entered into a FileMaker database, and reports generated on various themes or groups of themes as required. I also coded descriptive and reflective fieldnotes generated through participant observation in relation to practical, ethical and methodological considerations; noting where fieldnotes related to or problematised the interview themes or the contextual data (see Emerson et al., 1995).

Writing a thesis demands decisions about the relative importance of different aspects of the data, what should be included or not included in the writing. My decisions in writing this thesis were informed by the initial research questions (see Chapter One); my political commitments and theoretical lens (see Chapters One and Four); the connections/disconnections between my own research and that which I drew on to situate the study (see Chapters Two to Four); and the ‘weight’ of particular themes in and across women’s interviews and my observations. In deciding how to represent the research I was concerned with maintaining and reflecting both the inherent “wild profusion” (Scheurich, 1995, p. 244), and the diverse, embodied perspectives that it revealed (DeVault, 1990; Pillow and Mayo, 2007). After Fine et al. (2000, p. 111), I endeavoured to write in (at least) “two dialects, to issues of the common and the specific without diluting either”. My

30 I explain my use of the word ‘discourse’in the previous chapter.

31 I was interested not only in how the data looked in relation to these, but also how it problematised and/or complicated my initial questions, political commitments and theoretical understandings.

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aim was to produce a thesis that was theoretically, practically and politically useful (Sikes, 2006; Simpson, 2006).

While this thesis is a representation of situated data (Clough, 1996) it is also open to different readers’ interpretations. With multiple readers in mind, I have endeavoured to be honest, clear and careful in my writing. My hope is that the thesis honours the generosity of those who appear in it, without romanticising perspectives and realities that are (like all perspectives and realities) implicated in broader relations of power. I also hope that the thesis highlights how these (discursive and structural) relations of power are complex, multiple, and contested; not linear, unified, coherent, or ‘all that there is’ (see Larner, 2003; Robertson, 2006).

Ending the research

Before introducing the remainder of the thesis, it is necessary to briefly discuss how I ended the research. In one sense and for some women it did not end. I remain in ongoing email, telephone or social contact with nine of the sixteen women and as discussed, three in particular have taken an ongoing interest in my work and its outcomes. Also, several of those involved in Women Across Cultures during 2005 and 2006 remain in social, email and telephone contact with each other; in some cases, travelling internationally to visit and spend time together (see Chapter Ten).

In another sense, how to end the research was a crucial ethical consideration, especially in terms of Women Across Cultures. From mid-2006 I had been in contact with the international office staff who had endorsed the project at its inception, discussing possibilities for their continuation of the group beyond the duration of the project. Unfortunately, since the conclusion of the project coincided with significant staff changes, I was unable to gain an assurance that this would be possible until the 2006 academic year had ended. Because of this uncertainty, I publicised Women Across Cultures very little during the second half of that year. After the 2006 academic year ended, the international office in question provided an assurance that the group would continue, so I handed over organisational details and group resources. I also emailed those on the existing group list to explain the change in how the group would be run the following year and to offer an opportunity for them to discontinue their involvement if...
they preferred. One of the women who had been involved during 2005 and 2006 agreed to assist international office staff with practical matters during 2007 by purchasing supplies (from an established budget) and arriving early at each meeting to open the room and set out refreshments.

In reality the hand-over at the end of my project was not straightforward. Those who took over responsibility for the group were busy with other new responsibilities, and were unable to plan and advertise the group programme well in advance. Also, the woman who agreed to assist organisationally became pregnant and felt unsure of her role in the group alongside new staff who she did not know well. Because of these factors I found it difficult to retreat from the group at the end of 2006, and so attended most group meetings in 2007, helping out with background organisation whenever possible. By the end of 2007, the numbers of women attending group meetings had dwindled significantly and at the start of 2008 Women Across Cultures was officially closed down. By this stage most of the women who had been involved in Women Across Cultures during my project had moved on, so the group’s ending had little to do with my project. In another sense, since the project was in part aimed at evaluating the group as a means for fostering women’s interaction with each other (see research objectives, Chapter One), the manner in which it ended is a crucial consideration. I discuss its implications in Chapter Ten.

5.5 Towards a situated re-telling

The remaining chapters of the thesis represent some women’s accounts of internationalised higher education as they/we experienced it during 2005 and 2006, and of the broader educational and social ‘worlds’ that they/we inhabited both prior to and during the project. I use both ‘they’ and ‘we’ here because although most of the accounts that I draw on are not my own, I am implicated in them as interviewer and participant observer, and as writer of the thesis. I acknowledge that the interpretations in this thesis are my own, albeit inflected and checked by others.

The remainder of the thesis is as follows. Chapters Six and Seven reflect on women’s interview accounts in relation to the two overarching priorities of the ‘International Education Agenda’ (Ministry of Education, 2007a): national identity and economic transformation (see Chapter Two). Chapter Six connects the social, historical,
and policy contexts discussed in Chapters Two and Three with Stuart Hall’s (1996) notion of identification (see Chapter Four) and women’s accounts of themselves, others and each other. It considers how fixed notions of New Zealand-ness were woven throughout and contested in my research interviews; encountered by some women in particularly forceful ways; and subverted or problematised in some women’s accounts.

Chapter Seven reflects on economic transformation and ‘export education’ (see Ministry of Education 2007a) in the light of interviews with full-fee paying international students involved in my project. This chapter connects the contextual material in Chapters Two and Three with critical perspectives on neoliberalism as a discursive/perceptual framework (see Chapter Four), considering how women actively spoke about, took up and resisted neoliberal subject positions and sometimes found themselves positioned as commodities or consumers whether or not they wanted to be. Chapter Seven also discusses the convergence of ‘market’ discourses and racialisation for three women (including one New Zealand student). It highlights how some social outcomes of ‘export education’ are in stark contrast to those espoused in current New Zealand policy literature (see Chapter Two).

Chapter Eight considers the matter of teaching and learning, as discussed in interviews with women who were students. Relating Lugones’ (1987) notion of world-travelling to teaching and learning in and across contexts (national, cultural, pedagogical, and/or disciplinary) this chapter considers the factors women spoke about as creating or jeopardising their sense of ease and/or wellbeing in particular teaching and learning worlds. Chapter Eight also highlights however, women’s accounts in which unease or unfamiliarity was also identified as offering opportunities for personal growth, freedom and self-reinvention.

Chapter Nine foregrounds the accounts of women who were partners of students alongside those of other women who reflected on their homes (both real and symbolic) and sense of being or not being ‘at home’ in New Zealand and elsewhere. It relates women’s accounts to existing literature on women in (internationalised) higher education (Chapter Three), feminist concerns with the material politics of women’s everyday lives (Pillow and Mayo, 2007), and cultural geographers’ work on ‘home’ spaces, power and agency. Chapter Nine discusses factors women identified as making homes more or less
comfortable and more or less safe, suggesting some implications of these for policy, practice and support provision.

Chapter Ten ‘evaluates’ *Women Across Cultures* in relation to my research questions (see Chapter One), my rationale for establishing it, women’s expectations of the group, and their reflections on its day-to-day functioning. Using women’s interview accounts and excerpts from my participant observation journal, the chapter revisits the literature on intersectional social spaces outlined in Chapter Five. It highlights both the hopefulness and complexity of intentionally developing and maintaining an intersectional social group for women in an internationalised education context.

Chapter Eleven summarises the main points that emerge from Chapters Six to Ten in relation to three broad themes: discourses, representations, institutional practices and women’s lives; how dominant discourses and representations as contingent and open to contestation; and the significance of interpersonal interactions as sites in which dominant discourses are both reinscribed and disrupted. Chapter Eleven revisits my initial research questions in relation to the project as it unfolded, and highlights some key implications for future research, policy and practice in internationalised higher education.

An explanation of my use of interview transcripts in the remaining chapters is necessary before I proceed. Short quotes from interview transcripts are indicated by quotation marks, while longer quotes are indented. Bold type indicates women’s emphasis of particular words or phrases. Repeated full-stops indicate a pause in the conversation or a place where I have removed a phrase or a word to avoid women or those they spoke about becoming identifiable. ‘Equals’ signs (=) indicate where there was no pause between the interviewer and interviewees’ comments or questions and curly brackets indicate where an interruption of another’s comment or question occurred. Square brackets indicate where I have added a word or an explanation to assist the reader’s understanding, and parentheses, where I think a woman used a particular word but it is unclear on the sound recording. Where a phrase or word has been removed from a quotation, I have tried not to alter the meaning of the conversation. The same conventions are used whenever I quote from my research journal.

Where I include excerpts from women’s interview transcripts in a section of text, I identify the speaker in relation to her codename, enrolment status in New Zealand, level
of study, and national affiliation/s (see Table One, previous section). I also give the year in which the interview was conducted and the interview number from which the excerpt was taken (for example, 1/1 is interview 1 of 1; 1/2 is no 1 of 2 and so on). Subsequent quotes from the same person in the same section of text are from the same interview unless stated otherwise. Excerpts from my research journal are labelled as such and I state the date of entry from which the excerpt was taken. Although the majority of the data included in the thesis reflects on higher education contexts in one New Zealand city, some refers to learning contexts elsewhere in New Zealand or to primary and secondary school contexts. Although I signal in the text where women refer to New Zealand primary or secondary schools or to living and learning contexts outside New Zealand, the New Zealand cities and higher education institutions to which women refer remain unidentified in order to protect the women’s anonymity.
SECTION C – THE PERSPECTIVES OF
‘INTERNATIONAL’ AND ‘NEW ZEALAND’ WOMEN
Chapter 6 - Problematising nationhood: New Zealand-ness, difference and double vision in women’s interview accounts

6.1 Introduction
As discussed in Chapter Two, current internationalisation policy in New Zealand espouses two “overarching national priorities”: New Zealand’s economic transformation and strengthened sense of national identity (Ministry of Education 2007a, p. 8). In this chapter, I reflect on national identity as an overarching priority for education policy in the light of interview data in which women in my project spoke about themselves, others and each other. In the following chapter (Chapter Seven) I reflect on economic transformation as a priority for education policy, considering how full-fee paying international students spoke about fees, treatment, and ‘export education’.

This chapter considers how women in my study both revealed and contested a view of New Zealanders as homogenous, and international students as culturally different others. It continues the historical account and policy critique begun in Chapters Two and Three and explores research questions one and two: how an international/local binary relates to women’s interactions with and conversations about others in New Zealand; and new insights that their accounts suggest concerning internationalised higher education. The chapter is a response to the lack of New Zealand research that considers the complex and reciprocal identity work that occurs in internationalised higher education contexts, specifically in relation to notions of nationhood and otherness (see Chapter Three). It is also an attempt to look for “new imaginations of difference”, beyond us and them, national (or local) and international distinctions (Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007, p. 697).

Conceptually, my analysis in this chapter draws on Hall’s (1996) consideration of identities and identification as outlined in Chapter Four: identities as plural, not singular; and discursively constructed, not natural. I am interested in women’s ways of identifying themselves and others and how they expressed, resisted and performed particular identifications (see Fine, 1994). I am also interested in the interplay between agency and power in women’s accounts; how and to what extent particular identifications were
shown to have more “force” than others, and how this force was revealed, felt, and contested (Palumbo-Liu, 2002, p. 769). I also draw on Lugones’ (1987, 2006) notion of ‘double vision’ (see Chapter Four) to consider how some women subverted or disrupted static views of nationhood and otherness that they encountered, and/or described shifting understandings of themselves and others.

The chapter is organised into five sections. The first (section 6.2) revisits two different ways of constructing identity (and identification) as discussed in Chapter Four: first as “naturally occurring ecologies” (Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007, p. 706), and second, as discursive, unstable, and shifting (Hall, 1996). This section begins by discussing how identities emerged as bases for affiliation and belonging in women’s accounts. It then draws on three interview conversations to illustrate the use of New Zealand-ness as a discursive construction that is both forceful and unstable (Hall, 1996; Palumbo-Liu, 2002). Section 6.3 considers how five women encountered fixed notions of New Zealand-ness in others’ erasure, verbal abuse, and/or violence. Section 6.4 discusses some complicating data: interview exchanges that troubled straightforward understandings of New Zealand-ness, dominance, and/or difference. Section 6.5 describes some oppositional readings of New Zealand-ness and otherness that women suggested, highlighting their use both as an active survival strategy and as a basis for disrupting us/them distinctions and the static identifications that maintain them. Section 6.6 concludes the chapter with some suggested implications, including the importance of recognising how fixed notions of nationhood may be played out in material, sometimes harmful ways; and may be disrupted through exercising double vision in research, policy, and interpersonal interactions (Lugones, 1987, 2006).

6.2 Identities, identifications, New Zealand-ness and interview conversations

In Chapter Four I described two ways of thinking about identities. The first was as “naturally occurring ecologies”, or how people identify with particular ‘cultures’ or ways of being as a basis for belonging (Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007, p. 706). Some women in my project referred to identities in this way, describing shared understandings as a basis for affiliation, and interpersonal interactions that are easy, enjoyable, and non-superficial. Stella, and Fiona and Sharon referred to communication with others from shared socio-
linguistic backgrounds as easier than communication where socio-linguistic backgrounds are not shared. Sharon (an international student from Taiwan), described a sense of ease interacting with other “Asian” students, and suggested that for her, “look[ing] similar” made it easier to “get along” (interview 1/1, 2006). Violet, who noted the tendency of her fellow international Malaysian students to privilege co-national friendships, described a sense of shared national affiliation as making interactions more “comfortable” (interview 2/2, 2006). Conversely, women spoke about differences between people as a source of unease, curiosity, bewilderment, or distance. Stella spoke about socio-linguistic differences as limiting rapport and Fiona, as limiting one’s ability to share a joke and engage in “small talk”. Miho and Arui referred to different expectations of friendship; Yukiko, to different expectations of household behaviour; and Frances, to different understandings of host and guest roles. ‘Real’ and perceived differences and commonalities of many kinds raised practical issues, both for women in my project, and in terms of the project itself.

The second meaning of ‘identity’ discussed in Chapter Four was as discursive, unstable, and “always ‘in process’” (Hall, 1996, p. 2). It is this second meaning that is primarily my focus in this chapter. Although, as Hall argues, identification is a discursive process that is slippery and unstable, particular identities may be more or less central to the functioning of a given social context, and as such, carry more or less discursive “force” within them (Palumbo-Liu, 2002, p. 771). Nineteen of the twenty women that I interviewed constructed New Zealand-ness (or “Kiwi”-ness) as an unmarked or sometimes, explicitly ‘white’ identification,² and other identifications (Chinese, Indian, Asian, Japanese, international, foreign etc) as marked categories outside New Zealand-ness. These women included seven international and nine New Zealand students, and three women interviewed as international students’ partners. That a homogenising and at times, explicitly Eurocentric view of New Zealand-ness was revealed in women’s interview accounts is hardly surprising, given that my interview questions were also

¹ I discuss this further in Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten.

² I use scare quotes here in recognition that although associated with historical and ongoing social privilege in New Zealand (Mohamam, 1998; Spoonley, 1993), ‘whiteness’, like all identifications/categorisations, is (and has always been) fundamentally unstable (Brooking and Rabel, 1995; Pearson, 1996, see Chapter Two). I provide examples that illustrate this point later in the chapter.
peppered with international/local, us/them, New Zealander/other distinctions, and some of my questions elicited women’s opinions specifically through the use of difference. While the construction of New Zealand-ness as a homogenous, oppositional category to culturally different/international otherness was woven throughout our interviews, fifteen of the nineteen women (above) also explicitly contested this. Women identified themselves and/or others as both inside and outside New Zealand-ness (Hall, 1996), while also troubling an inside/outside binary. Although women referred to particular identifications as if natural, they also problematised and resisted static and simplistic notions of nationhood, otherness, and difference.

Three interview conversations are useful for illustrating both the instability and the discursive force of a view of New Zealanders as homogenous and/or white. These were with Alexis (a Pākehā New Zealand student), Violet, and Sharon (international students from Malaysia and Taiwan respectively). Although our conversations were not exceptional, they are included here because of the clarity with which they reveal contradiction: both the use and contestation of forceful (homogenising) constructions of New Zealand-ness. I also include them because as conversations with New Zealand and international students, they reveal instructive parallels and differences.

Alexis, a first-generation New Zealander whose parents had immigrated to New Zealand from Western Europe, was explicitly critical of New Zealanders identifying “international people” as unwanted outsiders:

New Zealand is very conservative, not well-travelled, not used to different cultures... Every week, somebody makes a comment to me about... international people.... You know ‘taking our jobs’, ‘taking over’, ‘eating weird things’ (postgraduate NZ Pākehā student, interview 1/2, 2005).  

While contesting New Zealanders’ “conservat[sm]”, Alexis also mirrored the conflation of international-ness, otherness, and difference evident in the ‘Agenda’. Later in the interview, her use of difference in relation to some “others” was much more explicit.

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3 For example, “what experiences have you had interacting with international students or people from countries other than New Zealand?" and “has your involvement in Women Across Cultures influenced how you think about New Zealanders?” (see Appendix VI).

4 My use of abbreviations in relation to interview excerpts is explained on Table 1 (page 82).
Here she reflects on interactions between New Zealand and international students on campus:

I know that there are certain countries that are groovier than others, like I can see that Japanese students are slightly groovier than Chinese in the way they dress,... and probably are better at interacting with Kiwi students, and poor old Chinese students, they are lovely but they are so different.

Alexis positioned both Japanese-ness and Chinese-ness as to a greater or lesser extent outside New Zealand-ness, and (in contrast with her earlier portrayal of New Zealanders’ intercultural ineptness), as more or less adept at social interaction. In particular, Alexis positioned Chinese students as “so different”; objects of pity that lack both (acceptable) dress sense and skillfulness in social interaction. New Zealanders on the other hand, remained an unmarked (well-dressed?) “same”.

Violet and Sharon also used marked and unmarked categories to distinguish between New Zealanders and others, but for them, white New Zealand-ness functioned as an imagined “ideal” (Hall, 1996, p. 2). Both women described meeting “Kiwi people” as a central motivation in coming to New Zealand, and a lack of “Kiwi friends” as a source of disappointment and frustration. First Violet:

I mean coming all the way from Malaysia,... one of the things is.. you really want to meet Kiwi people, get into their culture or something. And.. you find here.. it’s not that easy to get into.. these people’s group (undergraduate international FFPS from Malaysia, interview 1/2, 2005).

And Sharon:

Before I came here the information I can get is all from the TV series, the movies,... It was ‘Wow it’s so cool to study in the foreign school and then you will hang out with... the [local] people there’. But it’s totally different (undergraduate international EXCS from Taiwan, interview 1/1, 2005).

Elsewhere in their accounts, Sharon and Violet revealed more explicitly how they imagined New Zealand-ness. Here Violet expresses her dismay when the New Zealanders she was matched with in a local hospitality programme did not match her idealised notion of New Zealand-ness:

They advertise it as....we’ll get you into like a Kiwi friend or family.... but this Kiwi is not the kind of Kiwi that we are thinking. What we are thinking is like, they are born here, ... maybe a few generations here. But the Kiwi that they [matched us with], is those that have a PR... all the Kiwi that there is is like Chinese Thai... Singapore Chinese, Indonesian Chinese. It was like...all the Chinese!

5 Permanent Residency visa status.
For Violet, Chinese, Singaporean, Indonesian and Thai New Zealanders did not qualify as (desirable) “Kiwi” friends, whether because of their ethnicity or their “new-ness” to New Zealand. Similarly, Sharon positioned Asian-ness outside New Zealand-ness, describing the “very obvious” separation between “Asian” and “New Zealand” students in her Hall of Residence as a “natural” consequence of students’ similar/different experiences, shared/disparate backgrounds and experiences of being local/international:

I still hang out with Asian people more, like in the students’ hall... probably it’s because [of] the cultures or ... it’s easier to... get along or to talk to the Asian people where you think they look quite similar to you with the yellow skin, black hair or... you have the similar background, like,...international students here.

When I asked Sharon if any of her Asian friends were in fact New Zealanders, she admitted that some of her friends were “Kiwi-born Asians” and/or “Kiwi-born Chinese”. In contrast with her earlier statement, Sharon did have New Zealand friends; but, like Violet, she did not consider them “really...[as] Kiwi friends”.

6.3 Encountering and contesting forceful identifications

In Chapter Two I discussed how ‘Agenda’ constructs internationalised education as fostering New Zealanders’ strengthened sense of national identity as well as their multicultural and multilingual skilfulness and openness to others (see Ministry of Education, 2007a). Five women in my project however, highlighted how a sense of national identity if exclusive or predicated on assumptions of New Zealanders’ sameness might instead foster suspicion towards and the exclusion of some international students and some New Zealanders. For these women, the conflation of international-ness with racialised otherness and New Zealand-ness with homogeneity and/or whiteness was played out not just at a discursive level but also at times, through day-to-day erasure, hostility and/or physical harassment. Stella, Yukiko, and Frances described such encounters using the words “racism” or “discrimination”. Roja and Rose did not use these words, but described the encounters and their feelings in response. Stella, Yukiko and Roja explicitly linked their negative encounters with their visible otherness in New Zealand, whereas Frances drew a connection between New Zealand-ness and whiteness elsewhere in the interview so that the link was implicit rather than explicit. Rose, who looked white, linked the harassment she experienced with her appearance as a “Muslim”
woman. In all five cases, the link between negative treatment and being positioned as marked or different to white/European-looking New Zealand-ness was unmistakably clear.

**Erasure**

Lugones (2006, p. 78) suggests that domination is enacted through the construction of some people as “invisible, not within the bounds of normalcy...as inferior, or as threatening”. Stella, Yukiko, and Roja described occasions in New Zealand when they were “first seen (racialised)” by (other) New Zealanders, “and then not seen (ignored)” (Diangelo, 2006, p. 1993). Stella, who had migrated from South Korea to New Zealand, described how she was often ignored by shop assistants and other service workers:

I’m self-conscious about... racism ....Some people might just think this ... just nothing but... when I just ... go shopping, in clothing shops or cafes, sometimes I met very rude... serv[ice] people, then just straight away in my mind, ok because of my... skin colour or lack of ...language that’s the things I think of at first,... but you shouldn’t think in that way because it could be just that rude person's problem, maybe that person had a bad day or sick that day, but ... this thought... started when I came to New Zealand, so it’s just carried on (undergraduate NZ student from Korea, interview 2/2, 2006).

Stella recognised that other “socially acceptable” explanations might exist for service workers ignoring her (Scheurich and Young, 1997, p. 5), including their ‘rudeness’, illness or unhappiness. She nevertheless read their behaviour as indicative of “racism”, explaining how her analysis was reinforced by service workers’ contrasting behaviour towards her “European” (Pākehā) husband:

I can feel those things very directly because my husband is a European who can speak English as his native language. Wherever we go the service people.....doesn’t treat me as the same as [my husband]... Sometimes when we walk in the shop... I ask some questions first, then the people answer to [my husband], not looking at me....Very many, many, many times happened.

Notably, although frustrated with being repeatedly ignored by staff when shopping, Stella was no passive victim. In the statement above, she highlights her active attempts to initiate conversation and thereby to construct herself not as invisible or foreign but as a visible, active and competent communicator in the exchange. Stella’s identity was evidently “produced well in advance of the interpersonal encounter” however (Palumbo-

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6 Specifically her use of a hijab (head scarf).
Liu, 2002, p. 767). She was frequently ignored by service workers, despite her efforts to resist being identified as not belonging, or invisible.

In contrast with current policy goals for international students (enrichment, welcome, integration, see Ministry of Education, 2007a) Yukiko, an international full-fee paying student from Japan, alluded to her experience of being treated as if invisible by New Zealand students during her two years in a New Zealand high school. Echoing Stella’s comments above, she also recalled a fellow Japanese international student’s description of being treated “like air” by “white” New Zealand students in a tertiary classroom. Yukiko highlighted how exclusion through erasure is doubly forceful: both clearly evident and easily denied (see Doane, 2006). Her statement, “New Zealanders would not think they are.. racist” juxtaposed sharply against, “We sometimes really get hurt…. I am pretty sure many, the majority of international students” (interview 2/2, 2006).

Roja, who had initially come to New Zealand as a full-fee paying international student from India, suspected that her marked difference was a factor precluding her ability to gain employment after graduating and becoming a permanent resident. Echoing Yukiko, she expressed frustration at the impossibility of proving her suspicion, and described how a “white” woman at a local council meeting had expressed outright denial when Roja attempted to raise the issue of employer racism. Roja recalled her response:

I laughed and said ‘look, it’s a little bit difference between you and me, the colour. See when I walk,...they can see that I’m Indian, it’s all over written in my body, but if you walk,... unless you open your mouth for five minutes they wouldn’t know you are a Spanish, so that is a little bit different.’ And she argued ‘no, no, no we both same colour’ and I said ’no, then something very wrong with you!’

In her statement above, Roja ridiculed the privileged assertion that “race [doesn’t] ‘matter’” in New Zealand (Doane, 2006, p. 259), noting the inescapability of her embodied ‘difference’ as an Indian woman (see Ang, 2003). Roja highlighted how although also a migrant, the other woman’s whiteness afforded her the privilege of remaining (or at least passing as) unmarked and belonging (Mohanram, 1998).

Notably, the “Agenda” (see Chapter Two) acknowledges that employer attitudes may be a factor limiting job opportunities for both international graduates and skilled migrants in New Zealand (see Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 20).
Harassment and abuse

Rose, Frances, Yukiko, and Stella were sometimes identified as outsiders in New Zealand through clearly targeted verbal and/or physical abuse. All four women recalled “discursively violent” encounters (Collins, 2006, p. 230); occasions when they were forcibly excluded through others’ words and/or actions (in Stella’s case, despite being a New Zealand student). Rose, an international student’s partner and former full-fee paying student from the Gulf region,8 recalled three separate occasions when passing young people had called her names such as “sister of Bin Laden”. Frances, an international exchange student from the PRC, was told by drunken students, to “go back to China”; and Yukiko was sworn at by New Zealand students in her tertiary institution. Like Rose, both Frances and Yukiko described such exchanges as occurring multiple times. Stella described an occasion when her marked positionality was clearly articulated by a young woman on her city’s main street:

We were walking, and there were a bunch of young people in the car and ... one girl shouted something......she was pointing at some direction and was saying ‘airport is that way’. And the moment I just understood what happened.... it was like ‘oh my god, what am I doing in this country.... why did I come here?’ It was so sad (interview 2/2, 2006).

Although a New Zealand student and permanent resident, on this occasion, Stella was identified as a marked outsider who did not belong.

Rose and Yukiko recalled occasions when they and fellow international students had encountered racially-targeted violence that was not just discursive but physical. Both women described having water thrown at them, and Yukiko discussed how New Zealand students at senior secondary school had regularly kicked and tripped Japanese international students. Yukiko also described an occasion when New Zealand students had approached and spat in her (Japanese) friend’s face. For Roja, Stella, Yukiko, Rose, and Frances, others’ strong sense of “national identity” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 9) was not experienced as “openness, interest, and a positive attitude towards... differences” (p. 13), but through erasure, exclusion and/or harassment.

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8 Rose’s ‘home’ country is not identified in order to protect her anonymity (see Chapter Five).
6.4 Destabilising New Zealand-ness, dominance and difference

Although fixed notions of New Zealand-ness were encountered by some women in decidedly forceful ways (see above), some women’s accounts also destabilised straightforward notions of nationhood, domination and difference. Deanna, Laura, and Jillian showed how European-ness and whiteness are like all categories, unstable bases for identification. Deanna, an international (European) student from Switzerland, described herself as feeling “foreign” in New Zealand. She also contested the use of European-ness as a homogenising descriptor:

I think Kiwis know a lot about the UK, about the States, and then as well maybe other English speaking countries, I mean like Canada or maybe South Africa, Australia of course... but Europe, like the rest of Europe is just Europe. I mean people here talk about Europe... instead of Italy or Germany, and I don’t know, I think it’s one of those things that they don’t know so much about Switzerland (international PhD student from Switzerland, interview 2/2, 2006, emphasis added).

Deanna’s statement suggests a need for caution when associating European-ness with domination or privilege, for example, as indicated in the term ‘Eurocentric’. To Deanna, European-ness as a basis for identification glosses over multiple incommensurable histories, understandings, and discourses.

Similarly, Jillian and Laura noted the instability of whiteness as a basis for identification in New Zealand. Jillian, a white New Zealand student who had moved here from the USA six months prior to our interview, described how she regularly encountered thinly veiled, racialised stereotypes that positioned some Americans as outside acceptable whiteness while affirming her acceptability: “I hear this a lot, ‘you’re a nice American’” (interview 1/1, 2006). Similarly, Laura, who had been born in the USA and grown up in four different countries, described intentionally identifying herself as not-American in New Zealand in order to avoid being identified through the use of negative stereotypes:

Since moving to New Zealand I had to sort of think about what culture I wanted to be a part of and I never really thought of myself as like a Pacific Islander before; that was just the place where I lived. But since starting university here I’ve actually found that I tend to have more in common with the Pacific Island students and so I sort of really worked on that part of my identity and, like getting involved in dance and everything, so I would usually say to people, because I wouldn’t want to be identified as an American because of like all the negative stereotypes people have and so I’d normally say well I grew up in Fiji. That would just be my response (interview 1/2, 2005).9

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9 Read alongside Raja’s earlier comment concerning the inescapability of Indian-ness in New Zealand, Laura’s ability to choose how to identify herself can be read as revealing a position of relative (unmarked)
Deanna, Jillian and Laura illustrated how European-ness and whiteness are like all identities, “never unified... never singular, but constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices, and positions” (Hall, 1996, p. 4). For Deanna, such discourses, practices, and positions included English language hegemony in New Zealand, and homogenising discourses about Europe. For Jillian and Laura, they included backlash to perceived American "cultural imperialism" (Kenway and Bullen, 2003, p. 12).

Frances, Miho and Laura also disrupted simplistic notions of dominance and otherness. For them, the use of difference was not (only) felt in relation to domination, but also as a condition of possibility (see Brooks, 2004; Davies, 2006). Although Frances disliked being forcibly constructed as different through drunken students’ remarks (see previous section), both she and Miho described being ‘different’ in New Zealand as an opportunity for reinvention and self-discovery away from familiar others’ expectations and preconceptions. Here Frances explains:

F: I have such [an] opportunity to come to study here, to experience some different cultures and different classes and to find another side of myself....
V: .... when you say find a different side of yourself, could you just talk about that a little bit more? Because I’m really interested in that comment..
F: ...Like... in China you’re used to that environment, you know,... at least for Asian people... you are familiar with the environment and you are familiar with all the people. So sometimes you... go in the same ways as them, even if you don’t know whether that’s the way you want to be. Whereas if you [are] in a totally different environment, no one knows you,... so you don’t need to care about how other people see you, observe how you act, so you can do whatever you like, with total freedom. And you don’t need to worry about the other people’s comment of you and what they are doing (undergraduate international EXCS from the PRC, interview 1/1, 2006).

Miho noted two other ways in which she enjoyed being a “foreigner” in New Zealand: first, because she found shared foreign-ness to be a point of commonality with others and a basis for new friendships; and second, because her Japanese-ness proved attractive to New Zealanders interested in Japan. Miho stated that by studying in New Zealand she had “[got] to know about Asian cultures more” (international FFPS from Japan, interview...
Laura contrasted the freedom she felt as a white woman living in Fiji with the constraint she felt as a white woman living in New Zealand and the USA:

L [Discussing being marked as ‘different’ in Fiji] My experience has been that when I’m there, I feel accepted as part of the community, but I can still do things that in their eyes would seem odd, and if say I was a Fijian girl... going out for walks by myself...they’d think I was sick or something [laughter], whereas they can kind of understand... you know, Europeans are different, so they do make allowances.

V So being different in Fiji kind of gives you a certain freedom because you look different.

L It does yes.

V ... and they know you as different?

L It does, yeah... and that’s the freedom that I don’t feel so much here or in the States where I do look like everyone else and so there are certain things I’m expected to do or certain values I’m expected to have, even if I don’t have those (postgraduate NZ student from Fiji/USA, interview 2/2, 2006).

Frances, Miho and Laura highlighted the duality of preconceived identifications or ‘stereotypes’ (Lugones, 1987; Palumbo-Liu, 2002), how they not only involve assumptions of difference but also assumptions of sameness that can be equally regulatory in their function (Davies, 2006; Hall, 1996). Frances and Laura described as constraining being read as belonging or not different. They explained that as people assumed to be ‘insiders’ in the PRC (Frances) and New Zealand (Laura) they were expected to perform particular behaviours and hold particular aspirations whether or not they wanted to. In contrast, being positioned as other or different (for Frances in New Zealand, and Laura in Fiji) was in some respects freeing.

6.5 Exercising double vision

Some women’s accounts revealed oppositional constructions of themselves, others and internationalised education in New Zealand: either inverting us/them, local/international, New Zealander/other, same/different distinctions; or destabilising them altogether. Lugones (2006, pp. 78-79) describes the use of oppositional constructions as a way of exercising “double vision”: disrupting dominating (or disappointing) realities in order to avoid being “consumed by” them (p. 79, also see Lugones, 1987).

\[11\] I refer here to Violet’s disappointment at not meeting (her ideal) “Kiwis” in the hospitality programme.
Two women referred to New Zealanders who had significantly shaped their study or living experiences in negative ways and whose behaviour they had been relatively powerless to change. Deanna recalled her supervisor’s insistence that she take a 100-level English paper alongside her PhD study despite having already met university English-language admission criteria. Yukiko referred to how “Kiwi” flatmates had made her home life unpleasant and uncomfortable. I read both women as exercising double vision in their construction of New Zealanders as lacking. Reflecting on her supervisor’s demands Deanna stated that “a lot of Kiwis... are ignorant about language” (interview 2/2, 2006). Recalling her flatmates behaviour, Yukiko remarked that New Zealanders are “careless” people who she would not choose to live with again in future. Yukiko also repeated a (Japanese) friend’s rather more disparaging description: “Kiwis are really country people .... they are like animals, they walk with no shoes, you know barefoot [laughter], so dirty” (interview 2/2, 2006).

To Lugones (1987, 2006) the ability to see double is not just a survival strategy, however, but also an optimal approach to perceiving or interacting with others. I read Violet and Arui as using this kind of double vision in their generous explanations for some New Zealanders’ “carelessness” (Violet) and “coolness” (Arui). Referring to the lack of (non-Asian) New Zealanders involved in a local hospitality programme, Violet said: “It’s hard to... get the Kiwi who have no experience to do this sort of work, because they don’t see the need” (interview 1/2, 2005). She indicated that some New Zealanders’ lack of interest in “foreigners” is understandable since they have never experienced being “foreign”. Similarly Arui (a New Zealand student from the PRC) explained that she had learnt to rationalise some New Zealanders’ “coolness” towards her in terms of their busyness. When I asked what advice she would give another newcomer to New Zealand, Arui highlighted the importance of clinging to positive oppositional constructions (or explanations) as an active coping strategy (Lugones, 2006). She said: “Never give up. Always have best hope. Always be nice to others…. always believe everybody’s nice to you” (interview 1/1, 2006).

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12 I discuss Deanna’s reflections on languages, learning and teaching in Chapter Eight.
Violet, Deanna, Arui, and Jillian revealed how double vision as an optimal strategy for interacting with others involves “an emotional, perceptual and cognitive shift in the personal response to ‘otherness’” (Haigh, 2002, p. 54). Violet and Deanna spoke of viewing foreigners in their ‘home’ countries differently as a result of having been foreign in New Zealand. Deanna said: “I think it can help me to understand other foreigners and sometimes I think I can say to Swiss ‘hey it’s not that easy’” (interview 2/2, 2006). And Violet:

After I go through all this thing I see the need, and maybe... there’s someone when I go back to Malaysia and someone need some help I’ll be really glad to help you know, but before I experienced I was like, ‘You choose to come here... you should be alright!’ ‘What’s the matter with you, it’s like just different!’ [Laughing] (interview 1/2, 2005).

Similarly, Arui remarked that some people’s day-to-day kindness to her in New Zealand had led her to see ‘strangers’ in the PRC in a new way:

A When I come back from here I feel I should help somebody.... I remember clearly when I come back about a few days I saw very old lady carry a bag. I really I want to go to help her... but before I never think about it.
V Ahh why do you think that difference?
A Because when... you get so much help, everybody’s so nice you feel so touched and you also want to give some help, and do something for others, because when you feel happy, it’s other bodies, others give to you, and... you really appreciate it but you cannot give it back because they’re just a stranger, they don’t care, they just make you happy, so when you feel this you also want to make others happy... when they’re unhappy you really want them happy, yeah nothing else (interview 1/1, 2006).

Jillian described the ‘shift’ she had undergone in terms of a learned ability to “see grey” (interview 1/1, 2006), to recognise us/them distinctions that divide people while also troubling them:

I think the older I get I see more grey... When I was younger things used to be black and white and now I think there’s some great things about the States and there’s also great things about New Zealand and... they don’t really incringe upon each other.... but I can’t tell you at 18 that I was looking at the grey. I was like ‘why isn’t this the way it should be?’ And I still do that to a certain degree, you want the easy way out ... I know what it’s like to be at college with your group of friends and you’re comfortable with that. And ‘why do we need new people? This group’s great.’ (postgraduate NZ student from the USA, interview 1/1, 2006).

Jillian described her ability to “see more grey” as a result of having lived and studied in countries in which she was more or less foreign and more or less comfortable (Lugones, 1987). Jillian was now more conscious both of her own preferences for comfort and the discomfort of being a newcomer or outsider in a social world. She was also open to blurring clear-cut self/other, same/different distinctions.
Yukiko alluded to occasions when her use of double vision allowed her to exceed the “impossible doubleness of subjection” (Davies, 2006, p. 428), to construct herself and others outside the terms of a local/international, New Zealand/other binary distinction. Yukiko described how she learnt to recognise some New Zealand students’ disinterest or hostility as indicating their “fear” of her unfamiliarity. Through recognising New Zealand students’ fear, Yukiko was able to mentally disrupt the social segregation between them and Japanese international students: “They got scared of course, they just hid[ing] their fear... so the same as us, yeah, same as me I guess” (interview 1/2, 2005). Yukiko described a technique for building friendships with New Zealand students that she developed on the basis of her new insights:

This is how I actually established friendships with some of New Zealand students.... I attack them when they are one! [laughs] ... They cannot ignore it. They cannot make an excuse... I just see them, they’re sitting... just by themselves. Attack them now! [laughter].... In this way I really made lots of valuable friendships (interview 2/2, 2006).

By recognising New Zealanders as fearful (rather than dominant) and positioning herself as a fearless initiator of conversation (rather than as simply dominated), Yukiko was able to alter the terms of an exchange. First, she was able to confront the reciprocal fear that resulted in us/them segregation. Second, by initiating interaction with New Zealand students when they were alone, she made the possibility of racist rejection “socially [un]acceptable” (Scheurich and Young, 1997, p. 5).

Notably, Yukiko also highlighted how although an active, intentional way of contesting dominant/dominating realities, double vision “cannot [necessarily] be idealised as pure opposition to the order it opposes” (Loomba, 2003, p. 257). Yukiko recalled a conversation with a fellow international student who was experiencing day-to-day erasure and harassment in a New Zealand higher education classroom:

Y I said, ‘actually Kiwi’s, they are more close than international students, yeah, so they have more fear than us. That’s why if we break our fears...they will see something different’.
V And what did she say?
Y It’s... too hard... they can understand it but their kind of emotion doesn’t allow [them] to listen and implement that (interview 2/2, 2006).

For Yukiko’s friend, the emotional pain of being subjected to domination in a classroom context precluded the possibility of adopting Yukiko’s strategy, or shifting the terms of her interaction with New Zealand students.
6.6 Some implications

The interview accounts considered in this chapter reveal both the force and the instability of a view of New Zealanders as homogenous and/or white, and ‘others’ as outside nationhood. The forcefulness of this view was revealed in two ways; first at a discursive level, in women’s references to New Zealand-ness as an unmarked (or white) identification and to others as marked, different or as not belonging. It was also revealed in the “material politics” of women’s everyday lives (Mohanty, 1991a, p. 11), through erasure, harassment or violence. For some women (such as Roja and Stella), a Eurocentric construction of nationhood was doubly forceful; not only because it was harmful, but also because of its impossibility to name and contest. Alternatively, three accounts also revealed the instability of Eurocentricity. Deanna problematised (homogenised) European-ness as a basis for identification (and analysis); and Jillian and Laura highlighted how some forms of whiteness are less acceptable than others in New Zealand.

For some women, double vision emerged as a creative strategy for coping with and/or subverting the force of discursive identifications. It involved a degree of self-reflexivity that was learned through travelling between and across social worlds (Lugones, 1987), being subjected to and through dominant assumptions (Davies, 2006), and in Arui’s case, experiencing unexpected kindness from strangers. In addition, for some women, the ability to exercise double vision involved a learned openness to others or otherness, and to new ways of seeing and being. In drawing conclusions from the accounts here, it is important not to downplay the harm associated with static notions of nationhood on the one hand, or to overstate their stability on the other. With Rhee (2006, p. 609), I “find no pure site of subversion, oppression [or] liberation” in women’s accounts, “but necessary engagements with particular identifications, histories and politics”.

The data in this chapter suggests that while laudable, fostering understanding, respect, and connection between people may be problematic policy aims, given the concurrent emphasis on internationalisation as a way of strengthening New Zealanders’ sense of “national identity” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 9). National identity if predicated on sameness or homogeneity rests on the construction of a “constitutive
outside” (Hall, 1996, p. 3); the positioning of some people as outsiders to nationhood. For some women, being constructed in New Zealand as marked outsiders reinforced us/them, New Zealand/international divisions; and resulted in disappointment, frustration, and pain. Ironically, the openness to others and understanding that are promised in stated policy outcomes for New Zealand students (Ministry of Education, 2007a) characterised women’s necessarily creative responses when marked as ‘other’ in New Zealand.

In terms of my first research question, women’s accounts in this chapter clearly defy the use of an international/local distinction. Eurocentric notions of nationhood, otherness and difference functioned as a basis for identification for both ‘international’ and ‘New Zealand’ women; both through structuring our interview conversations and shaping women’s daily encounters. Also, ‘international’ and ‘New Zealand’ women alike described moments when they contested or resisted their identification as (invisible/different) outsiders in New Zealand. Simultaneously, women’s accounts also reveal the material implications of conflating international-ness with marked difference and local-ness (New Zealand-ness) with unmarked sameness. Although problematic, such identifications have considerable discursive and material force as a way of structuring human interactions.

Palumbo-Liu (2002) suggests that disrupting static assumptions of sameness and difference, requires that we consider the specific institutional practices that reproduce them. Straightforward representations of some students in terms of their difference for example, and of New Zealanders as if homogenous (see Deloitte, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2007a; Ward and Masgoret, 2004, Chapters Two and Three), may do more to sustain discourses that ‘other’ than to help us foster “understand[ing]” and “respect” between people (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 9).

In terms of my second research question, I see women’s use of double vision as suggesting a way forward, firstly as a “theoretico-practical” approach to research, policy and practice (Lugones, 2003, p. ix), and secondly, as an optimal approach to social interaction (1987, 2006). As a theoretico-practical approach, double vision requires attention to dominant and oppositional readings of human social life (Lugones, 2006), to both the force and the instability of dominant identifications; and to the dangers of perpetuating “monolithic and monologic discourse[s]” about nationhood, international or
New Zealand students, and difference in New Zealand (Rhee, 2006, p. 609). It also demands a refusal of deficit discourses, and instead, a commitment to recognising and affirming at all levels the creativity and skilfulness necessary for surviving and thriving when subjected to forceful (dominant) identifications (Lugones, 1987). In saying this I am not advocating for downplaying the harm caused by domination, or by discourses through which some people are constructed as different or outsiders. Recognition and affirmation are not the same as idealisation.

Double vision as a theoretico-practical approach requires the development of policy that recognises cultural and other forms of diversity as integral to both 'national' and 'internationalised' teaching and learning contexts, and affirms multicultural and multilingual skilfulness as central to good pedagogy rather than an add-on for staff responsible for “dealing with international students” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 21). The accounts in section 6.2 suggest a need to disrupt at all levels a projected image of New Zealand-ness as static and homogenous; for example, in media and print representations (see Collins, 2006; Ho et al., 2007), and through pedagogical approaches that foster a differentiated understanding of nationhood13 (see Bishop, 2005, for a discussion of this in relation to Māori). Violet and Sharon’s accounts suggest a need to reconsider how New Zealanders are portrayed in marketing material, including websites and other information sources for prospective international students and new migrants.

At an interpersonal level the possibility of disrupting us/them distinctions relies partially on a learned openness to “the possibility of both commonalities and differences” between people without prejudging either (Madge et al., 2009, p. 43). How policy and practice in higher education might destabilise rather than reinscribe static notions of self and other (or nationhood and international-ness) and foster openness to seeing oneself and others differently is a crucial question. I consider this further in the following chapter in relation to the enrolment of full-fee paying international students, and their construction in New Zealand as a source of revenue.

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13 In Chapter Eight, I take up this point in relation to teaching and learning in higher education.
Chapter 7 – Problematising ‘export education’: commodification, contestation and resistance in women’s interview accounts

7.1 Introduction

Revenue generation is a primary motivating factor for the internationalisation of education in New Zealand as in many other countries (Haigh, 2002). New Zealand’s ‘International Education Agenda’ exemplifies this, in its emphasis on internationalised education as central not only to strengthening New Zealanders’ sense of national identity, but also to New Zealand’s economic transformation (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 9).

Within global ‘knowledge economy’ discourses all students are, arguably, “big business” (Haigh, 2002, p. 50); desirable consumers and commodities\(^1\) (see Butcher, 2003; Codd, 2002). Full-fee paying international students, however, as the richest source of education export earnings are clearly constructed as ‘bigger business’ than others (for example, see Ministry of Education, 2007a).

In my study, five of the seven women who were or had earlier been full-fee paying international students described being constructed as a source of revenue within an education ‘marketplace’, actively constructing themselves as consumers or a source of revenue while studying in New Zealand, and resisting being constructed in this way. Two of the five women reflected on moments in which their positioning as a wanted source of revenue was juxtaposed against a sense of also being identified as an unwanted outsider. One New Zealand student described occasions when her Asian-ness was conflated with full-fee paying international enrolment status, and she was wrongly identified as both an outsider and a source of revenue.

This chapter addresses my first research question by considering six women’s interview accounts in relation to the construction of full-fee paying international students as a primary source of revenue. The chapter has three aims. The first is to highlight (as in the previous chapter) how the policy contradictions noted in Chapter Two may be played

\(^1\) Constructed in terms of their commercial value.
out for some students in material ways. The second is to problematise taken-for-granted understandings in New Zealand of internationalised education as an export industry (Ministry of Education, 2001, 2007a). The third is to look for possibilities in women’s accounts as to how internationalised education might be re-imagined (Larner, 1998b; Robertson, 2006; Young, 2000).

The six women in this chapter spoke during research interviews about fees or about being identified by others in relation to their fee paying status (or in Stella’s case, presumed fee paying status). Five were international full-fee paying students: Fiona, Nikki, Yukiko, Roja, and Rose. When interviewed, Fiona and Nikki had come to New Zealand as full-fee paying international students from Norway; Fiona to study for her Masters degree, and Nikki, to study at undergraduate level. Yukiko was a full-fee paying postgraduate student from Japan, and Rose (an international student’s partner from the Gulf region) had recently completed an eighteen month course as a full-fee paying international student in another New Zealand city. Roja, a New Zealand student, had initially come to New Zealand from India as a full-fee paying international student. The New Zealand student included is Stella, who had emigrated from South Korea three and a half years prior to the beginning of the project.

The chapter is organised into three sections. The first (section 7.2) discusses how Fiona, Rose and Nikki described being constructed, constructing themselves and resisting being constructed in terms of their dollar value. Section 7.3 considers how Yukiko, Roja, and Stella spoke about being jointly commodified and racialised; constructed both as a (wanted) source of revenue and as unwanted outsiders (see Collins, 2006). The final section of the chapter (7.4) revisits current policy in the light of the women’s interview accounts; highlighting some social consequences of framing internationalised education in ‘market’ terms, and some possibilities for framing it differently.

7.2 Being constructed as a source of revenue
Fiona, Rose and Nikki spoke with frustration about institutional practices that reinforced their positioning as consumers and commodities in New Zealand educational institutions. These women were not simply victims of commodifying discourses or of institutional power however, since each had freely chosen to study in New Zealand, desiring
particular educational ‘goods’ for their own personal and professional benefit. Both Fiona and Rose also actively confronted educational institutions’ staff in relation to fees. Nikki, who decided that her tertiary study in New Zealand was not “worth it”, withdrew from her course of study. Although at times during our interviews all three women rejected a market view of education outright, at other times, they did so by simultaneously taking up a consumer identity; acting or speaking as paying customers “within/against” institutional practices (Lather, 2006a, p. 41).

Contesting fees and the use of fees
Fiona referred to being constructed as a source of revenue in her son’s primary school. As a full-fee paying international student and the mother of a school-aged child, she was required to pay full international fees for both her own and her son’s studies. Fiona described an occasion when she received an angry letter from her son’s school principal after having missed a fee payment deadline by one day. Since prior to this occasion, Fiona had consistently paid her son’s fees on time and without question, she was surprised and upset by the tone of the letter and decided to question the school principal about it:

I went to the school and I was pretty angry about this letter, and I said ‘You know, what right do you have in sending me a letter like this, when we’re one day late in payment? I mean look how much we’re paying!’ (postgraduate international FFPS from Norway/Canada, interview 1/1, 2005)

Fiona explained that on the day the principal’s letter had arrived, she also received a second letter requesting an additional $100 for school activity fees and stationery. Given that she was paying full international fees for her son’s tuition ($8,500), Fiona was annoyed to receive another demand for fees. Here Fiona recalls the school principal’s response to her question (above), and to her request for an explanation concerning the use of her son’s fees given that they were also requesting additional monies:

First he was like, ‘well about the letter,’ he said ‘by not paying this you’re asking us to break the law, you’re asking us to do something illegal because... it’s illegal to have [child’s name] in school if he hasn’t paid his tuition up to date’,... and then I got pretty angry and I said, ... ‘well, how much does it cost... to have one New Zealander in school?’ I said ‘we’re paying

2 Since April 2005, the children of international doctoral students have been permitted ‘free’ access to primary and secondary education in New Zealand. All other dependents of international tertiary students are required to pay full international student fees.
$8,500, that’s just an insane amount!’... and the principal of the school looked at me, ... he’s been a principal for many years... so he should know how much it costs to have a New Zealander in school, and he looked at me straight in the eye and said he didn’t know, that this was... not part of his job, and I just... ‘what do you mean you don’t know?!’ ..... And then he said to me, ‘okay well, I’ll tell you what, you don’t have to pay the extra hundred dollars’.

While frustrated at having to pay full-fees for her son’s so-called ‘public’ education, Fiona was primarily concerned about two issues: first, the discrepancy between the fees charged for her son’s education and fees charged to New Zealand students; and second, the principal’s failure to be transparent about the use of her son’s fees. Fiona saw primary school education as a human entitlement, not a business activity, and was upset at the revelation that her son’s fees were not simply a way of recovering costs but also a source of profit for the school. Ironically, in contesting the marketisation of her son’s primary school education, Fiona might also be read as taking up a ‘consumer’ identity. She expressed anger at the principal’s apparent lack of knowledge about the education industry in which he was a participating actor, and refusing to see the marketisation of education as a “process without a subject or agent” (Robertson, 2006, p. 305), insisted on holding him to account. As an angry consumer, Fiona was able to exercise some power, causing the principal to drop his request for additional fees. Fiona found this achievement no cause for celebration, but (like the school principal) expressed unease about her positioning within the “export education” industry (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 2). She commented ruefully, “I just kind of left feeling like I was a money machine and actually I should have a right to make the rules practically at the school ‘cause I pay so much!”

Rose was not in a position to ‘make the rules’ at her (former) New Zealand university, but like Fiona, she resisted attempts to extract extra fees from her with some success. An experienced professional in her ‘home’ country, Rose was surprised when she arrived at the university to be confronted with a request for $12,000 in excess of the $17,000 indicated on pre-arrival information:

It was a big shock for me because we planned for it, I mean the money, because I’m not sponsored, my husband is paying for me, and ... we came here according to our plan and 17,000, we took a loan because of that, and now they’re telling me 29. I tried to find out from the paper that they gave me is written, they said ‘No you understand wrong’. How come I understand wrong?...I’m not the only one who understand what I understand from the paper (postgraduate international FFPS from the Gulf region, interview 1/1, 2006).
Like Fiona, Rose refused to pay the additional fees up-front, instead insisting on querying why she had been charged additional, unexpected fees. Staff avoided Rose’s request for an explanation, accusing her of having misunderstood the pre-arrival information, a charge that Rose vigorously denied.

Rose actively resisted being constructed as a source of (additional) revenue and as at fault for misunderstanding the educational institution’s previous communications. Her resistance proved partially successful but it was also costly. Rose had sacrificed much to study in New Zealand, she was newly arrived in the city where her educational institution was located, and for the first time was living apart from close family support. Having been denied the right to enrol in coursework due to the disagreement over fees, she was now also behind in her assessment tasks. Desperate for a resolution and unsatisfied with staff responses to her queries, Rose actively sought help elsewhere, consulting staff from her embassy in New Zealand. Embassy staff (who agreed with Rose’s interpretation of the pre-arrival fees information) contacted her university directly. When university staff again asserted that Rose’s misunderstanding had led to the disagreement, embassy representatives contacted a lawyer on Rose’s behalf. The lawyer suggested that Rose had grounds for laying a formal complaint, but by this stage she had decided that further resistance was not worthwhile: “I refused [to lay a complaint] because I was already stressed, and... I don’t want more”. Rose also felt that as a government employee in her home country, it would be inappropriate to pursue a formal complaint against a New Zealand university.

Despite her decision not to initiate a grievance process, Rose’s resistance (like Fiona’s) was partially effective. Following contact from the embassy, staff at Rose’s university agreed to offer Rose a $4,000 dollar scholarship if she would pay the outstanding additional fees. Rose, anxious to begin her course, agreed somewhat ambivalently. While relieved to finally enrol and commence coursework, Rose read the university’s ‘generosity’ as a covert admission of guilt, saying, “They know that they’re wrong because they... offered me this scholarship. ...They knew that I showed it to the lawyer”.

Having now paid fees several thousand dollars in excess of the amount originally quoted, Rose at last began her coursework. She described the intense work involved in
catching up on assessments that she had missed due to starting late. She also described her surprise at finding that her study was to be largely self-directed. While some course tutors were helpful and accessible, others were unavailable, even absent on occasions when formal meetings were arranged. Rose noted that her need to work independently was related to her enrolment as a 'distance' student, but given that she was living in the same city as her educational institution and had paid full international fees to be enrolled in the course, she found the inconsistent availability of academic support frustrating: “I felt [this is] hard because I didn’t expect it like this. I paid and everything”.

Later in our interview, I asked Rose what advice she would give to institutions that enrol international students, and also to students themselves. Her responses were interesting. Unlike Fiona, Rose did not contest institutions’ right to charge full fees or to enrol international students on a full-fee paying basis. Rather, she emphasised the need for educational institutions to take responsibility for the quality of teaching and support offered to all students:

I would like them to see how the tutor...deals with the student.... to know each staff, how she’s dealing with the student and to give some advice and some classes for ... good teaching.... to let them know that the student needs support.... especially [if] English is not the first language, ... even if [he] is a native he needs the support, as a student he needs the support.

Rose’s statement can be read in two ways; first, as not rejecting the (international) education ‘market’ outright, but as emphasising the “moral responsibility” of educational institutions to be upfront about the education ‘product’ that they provide (Haigh, 2002, p. 52).³ In this sense, Rose’s comments suggest the importance of institutions being honest and explicit about the level of teaching and learning support prospective students can expect given the fees that they pay, or if adequate teaching and learning support cannot be provided, tempering their “desire for student dollars” accordingly (p. 56, also see Madge et al., 2009).⁴ Haigh (2002) argues that at the very least, educational institutions that enrol students on a full-fee paying basis must resist projecting a marketed image likely to result in disappointed expectations. Second, Rose’s statement can also be read as

³ Although it should be noted that Haigh does argue strenuously for the value of conceptualising internationalisation beyond a narrow ‘market’ agenda.

⁴ Not enrolling students for whom adequate teaching and learning support is unavailable.
rejecting a ‘market’ view of education altogether. In her comment above she makes no connection between students’ “dollar value” and their right to educational support and institutional oversight (Butcher, 2004a, p. 28). Rather, Rose suggests that good teaching and support for all students is central to good educational practice.

Like Fiona, Rose recognised the necessity of being an informed consumer when a full-fee paying international student within export education. When I asked what advice she would give a prospective international student, Rose replied:

Know more about the institute, and especially the paper work, and understand well before accepting anything... Have the receipts, and everything, because ..... they want to make [out that] the student is wrong.... My advice is to keep everything, and..... seek help always.

Haigh (2002, p. 58) suggests that given the pervasive emphasis on income generation in internationalised education, “consumer protection” is a critical necessity. In New Zealand, such protection is supposedly guaranteed under the ‘Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students’ (Ministry of Education, 2003, see Chapter Two). Rose’s institution was apparently in breach of the ‘Code’ on at least two counts: first, for failing to provide fees information that avoided “substantial hidden costs”; and second, for failing to “give a fair and accurate representation of the activities and services [the institution was] offering to provide” (p. 8). The ‘Code’ was of little use to Rose however, because she did not know about it,5 and because she saw pursuing a formal complaint process as more costly than paying extra fees and completing her coursework without assistance. Rose’s story highlights how the effectiveness of the ‘Code’ as a regulatory tool rests on the ability and willingness of international students covered by it to actively pursue their rights as ‘consumers’: in the first instance, through grievance processes within their educational institution, and then if necessary, beyond (see Lewis, 2005). Rose’s experience suggests that explicit training in how to exercise one’s rights as a consumer (or to extend the analogy, in how to ‘read the labelling’!) may be a necessity for full-fee paying international students while internationalised education remains an export education industry (Haigh, 2002).

From a consumer protection perspective, Rose and Fiona’s accounts reveal the importance of students resisting institutional practices where these are questionable or

5 If Rose’s university had failed to inform her of the Code’s existence this would have been a third breach of the Code.
morally irresponsible (see Haigh, 2002). Rose’s account also highlights the significant barriers some students may need to confront in order to do so. Despite having access to an arguably powerful ally (staff from her embassy), Rose saw neither the formal pursuit of a complaint nor leaving the university concerned as real options; the former because of the stress and time involved, and the latter because she had already sacrificed much to be there. Rose’s determination to complete her course of study is a testament to her courage, determination, and strength, but it also highlights the inadequacy of making assumptions about student satisfaction on the basis of the number of formal complaints made.

Rose hinted at the unsustainability of a money-driven approach to the provision of education where education ‘providers’ fail to take seriously their “moral responsibility” towards the students that they enrol (Haigh, 2002, p. 52). She cited the anger of embassy staff in her own case, and described two cases in which other students from her country had withdrawn their enrolment and spent their study dollars elsewhere. It is ironic that for Rose’s university, an emphasis on revenue generation through internationalised education may have been self-defeating. Neither Rose, nor the embassy personnel who supported her were likely to act as “ongoing advocates for New Zealand”, or for the New Zealand university that Rose attended (Ministry of Education, 2002a, p. 18).

**Withdrawing from study**

Unlike Rose, who had come to New Zealand primarily for professional reasons, Nikki, an international full-fee paying student from Norway chose to study abroad in order to experience “living abroad” with her partner and young child. In reality however, Nikki found coursework and the need to juggle study and domestic commitments much more demanding than she had expected, and her desire to see New Zealand proved incompatible with continuing her studies. When I interviewed her, Nikki had already decided to withdraw at the end of her first semester. I knew at this stage that Nikki was pregnant with her second child, and when I asked if her withdrawal was in some way related to this pregnancy, she replied:

No because it’s such a lot of money and I would probably have failed. I don’t want to waste that much money and just be at university and not seeing my family and not seeing New Zealand. So I think I would have quit anyway (interview 1/1, 2005).
Nikki expressed frustration at the ways in which international education marketing campaigns capitalise on international students' desire to experience New Zealand for the express purpose of promoting the sale of an (international) education (for example, see Education New Zealand, 2008). She argued that for her and arguably, for other international students, an image of internationalised education as an opportunity to have a good time is both highly attractive and inaccurate:

I think that all the commercial about come and ... have a good time and I don’t think people have time to do that when they study, like all the partying and going places and stuff it’s not if you’re an international student... because then it’s more than enough just to try to understand everything the lecturers say.

Nikki highlighted how a “coordinated approach to promotion and marketing by education providers” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 26) is problematic if it effectively promotes a false or simplistic image of studying in New Zealand, or one likely to fuel unrealistic expectations for some students.

Like Fiona, Nikki rejected the marketisation of education outright: “I think it’s really stupid that international students have to pay so much... because then only a limited amount of people can actually go abroad”. She also, however, exercised her ‘consumer’ judgment in declaring a New Zealand education “not worth it” and withdrawing. Nikki’s account when considered alongside Rose’s highlights how politico-economic factors intersect to position full-fee paying students differently. Whatever she chose to do in New Zealand, Nikki was well-supported by her ‘home’ government. In contrast, Rose felt her options were limited, partly due to her role as a government employee, and partly due to the economic and personal sacrifices already made for her to be here. Nikki had come to New Zealand in order to experience the country, and while study pressures jeopardised this possibility, withdrawal from study did not. In contrast, Rose had come here specifically in order to obtain a New Zealand qualification. As such, withdrawal was for her, not an option.

7.3 Being constructed as both a source of revenue and an outsider

Chapter Two noted that the majority of full-fee paying international students in New Zealand come from countries in the Asia region. Collins (2006) has identified the resulting conflation in public discourse of Asian-ness with full-fee paying enrolment
status. He argues that this has two effects. The first is the construction of a group of people as "economic objects"; wanted as a source of revenue, but unwanted as 'outsiders' in New Zealand (p. 230). The second is the exclusion of "a generation of young New Zealanders from the nation" (p. 230, emphasis added).

Three women (Yukiko, Roja, and Stella) referred to a sense of contradiction; being dually constructed in New Zealand educational contexts as both a (valued) source of revenue and as (unwanted) outsiders. Yukiko and Roja spoke of a disjuncture between the fees that they paid (as a full-fee paying international student and former full-fee paying student respectively), and the ‘treatment’ that they experienced in a high school context (Yukiko) and when trying to get work (Roja). Stella described instances on a university campus when her Asian-ness was wrongly read as indicative of her enrolment status as a full-fee paying international student.

Like Nikki (see previous section), Yukiko reflected on New Zealand’s marketing strategies, recalling having chosen a secondary school in New Zealand on the basis of a marketing brochure that projected a caring, inclusive image of the school. In contrast, upon her arrival Yukiko found that international and New Zealand students at the school rarely mixed, and that international students were regularly subjected to harassment and bullying (see previous chapter). In the statement below, Yukiko does not contest having to pay fees per se, but rather the mismatch between the fees her parents were paying and the reception that she received in the school. She said:

> When I found out I’m paying 9,000 per year... for the... tuition fees at the ... high school, and when I found out... that these local students pays only 75 dollars...I just felt so shocked.... I could not describe why .... the fees and also the treatment... we get here.... it's just so... doesn't match (undergraduate international FFPS from Japan, interview 1/2, 2005).

In addition to a mismatch between fees and “treatment”, like Fiona, Yukiko also noted a lack of transparency around the use of international students’ fees at both institutional and national levels. Referring now to higher education, Yukiko noted the irony that while international student supports were apparently allocated a low level of funding and afforded low visibility, her university was evidently able to purchase many showy and unnecessary “extras”:

> I still want to know the truth - how much actually government is getting the benefit from us, and [the university] too..... there are lots of things that are unnecessary..... like, for example in the library there [are] seven.... thin TV things hanging on the top floor... that cost.. three
thousand or...five thousand,... one TV, and yet that is not really doing much! It's even
turned off now! You know it's black! [Laughing] And .. is it.. coming from our.. money?
Then I would be really sad actually.

When I asked Yukiko what could be done to challenge the construction of full-fee paying
students as primarily a source of money, her response was revealing. First, she responded
as a concerned consumer, like Rose, emphasising the importance of matching
international student support provision with the fees students pay. Second, Yukiko
suggested the value of an exchange approach to internationalised education, particularly
in relation to teaching staff:

And what I really want [them] to do is the teacher exchange... overseas. Because you know
they are only encouraging students to do the exchange, but ... the teachers can experience
that. Otherwise they [are] never ever going to realise how.. difficult it is.

The ‘Agenda’ as a recent policy text affirms the value of exchange for fostering
new ways of seeing oneself and others (Ministry of Education, 2007a; also see Lugones,
1987). At present however, New Zealand educational exchange relations are strongest
with European and other English-speaking countries, and the enrolment of students on a
full-fee paying basis occurs separately from exchange programmes (see Chapter Two).
As Yukiko acknowledged, staff exchanges within an export education industry occur in
politic-economic circumstances that are far from reciprocal:

Y They go, like principals, but they have great trips, to share their product.... For they are the
guests you know, and they look Western. Of course they are all welcomed, not like us....
those who look different, who are... kind of marginalised [laughing] maybe.
V So you'd like to see the teachers put in a position where maybe they are made
uncomfortable=
Y =Yeah, just go there! [Laughter] And you feel it! And then they pay the fee, you know,
like us....yeah that's how I feel.

Yukiko noted the global desirability of ‘whiteness’ and ‘Western-ness’ as positioning
New Zealand staff in a much less “precarious” position than (predominantly Asian) full-
fee paying international students in New Zealand (Robertson, 2006, p. 310). She also
highlighted a power differential between those who market and sell educational
opportunities, and those who desire and purchase them. Yukiko’s comments reveal the
inadequacy of an approach to international “linkages” that is underpinned by a concern
with commercial opportunities and the promotion of New Zealand qualifications
elsewhere (see Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 26). She notes that an “emotional,
perceptual and cognitive shift in the personal response to ‘otherness’” is an unlikely
outcome for staff who travel primarily to promote an education ‘product’ (Haigh, 2002, p. 54).

Roja acknowledged that within New Zealand’s export education industry, different higher educational institutions may treat full-fee paying international students differently. She had initially studied in a small, provincial higher education institution, and described this as friendly and supportive. In contrast, Roja described her second institution as concerned only with “advertising”, “publicity”, and “money”. Here she recalls the specific occasion when she first became aware of her ambivalent positioning within this educational institution as both a desirable source of revenue and an unwanted outsider (see Collins, 2006):

When I came to [names educational institution] for an interview the director... was so good. It’s a business see, I’m an international student, so one and a half hours he can talk and ‘ha, ha, ha’. When I came here as a student I went to say ‘hello’ to him. He doesn’t know any more! He didn’t even talk to me anymore!... It changed. I was shocked, and what is on earth going on? (postgraduate NZ student/former international FFPS, interview 1/1, 2006)

Like Rose earlier, Roja noted the irony that an education industry built on image rather than substance is ultimately unsustainable. She said, “[unless] you open your eyes..., student wouldn’t come, and that’s what’s happening”.

Roja described her determination to succeed in coursework given her position as a paying consumer. Having been enrolled by her educational institution after a group work component of the academic programme had already been organised, Roja was at one point threatened with course failure. Mindful of the financial investment she had made in the course, Roja was determined to pass. As she put it, “Five thousand dollars for that paper, I said ‘I’m going to do it on my own’ so I did, and just passed. And the whole thing was really, really hard.” Like Fiona, Rose, Nikki, and Yukiko, Roja can be read as taking up a consumer identity; expressing her wish to pass the course given the price she had paid to purchase an educational product. Her statement also highlights the difficulty inherent in doing so when responsive teaching support is not forthcoming.

Roja’s contradictory position as a wanted source of revenue and unwanted outsider became especially apparent to her once she finished her degree and began to look for work. By then, Roja had begun a relationship with a New Zealand man, and due to his family commitments, could only seek employment in New Zealand. Despite having gained a New Zealand degree in a “skill-shortage” area (Immigration New Zealand, 2006).
2007) and having had extensive professional experience outside New Zealand. Roja found it impossible to get work.

I did apply for more than 100 applications I think... and then none. I never got an interview... so I thought that I’m not getting anywhere, really frustrated, and... I was an international student so I paid a lot of money and I felt no use of all my hard work, and English is my second language so I really worked hard to come this far and I felt that ...all my study and effort is going down, and all I get is like cleaner job or anything..... I thought that all my hard work is gone now..... nothing come through.

As discussed in Chapter Six, Roja suspected that her inability to get a job was in part, a result of others’ identification of her as an incompetent outsider:

When I ring up I ask people ‘why don’t you...consider?’, so example... I rang up and just a call-centre thing....and I think accent became a problem. First when I spoke with them he said ‘you are kind of over-qualified, would you do this kind of job?’ And I said ‘I...love to work! I want to, I don’t mind. It’s still computing...’; and then I didn’t get the interview...I got the explanation saying that there were more skilled people there, and I was comparing these two... I cannot understand the system, how this work, or even in my future whether I will get any job.

Like Yukiko, Roja expressed deep sadness and frustration at being positioned first as an economically desirable full-fee paying international student, and then as unwanted by New Zealand employers (Collins, 2006). At the time of our interview she was again studying, this time as a New Zealand student. Roja’s decision to return to study was clearly not an outcome of having been “enriched” by her earlier study experiences (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 18), or positioned as “talent in a tight labour market” (p.21). Further study was a forced choice, an active strategy for coping with the impossibility of finding employment and as she put it, a preferable option to “sitting at home”.

Stella described how as a Korean New Zealander on a university campus she was sometimes read by others in relation to full-fee paying international students’ contradictory (wanted/unwanted) positioning:

When I met people on the campus .... the perception they have of me....is... I’m an Asian, they think I’m [a] young international student, therefore you’ve got money.... And you study science or commerce....that’s the whole concept they get from me, even though I don’t say a word..... but if you talk for about one or two minutes they realise that I’m not in that category... they don’t see me as an individual person, but they just start ....thinking of me because of my appearance, so... I think that has to be changed. Obviously, ok, I’m an Asian but I’m not an international student which means I don’t have that much money [laughing], and I’m a natural6 student who is married (interview 2/2, 2006).

6 Here Stella refers to her citizenship status. The term ‘natural’ alludes to the expression ‘naturalised citizen’ used in the USA.
Although not a full-fee paying international student, Stella, like Roja, found that in interactions with some New Zealanders, her “identity [was often] produced well in advance of the interpersonal encounter” (Palumbo-Liu, 2002, p. 767, also see previous chapter). This was a result of other New Zealanders conflating Asian-ness with foreignness, full fee-paying enrolment status, and wealth (see Collins, 2006). Stella expressed frustration at being constructed alongside predominantly Asian full-fee paying international students as both a source of revenue and a “constitutive outside” to New Zealand-ness (Hall, 1996, p. 3). Her statement highlights the risk that internationalised education as export education may foster exclusion and the development of stereotypes rather than “understand[ing]” and “respect” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 13), not only in relation to international students but also, some New Zealanders (Collins, 2006).

7.4 Internationalised education as export education: alternative possibilities
“Economic transformation” as a key priority for internationalised education in New Zealand rests at least in part on the ongoing construction of some students in terms of their dollar value (Ministry of Education, 2007a, pp. 9, 28, see Chapter Two). For the women in this chapter, being constructed as a source of revenue and sometimes also as a marked outsider, was a cause for anger, frustration, and the necessary performance of a consumer identity. However, as someone endeavouring to bring a critical lens to internationalised education as it is currently constructed, I am faced with a dilemma when drawing conclusions from women’s accounts. By emphasising the commodifying (and racialising) effects of the application of neoliberal ideology to education provision, I risk reifying neoliberalism as a coherent and unified programme to which there is no alternative (see Larner, 2003; Robertson, 2006). However, to downplay or minimalise the embodied effects for some women of being commodified, and sometimes, racialised through educational institutions’ policies and practices is also ethically untenable, given the human pain (and ironically, vast sums of money) involved (Haigh, 2002).

Notably, two international full-fee paying students involved in my project did not allude to a sense of being constructed as a source of revenue in New Zealand. Violet (who came to New Zealand from Malaysia) instead emphasised friendship, isolation, and
coping as central concerns; and Miho (a student from Japan) described her experiences in a New Zealand university in relation to the new learning opportunities she encountered. Although both Violet and Miho sometimes encountered others’ racialising assumptions, they did not relate these to their full-fee paying enrolment status, or to internationalised education per se. The divergence between their accounts and those considered in this chapter problematises cause-and-effect assumptions based on bounded analytic categories, ‘international full-fee paying student’ included (Rhee and Subreenduth, 2006). The women whose accounts are in this chapter were not solely victims or resisters of educational policies and practices, or savvy, articulate ‘consumers’. Each spoke from multiple positions: sometimes as multilingual, internationally educated, critical, and well-informed actors and/or resisters in the international education marketplace; and at other times with significant pain, as women subjected to the asymmetric politics of export education, and/or irresponsible institutional practices.

It is instructive to return to the social and education goals of the ‘International Education Agenda’ as outlined in Chapter Two. These included international students’ enrichment, the development of New Zealand students’ global citizenship skills, and opportunities for intercultural learning and exchange (Ministry of Education, 2007a). Echoing these goals, Haigh (2002) imagines internationalised education as a way of promoting “social justice” (p. 62); providing educational opportunities for all that look beyond narrow institutional concerns, and fostering multi-vocality and the skills necessary for living together in an interconnected, intercultural world (p. 55). From the accounts of the women in this chapter, it seems that the current imagining of internationalised (export) education as a basis for economic transformation might produce social outcomes quite different to those espoused in the ‘Agenda’; for example, the taking up of entrepreneurial and consumer identities, and social separation between people. Rather than being a means for promoting social justice for both international and

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7 Since the themes that emerged in Violet and Mihos’ accounts also emerged in interviews with New Zealand students, international exchange students, PhD students, and international students’ partners, they are addressed elsewhere in the thesis (see previous and following chapters).

8 The former in the case of teaching and other staff members, and the latter in the case of full-fee paying international students (although arguably this may be the case for all students in a marketised higher education environment).
minoritised students, and for fostering New Zealand students’ openness to otherness, self-awareness, respectfulness and so on (Haigh, 2002, p. 53); education policy intent on bringing foreigners here so that ‘we’ might benefit from ‘them’ may “[help] create us-and-them divisions” (p. 57). Chillingly, as highlighted by Stella’s account, it may also create or reinforce us-and-them divisions between New Zealanders (Collins, 2006).

The data in this chapter suggests three key implications for policy and practice. The first is that even from an export education perspective, lack of attention to educational institutions’ pedagogical and support responsibilities is likely to undermine the possibilities of internationalised education. Yukiko and Nikki’s accounts highlight the short-sightedness of developing the “‘New Zealand-educated’ brand” through the projection of marketable images that provide less than frank and full information (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 31). Roja and Rose’s highlight the harm done to people (and the ‘brand’) through unscrupulous and uncaring practices. Rose’s account also suggests that while revenue generation remains a primary concern, students enrolled on a full-fees basis should have easy access to independent advocacy and assistance. Advocacy must be available through avenues external to students’ educational institutions since (as Rose indicated) the ‘cost’ of pursuing complaints through internal channels is likely to be prohibitive. Advocacy and other ‘help’ sources available to students must also be widely and actively publicised.

The second implication is suggested in Yukiko’s account; that making exchange rather than export central to internationalised education may be a promising way forward. This ‘exchange’ might involve inter-national travel and the movement of students and staff between different socio-geographical contexts. It may also involve development of academic programmes likely to destabilise static notions of self and other, us and them, local-ness and international-ness (Haigh, 2002). A shift from an export to exchange focus is difficult to imagine but is necessary if the educational and social promises of internationalised education are to move beyond empty rhetoric. The data in this and the previous chapter suggests that while international students remain constructed as outsiders to New Zealand-ness and/or as a source of export revenue, “separation at policy level is [likely to be] translated directly into practice, challenging integration, interaction and intercultural learning” (Ippolito, 2007, p. 752).
The third implication is drawn from Roja’s account, and her allusion to educational institutions in which individual staff members had either reinforced or reduced her sense of being constructed as a source of revenue. While internationalised education remains imagined as export education, the significance of interpersonal interactions should not be downplayed. These offer strategic moments in which individual people can act against and in spite of the constraints of existing policy frameworks and broader ‘industry’ practices (Lather, 2006a).
Chapter 8 – Teaching and learning in New Zealand and elsewhere

8.1 Introduction
This chapter considers how women reflected on teaching and learning during interviews. It draws on Lugones’ (1987) notions of world-travelling and ease to explore how women compared and contrasted different teaching and learning ‘worlds’, and factors that they identified as making some teaching and learning contexts more comfortable or preferable than others (see Lugones, 1987). In terms of my research questions the chapter considers numbers one and two: whether women’s accounts of learning and teaching revealed or troubled an international/local student binary; and how research that centres international and New Zealand women students might foster new insights into learning and teaching in internationalised higher education (see Chapter One). In the following chapter, I consider women’s parallel reflections on ‘homes’ in New Zealand and elsewhere.

The chapter begins with a theoretical introduction (section 8.2). This section outlines Lugones’ (1987) use of the terms ‘world’, ‘world-travelling’ and ‘ease’; relates the latter to Noble’s (2005) notion of comfort; and explains why I use these ideas as a framework for considering women’s teaching and learning experiences. Section 8.3 discusses women’s reflections on teaching and learning worlds and the experience of moving between them in relation to five ways of being at ease outlined in section 8.2: through having practical and informational confidence (after Ramsey et al., 2007), communicative confidence, being familiar and in agreement with behavioural and social norms, being socially connected, and/or having shared histories with one or some other people (Lugones, 1987). The chapter concludes with some suggested implications for student support and pedagogy in internationalised higher education (section 8.4).

8.2 Worlds, world-travelling, ease and comfort
As noted in Chapter Four, Lugones (1987, p. 9) describes as a “world” any context “inhabited by flesh and blood people”, whether a “whole society”, or a smaller context within a society. World-travelling refers both to movement between different contexts, and to the sense of belonging to more than one world at the same time. Lugones
conceputalis world-travelling as involving literal shifting or movement; being different people in different contexts; having different personalities or characters; or behaving, using language, or space in different ways (p. 11). She also describes it as a “necessarily acquired flexibility” (p. 3); an ability to travel or shift between (for example) behavioural, values, and/or linguistic codes as the result of an intentional decision to do so or as a necessary part of everyday life (also see Madison, 2005).

I use the term world in this chapter in reference to different teaching and learning contexts that women discussed during research interviews, including different countries, educational institutions, levels of study, programmes of study, and classes or kinds of classes. Attention to women’s reflections on and comparisons between different educational worlds precludes the use of ‘culture’ as an overarching perceptual framework (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; McConaghy, 1998), while highlighting how specific factors shape students’ experiences of learning and teaching. It offers a way of thinking about teaching and learning beyond static assumptions of ‘difference’ and ‘sameness’, and straightforward Western/non-Western binary distinctions (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Doherty and Singh, 2005, Chapter Three). Also in world-travelling, Lugones (1987) conceptualises shifts between social worlds as complex and multiple rather than as unidirectional or as necessarily involving static endpoints (such as ‘integration’ or ‘adaptation’). Lugones’ world-travelling affirms the “flexibility” required for surviving shifts between learning and teaching contexts (p. 3), without downplaying the difficulty or discomfort that is sometimes inherent in ‘travelling’.

The sixteen women who appear in this chapter were students and world-travellers in a geographical and an intentional sense, having moved to New Zealand from another country or from one part of New Zealand to another in order to study. They include nine international students (Yukiko, Violet, Fiona, Deanna, Nikki, Miho, Sharon, Frances, and Rose); and six New Zealand students (Stella, Laura, Arui, Jillian, Roja, Wakuwaku, and Janice).¹ All of the New Zealand students except Janice had immigrated to New Zealand during the seven years prior to our interviews, and although born and raised in New

¹ As noted in Chapter Five, Rose and Janice were also international students’ partners. Here I draw on their reflections of study as (in Rose’s case) a former full-fee paying international student in New Zealand, and (in Janice’s) a New Zealand student. Likewise, I draw on Roja’s reflections as both a New Zealand and a former international full-fee paying student.
Zealand, Janice had shifted cities for the purpose of studying. The four women who are not included in the chapter include two New Zealand students (Jordan and Alexis) and two partners of international students (Xena and Anita). These women did not reflect during interviews on their teaching and learning experiences either in New Zealand or elsewhere.

The women whose accounts are included in this chapter were not only world-travellers in a large-scale geographical or socio-cultural sense. They also described shifts between different study contexts; levels of study; academic disciplines; and living, social and study contexts within New Zealand. Women reflected on observed differences and similarities between these contexts and the factors that made some more comfortable or preferable for them than others. For most of the women in this chapter, comfort or “ease” (Lugones, 1987, p. 12) was associated with a sense of familiarity or connection and unease with unfamiliarity or strangeness; but women did not always speak about familiarity as a positive thing, or unfamiliarity as a negative thing. For some women, familiar worlds, although comfortable, were in some respects constraining; and unease or unfamiliarity was also a source of enrichment, personal growth, and/or freedom. Also, women did not only associate unease or discomfort in particular teaching/learning worlds with unfamiliarity, but also with poor quality teaching and other institutional practices.

Noble (2005, p. 114) defines “comfort” as “an attachment to a place or a setting that makes acting in that setting possible”. He argues that it is an individual’s affective sense of “ontological security”, connected to relations of power in that setting (p. 114, citing Giddens, 1990). Noble (2005) suggests that a person’s sense of comfort depends on her “sense of ‘fit’” in a particular environment; the extent to which she is recognised by other people as “rightfully existing there”, and the extent to which she also experiences a sense of belonging in her relation to the “habits, routines and artefacts of...everyday environments” (p. 114).

Lugones (1987, p. 12) articulates how specific habits, routines and artefacts might contribute to or reduce a person’s sense of comfort or “ease” in everyday environments or social worlds. She describes four ways of being at ease or comfortable: through communicative confidence (being able to communicate freely with others); being familiar and in agreement with behavioural and social norms; having a close connection with at
least one other person; and/or having some kind of “shared history” (shared day-to-day understandings) with others (p. 12). Lugones' distinction between different ways of being at ease highlights how comfort is a “complex [and shifting] web of relations and experiences” (Noble, 2005, p. 115), not a straightforward state of being that is solely affective, cognitive or physical. Lugones (1987) highlights how a world might be comfortable or uncomfortable in one way and not in others, and how specific sources of ease or comfort might mitigate others that make a world otherwise uncomfortable.

Women in my project alluded to each of the ways of being at ease mentioned above. To these I add practical and informational confidence, a further way of being comfortable or at ease that some women also referred to during research interviews (see Ramsey et al., 2007). I define practical and informational confidence as having the confidence and knowledge necessary to access practical information (such as where to go for classes, who to see for help, and where and how to get course advice).

In the remainder of the chapter I consider women’s reflections on different teaching and learning worlds in relation to how they spoke about having or not having a sense of practical and informational confidence, communicative confidence, familiarity and agreement with behavioural and social norms, social connectedness, and shared history with others. I also consider factors which women identified as contributing to or reducing their “sense of ‘fit’”, capacity to act, and sense of comfort in the teaching and learning worlds that they described (Noble, 2005, p. 114). Although women’s reflections on teaching and learning could be read in many other ways, I find Lugones’ (1987) framework useful for considering both the “situated” and the “social” aspect of comfort or ease (Noble, 2005, p. 114); women’s material experiences in teaching/learning worlds and how these were shaped by and/or were a response to broader relations of power. In the following chapter I extend the idea of comfort or ease to consider women’s accounts of home spaces and being ‘at home’ in New Zealand and elsewhere (after Noble, 2005).

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2 I borrow this term from Ramsey et al. (2007, p. 260), who refer to “practical and informational” support (see Chapter Three).
8.3 Women’s reflections on world-travelling, teaching and learning

For the nine international students that I interviewed, studying in New Zealand involved negotiating new teaching and learning worlds. These women reflected on differences and similarities that they had observed between different teaching and learning contexts in New Zealand, and in other countries where they had previously studied. Some women also reflected on world-travelling or transitioning between different levels of study: Yukiko from high school to university, and undergraduate to postgraduate study in New Zealand; Fiona, from undergraduate to Masters study; and Deanna, from Masters to doctoral study. Of the nine New Zealand students interviewed, seven also spoke of world-travelling in relation to their studies. Stella, Laura, Arui, Wakuwaku, Jillian and Roja had studied in countries other than New Zealand; and Janice had shifted between cities and academic programmes. Stella, Laura, and Wakuwaku also described moving between different levels of study; and Roja reflected on differences and similarities between three New Zealand higher education providers.

Practical and informational confidence

Seven international students (Deanna, Yukiko, Violet, Nikki, Frances, Sharon, and Rose) and four New Zealand students (Roja, Wakuwaku, Laura, and Janice) referred to factors that reduced or increased their sense of practical and informational confidence in new teaching/learning worlds and therefore, their sense of ease or unease. Deanna, Yukiko, Frances, and Rose (all international students) began their initial studies in New Zealand when the teaching semester or academic year was already underway. As a result, they missed out on formal orientation events, and Rose was forced to catch up on missed coursework. Deanna and Yukiko noted how a lack of orientation made it difficult to meet and connect with other people (see later), and to access necessary practical information relating to their new learning environments. Deanna, an international doctoral student from Switzerland compared a lack of orientation in her New Zealand university with comprehensive orientation programmes she had experienced as a study abroad student elsewhere. She explicitly associated a formal orientation process in her previous overseas study context with a sense of feeling both “integrated” and “comfortable” (interview 1/2,
Yukiko, an international student from Japan, contrasted a sense of “having to find out everything by myself” due to a lack of orientation at a New Zealand high school with her “confidence” when she then moved to university study (also in New Zealand). Although describing university as a “different world”, Yukiko was already familiar with the physical campus environment and also with some students and tutoring staff. Yukiko noted the irony that while (as an international student) she felt completely comfortable in her New Zealand university, many “local students” from her former high school were uncomfortable and overwhelmed: “local students, they were scared.... they say ‘Oh this is huge’, I say ‘Not really!’ [laughs]” (interview 1/2, 2005). Her account suggests that comprehensive orientation programmes aimed at building connections and facilitating students’ access to practical information are a necessity for all students new to a higher education campus.

Other factors women described as limiting a sense of practical and informational confidence in some teaching/learning worlds included large undergraduate university classes; disinterested or unavailable teaching staff; unclear processes or the limited availability of course information and course-specific advice; and the need to juggle family and study commitments. Frances and Sharon, international exchange students from the PRC and Taiwan respectively, described large class sizes in New Zealand as limiting the extent to which lecturers could assist students with practical issues related to their study. Wakuwaku and Laura (two New Zealand students) and Sharon described large class sizes as also limiting students’ interactive opportunities, and therefore, the possibility of accessing practical information from peers. Rose, a former international full-fee paying student from the Gulf region, described teaching staff at her New Zealand university who were either unavailable to answer queries or dismissive when asked for course-related advice. Violet (a full-fee paying international student from Malaysia) and Rose both expressed frustration at unclear processes for having practical enquiries answered, in particular, being repeatedly “sent elsewhere”. Violet contrasted the ongoing

3 Having used the university library for study as a secondary school student.
availability of course-specific advice in Malaysia with the short window of time allowed for course-approval in her New Zealand university. Violet explained that in her Malaysian university, students were allowed to ‘try out’ classes for a week before formalising enrolment, thereby accessing in-depth course-related information on which to base their enrolment decisions. In contrast, university enrolment in New Zealand took place before the beginning of the teaching semester. Nikki, a full-fee paying student from Norway described the juggle between family and study commitments as limiting her ability to stay up-to-date with course readings. Nikki noted how courses in her New Zealand university described as “introductory” had proved to require much more prior knowledge than indicated in pre-enrolment information.

For two women, practical or informational issues contributed both to significant unease and ill-health. Rose’s institution changed her fee requirements, forcing her to engage in a very stressful process of negotiation and delaying her enrolment by several weeks.⁴ Janice, a New Zealand student who was originally enrolled in a professional programme, became unwell and decided that the course she was enrolled in was not right for her. Janice said that when she approached those in charge of her course “they made it very hard for me to pull out….and then when they did [let me pull out] they made it very clear that if I changed my mind… all that work I’d done …until August … I wouldn’t have any of that credited towards me”⁵ (interview 1/1, 2005). Janice connected her department’s “difficult” response with her subsequent need to seek medical treatment for depression and anxiety. Rose noted the physical, emotional and financial cost of grappling with non-transparent university requirements and of seeking to contest them (see previous chapter).

Some women noted significant sources of practical and informational assistance. These included: a university ‘student learning centre’ (Deanna and Wakuwaku); peer mentors arranged through a university international office (Sharon and Frances); individual staff members who were highly supportive or who acted in an advocacy role (Roja, Violet and Yukiko); and supportive friends (Violet, Yukiko and Deanna). Two

⁴ See Chapter Seven.

⁵ This included several completed courses in which Janice had received a ‘distinction’. She was informed that if she withdrew, these would not appear on her academic record.
women described practical issues that made teaching/learning worlds uncomfortable and were irresolvable. Nikki withdrew from her course of study after one semester, partially because she found it too difficult to maintain both coursework and family relationships (see Chapter Seven). Sharon, who completed her course in New Zealand, expressed dissatisfaction with her exchange experience, stating that neither teaching staff and university-based student support services nor friends had been able to mitigate practical difficulties associated with her coursework.

**Communicative confidence**

Sharon related her coursework difficulties specifically to communicative issues. She was not alone in this. Frances, Violet, Yukiko, and Deanna (all international students) also discussed factors that limited their sense of communicative confidence, and therefore their initial or ongoing sense of ease in some teaching and learning contexts in New Zealand. Sharon and Violet described having initial difficulty understanding New Zealand English, despite having studied English and in English for many years. Violet explained: "These paper’s everything’s in English. But still.. the accent, you can’t try to have that [laughing], so that’s.. been a problem we have with the lecturer, because we can’t really get everything" (interview 1/2, 2005). Sharon also noted the challenge of trying to take notes while struggling to understand an unfamiliar accent. Sharon indicated that had some lecturers slowed their speech a little and provided lecture notes prior to instead of after lectures, she may have had less difficulty understanding lecture content:

They speak too fast. I mean they speak in their natural way but... their natural way is not my natural way because I have to... literally think it first and then it takes time so... when I try to figure out the first sentence the lecturer was already in the third sentence [laughter]... And...because they speak too fast I cannot even do the note-taking, because I cannot listen and write at the same time. And they don’t provide... the handout beforehand. It's kind of like a department policy... they only provide [it] after the lecture (interview 1/1, 2006).

Sharon’s comment echoes Friedenberg’s (2002) suggestion that relatively small adjustments to teaching approaches may go a long way in supporting students’ learning when local accents and idiom are unfamiliar. Adjustments may include reduced speed, increased clarity, the avoidance of local idiom and slang, and the provision of lecture notes or a lecture outline prior to lectures.

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6 In using “we”, Violet referred to Malaysian international students.
Noble (2005, p. 114) describes comfort as partly a result of “our success in appropriating an object or environment...accommodating ourselves to it; and...the extent to which we are able to appropriate or accommodate”. In terms of learning and teaching, however, Doherty and Singh (2005) question whether international students’ ‘accommodation’ or ‘adaptation’ to so-called Western teaching and learning approaches is necessarily desirable (for example, see Berno and Ward, 2003; Ward and Masgoret, 2004). Noble’s (2005) use of the term ‘accommodation’ does not refer to assumptions of superiority and inferiority however, or to the desirability or otherwise of particular ways of being and behaving. Rather, it highlights how comfort or ease is not a passive response, but an outcome of whether or not we are able to act or to be seen as acting legitimately (see Davies, 2006).

Sharon and Violet described how they recorded lectures as an active strategy for accommodating themselves to some lecturers’ unclear communication. Violet stated that lecturers’ accents, approaches to teaching and communicative (in)ability shaped the extent to which her strategy proved useful. Here Violet reflects on three different lecturers’ communicative approaches and the usefulness or otherwise of recording their lectures:

For this semester we have three lecturers. The first lecturer... was quite good. But what she says, nearly everything’s in the PowerPoint. So... I feel sometimes like, why am I recording exactly the same thing? It’s like, you copy them and you can understand... but she’s usually good. And the second and third,... there are more things to listen [to], but other problem come in.... Their voices are so flat! [Laughing] And... in the lecture,... maybe it’s... my personal attitude or something, when you have the recorder you sort of... depend on it, thinking that... go home, you can listen to it. So you get like... oh so boring. I go to sleep! [Laughter] But the problem going home, when you’re on the recorder...oh! This is...like trying to get you to sleep, that sort of... voice...[laughing] ...and it’s real hard! So it’s sort of like, at the end,... just leave it, don’t want to listen to the recorder [laughed].... The second one is [names subject area]..... We have a real good... lecturer in Malaysia....[but] this [New Zealand] one is so boring, explaining the same thing but in a much more boring way [laughing]... So...that makes it feel like I don’t really want to go to the class. But the .third one, is sort of some new stuff and the content is... interesting... So... his words are not interesting, but at least you...can try to, like, look at the PowerPoint, read his stuff and...get some material... Yeah, that makes a bit of [a] difference (interview 1/2, 2005).

Violet’s comparison of three New Zealand lecturers reveals a reflexive awareness of her pedagogical preferences (for example, for vocal variation and opportunities to actively engage in learning activities). It also highlights practices that are central to effective pedagogy. Lecturers’ apparent enthusiasm or otherwise, the interest level of their lecture content, whether or not they used supporting visual material, and their effectiveness or
ineffectiveness at engaging students increased or diminished Violet’s ability to listen, understand and engage with lecture material in different classes. In highlighting the variability of teaching approaches in her New Zealand university department, Violet reiterated the inaccuracy of representing New Zealand university teaching as drawing on a ‘pure’ academic tradition (see Doherty and Singh, 2005). She noted that when lecturers used visual aids (in this case, comprehensive PowerPoint slides) to support their teaching, included interesting content, and/or spoke in an engaging and enthusiastic way, “accommodating... to” (understanding, concentrating on, and engaging with) their teaching was much less difficult (Noble, 2005, p. 114).

Frances and Sharon commented on how the frequency and kinds of direct interactions that occur between lecturers and students may increase or decrease a student’s communicative confidence. Frances noted the scarcity of opportunities for direct lecturer/student interaction in her New Zealand undergraduate classes, describing this scarcity in terms of a “language problem”:

F I think the language problem is [an] obstacle, so in China we have quite a lot [of] interaction with the professor and you know what they’re talking about, you know the structure..... and we don’t have tutorials. Whereas here we have tutorials.
V So over there your lectures were more like... a tutorial and a lecture, like you were talking with professors you could ask questions...
F Yeah... whereas here yeah ...
V The lecture you sit and you listen?
F Yeah.
V Interesting.
F Yeah and you won’t answer questions, because they don’t ask the questions.
V Here?
F Yeah.
V Interesting (interview 1/1, 2006).

Frances’ comments problematise a binary distinction between dialectic/dialogic and Eastern/Western approaches to teaching and learning (for example, see Ho et al., 2004; Holmes, 2004, Chapter Three). Rather than describing her New Zealand lecturers as fostering student-teacher interaction and (inter)active learning, Frances recalled her undergraduate classes in the PRC as more conducive to student-teacher interaction (see Mok, 2006). She observed that in contrast, New Zealand university classes encouraged a greater degree of in-lecture student passivity through their lecturer-centred teaching approaches (also see Doherty and Singh, 2005). In the statement above, Frances indicated
that accommodating herself to undergraduate lectures in New Zealand involved learning to sit silently (Noble, 2005).

Elsewhere Frances echoed the binary distinction often drawn between Eastern/Western, dialectic/dialogic, collectivist/individualist approaches to teaching and learning (see Chapter Three), associating a lack of contact between students and lecturers in New Zealand with expectations of independent learning. Frances remarked that compared to “quite a lot of classes” in the PRC, “only two lectures per week” in New Zealand means that “you don’t have much communication... with the lecturer” (interview 1/1, 2006). Similarly, Sharon discussed the kinds of communication that she had observed between lecturers and students in Taiwan and New Zealand, and like Frances, remarked on the associated independence expected of students in her New Zealand university:

I think the studying here is... based on the students. You have to learn about it yourself; you cannot rely on the lecturer. They just give you the outline and the general ideas and you have to study everything by yourself, and that’s different. Like back home the lecturer’s just kind of like an instructor like lead you to analyse the article,... they give you the key points and emphasise that that is really important... and explain really clearly, and then you don’t really have to do like... extra research or everything, so it’s kind of like you just absorb everything, accept everything they teach, and here it’s different. Here (you have to do) really critical thinking, do your own research (interview 1/1, 2006).

Frances and Sharon can be read as both echoing and problematising “culturalist” discourses that construct Eastern and Western teaching/learning approaches in hierarchical, binary terms (McConaghy, 1998, p. 345; also see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Doherty and Singh, 2005). Although earlier Frances had contrasted interactive lectures in her Chinese university with students’ relative passivity in New Zealand, she also noted the active independence expected of students in New Zealand; and Sharon contrasted the “critical thinking” required of students in New Zealand with the “absorp[tion]” of teacher direction required in Taiwan. Notably however, Frances indicated that the independence required of students in New Zealand was partly associated with limited opportunities for communication between lecturers and students; and Sharon, that espoused expectations of students’ independence and critical thinking may mask a kind of pedagogical neglect (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Johnson et al., 2000). For Sharon, pedagogical approaches in Taiwan involved clarity of expectations and clarity of information. There she was confident in a communicative sense; certain of her lecturers’ expectations and of
what she needed to learn. In contrast, in her New Zealand university Sharon found that she could not "rely on the lecturer" and therefore that she needed to "study everything by [her]self". A lack of teacher-student contact and unclear teacher expectations meant that Sharon had difficulty knowing how to "appropriate or accommodate" herself to her New Zealand university classes (Noble, 2005, p. 114).

Yukiko, reflecting on her transition between undergraduate and postgraduate study worlds, referred to a similar loss of confidence and lack of direction. Yukiko described the panic she felt when faced with new coursework expectations, and her resulting sense of illiteracy:

It was a kind of... transition for me and... I just faced how hard it is to come back to studying again.... I just couldn't write, couldn't read, couldn't engage in the readings as much as I could when I was studying in the university, third year, so I was really shocked... how much I couldn't write! [laughs] I couldn't read! Yeah. I was just panicked... for a few weeks (interview 2/2, 2006).

Yukiko explained her lack of communicative confidence as caused by a "huge gap" between course requirements at undergraduate and postgraduate level, noting that both the "quantity and the quality" of reading required for postgraduate study are "different" and "more demanding" than that required at undergraduate level (interview 2/2, 2006). Yukiko's statement problematises a privileging of 'culture' in relation to students' teaching and learning experiences and pedagogical support needs. It highlights how students engage in multiple pedagogical transitions in higher education contexts, not just between different socio-cultural or geographical locales (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003).

While communicative confidence in the accounts above was a broader issue than vocabulary, syntax, and semantics, Sharon and Deanna discussed linguistic matters specifically. Sharon indicated that appropriating or accommodating herself to teaching and learning approaches was much more "straightforward" when working in Mandarin than in English (see Noble, 2005). Deanna reflected on how working in a foreign language may reduce one's ability to appropriate or accommodate oneself to a teaching and learning environment purely because of the extra time necessary for completing tasks:

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7 In contrast with Sharon, Frances described the independence that she experienced in her New Zealand university as freeing. I discuss this later in the chapter.
As a... non-English speaker..., sometimes I know how I would say it in German or maybe I know some English words but it’s maybe not always really the right word, or words can have a different meaning, and very often I had to double check because a word... is a mismatch. I mean it doesn’t fit 100 percent, and it means that we... foreigners have to double check more often which simply takes time (interview 2/2, 2006).

As an international doctoral student, Deanna was required by her PhD supervisor to take one 100-level English paper. She expressed frustration at this requirement, given that she was already sufficiently fluent in English to have been admitted to doctoral study. Deanna was also frustrated at how the English lecturer’s approaches to teaching apparently disregarded both the specific learning needs and language-learning prowess of multilingual students. As an example, Deanna commented on the lecturer’s use of incorrect English grammar as a strategy for teaching correct grammar, explaining that as an experienced language learner she found this strategy linguistically misleading and confusing rather than helpful:

The way I learn language.... I learn from the context, not necessarily because I know this grammar... It’s really a lot with connecting and context, and I think for me it’s good to hear correct English and learn from that. If I hear a lot of bad English, that’s what I kind of memorise, and I probably memorise best what I hear the most often, and if I get this confusing sentence..... I try to figure them out and... and.... I think she’s not aware that this is harder for me if I have to revise those (interview 2/2, 2006).

Deanna noted how pedagogy appropriate for monolingual students can undermine the communicative confidence of multilingual students and reduce their success in accommodating or appropriating new approaches to teaching and learning (see Noble, 2005). She reflected on how even one unknown word can limit a student’s understanding of classroom tasks or disadvantage her during assessment activities. Deanna contrasted assumptions of monolingualism in New Zealand with educational policies in Switzerland that actively support (or accommodate) multilingual students; such as allowing the use of German-French or German-Italian dictionaries in university examinations. Like Skyrme (2007), Deanna noted the irony that while multilingual students in New Zealand are expected to adjust to English-only teaching and learning approaches, the educational institutions that actively recruit them apparently make few adjustments in order to support their learning (also see Haigh, 2002).

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8 English was Deanna’s third language.
Communicative confidence was also discussed by both international and New Zealand students in relation to interactions between students in teaching/learning environments. Women noted how unfamiliar behavioural norms, a lack of connection with other people and a lack of "shared history" or common understandings limited their confidence in interacting with others (Lugones, 1987, p. 12). They also noted how shared experiences and friendship with one or more other people increased their confidence and made communication easier. I discuss communicative confidence in relation to social and behavioural norms, social connectedness, and shared histories in the remaining sections of the chapter.

**Familiarity and agreement with behavioural and social norms**

Seven international students (Rose, Deanna, Fiona, Frances, Nikki, Yukiko, and Sharon) and two New Zealand students (Laura and Stella) reflected during our interviews on behavioural and social norms, teaching and learning. Nikki and Frances discussed computer use, contrasting the heavy reliance on computers in their New Zealand universities with the much lower use of computers in their respective universities in Norway (Nikki) and the PRC (Frances). Rose, whose study in New Zealand required her to work in health clinics, discussed behavioural norms in relation to dress. Long sleeves and a hijab were the accepted form of dress for women in health clinics in Rose’s ‘home’ country, while short sleeves and no head covering was the accepted form of dress in New Zealand. For Rose, negotiation and compromise ensured a level of accommodation and comfort in a new clinical setting. Rose agreed to wear short sleeves when working in clinical settings and her course coordinators allowed her to wear a hijab.

More extended discussions on social and behavioural norms were around student-staff relations and teaching methods. In terms of the former, Fiona and Deanna commented on relationships between staff and students at Masters (Fiona) and doctoral (Deanna) levels. Both women drew a contrast between student-staff relations in their former institutions; in Fiona’s case, in Canada, and Deanna’s, Switzerland. Here Fiona compares student-staff relations at undergraduate level and her expectations of how these would differ at Masters level study:

F: When I was an undergrad I was looking so forward to becoming a Masters student because Masters students had completely different relationships with their teachers...
There was like... much more interaction and barbecues and pub stuff and like it was more you know involved= 
V = more social= 
F = more social yeah. And you’re part of a world, you know, or something. Whereas an undergrad... you’re very much a number (interview 1/1, 2005).

In contrast with her expectations and observations of postgraduate student-staff relations in Canada, Fiona found that in her New Zealand department there was limited social interaction between academic staff and postgraduate students. She described the relationship between her and her academic supervisor as “hierarchical”, as limiting communication, and as a source of frustration:

I have a family. I mean I’m not a single twenty one year old or [in need] of... life guidance or whatever, .... I would like to be able to communicate with [him]. because I like that with everyone actually. I can’t stand hierarchies....... And really,... if there’s a problem, I really don’t feel that I can say it to [him] (interview 1/1, 2005).

Deanna compared relations between doctoral students and staff at her university in Switzerland and in her department in a New Zealand university. Initially, she reflected on the respective patterns of social interaction as simply “different”, having positive and negative aspects, including different patterns of interaction, and different levels of learning support:

I think the relationship here between students and teachers is different. I think in Switzerland students are normally a little bit older when they come to university. And I feel they are more regarded as adults, and I think this can have advantages and disadvantages. I think it does have the advantage that people are just treated... really as adults. But I think especially the fact that here... there is a Student Learning Centre shows that the students are kind of still allowed to not know exactly how you learn or how you write and back home you’re more just expected to know that at high school (interview 1/2, 2005).

While acknowledging the significant support available through her New Zealand university’s student learning centre, Deanna also noted the apparent disregard for doctoral students at departmental level.

Sometimes I felt like people are not interested in what I’m doing, like other lecturers where I thought they could be interested, like there could be a key word that they could be interested in like ‘what... did you do there?’ or ‘how did you do this?’ ....[but] I feel like the PhDs are, well they are just PhDs and the lecturer and staff is again another group, the higher end hierarchy (interview 1/2, 2005).

Noble (2005, p. 114) argues that a person’s comfort or “sense of ‘fit’” in a given social world “is founded on [her] ability to be recognised”. In our second interview Deanna drew a striking contrast between the ways in which doctoral students were recognised in her Swiss university and in her department in New Zealand. In the former, doctoral
students were seen as integral to the department; but in the latter (from Deanna’s experience) they were barely “recognised as belonging” (Noble, 2005, p. 114):

To say it short, in Switzerland PhDs are bad paid staff members, but they are recognised as staff members, and here they are not, they are students … they are kind of some additional stuff [laughs] (interview 22/2, 2006).

Fiona and Deanna’s reflections on student-staff relations at postgraduate level suggest two things. First, like Violet’s remarks on undergraduate teaching earlier, they disrupt the construction of a pure ‘Western’ academic tradition (see Doherty and Singh, 2005), highlighting marked differences in departmental practices and student-staff interactions across three so-called Western academic contexts. Second, like Bullen and Kenway (2003) and Skyrme (2007), they highlight how the privileging of autonomy and independence in some higher education contexts may result in pedagogical neglect or social disconnection (see Chapter Three). This is of concern from both a practical and an ethical perspective. In practical terms, and as other scholars have noted, social connectedness is crucial to student wellbeing (see Ramsey et al., 2007; Rosenthal et al., 2007). It facilitates both a sense of belonging and one’s “intersubjective engagement in the world as human beings with acknowledged social capacities” (Noble, 2005, p. 116). Deanna and Fiona’s experiences are also of concern from an ethical perspective. The university they attended does not market its postgraduate research programmes in terms of “do-it-yourself” study (Skyrme, 2007, p. 357), but as characterised by excellent supervision and support provision.

While Deanna found student-staff relations in her New Zealand department both disappointing and problematic, she recognised that separation between doctoral students and staff was exacerbated by both student and staff behaviours. Deanna noted the exclusion of students from some departmental social events. Here she recalls a mid-day Christmas party held in the departmental tearoom:

I just went... into the tearoom to eat lunch, and I came in and all the lecturers and staff were there having nice things, wine [laughs], grapes, cheese, sweet things and yeah and I was like 'oops, there is a party going on!' and ... I think our head of department was a bit embarrassed and he just said to me 'yeah come and join' and I don’t know, I felt strange. I just ate my leftovers [laughs], sat there, ate and left because I felt that they should have invited us (interview 1/2, 2005).

Deanna also highlighted student behaviour that contributed to a lack of social interaction between students and staff, stating that “PhDs don’t integrate that well… so there are two
sides” (interview 1/2, 2005). Deanna acknowledged that doctoral students in her department rarely used the departmental tearoom or attended regular seminars. Rather than suggesting a need for special departmental programmes or other initiatives to promote “integrat[ion]” between staff and students, she emphasised the value of informal interactive opportunities; for example, through shared use of the departmental tearoom (on a daily basis and for special events), joint seminars, and informal discussions about research. Although Deanna acknowledged that the development of social connections depends to some extent on the active engagement of all those involved in a teaching/learning world, her reflections also suggest that the onus for recognising students’ legitimate presence rests on their departments (Haigh, 2002). Doctoral students’ disengagement with departmental events may have been an inevitable outcome of the department’s failure to recognise and affirm their “legitimate participa[tion]” at a systemic and interpersonal level (Noble, 2005, p. 116).

The previous section discussed Sharon and Frances’ reflections on different kinds of student-teacher interactions in undergraduate lecture contexts. Interestingly, although she described lectures in New Zealand as "difficult or different", Frances also indicated that she had enjoyed encountering unfamiliar teaching and learning behaviours in her New Zealand university. When I asked Frances about her expectations for the future, she stated that upon her return to the PRC, she would “miss the lecture, the class here”. Here she explains why:

Here... the lecture is the start of your studying, it's not the end of your study... and then like there are different ideas in the lecture. The professor talks about different things. It's quite open, open idea, open answer ... quite thought provoking and yeah I like to think about it, and then go to the library to look for this information, for the references. It's kind of independent working... And also you can choose whatever classes you like but you don't need to worry about those classes you don't like because you don't need to take them, whereas in China we have to take some compulsory classes which I don't quite like .... I think because you need to spend more time on [the] stuff you don't like, that means you have less time to explore or to look for the information or the stuff you like and also the classes in China's quite intense, so you don't have much free time, yeah to do whatever you like (interview 1/1, 2006).

Frances’ comment highlights how familiar social and behavioural norms while easy or comfortable may also be constraining, and how encounters with unfamiliar and initially uncomfortable social and behavioural norms may also create opportunities to be and behave differently. As noted in the previous section, Frances found the smaller amount of
direct interaction between the teacher and students in New Zealand problematic, but she also suggested that this provided a relished opportunity for freedom; choice over which classes to attend, which ideas to investigate further and so on. Having successfully “appropriate[d]” her new teaching/learning environment (Noble, 2005, p. 114), Frances was ambivalent about returning ‘home’ to the PRC.

Stella and Wakuwaku, both New Zealand students, and Yukiko, a full-fee paying international student, drew comparisons between behavioural norms governing teaching behaviour in undergraduate and postgraduate contexts in New Zealand. Stella compared large and impersonal teacher-centred approaches in undergraduate lectures with smaller, more interactive, student-centred teaching in postgraduate classes:

I found the postgraduate paper is really really different to just the ordinary 1, 2, 300 level papers. We have only six students in the class, and... actually it’s totally student-orientated class which is so, so nice, you just... learn a lot through that course because you talk a lot. You have to talk, so you have to think before them, which means that process makes you learn really, really effectively, compared to other, just ordinary papers for other degrees (NZ student from Korea, interview 2/7, 2006).

Wakuwaku described doctoral study as allowing more independence than undergraduate and postgraduate study, but described it as involving an extension of smaller-scale tasks at postgraduate and undergraduate level rather than a major transition. Wakuwaku related the kind of self-discipline required for doctoral study to that required in her former paid employment:

Because of my background, like studying...being a student in Japan and working in the company over there I’m very very confident about... sort of disciplining myself, and I’m really good at that. I can sit down and just work through quite methodologically, which is no problem for me, so that’s not my concern. So I actually I don’t feel much transition yet, maybe it might come later... once I start to get into writing and so forth, but yeah to me it’s just an extension of what I’ve been doing (NZ PhD student from Japan, interview 1/1, 2005).

Notably and unlike Deanna, Wakuwaku spoke warmly of the collegiality and supportiveness that characterised her department. This may provide an explanation for her much more positive assessment of doctoral study. (I discuss collegiality or social connectedness more fully in the next section).

In contrast with Wakuwaku, Yukiko found it difficult to adjust to the degree of independence required at postgraduate level in New Zealand. She found her department’s expectation that students choose their own research topics especially problematic, saying: “I just feel there’s no anchor until you grasp you know, grab what you want to do.... I’m
just the person just give me the topic, I do well then” [laughs] (interview 2/2, 2006). For Yukiko, like Sharon (earlier), expectations of autonomy were felt as a lack of pedagogical direction (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003), resulting in a degree of unease or discomfort that made “acting in that setting” difficult (Noble, 2005, p. 114).

Social connectedness

Lugones (1987, p. 12) states that if a person is “humanly bonded” with another person in a world, she can be ‘at ease because of them”, even if the world is otherwise “hostile”. This is akin to Noble’s (2005) emphasis on the significance of recognition not as “the valorisation of difference, but the acknowledgement of people as legitimate participants in a given setting, as ‘fully human’, which is vital to the experience of being comfortable” (p. 115). In all of my interviews with students, supportive connections with other people featured as a major factor shaping women’s sense of wellbeing; sometimes, mitigating the effects of other, difficult circumstances. Conversely, a lack of significant connections was noted as a primary source of unease and/or unhappiness.

Factors women noted as limiting the development of social connections included assumptions of others’ difference, large and impersonal teaching environments, dismissive or disinterested staff members, limited interactive opportunities and/or limited self-confidence in initiating interactions. Women also noted factors that promoted the development of social connections. These included shared understandings or experiences, the perception of another’s ‘difference’ as desirable, smaller class sizes, a collegial departmental atmosphere, and opportunities and confidence to connect with other people. In terms of shared understandings or experiences, Violet, Deanna, and Jillian (a New Zealand student), described it as “comfortable” or “natural” to build connections with others who look similar to or have shared similar experiences as oneself, or who come from the same country (echoing Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007, see Chapters Four and Six). For example, Violet described her Malaysian peers as preferring to spend time with other Malaysians rather than New Zealanders, saying, “I think the sort of thing that attract them is like.. they are my people, you know” (interview 1/2, 2005). Violet noted that her determination to make “Kiwi friends” at her New Zealand university was the result of a conscious decision, and one that resulted in some inevitable discomfort. In our second
interview, when I asked what advice she would give a prospective international student, Violet stated, “it’s really your own option, either you have to be comfortable [then] you’ll probably only interact with international people, or you really want to go and make an effort to get to know some Kiwis” (interview 2/2, 2006). Violet’s statement highlights how discomfort is both inevitable and potentially productive when interacting with others across differences. I discuss this further in Chapter Ten.

Considering difference and desirability, Frances, Yukiko, and Sharon compared patterns of interaction between “local” and “foreign” students in their ‘home’ universities and in their university in New Zealand. They noted New Zealand students’ apparent disinterest in predominantly Asian international students, contrasting this with the desirability of visible “foreigners” in the PRC (Frances), Japan (Yukiko), and Taiwan (Sharon). Frances explained the contrast in foreigners’ reception in terms of their scarcity in the PRC, and the large numbers of international students in New Zealand:

If some foreigners [are] in my class we’ll be really curious and we’ll be really interested in their culture, and in their life, and in how they find the class or... all those different aspects of their life, whereas I think maybe there are too many international students here, so the Kiwi students don’t pay much attention to them, or they are not curious about them (interview 1/1, 2006).

Yukiko, however, highlighted disparate power as shaping whose difference was constructed as desirable in teaching and learning worlds (see Doherty and Singh, 2005; Mohanty et al., 1991; Noble, 2005). She contrasted the desirability of “Western” difference in Japanese educational institutions with the undesirability of Japanese (or Asian) difference in New Zealand (also see Chapter Six). Sharon noted the asymmetric desirability of linguistic ‘difference’, acknowledging that although very few “foreign” students currently study in Taiwan, they would likely be welcomed by “local” students because of the desirability of the English language.

Sharon, who remarked on most New Zealand students’ apparent disinterest in international students, noted one exception. She recalled how in one class, she was approached by a New Zealand student who had taught English in Japan and the PRC, and studied Chinese language. Sharon highlighted how for this student, ‘Asian-ness’ was

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9 Violet’s oppositional use of the terms “Kiwi” and “international” is discussed in Chapter Six.
apparently desirable and a basis for recognition: "Probably... she goes like 'Oh yeah there’s an Asian student' [laughter]'" (interview 1/1, 2006). Sharon described herself as able to connect with the other student not only because they had some “common ground” as a basis for discussion, but also because of the other student’s recognition of Sharon’s legitimate presence as an Asian student in a New Zealand university classroom (see Noble, 2005). Sharon suggested that an open attitude is necessary if students are to recognise and connect with ‘others’ (Haigh, 2002). She said, “If the Kiwi student [is] really interested in cultures, we will get along better”.

Laura and Wakuwaku, both New Zealand students, highlighted how large undergraduate classes in New Zealand universities may also contribute to New Zealand students’ apparent disinterest. Laura, an American-born New Zealand postgraduate student, spoke of how before starting university, she had looked forward to university life as an opportunity to make friends. In contrast, she had found that students rarely talked to each other in large undergraduate classes, unless already part of an established peer group:

I thought I’m starting classes... I’ll get to know people in class, like I’ll just sit next to someone... but no one talked. Like the people sitting next to you wouldn’t talk to you...
So... actually my first year here I was really isolated (interview 1/2, 2005).

Laura found undergraduate classes socially isolating, despite being a ‘white’ student able to pass as a Pākehā New Zealander. When I asked what suggestions she would make for other students planning to attend a New Zealand university, Laura indicated the importance of having realistic rather than high expectations, saying, “This sounds a bit sad, but maybe to not have very high expectations of making friends through lectures and classes because, you know, they’ll probably be disappointed” (interview 2/2, 2006). Wakuwaku, who described herself as a “mature” student, identified both class sizes and age differences as contributing to an initial sense of social isolation as an undergraduate student. She noted how a sense of recognition can “accrue over time” (Noble, 2005, p. 115), and like Lugones (1987), emphasised the significance of connections with (or recognition from) even a few people in a classroom context. Wakuwaku said, “just a few people, a couple of people who you can just talk [to] in the class... that makes a huge difference” (interview 1/1, 2006).
Like Deanna in the previous section, international students Rose, Yukiko, and Roja, all noted staff members' demeanour as contributing to a sense of being socially connected, and recognised or otherwise. Yukiko described how she had actively developed friendly relations with staff members in her department, and how this had assisted her greatly in coping academically. Rose noted how key tutors and clinical colleagues who were highly supportive had to some extent mitigated the unease caused by other, unhelpful, unavailable, or inconsiderate staff members. Roja, reflecting on the teaching staff in two New Zealand institutions, noted her preference for the one in which staff members were consistently caring and supportive, especially when she was experiencing difficult personal circumstances:

"[Names institution] I enjoy the most, you know. I have bad times... physically and a lot of things I went through, but the teachers, the director, they are wonderful. They just back you up. You know,... 'if you’re not well just take rest, and come back' you know, fantastic (NZ student from India, interview 1/1, 2006)."

Lecturers’ recognition of Roja as “fully human” (Noble, 2005, p. 115) supported her recovery and successful return to study.

Other factors women noted as contributing to or precluding a sense of being socially connected in teaching and learning contexts included being busy, demanding coursework requirements, a lack of communicative confidence, and a lack of communicative opportunities. Arui, a New Zealand student from the PRC recalled how her own busyness with coursework requirements had made it difficult for her to help an international student in her class when the student approached and requested assistance. Here Arui reflects on the tension she felt between wanting to help the other student and needing to complete her own academic work:

"A [She asked] me for help. I said ‘ok’, but sometimes... inside the class we all need to do something, I'm really, you know [in a] hurry, I need to do something, and also answer her question...
V That’s quite a difficult role for you to be in.
A Yeah I really want to help her, you know, she’s so nice, also really need help. And I want help but sometimes I also need to finish mine (interview 1/1, 2006)."

Arui’s statement suggests the value of programming in-class interactive opportunities that allow students to connect with and assist each other.

Fiona, Yukiko, Miho, and Sharon (all international students) and Stella (a New Zealand student) referred to communicative confidence as helpful in developing
connections with others. Fiona, a native English-speaker who had moved to New Zealand from a non-English-speaking context, commented on linguistic fluency in New Zealand. She contrasted a sense of social connection in New Zealand with feeling like an "outsider" where she had lived previously, noting how being able to share "small talk" and humorous interactions in New Zealand facilitated others’ recognition of her legitimate presence and her own sense of belonging (see Noble, 2005). Yukiko contrasted the impossibility of having both local and international friends during her first year at a New Zealand high school, with her sense of connection to both groups of students from Year Thirteen onwards. Like Fiona, Yukiko and Miho (an international student from Japan) described the ability to “chat” with others as an important basis for connection and recognition. Wakuwaku, Arui, Stella, and Sharon noted how a sense of connection is made easier through having shared experiences to chat about, and shared day-to-day understandings as a basis for conversation. I discuss this below in terms of having a sense of shared history.

Yukiko and Miho, both international students from Japan, described connections with local students and staff as allowing a sense of “being adjusted” (Miho) and offering an avenue for practical and informational support (see Ramsey et al., 2007). Yukiko acknowledged how developing such friendships takes persistent action and deliberate boldness (see Chapter Six). Sharon indicated that the question of how to actively foster connections between people in classroom contexts might be a worthwhile consideration for teachers. When I asked Sharon how she found tutorials as a forum for teaching and learning she replied “most of the time I just remain silent”, and acknowledged that she was not alone in doing so (interview 1/1, 2006). Sharon linked students’ silence to not knowing anyone (see below), contrasting the lack of connection between students in her New Zealand course with a course structure in Taiwan that ensures students know each other and participate readily in class discussions:

S Back home because you all know your classmates, you know everyone and, oh yeah, about the classmates, totally different here. You don’t really have classmates here in your class. You don’t know anyone here and back home it’s like... I majored in English so I stay with the class, with... other 40 students... we remain in the same class for four years. So we know each other.
V And so... every course you do together? Every different class pretty much all together?

10 The final year of high school in New Zealand.
In her observations above, Sharon highlighted how just as communicative confidence may limit the extent to which a student feels connected to or recognised by other students (see Yukiko, earlier), so a lack of social connectedness or recognition can limit communicative possibilities. In Sharon’s Taiwanese university, an affective sense of connection was built up over time; hours, days, and years of working alongside other students. In contrast, Sharon found little connection in her New Zealand programme, since she didn’t “really have classmates”.

**A sense of shared history**

Five New Zealand and four international students spoke about how a sense of shared history or lack of shared history with others shaped their experiences of moving across and between teaching and learning worlds. Women described a sense of shared history as a basis for communicative confidence and the development of social connections; in relation to teaching and learning specifically; and as a basis for understanding ‘foreignness’. They indicated how it is problematic to assume that particular students or groups of students share similar histories or common backgrounds. They also described how a sense of shared history can be disrupted through moving to study and live away from family and friends, creating communicative challenges upon one’s return ‘home’.

Wakuwaku and Arui (both New Zealand students and recent migrants) referred to shared histories or a lack of shared history in terms of common and uncommon experiences, for Wakuwaku, of employment; and for Arui, of family life. These women described common experiences as allowing a sense of connection or recognition and ease when communicating with other students on campus. Wakuwaku recalled how as an undergraduate student in New Zealand, she had felt a sense of connection with other “older” students; people who like her, had returned to academia after some time in paid employment. Arui (also a ‘mature’ student) however, described a lack of shared history with others who had returned for further study after engaging in other occupations. She
found that since many of these students had family responsibilities while she did not, it was difficult to find things to talk about with them: "I'm older age but I have [laughs] no family affairs, so... no common language ... [laughs]" (interview 1/1, 2006).

Sharon, an international student, and Stella, a New Zealand student, described how a lack of shared history can limit rapport, or the extent to which communication and friendship can move past superficial pleasantries. Sharon described as “common ground” shared experiences and understandings that make communication possible and in a classroom environment, non-threatening. Stella referred to shared histories in terms of “common cultural background[s]”, describing how shared or disparate day-to-day knowledge and behavioural norms might foster or limit both a sense of connection and the possibility for “deeper” communication:

Like for example, nursery rhymes. I never know them in English. Probably we have the similar ones in Korea with the same... tune and melody and stuff but ... maybe you can see those as... minor factors but... because you lack those things you miss lots of things. ... When you have a conversation with somebody you might start talking with those little things but to develop the deeper relationship with that person, actually those ones are the important things to have the rapport between you and the person you talk to, to... make your conversation deeper and bigger... And then obviously... the way of thinking...... I know what is polite and what's not polite, but the way to express respect to other people is different (interview 2/2, 2006).

While Noble (2005) associates others’ recognition with a sense of comfort, he also highlights the discomfort that can result from misrecognition, or one’s reduction to homogenised assumptions of sameness. Sharon, Violet, and Laura highlighted as problematic teaching approaches that assume students share the same history or background. Sharon, for whom journal articles and theoretical writing were new, found that her coursework in New Zealand required negotiation not only of new content, but also of new ways of reading, writing, and thinking that were not explicitly taught in her university classes. Sharon was unable to access useful advice on how to “accommodate” herself to her new teaching and learning world (p. 114), despite actively seeking assistance from lecturers, friends and student support services. Laura, who had previously studied in Pacific contexts where the majority of students shared or respected her Christian faith, described as alienating the view she encountered in New Zealand university classes: that “every other religion is fine but Christianity is horrible” (interview 1/2, 2005). Laura described as problematic the assumption implicit in lecturers’ dismissal of Christianity: that no students in university classes could seriously identify as Christian.
Violet expressed irritation concerning a tutor’s remarks on a laboratory assignment. The tutor, who had initially come to New Zealand from Russia as an international student, evidently assumed that the Malaysian international students in her class would struggle as she had writing academic English. Violet recalled the tutor’s comments:

On the first assignment... we just found that all four Malaysian in the lab... all got returned assignment, ‘ask the Kiwi students to... proof-read your work before you hand in’. And it was like.... that’s discrimination! Kiwi doesn’t equal good English. I don’t mind her saying like, ‘try and get someone with good English, or PhD’ you know, they’d really have the standard, and have them proof-read, that’s all right! But... why is she stressing the Kiwi? (international undergraduate FFPS from Malaysia, interview 1/2, 2005).

Violet and her friends were annoyed by the insinuation that their English language skills were lacking, and that New Zealand students would necessarily be more proficient than them at academic English. (Violet and her friends had previously studied in English). Although the tutor’s background as an ex-international student mitigated the discriminatory implications of her remarks, Violet remained surprised at the tutor’s assumption that international students necessarily share common language issues, and New Zealand students, common English-language skills.

Jillian (a New Zealand student), and Violet and Deanna (both international students) highlighted how the development and disruption of shared histories is always in process, creating challenges for those who move between living and study contexts in one part of the world and another. For example, all three women described how having been ‘foreign’ elsewhere, they had developed a new sense of empathy for “foreigners” and international students in their home countries. Yukiko and Violet also described having new experiences away from family and former friends as making communication about one’s experiences difficult, and as disrupting a sense of shared history at ‘home’. Here Violet reflects on a conversation with some young friends in Malaysia in which she could not adequately convey the ambivalence inherent in international study:

They’re also excited and...when they ask me ‘How was it?’ I was kind of... it’s hard to answer! I mean...the good time is so little. Most of the time you’re finding yourself so isolated and it’s so different from what other people say, so I was like, ‘It’s really hard to answer that!..... You have issues in New Zealand and then you go back to your own home country...you will still deal with another set of issues. There is not a perfect thing (interview 2/2, 2006).

Having never studied overseas, Violet’s friends were excited about the prospect of doing so. Because they did not share her experiences of international study, however, Violet
found it difficult to explain that (contrary to their expectations) “there is not a perfect thing”. Yukiko reflected on how she had become a different person through studying in New Zealand (see Lugones, 1987). Having “appropriate[d]” and “accommodate[d]” herself to a New Zealand living and learning environment over several years (Noble, 2005, p. 114), she found herself a ‘stranger’ to her friends and family when she returned to Japan: “I was totally different really; people thought I’m a foreigner” (interview 2/2, 2006). Yukiko’s experiences studying elsewhere had changed her, disrupting the sense of shared history she had previously enjoyed with friends.

8.4 Concluding thoughts
In this chapter, I have highlighted how multiple factors intersect to shape women’s experiences of teaching and learning worlds. I have shown how women’s accounts problematise assumptions of international students’ difference and New Zealand students’ sameness; and how homogenising assumptions that construct some people in deficit terms are an inadequate basis for educational research and practice (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Doherty and Singh, 2005; Madge et al., 2009, Chapter Three). The data in this chapter suggests some key implications in terms of student support, pedagogy, and institutional practices in higher education. These are as follows.

First, women’s accounts revealed the necessity of practical information that is easily accessible, accurate and comprehensive. Examples of important practical information include that pertaining to course fees; who to go to for different kinds of help; and how, when, or through whom to access course-specific advice. Other informational support might include explicit discussion of social and behavioural norms in the particular study environment and (as in Rose’s case) opportunities for negotiation around these. For some of the women in this study, individual staff members were an important source of practical information, as were generalised study support programmes (student learning centres) and peer mentors. Women indicated that more carefully targeted study support, peer mentoring, and/or informational processes within academic departments might also be useful.

Second is the importance of support when ‘travelling’ or experiencing transition. Women’s accounts indicated the need for ongoing rather than one-off orientation opportunities, not only for students beginning tertiary study, but also for those moving
between different levels of study, and starting part-way through an academic year. They also highlighted the possible value of ‘exit’ support, opportunities to reflect on and prepare for the return ‘home’, or maybe, the transition from study to a paid-work environment. Janice, who had faced considerable difficulty withdrawing from a professional programme, indicated the importance of clear processes for students who wish to change courses or academic programmes. Nikki, who found her studies incompatible with family commitments, highlighted the importance of flexible arrangements and departmental support especially for students with families.

Third, women’s accounts problematised a view of higher education teaching in New Zealand as necessarily of a higher quality than teaching elsewhere. Teacher-centred, impersonal lecturing approaches that characterise undergraduate teaching in New Zealand universities were highlighted as alienating, isolating, and/or ineffective for some women. So too were teaching and supervision approaches that privileged and expected autonomy and independence at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (see Sharon and Deanna’s accounts). International and New Zealand students alike indicated that student-centred teaching practices in contexts where students and staff know and trust each other are more likely to foster understanding, engagement with learning material, communicative confidence and a sense of ease. Women described as effective teaching the use of clear articulation, clear explanations and expectations, engaging and interesting delivery, and the use of visual material to support teaching points. They suggested the importance of recognising students’ prior experiences and supporting students appropriately, while also exercising caution before assuming their sameness or difference to each other.

These findings highlight the importance of teaching that is responsive to students’ specific needs. They also resonate with Friedenberg’s (2002, p. 320) assertion that the use of “sheltered techniques” when teaching is likely to benefit all students (see Chapter Three). The question of what constitutes effective pedagogy (rather a preoccupation with students’ adjustment to ‘how we do things here’) should be at the heart of conversations around teaching and learning in internationalised education contexts (see Haigh, 2002). Such ‘conversations’ should nevertheless include attention to specific pedagogical approaches that may support particular students more effectively, or facilitate students’
capacity to learn in a new teaching and learning environment (Noble, 2005). For example, Deanna highlighted the importance of recognising the skilfulness and specific learning needs of multilingual students, not only through attention to vocabulary used and the provision of contextual cues, but also through other teaching practices such as allowing extra time for completing course requirements, and the use of dictionaries in exam contexts.

Fourth is the issue of pedagogy at postgraduate and doctoral levels. Yukiko indicated the importance of recognising the overwhelming unfamiliarity of postgraduate study requirements for some students, and offering ongoing study support. Fiona and Deanna highlighted how departmental practices might foster social and academic interaction rather than a sense of isolation. Such practices might include inviting postgraduate students to departmental social functions, encouraging shared use of departmental tearooms, and encouraging students' attendance at departmental seminars. Women's accounts highlighted how the reification of autonomy in academic departments is problematic both from a student support and a pedagogical perspective (see Johnson et al., 2000). As Fiona, Deanna and Wakuwaku indicated, a sense of collegiality and mutual respect is important not only in terms of ensuring student wellbeing, but also so that students will speak freely and openly about research issues as they arise.

Fifth is the importance of fostering a sense of connection with others, both staff (as in the paragraph above) and students. Women highlighted how connections with one or some other people were significant in allowing opportunities for practical and informational issues to be addressed, fostering communicative confidence, allowing the discovery and development of shared histories, and an affective sense of belonging. This suggests the importance of fostering opportunities within educational institutions for students to interact with each other through clubs etc., in classes, and in tutorials (see Ramsey et al., 2007). Obviously, large-scale undergraduate lectures may make this difficult. How lecturing practices might allow students to feel part of a class rather than an anonymous member of a large and disconnected group is worth further research attention. Women's accounts in this chapter suggest that such practices might be as simple as allowing space in lectures for one-to-one discussion, and lecturers being positive and approachable with students. For some of the women in my study, a sense of
connection with just one other person was significant in fostering a greater sense of ease, confidence, and connection. Similarly, individual moments where staff expressed human care and concern were remembered and deeply valued (see Roja, earlier).

Sixth is the importance of recognising women's creativity and capacity for surviving, accommodating to and enjoying unfamiliar and at times uncomfortable experiences. While world-travelling by definition involves experiencing discomfort or unease (Lugones, 1987), this is not always a negative thing. As many of the women noted, uncomfortable encounters with new approaches to teaching and learning also offered rich and interesting experiences, and fostered new ways of seeing oneself and others (see Chapter Six). This is not to say that pedagogical indifference and misrecognition, or inadequate teaching and student support are acceptable. It is simply to suggest the need to critically reflect on one's teaching and student support practices before constructing those we teach in deficit terms (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Chalmers and Volet, 1997; Doherty and Singh, 2005).
Chapter 9 – Homes and being ‘at home’ in New Zealand and elsewhere

9.1 Introduction
This chapter considers women’s reflections on living in New Zealand, and moving between homes in New Zealand and in other places. It is a companion chapter to the previous one, and is similarly concerned with research questions one and two: how an international/local student binary relates to women’s interview accounts; and how research that centres women, including women partners of international students, might inform international education research, policy and practice. Throughout the chapter, I use the word ‘home’ in reference to women’s literal living situations, and the roles, relationships, expectations, and memories associated with these (see Evans and Robinson-Pant, 2008). I also use it in a symbolic or metaphoric sense; for example, how women spoke about feeling ‘at home’ or ‘not at home’ in a place (after Noble, 2005). My aim in this chapter is not to reinscribe a “nostalgic and universalistic concept of home”, but to consider how women in my study spoke about homes as “an active practising of place” through the carrying out of everyday activities, the development and maintenance of social relationships, and ongoing emotional and identity work (Johnson, 1996, p. 461; citing de Certeau, 1984). I am interested in women’s references to homes as ambivalent, shifting sites:

space[s] of belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear,...invested with meanings, emotions, experiences and relationships that lie at the heart of human life...[as] both material and symbolic and, located on thresholds between memory and nostalgia for the past, everyday life in the present and future dreams and fears (Blunt and Varley, 2004, p. 3).

A rationale for the chapter is provided in Chapter Three; namely, the privileging of autonomy, independence, and public selves in higher education, and the related inattention to women partners of international students in international education research, policy and practice. The chapter pays “close attention to the spaces of everyday life”, endeavouring “to keep women visible...where their activities [have tended] to slip
into the shadow of dominant models” (Dyck, 2005, p. 234).\(^1\) It also highlights connections between women’s reflections on homes and the broader context(s) within which their reflections are situated, shaped by political, social, and geographical relations, and shifts in space and time (see Blunt and Varley, 2004; Dyck, 2005; Ryan, 2007).

The chapter is organised into two main sections. These draw mostly on women’s interview accounts, and to a lesser extent, excerpts from my participant observation journal. Section 9.2 discusses three key factors that emerged in interviews as shaping women’s active “place-making” and sense of self in particular homes (Dyck, 2005, p. 233). These include the availability or unavailability of practical information both prior to and after shifting to a new place; the need to negotiate new occupational roles and/or new social and behavioural norms; and the development and maintenance of familial relationships and other social networks. Section 9.3 highlights some implications drawn from women’s accounts for higher education research, policy and practice.

9.2 Factors that shaped women’s place-making

Nineteen of the twenty women in my project spoke explicitly about homes and a sense of being ‘at home’ or otherwise in particular contexts. The most extended discussions in this regard were with Anita, Xena and Rose; three of the four women who took part in the project as international students’ partners.\(^2\) This is not surprising given that for each of these women, coming to New Zealand involved spending much larger periods of time than previously being physically at home; for Anita and Xena due to a shift from full-time study (Anita) or professional employment (Xena) to initial unemployment, and in Xena’s case, from paid work to working primarily as a mother. For Rose, moving to New Zealand involved a shift from full-time professional employment to full-time distance

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\(^1\) Dominant models include those that privilege or assume students’ independence and autonomy, and overlook the presence of women whose partners are international students (also see Chapter Three). Scholars have noted how dominant models in migration research have also often rendered women’s lives invisible (for example, see Ho, 2006; Leckie, 1995).

\(^2\) Rose also completed an eighteen month course while in New Zealand, and so (as explained in Chapter Five) is included in my project as both an international student’s partner and a full-fee paying international student.
study. Although Rose lived in the same city as her educational institution while studying, as a distance student she worked mainly from home.

Although this chapter especially foregrounds Anita, Xena and Rose’s accounts, they were not the only women who reflected on homes or a sense of being ‘at home’ during their interviews. Others included eight international students (Yukiko, Violet, Sharon, Nikki, Deanna, Miho, Frances, and Fiona); and eight of the nine New Zealand students (Arui, Janice, Laura, Jillian, Stella, Roja, Jordan and Wakuwaku). Janice and Jordan were the only women to speak about homes who were not either international students or recent migrants to New Zealand. Janice recalled her experiences of moving between her family home in a large New Zealand city and a university residential hall in a much smaller city. Jordan reflected on her experiences as an exchange student in Canada, and the factors that had influenced her place-making while she lived there. Although Janice is included in the study more broadly as both a New Zealand student and an international student’s partner, her account is less central in this chapter than those of Anita, Xena and Rose. This is because she reflected only briefly and in retrospect on issues concerning her living situation, recalling her first year as a New Zealand student before she met and married her current partner. As both an international student’s partner and a New Zealand student, Janice’s account usefully highlights the limits of considering analytical categories such as ‘international’, ‘migrant’ and ‘local’ as bounded, coherent, or necessarily distinct from each other.

Like women’s reflections on teaching and learning worlds in the previous chapter, women’s reflections on homes and being at home differed. Women described place-making as a physical, social, and emotional process that “is intensely political, both in its internal intimacies and through its interfaces with a wider world” (Blunt, 2005, p. 510; Dyck, 2005). Some women spoke about homes that functioned as safe spaces (Pratt, 2002); characterised by familiarity, human connection, shared day-to-day understandings and easy communication. Women also reflected on homes as involving significant obligations; as isolating, lonely and/or depressing; and emphasised the importance of different kinds of connections with others both in and beyond the immediate home environment. Some women spoke about homes that were marked by unfamiliarity, difficult relationships, misunderstanding, and miscommunication or little communication;
and some associated unfamiliarity with excitement and a sense of freedom. While identifying factors that made coping with or living in new homes more or less difficult, women also described their creative responses to difficulties and unfamiliarity, and outlined active strategies for surviving and thriving in new places.

The availability or unavailability of practical information

Women described the availability or otherwise of practical information as a key factor that shaped their initial place-making when living in a new location. Echoing the findings of other migrant and international education literature, women in my study identified contact with other people, both long-term ‘locals’ and more experienced ‘newcomers’, as crucial for accessing locally-based, practical information (see De Verthelyi, 1995; Myburgh et al., 2002; Myles and Cheng, 2003; Ramsey et al., 2007; Ryan, 2007; Tokoyawa, 2006).

Xena and Anita, who had accompanied their partners to New Zealand from Ireland (Xena) and India (Anita) recalled specific New Zealanders who had acted as important initial sources of local information and practical support. Xena, who was 28 weeks pregnant when she first arrived in New Zealand, recalled as crucially important a local doctor’s careful explanation of maternity care options, and assistance with finding a midwife at short notice. Xena also highlighted the ongoing usefulness of practical information obtained through other people in community antenatal classes, a local church, and later, community-based playgroups. Anita recalled the helpfulness of one of her husband’s lecturers:

My husband’s teacher... she’s a gem of a person. When we came here thousands of miles away from our home we were strangers. [The lecturer] had met [my husband] and in one of the get-togethers she came to meet me as well and she came to know that we were finding the weather a bit cold. So the next day we were surprised to see that she came along with her husband with a heater to our place.... and both of them – [the lecturer] and her husband gave us tips on how to keep warm.... and said that if there is anything else, any consulting or something you need to ask then you should never hesitate in asking that (interview 1/2, 2005).

Anita explained that the lecturer not only offered practical assistance through the loan of a heater, but also some suggestions as to how Anita and her husband could maximise warmth in their flat and minimise draughtiness. In addition, this lecturer brought Anita to Woman Across Cultures, a group that also proved to be a source of further practical
information. Notably, Anita identified the lecturer's practical support and assistance not only in material terms but as also reflecting human warmth and care. By recognising and responding to Anita's need for physical warmth and human connection, the lecturer had diminished Anita's sense of strangeness and affirmed her ‘full humanity’ in a new place (see Noble, 2005, p. 116).

Frances, Yukiko, and Violet (international students from the PRC, Japan, and Malaysia respectively) also described individual people who had recognised and responded to their initial practical and informational support needs in New Zealand. Frances recalled the helpfulness of her ‘peer mentor’,3 another international student from the PRC, who had helped her to open a bank account and complete course approval; showed her around her new campus and around the city; and showed her where to buy food and phone cards etc. Yukiko and Violet recalled other people’s assistance with negotiating bus services. In Yukiko’s case, a “host sister” from her home-stay accommodation came with her the first time she travelled by bus; and in Violet’s, a fellow Malaysian student accompanied her on her first bus trip from home to university. When discussing her friend’s assistance, Violet noted how having a “shared history” (Lugones, 1987, p. 12) with another person may offer insights into the kinds of practical information that he or she may require. She suggested that “those without international experience” may not recognise a person’s need for taken-for-granted information, and explained how her friend’s knowledge of ‘acceptable’ bus use in Malaysia had meant that she recognised exactly what Violet needed to learn about using buses in New Zealand:

It’s just like for me... from my own background you wouldn’t go to a place that you totally don’t know and take a bus. Because what happens in Malaysia is that we know where we are going, we know which bus stop to go down, and you wouldn’t tell the conductor or bus driver that they are going to this place and ‘could you show me when should I go down?’, you’d never do that. You know, there’s no such situation that’s going to happen in Malaysia, but you can do it in New Zealand and [as] international students we don’t know about that (interview 2/2, 2006).

Rose (an international student’s partner and full-fee paying international student) and Violet (see above) both highlighted how a lack of practical information can potentially be dangerous. Rose, who came to New Zealand with her husband from the

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3 ‘Peer mentors’ are more experienced students who are matched with incoming international students as part of a peer support programme arranged through Frances’ university. Mentors’ contact details are given to in-coming international students prior to their arrival in New Zealand.
Gulf region, lived for two months in one city with him, and then moved alone to a different New Zealand city to pursue her own studies. During our interview, she explicitly drew connections between shifting homes, the availability or otherwise of necessary practical information, and her physical and emotional wellbeing. Rose described how after the move she became ill, partly because of various problems associated with enrolling in her new course of study, and partly because of an initial lack of contact with other people who could give her practical information about where to access halal food: “When I went to [names other New Zealand city] I was so depressed, really depressed, and I lost 8 kg in one week…. Yeah, and I had anaemia” (interview 1/1, 2006). Rose explained that major issues with her enrolment meant that she had no time to search for halal meat, or to seek out other people who would know where to buy it. She associated her weight loss and anaemia with a month-long diet of “bread and cheese and other simple things”. After several weeks, Rose had time to search out other “Arab” women through the university international office, and through them, to find the food she needed.

Violet described an occasion when the practical and professional assistance of both a university lecturer and student counsellor had allowed her to leave a potentially harmful home environment. Violet had discovered that a flatmate was under police investigation for sexual assault, and after returning a late assignment, was asked by her lecturer to see a counsellor in order to obtain a medical certificate. When the counsellor became aware of Violet’s home situation, she immediately helped her to arrange alternative, safe accommodation. Violet reflected during our interview on the significance of both the lecturer’s concern for her wellbeing, and the counsellor’s professional assistance, like Anita (earlier) hinting at the interconnections between recognition (see Noble, 2005), human care and the provision of timely information or practical assistance. Violet said: “I found it so helpful that they are quite concerned about my accommodation…. These tiny things sometimes, they [referring to the professional staff involved] know what to do” (interview 2/2, 2006). Violet acknowledged that had it not been for the lecturer’s initial suggestion that she see a counsellor, she would not have thought to access professional assistance.

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These are discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight.
support or practical advice on matters relating to her unsafe home situation. Like Anita and Xena, Violet emphasised the importance of professional staff (in both higher education and community contexts) as an important source of practical information in a new place (see Ramsey et al., 2007).

Women alluded to factors that limited their access to locally-based practical information, thereby constraining their active place-making (Dyck, 2005). As well as a lack of contact with other people (for example, see Rose, above), these factors included communicative difficulties; other people's indifferent or hostile behaviour; and misinformation or lack of information. I turn now to some examples where women spoke about misinformation or a lack of information. I consider communicative, behavioural, and social factors as the chapter proceeds.

Two areas in which a lack of practical information shaped women's place-making in New Zealand included accommodation or tenancy issues, and maternity care. Xena discussed having been misinformed about rental accommodation before her arrival. Although she was able to access information about house rentals through on-line and word-of-mouth sources, she later discovered that this had been unhelpfully inaccurate:

X: What we had been led to believe we would pay in rent was ridiculously untrue unless you wanted to live in a cardboard box really or these old-

V: What you were led to believe before you came?

X: Yes. Both by word of mouth and by looking on you know various sites that kind of you know 'welcoming you to [names city]' sort of sites....

V: Yeah? So the site was incorrect in terms of-

X: Yeah completely incorrect so... in terms of our budget... we couldn't understand why we couldn't find anything for this price.... we couldn't believe the standard of accommodation that people were trying to rent (interview 1/2, 2005).

House rentals in New Zealand were substantially more expensive than Xena and her husband had anticipated, the houses were less well-heated and well-insulated than in Ireland, and finding a 'good house' for a reasonable price proved difficult. Since Xena was expecting a baby and intending to be at home full-time, having a warm, comfortable place to live was an especially important matter. Eventually, Xena and her husband settled for a house that although "pretty good in terms of what we were paying for it... was not a pleasant place to live". Like Rose, Xena highlighted the connection between practical issues (in her case, a costly but cold physical dwelling) and affective wellbeing.

Affordable for two people whose sole source of funding was a doctoral scholarship.
or comfort, recalling, “I think I cried the whole first day I was in there. I got into this empty house that was... damp and uninsulated and cold”.

Four women’s accounts highlighted a lack of practical information in New Zealand on landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities or avenues for help in this area. Like Xena, Yukiko, Nikki, and Deanna remarked on the poor quality of their rental accommodation. Yukiko had faulty appliances in her flat, and Nikki, an international student from Norway, lived in a “really cold house” with high ceilings, holes in the bathroom floor and no smoke alarms (interview 1/1, 2005). Deanna, a doctoral student from Switzerland, described how her house had a faulty hot-water cylinder, taps that did not work, and fungi growing inside some of the window frames. Each woman expressed uneasiness about approaching landlords to request adequate heating and much-needed repairs. On the occasion when Yukiko had complained, her landlord had appeared to be angry with her; Nikki knew that her landlord was in financial difficulties; and Deanna was worried that the landlord might increase her rent if she complained. In contrast, following a discussion about tenants’ rights at a Women Across Cultures meeting, Anita approached her landlord to request that open doorways in her flat be covered by curtains. Anita’s landlord responded positively, agreeing to provide curtains. Yukiko, Deanna, and Nikki’s accounts highlight the importance of students and students’ partners being clearly informed of their rights and responsibilities under New Zealand tenancy law. Since ‘information’ does not necessarily preclude difficult landlord-tenant relationships (as in Yukiko’s case), easily accessed avenues for advice, assistance and/or advocacy around tenancy issues are also important.

Rose suggested that educational institutions should take some responsibility for the standard of accommodation available for students and their families; specifically in her case, home-stay accommodation. In this, she reiterates the assertion made by Madge et al. (2009, p. 43) that pedagogical responsibility in ‘internationalised’ higher education requires attention “well beyond teaching practice and into everyday practices of caring and responsiveness beyond the classroom” (emphasis in the original). Rose had arrived at

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6 Yukiko and Deanna discussed their flats in a Women Across Cultures meeting: participant observation notes, 6 May 2005.
her pre-arranged\(^7\) home-stay accommodation to find the house filthy and her home-stay host in hospital due to a chronic health condition. Rose immediately left the house to find a more suitable place to live. While expressing concern for her sick home-stay host, Rose argued that home-stay coordinators should ensure the suitability of home-stay arrangements. She said: “I came here to learn and not to take care of somebody else... I mean if the person is sick... you have.. to tell us before” (interview 1/1, 2006).

During our first interview, Xena spoke extensively about having had difficulty accessing information concerning maternity care options in New Zealand, and determining her eligibility for publicly-funded maternity care.\(^8\) Before her arrival in New Zealand Xena had actively searched for such information but had been unable to ascertain both how the New Zealand maternity care system works and whether or not she would have to pay for maternity care herself. Xena noted that this lack of information was especially troubling since by the time she arrived in New Zealand she was 28-weeks pregnant and few midwives were available at short notice:

> The hardest thing for us was trying to find out beforehand how things worked over here. I spent a lot of time online. I emailed government sites and everything... because there’s no one way of having a baby over here whereas at home you go public or you go private and that’s it.... I understood quite well how it worked at home so it wasn’t an issue and there was no question of paying at home whereas we knew there was probably a question of paying for it here and it was quite a lot of money and it was quite a worry for us you know... and then if anything went wrong .... it was becoming astronomical.... And also all the midwives of course by the time you’re 28 weeks pregnant have full lists. So yeah, it was a little bit unnerving (interview 1/2, 2005).

Although Xena eventually found a family doctor who was able to explain maternity care options and help her find a midwife, it was still some weeks after her arrival in New Zealand before Xena’s eligibility for publicly-funded maternity care was confirmed.

Dyck (2005, p. 237) argues that it is “women [and the men who support them]... who absorb most of the costs of cuts to... health care, the privatisation of public services and deregulated markets”. Xena’s reference to the gap that exists in healthcare coverage for many international students and their partners highlights the relevance of Dyck’s point to ‘export education’. Although eventually Xena was deemed eligible for publicly-

\(^7\) Pre-arranged through her educational institution’s home-stay coordinator.

\(^8\) Since Xena had lived and worked in various different countries, determining her eligibility for publicly-funded maternity care was not a straightforward matter.
funded healthcare in New Zealand by virtue of her long-term employment in the UK health sector, many other women would not have been so fortunate. At present, no international students or students’ partners can access funding for maternity care provision in New Zealand either through available health insurance or through the public health system, unless they come from countries with reciprocal healthcare agreements in place or which will cover maternity care abroad. This failure to recognise women’s specific healthcare needs arguably reinforces the political division between public and private worlds, forcing women to either ‘go home’ or ‘stay home’ to have their babies or to have termination procedures undertaken at their own expense. As an example, one woman who became involved in Women Across Cultures towards the end of the project flew for twenty hours late in her pregnancy to have the baby where her maternity care would be funded. Her husband was required to take several weeks off his doctoral studies to be with and support her following the birth. Given the lack of maternity care provision for many international students and students’ partners in New Zealand, Xena’s reference to a lack of clear information and/or process for accessing information around maternity care provision and eligibility is concerning. A lack of comprehensive maternity care provision coupled with an apparent lack of straightforward information about maternity care in New Zealand risks leaving women extremely vulnerable.9

While inattention to gaps in higher education policy or practice may clearly serve to disadvantage some women, it is overly-simplistic to represent women or particular groups of women associated with higher education simply as ‘disadvantaged’, or ‘victims’ of educational or policy oversight (Kenway and Bullen, 2003; also see Howes, 2001; Scheyvens et al., 2003). For example, while Rose did not downplay the stresses associated with her move from one city in New Zealand to another and her initial lack of suitable accommodation, she also emphasised how her sense of confidence had grown rather than diminished as a result of having to deal with difficult experiences alone:

9 This vulnerability was starkly evident in an instance that occurred while my project was in process. A young international scholarship student at a New Zealand university was convicted of infanticide after she gave birth alone in a residential hall toilet and her baby was found dead in the gardens outside. Undoubtedly the circumstances that contributed to this occurrence were multiple and complex, but the barriers to accessing adequate medical or midwifery support were significant. Had the woman in question requested assistance either during the pregnancy or delivery, she would have had to carry the full financial burden for doing so.
Rose identified herself as having become “a different person” in order to negotiate life in a new place (Lugones, 1987, p. 13). Because of her aloneness and unaccustomed lack of partner or familial support, Rose became “more independent” and less fearful of seeking practical assistance. This is not to downplay the very stressful and difficult personal circumstances that necessitated Rose’s newfound independence and sense of self-confidence (see Chapter Seven), but to highlight how for Rose and many of the other women in my study, place-making was often an ambivalent process (see Blunt, 2005; Dyck, 2005). While in the statement above, Rose describes herself as having become a competent, self-confident urban actor “rather than [a] passive recipient of spatial arrangements” (Dyck, 2005, p. 236), her agency “cannot be idealised as pure opposition to the order it opposes” (Loomba, 2003, p. 257). Rather, it was a necessary outcome of having to grapple with difficulties and discomfort in her new home and learning environments (Noble, 2005).

**Negotiating new occupational roles and/or social and behavioural norms**

A second factor that women identified as shaping their active place-making in New Zealand was the need to negotiate new occupational roles and new social and behavioural norms. As noted, for Xena and Anita, moving to New Zealand involved a shift in occupation: for Xena from full-time work in the health sector to full-time (at home) motherhood; and for Anita, from full-time study to initial unemployment followed by employment as a check-out operator in a local supermarket. Here, Anita responds to my question concerning her occupational transition, describing ‘keeping busy’ as an active strategy for coping with the unaccustomed space of initial unemployment:

V How do you find it living in Dunedin, and particularly with [your husband] studying and you’ve just finished your course but you’re not able to work, or to study, how are you finding that, that adjustment?
A Right now it’s fine with me because I’m busy at home... because he is busy, so I’m cooking and getting food from the market and all those things (interview 1/2, 2005).
Anita indicated that remaining busy was important because her husband was also preoccupied with coursework. The excerpt above indicates that her activities largely revolved around daily household tasks that supported and facilitated his study. In our second interview Anita revealed that being at home and keeping busy with home-related tasks was not satisfactory long-term. In this interview she described being at home as both socially isolating and “depressing”. During the time between our two interviews, Anita had obtained a work visa and a job in the local supermarket, and although her employment was unrelated to her academic training, it offered a welcome sense of distraction and an escape from social isolation: “If I would be at home it would be really depressing for me because I was just home alone, but now I am having a work so I can just distract myself and go to work and I am tired as well and he’s tired as well” (interview 2/2, 2006).

In her study involving women partners of international students and scholars, De Verthelyi (1995) described women’s development of personal projects as an important strategy for coping with living in a new place (also see Sakamoto, 2006). Similarly, Anita valued her paid employment since it offered her a “role of her own” (De Verthelyi, 1995, p. 405). However, Anita’s ‘role’ was evidently a compromise; an effective way of keeping busy and meeting people that neither used nor extended her own skills or academic training: “My parents, when they knew that I got a job they were happy about it but they were looking at my field like I’m a software programmer,...but something is better than nothing” (interview 2/2, 2006).

Xena contrasted her former busy life in Ireland with the quietness of her lifestyle in New Zealand. She reflected on how she had previously judged her own and others’ importance on the basis of their apparent productivity:

I’m very much the sort that thinks unless you’re doing 100 things you’re not really busy enough, inverted commas, and therefore not productive enough and therefore... the busier you are the more important you are....back at home, that’s how everybody works. If you can tell somebody you don’t have time to meet them for three weeks, good on you, it shows you’re very important (interview 2/2, 2006).

Xena’s shift to New Zealand involved a dual transition; both from full-time paid employment to initial unemployment, and from not being a mother to being a mother. Here she describes these two transitions, and reflects on what they had meant in terms of her sense of self and daily behaviour:
I suppose I could talk all day really about how I’ve changed. Partly being a mummy is a really different thing from not being a mummy, I’m sure everybody finds that but... It’s not just me with a child, it’s a different part of me that wasn’t there before I had her. It draws out a new part of my nature and I like what it’s drawing out of me, I think it’s a much more... compassionate, soft side, and I really like that.... And also the fact that I have not been work productive, you know what I mean? I’ve been at home a lot of the time which I always dreaded [laughs]... I’ve learnt to be a much quieter person,...... This kind of having time and being at home and washing my floors and doing my washing ... it’s very wholesome, [V laughs], and it’s very quiet, and it’s just... a lot of space... just... the whole thing of taking the time out to be here and having a break, and it has been that for me... I’ve felt I’ve had the freedom to be like that, because if I was at home I would have had a lot of pressure to be back in my job.

In this statement, Xena draws a clear distinction between public “work” and private “home” worlds, contrasting “work” productivity with the accomplishment of mundane, household tasks and noting her former dread of being primarily preoccupied with the latter. Kenway, Willis, Blackmore and Rennie (1994, p. 201) argue that the separation of public and private work is not a natural concept, but rather, a "deeply political" one, revealing as it does a privileging of paid over unpaid labour and of autonomy over the care-work necessary for maintaining human life (also see Fraser and Gordon, 2002; Johnson, 1996; Kittay, 1999; Tronto, 1993). Xena’s statement also problematises assumptions underpinning public/private, work/home binaries. However, rather than suggesting that “the desire for home is necessarily linked to the realm of tradition and opposed to self-definition and autonomy” (Johnson, 1996, p. 462), Xena indicated that being a mother and at home with her baby full-time had offered a welcome and unexpected sense of fulfilment, “space” and “freedom”. Also, living in a context far from her previous employment and friendship network had allowed her a valued opportunity to explore new ways of being and behaving as she experienced motherhood for the first time.

While Xena evidently appreciated the opportunity to experience the “space” and “freedom” of at-home motherhood, she did not speak about motherhood only in those terms. Elsewhere in this interview, Xena also reflected on her enjoyment of part-time employment as an opportunity to be “separate” from her baby, and to escape the constancy of parenting:

Having started work... that’s been good because...[I’m] gradually realising I am a person separate to [baby]. It took me a long time to really be aware that I am separate [laughter]... Because everything she needs is from me... everything that she gets or wants I’m always there, I’m never not there.... So it’s interesting to suddenly realise ‘actually I’m a different person from her’, and there are times when she lives her life and I’m not there, and I don’t

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Xena’s apparently contradictory reflections on work, mothering, and being at home again reveal the inadequacy of pure categories or binary oppositions to conceptualise the complex politics and practices of everyday life (Dyck, 2005; Johnson, 1996; Rhee, 2006). Like Rose’s comments in the previous section, Xena’s reveal how place-making is not “fixed”, but an ambivalent, shifty and ambiguous “process” (Dyck, 2005, p. 235).

I turn now to interview accounts in which women described encounters with unfamiliar social and behavioural norms as affecting their ability to feel “at home” in New Zealand (Noble, 2005, p. 117). These included interviews with six women: Sharon, Fiona, and Yukiko (three international students); Jillian and Janice (two New Zealand students); and Rose (an international student’s partner). As noted in the previous chapter, Noble (2005, p. 107) relates a sense of being at home to “comfort”, the “‘fit’ we experience in relation to the spaces we inhabit and the practices we [and others around us] perform” (p. 114). Women in my study spoke about a greater or lesser sense of ‘fit’ both in a “situated” and a “social” sense, how others’ behaviour in both private and public spaces contributed to a sense of being ‘at home’ or otherwise (p. 114).

Fiona and Sharon (who came to New Zealand from Norway and Taiwan respectively) commented on some New Zealand students’ drunken behaviour as impacting both on their situated and social sense of being ‘at home’ (Noble, 2005, above). Fiona described student neighbours’ drunken and destructive behaviour as threatening the physical comfort and safety of both her and her family:

We’re in a really nice house actually but it’s on a street which is all students and there’s a lot of you know, couch burnings and [laughs] really loud parties and behaviour that I’m not used to... I don’t know why, if it’s kids that are moving out for the first time and they’re just going nuts, well they’re not even kids anymore... There’s a lot of broken glass and noise and people...screaming and doing silly things in the middle of the street in the middle of the night, or not even in the middle of the night [laughs], so...sometimes it becomes...a bit of a zoo (interview 1/1, 2005).

While acknowledging that her neighbours’ drinking and parties had never actually resulted in material harm to either her or her property, Fiona was clearly bemused as to the possible reasons for the students’ destructive, anti-social and to her, abnormal behaviour.
Sharon described how some New Zealand students' drunken and aggressive behaviour at the beginning of the semester was a source of discomfort and fear that limited not only her sense of “security” in a hall of residence, but also her sense of “social agency” (Noble, 2005, p. 107):

I'm just thinking ‘Ahh I'm going to meet a lot of Kiwi students’ and... then... when the Kiwi students in my floor came back, they were really like hyper, they were really excited..... just drinking... kind of drunk and yelling, shouting some bad language... and then I was kind of scared.... I feel like I don't know how to talk to them because I was quite scared (interview 1/1, 2006).

Noble (2005, p. 116) argues that “being comfortable” in a space “enables the possibility of doing”. For Sharon, some New Zealand students’ unfamiliar and anti-social behaviour undermined both her expectations of making “Kiwi” friends, and her confidence at initiating conversations likely to lead to friendship.

Janice, a New Zealand student, recalled her own “mad” behaviour when a first-year student in a residential hall, and confirmed Fiona’s suggestion (above) that some students’ ‘madness’ may be a consequence of their new, new-found freedom from familial behavioural and social constraints:

I was at... the hall there and ....I loved it, I loved my first year, it was great, I just felt so free, [laughter]... I guess I was like a lot of the students around here, you just go mad... because I guess at home it was quite a strict environment, so I came down here and I suddenly felt like I had all the freedom in the world, so I guess I went a bit crazy for a year (interview 1/1, 2005).

Although Janice did not speak specifically about drunkenness, destructiveness or aggression, her statement alongside Sharon's and Fiona’s highlights how in university communities or residential accommodation, people’s views may differ as to what constitutes normal or acceptable social behaviour. While Janice connected students’ “mad” behaviour with fun, freedom and a new sense of agency; Fiona connected it with a sense of annoyance and bemusement; and Sharon, with fear, isolation, and disempowerment.

Jillian, Yukiko, Sharon and Rose highlighted how a sense of comfort or discomfort reflects both “our capacity to make ourselves at home in [a] world, and the power of others to shape that capacity” (Noble, 2005, p. 117). Jillian, Yukiko and Sharon described flatmates’ behaviours that were a source of discomfort, annoyance, or potential danger. Jillian, a New Zealand student from the USA, referred to feeling uncomfortable and
annoyed when her flatmates (New Zealanders) repeatedly left the outside door to her flat unlocked. Having moved to New Zealand from a densely populated suburb in New Jersey, Janice associated an unlocked door with the likelihood of home invasion. Yukiko, an international student from Japan, described how having found “Kiwi” students’ flatting behaviour “untidy” and “unconcerned” she would “never live with Kiwis... I do not want to [laughs]!” (interview 1/2, 2005). Sharon, who had moved into a flat after one semester in a residential hall (see earlier), described her American flatmates’ unresponsiveness (see next section), and their loud late-night socialising as resulting in two negative outcomes. The first was a shift in her view of Americans:

Before I really know Americans.... what I get in Taiwan is all American education, American English, American culture, I would be ‘Oh America is really good, really good, really good’.... and then when I really spend time... the flat life with them, American sucks [laughter] (interview 1/1, 2006).

The second was a negative view of self, or as she put it, "I think it’s my personality. I have a really bad personality". Sharon described how her sense of discomfort and disappointment caused her to become "homesick"; to want “to retreat to a safe place”. Sharon associated ‘home’ with a sense of safety, comfort, and belonging, and explained that, "my home, Taiwan is the safe place to go back [to]". For Sharon, uncomfortable living contexts functioned as sites of alienation and disconnection not security, fuelling nostalgia for another remembered ‘home’.

Rose described herself as “shocked” by the differences she encountered when she first arrived in New Zealand. She was also fearful due to her own marked difference as a Muslim woman who wears a hijab:

R When we came here, I was shocked with the culture because it’s totally different. Especially for the family issues and how the adult[s] treat the elderly people, the old people, ... and because I’m Muslim and I’m wearing the scarf, so I was...
V Did you feel self-conscious?
R Yeah.... I was so scared (interview 1/1, 2006).

Rose emphasised a sense of insecurity as resulting not only from her observations of others’ behaviour (see Fiona and Sharon earlier), but also as an outcome of her own expectations that others may not recognise her “legitimate” presence in New Zealand society (Noble, 2005, p. 115). Elsewhere, when reflecting on her work in New Zealand clinical settings Rose revealed that this sense of insecurity was not simply a matter of self-consciousness, but connected to broader social relations on a global scale: “I [was]
not that confident that the patient will trust me, because [of] all what is going on now in the world... so I can’t blame them”. Rose’s initial sense of insecurity highlights how “what happens at the scale of the global” can for women become “embodied at [a] very local body space” (Dyck, 2005, p. 239; Noble, 2005). In Chapter Eight I noted how occasionally Rose was subjected to others’ “uncivil attention” because of her visibility as a Muslim woman (Noble, 2005, p. 116); her fears at least in part, proving to be justified. Rose did not portray herself solely as uncomfortable or insecure, nor as a victim of post-9/11 politics or anti-Muslim sentiment (see Noble, 2005). She also emphasised her sense of strength as someone able to survive unfamiliarity and adversity in a new home environment (see previous section), and noted how the civil attention of New Zealanders she met in both community and clinical settings had allowed her to view some people’s incivility as exceptional rather than normal. She said, “I like [names city] because... the people are very friendly and kind also. Yeah and they respect us. Yeah I didn’t expect that”.

The development and maintenance of social connections

As exemplified in Sharon and Rose’s accounts, the development of social connections was identified by many women as shaping their active place-making. Here I use the term ‘social connections’ in reference to immediate and transnational relations with partners or family members; and connections with other people in New Zealand, whether superficial, or reflecting ‘deeper’, emotionally supportive friendships. Women described factors that facilitated or precluded a sense of social connection; and discussed or anticipated shifts in the nature of some social connections as a result of leaving or returning ‘home’. As in the previous chapter, women referred to connections with other people as allowing a sense of comfort or safety in an unfamiliar place; as protective against other forms of discomfort or unease (Lugones, 1987; Noble, 2005); as a source of practical information; and as facilitating a sense of communicative confidence (p. 12). Women also noted that establishing and maintaining connections sometimes involved significant emotional work, and that “deep” friendships were sometimes elusive.
Social connections with partners and family members

Noble (2005, p. 116) argues that “comfort is not a passive withdrawal from the world into the realm of domestic isolation: it is feeling ourselves to be legitimate participants…with acknowledged social capacities”. Some women in my project, however, referred to the support of partners and families in their home environments as providing both a sense of safety and increased social capacity in otherwise unfamiliar and uncomfortable social settings. Arui, a New Zealand student who had emigrated with her partner from the PRC, recalled how when she first arrived in New Zealand, staying home seemed a “safer” option than going out (interview 1/1, 2006). She also described her partner’s persistent encouragement as instrumental in prompting her to seek connections with people outside her home. Similarly, although Rose recalled her shock and fear when she initially arrived in New Zealand, she identified her husband’s presence as offering a sense of security and comfort: “Because my husband [was] here with me I was… feeling safe with him” (interview 1/1, 2006). Wakuwaku, a Japanese New Zealand student described her (New Zealand) partner’s assistance with proof-reading her university assignments as supportive of her university study. In contrast, Miho and Frances associated ‘leaving home’ with an increased sense of social capacity (Noble, 2005, p. 116). Both women welcomed the escape from immediate familial relationships and associated expectations; as Miho stated, "honestly I feel really free... living away from my family... I like living alone now" (interview 1/1, 2005).

Women’s accounts of how connections with family shaped their place-making again illustrate the inadequacy of clear-cut “distinctions and oppositions…based around ideas of home” such as public/private and dependence/independence (Johnson, 1996, p. 461). For example, Rose associated her husband’s presence with “safety” and ongoing support, but she also associated living alone with a new-found sense of independence and self-confidence. Likewise, Xena spoke of both paid and parenting work as fulfilling and difficult; and as facilitating and limiting her access to particular social networks. Some women revealed how connection with partners and families can be ambivalent; offering a sense of security or recognition (Noble, 2005), but also in obligations (Sakamoto, 2006; Scheyvens et al., 2003). Xena deliberately avoided discussing some family matters with her husband so as not to distract him from his study or cause him stress. Rose repeatedly
told her parents she was “fine” while experiencing major problems with her course, her living situation and her health. Arui described a sense of being torn between two homes: New Zealand, where her partner was and where she was free to “enjoy [her] life”; and the PRC, where her young daughter and parents lived. Roja indicated that although she had been unable to gain paid employment in New Zealand, looking for work elsewhere was not an option due to her New Zealand mother-in-law’s need for support.

Like Arui, three other women spoke about connections with family members in terms of ‘returning home’ and negotiating transnational, plural homes. Xena, who had been absent from Ireland during a significant family crisis, revealed the emotional work involved in transnational place-making; the need to negotiate plural lives, plural homes and a plural sense of self (Lugones, 1987):

I’m trying to prepare myself to go back to the life that I can’t even remember... Go back to relationships that I have kept going but... everything’s different. I’m different and not just because of the baby, but because of being here, and yeah because of not having to work...... So it’s just, it’s changed, everything has changed... Been dealt a new hand in some ways (interview 2/2, 2006).

Stella, anticipating an imminent return to South Korea, noted how her years of living apart from family had changed her as a person and reduced her sense of familial “closeness”. She expressed her fear that family members would not recognise her when she returned, and as such, that her relationship with them would be altered:

In Korea if you are [with] one of your family members or just close friend... you get the feeling of inclusiveness, so ... you can be understood, whatever you do, because you are in that group, but... here I more or less lost that bond with my family, and here I learned to be more independent... so while I grew up in that way I lost a bit of... the closeness I used to have with my family, so I was worried that because of that... probably my family feel that I’m a different person, in the future (NZ student from Korea, interview 2/2, 2006).

Laura, who had lived and worked in five different countries, reflected on having plural homes, none of which were a complete “fit” (Noble, 2005, p. 114). Echoing Noble’s association between a sense of fit and others’ “recognition” or “acknowledgement” of a person’s legitimate presence in a place (p. 114), Laura noted how her southern Appalachian family members identified her as “Northern” or “posh” due to her accent. She said, “While I feel a part of [Appalachia], as soon as I speak my accent is going to put up a wall between me and them” (interview 1/2, 2005). Having lived transnationally and in a wide range of socio-cultural contexts, Laura articulated a need to find a ‘home’ among other transnationals, or people who, like her, had experienced plural ways of
being and behaving (Lugones, 1987). She said, “I think I need to be around other people who are different, and other people who have travelled and stuff, just for common... understandings of things” (interview 1/2, 2005).

Other social connections

Laura, Xena, Anita, Arui, and Violet noted that although relationships with others ‘at home’ may offer a source of support, homes can also be experienced as “domestic isolation” (Noble, 2005, p. 116). For this reason, they emphasised the importance of building connections with people beyond the immediate home environment. Arui indicated that as a newcomer, having to actively seek out connections with others takes considerable courage. Both Arui and Anita emphasised how early friendly responses had been instrumental in motivating them to seek further social connections. Arui recalled individual people whose friendly acknowledgment when she spoke to them had reduced her sense of being foreign and bolstered her confidence in using English (see Noble, 2005). Similarly, Anita considered her husband’s lecturer as reducing her sense of isolation in a new place. Anita and Arui emphasised how recognition expressed through everyday civility increased their ability to feel ‘at home’ in New Zealand. As Anita said, “These are the small small things, these are not the very big things, but they really make you feel that you’re not isolated. There are people who care about you” (interview 2/2, 2006). Anita and Arui’s accounts (alongside Rose’s earlier reflections on New Zealanders’ respectfulness) highlight how affirming interpersonal interactions may mitigate the effects of other negative experiences or encounters. While as Noble (2005) suggests, everyday incivility is likely to undermine a person’s sense of being at home in a place, so everyday civility may be a strategic means for refusing, resisting or subverting “wider processes and relations of power” that are otherwise dehumanising or harmful (Dyck, 2005, p. 234; also see Gibson-Graham, 2003).

Some women identified how social connections with others who had some kind of “shared history” (Lugones, 1987, p.12) could contribute to a sense of being ‘at home’ in a new place. For example, Rose, Sharon, Stella and Violet each highlighted the practical helpfulness and ease of social connections with other people from similar socio-linguistic backgrounds. Arui suggested that being at a similar life stage may provide a basis for
easy communication, and Xena and Deanna highlighted how shared experiences such as
motherhood (Xena) and being ‘foreign’ (Deanna and Xena) might also provide a basis for
strong and sometimes unexpected connection. Deanna (an international student from
Switzerland) and Jordan (a New Zealand student) reflected on how being part of a
“community” of students when they went on student exchange elsewhere had ensured a
sense of belonging and connection. For Deanna, this had been a “community of
international students” (interview 1/2, 2005) and for Jordan, a “social network”
developed through living in an on-campus residential complex designed to be conducive
to students’ social interaction (interview 1/1, 2005).

Anita, Stella, and Violet articulated how a sense of being socially connected rather
than alone might be fostered by simply being around people in a public space. As noted
earlier, Anita valued her work as a checkout operator in this regard. In addition, she
described her work as having increased her sense of self-confidence:

I’ve become more confident... because I’m going out and meeting people. I am more
confident in speaking to them and I think that is one of the best things which has happened to
me I think, that I have gained confidence which I was not having previously (interview 2/2,
2006).

Stella and Violet highlighted how a sense of being one among many might be especially
important for those who move from a busy, urban context to one that is quieter or less
densely populated. When Stella initially migrated to New Zealand she had moved from
urban Seoul to a rural New Zealand town. During our first interview, she recalled her
relief at being back in a populated setting in order to pursue her studies, saying, “I was
happy to see many people around [laughs] on the street” (interview 1/12, 2005). Violet
described how when she first arrived in New Zealand from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, she
had intentionally acted on a more experienced international student’s advice to “get out
of the house” and “see that there are people around” in order not to feel so alone:

A friend of mine she had a long time overseas... and when I first came over here she emailed
me and... told me, ‘Get out of the house.... Go and do some shopping even if you don’t buy
anything, just go and window shop... You need to see that there are people around (interview
2/2, 2006).

As in Stella’s case, “seeing] that there are people” may have offered Violet not only a
sense of being connected rather than alone, but also of being among familiar human
activity.
Some women alluded to a lack of communicative confidence (Lugones, 1987) as limiting or threatening to limit their engagement in day-to-day social interaction. Both Arui and Rose, whose first languages were Mandarin (Arui) and Arabic (Rose), were initially fearful that communication with people other than their partners would be difficult and make connection elusive. Arui recalled how in the days immediately following her migration to New Zealand from the PRC, she was horrified at not understanding New Zealand English on the television, despite having a degree in English for Business:

When I first came here... I had a terrible time, really. Now I feel if somebody go to some really totally different world, new world it's really... a little horrible. Because my major is English for business, I thought my English... should be okay, but when I first got here the accent... [it was] Anzac Day at that time.... but I couldn't understand what is Anzac Day. And when I opened television, all new words. I couldn't understand, even [if] I understand the word, I don't know what they are talking about, so I'm... scared at the first time, I don’t want to go out. I’m scared to go out, scared to go shopping, scared [of] anything. Just I stay home, safer (interview111, 2006).10

As noted earlier, initially Arui saw her home as a refuge from negotiating linguistic unfamiliarity. Both she and Rose however, were (largely) pleasantly surprised to find people friendly and helpful in response to their communicative attempts. Strangers’ acknowledgement of them as “legitimate participants” in public settings in New Zealand reduced both Arui and Rose’s fear of initiating further social interaction (Noble, 2005, p. 115).

Conversely, Sharon’s account highlighted how a home environment characterised by linguistic unfamiliarity and communicative disconnection may diminish a person’s willingness to develop social connections. Sharon described how in her New Zealand university hostel she found it difficult talking to “Kiwi students” at first because of their accent, and then because of their apparent disinterest in her as an “Asian” student (see Chapter Six). As alluded to in the previous section, in her second home, Sharon also found her flatmates unresponsive to her communicative attempts. Here Sharon describes how she eventually gave up trying to build connections with the people who shared her flat:

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10 Anzac Day is a national holiday to honour New Zealanders killed in war and those who have served in the New Zealand Armed Forces. The day (April 25) marks the 1915 landing of the Australia New Zealand Army Corp (Anzacs) at Gallipoli (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2008).
I tried to like interact with them but they are not really... responsive. They don’t really care, so I kind of like ‘Ok if you don’t care I won’t really make effort to try to make a good environment or relationships’... So... now we are just... a little bit like strangers in the flat, so we will just say... greeting or we will just talk a little bit (interview 1/1, 2006).

For Sharon, superficial relationships did not generate a sense of connection, but instead, were experienced as a lack of recognition (Noble, 2005). Sharon’s sense of disconnection in the flat compounded both her sense of disappointment with the exchange experience (see previous chapter) and her sense of personal failure at having been unable to ‘fit’ in a new living and social environment.

In contrast with Sharon, Frances enjoyed living with American international students in her New Zealand flat. She described her flatting situation as offering a much-valued opportunity to practice conversational English with native English speakers, referring to her flatmates and their friends as “friendly” towards her and people she felt able to “talk to” (interview 1/1, 2006). Frances compared her current flat with her previous one, in which she had been living with fellow Chinese international students. Unlike Sharon, who described interaction with fellow “Asian” students as easier and more comfortable than interaction with “Kiwis” (see Chapter Six), Frances (a Mandarin speaker) described her Chinese flatmates as excluding her by communicating with each other only in Cantonese. Read alongside Sharon’s account, Frances’ highlights the inadequacy of “monolithic and monologic discourse[s] of international students”, international women students, and/or ‘Asian’ international students (Rhee, 2006, p. 609; also see Kenway and Bullen, 2003; Mayuzumi et al., 2007). Although both Sharon and Frances highlighted how a friendly home environment may allow one to feel more socially connected or ‘at home’, Sharon found shared ‘Asian-ness’ a basis for easy interactions and recognition, while Frances did not.

When I asked Xena what advice she would give another person coming to New Zealand as an international student’s partner she emphasised the value of many kinds of social connections, both deep and superficial, whether developed across differences or commonalities:

Getting yourself some sort of outlet, some sort of way to meet people is really important, and coming as a mum... for me the saving grace was meeting people in church, meeting people through antenatal classes, people who are in the same situation as you and who know the answers to all the questions you have simply because they’re based here, like ‘who do you go to for X and Y?’ Things like that can become so difficult unless you have someone to go to. And having various people... give you bits of advice and that kind of thing is really...
fundamental so I think... integrating as much as you can, whether that means you’re keeping to people who are from your home or whether that means you’re hanging out with New Zealanders, whatever, just in order that you have support. I would say being far away from home, the one thing you need is support, ….. I think loneliness is a big deal when you’re far from home (interview 2/2, 2006).

Echoing Ramsey et al. (2007), Xena’s statement emphasises the value of different kinds of social connections for providing multi-faceted support. It is interesting to contrast Xena’s use of the term ‘integration’ with its definition in social psychology literature: minority groups maintaining their “cultural integrity” while also becoming “an integral part of the larger social network” (Berry, 2005, p. 705). For Xena, integration may or may not be a matter of ‘culture’ or becoming ‘part of the larger social network’. Rather, it is a sense of being connected with other people, whoever they may be, and feeling practically and emotionally supported rather than alone in a new place.

9.3 Concluding thoughts
In this chapter I have considered women’s reflections on homes, being ‘at home’ and moving between homes in New Zealand and elsewhere. Interview data considered reflects the experiences and perspective of both ‘international’ and ‘local’ women, and disrupts a view of either group as internally homogenous or necessarily distinct from the other. However I read in women’s interview accounts some implications that pert ain specifically to international students and/or international students’ partners, and some that are relevant to education policy and support provision more broadly. These are as follows.

First, the availability of clear and accurate practical information and clear processes for obtaining information is crucial for facilitating women’s place-making and ensuring their material safety and affective sense of security in a new place. Given the current gap in maternity care coverage for most women who are international students or international students’ partners, straightforward access to information about maternity care and eligibility is an urgent concern.11 Realistic information about housing availability and costs, and landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities is also

11 This is obviously not an issue for international students’ partners who, like Janice, are already New Zealand citizens or Permanent Residents.
important, especially for couples and families coming to New Zealand from an overseas context, where one or some people in the household are likely to spend extended periods of time ‘at home’. Up-front and accurate information about acceptable/unacceptable housing standards and tenants’ rights under New Zealand tenancy law might serve to protect those in rental accommodation and to increase their confidence in approaching landlords as issues arise. Since information alone does not necessarily preclude difficult and unequal landlord-tenant relationships, it is also important that avenues of support and advocacy in this area are available for and accessible to all students and students’ partners (I include New Zealand students and their partners here).

Second, the accounts in this chapter suggest the importance of offering accommodation on and near campus that is safe, and likely to foster social connection between people. As Rose suggests, educational institutions arguably have some responsibility in this regard, especially when the accommodation is either arranged through or owned by them. Institutional responsibility for the safety and security of all students (see Noble, 2005) may involve ensuring that organised social events do not fuel or reify drunken or aggressive behaviour, or facilitate some students’ ‘fun’ at the expense of others’. Design and maintenance of the residential environment may also promote or preclude women’s sense of security and social connectedness. By way of example, Fiona described her accommodation as a “zoo” rather than a ‘home’; as littered with broken glass and burnt couches. In contrast Jordan recalled the social networking that occurred in her “beautiful” residential accommodation in Canada, where “little apartments [were] in little courtyards with a café” where people could meet each other.

Third is the importance for newcomers of early positive responses to communicative attempts. This is especially relevant to immigrants and international students whose place-making involves working in a second, third or fourth language and/or negotiating unfamiliar accents and social or behavioural norms. Arui and Rose’s accounts in particular suggest the possible value of ongoing training for service personnel

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12 This information could be disseminated through on-line links on accommodation and marketing websites, and through visual material around campuses. It could also be disseminated by local councils through public campaigns and community forums, to ensure that those who are not housed on campus also have access to information and assistance, and that landlords are well-informed of and publicly accountable for their legal responsibilities towards tenants (and vice versa).
in both education and community contexts. Also, since communicative and social opportunities may be less readily available for international students' partners than for students if they are unemployed or largely 'at home', it is imperative that education providers recognise the presence of these people, for example through the development of specifically-targeted welcome packs and proactive attempts to include them in on-campus activities (such as orientation and language exchange programmes, and in clubs and societies run by student associations). Consideration could also be given to how community-based migrant support services might extend to international students and their partners and families, especially given that international doctoral students and their partners/families often settle in New Zealand for three or more years.

Fourth is the importance of recognising the diversity of women in higher education, whether they are New Zealand or international students, or partners of students. Women in this chapter discussed negotiating shifts between urban and rural or less-populated urban homes; homes with and without particular family members; homes marked by different kinds of familiarity/comfort and unfamiliarity/discomfort; and at different life stages. They alluded to differing practical and informational needs, and responded to new occupational roles and social or behavioural norms in different ways. This suggests the value of creating spaces within education institutions and communities where specific issues around unfamiliarity or discomfort can be discussed explicitly, questions or queries explored, and through which social networks can be fostered. At a conceptual level it also highlights the importance of complicating rather than reinscribing homogenising discourses about 'international' or 'local' students, 'women' or 'partners of students' (see Rhee, 2006); and in Noble's (2005, p. 116) words, avoiding the reduction of "fully human" subjects to analytical (or enrolment) categories.

13 In particular, training that fosters positive attitudes towards multilingualism, as well as the interactive and communicative skills necessary for 'service' work.

14 These could include useful information on local services, community groups, social clubs, educational opportunities, and public events.

15 *Women Across Cultures* is one such example and is discussed in the following chapter.
Fifth, and in relation to this is the importance of recognising circumstances that may serve to disadvantage or adversely affect some women, while also affirming women’s coping skills and creativity when faced with unfamiliarity and/or difficult situations. I have already noted the importance of clear and accessible practical information and institutional practices that acknowledge the presence of international students’ partners. Further, as Madge et al. (2009, p. 43) suggest, consideration should be given to how “everyday caring and responsiveness...beyond the classroom” (emphasis in the original) might look in practice. This might involve ensuring that healthcare or insurance provision does not disproportionately disadvantage women students or students’ partners, or those likely to have children. It might also involve extending student support and orientation programmes to those who, while not students, are often crucial in supporting students’ studies. In terms of women’s coping skills, I discussed throughout the chapter how many women described intentional and creative strategies for dealing with discomfort or difficulty rather than positioning themselves as ‘disadvantaged’ or ‘victims’ of policy or institutional oversight. Sharon was the only woman whose attempts to develop friendships first in a university hostel and then in a student flat were apparently ineffective. She described her exchange experience as characterised by unease, a loss of confidence and disappointed expectations in both her living and study contexts. Forums for sharing coping strategies and discussing uncomfortable and/or disappointing experiences may be especially important for those whose home environments are not a source of support. Again, such forums might be offered through various kinds of social or community groups, and informal and organised peer-networks.

Sixth, and as in the previous chapter, the development of positive social connections emerged as vital for all women, whether with people who shared an element of one’s history (Lugones, 1987), or across historical, linguistic and other differences. Different kinds of social connections served multiple functions; for example, offering specific practical information, opportunities for different kinds of communication, forums for sharing common (and uncommon) experiences, and a sense of recognition and belonging in otherwise uncomfortable or difficult situations. Again, this suggests the importance of fostering and affirming the development of social connections whether
through organised or informal peer networks, community organisations, or social clubs. The preoccupation in New Zealand for example, with fostering interaction and ‘integration’ across an international/local student binary (Deloitte, 2008; Ward and Masgoret, 2004), may overlook and downplay the value of many other kinds of social interaction, and the significant ways in which different kinds of interactions facilitate both a sense of being “at home” and of human agency (Noble, 2005, p. 107).

While this chapter has in part attempted to address the invisibility of students’ partners and families in (international) education research, it includes only a very small number of women whose partners were studying. Further New Zealand research could usefully consider the experiences and perspectives of a larger group of women whose partners are studying; the experiences and perspectives of international students’ children and/or of parents who move to support their children’s study; and men who are partners of international students. Since assumptions of students’ autonomy characterise higher education research beyond international education per se (Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Johnson et al., 2000), future research might also consider the experiences of New Zealand students’ partners and families alongside those of the partners and families of international students.
Chapter 10 - Women Across Cultures

10.1 Introduction
This chapter reconsiders my personal, practical, methodological, and theoretical rationale for establishing Women Across Cultures in the light of women’s expectations of and reflections on the group and my initial research questions (see Chapters One and Five). My aim throughout the chapter is to foreground the “rich complexity” of Women Across Cultures as an intersectional site (Fine and Weis, 2005, p. 66); to highlight the possibilities and conundrums that marked its day-to-day running as they emerged in women’s interview accounts and in my own record of the group as participant observer. The chapter considers the group’s usefulness and (im)possibilities as a way of interrupting an international/local binary in an internationalised education context. It explores whether and to what extent Women Across Cultures was a way of offering support for international women students and women partners of international students; facilitating a sense of connection for women who were international students or international students’ partners, influencing New Zealand students’ perspectives towards international students and their partners, and/or promoting intercultural (and other kinds of) interaction between women on a university campus (see Chapter One).\(^1\) Data included in the chapter is drawn both from my research journal, and from the interview accounts of sixteen women who were active Women Across Cultures members prior to and after our interviews.\(^2\) I also include anecdotal data in relation to three of the remaining four women (Miho, Frances and Roja), as although these women did not speak directly about Women Across Cultures during interviews, they were nevertheless involved in the group at some stage during the project for varying lengths of time. Rose does not appear in this chapter because although her name was on the emailing list for Women Across Cultures from mid-2006, at no stage was she involved in the group (see Chapter Five).

\(^{1}\) I explained the limits of the term ‘intercultural’ in Chapter One (see footnote 3).

\(^{2}\) I define ‘members’ as those whose names were on the emailing list and who attended group meetings more than twice, although all of the sixteen women in this chapter were regular attendees of group events and activities either throughout 2005, 2006 or both.
This chapter takes up and reflects on the account of Women Across Cultures begun in Chapters One and Five. It also extends the academic scholarship discussed in Chapter Three on the possibilities of and limits to heterogeneous groups as a means for facilitating access to professional and peer networks, multi-faceted support in educational contexts, and new ways of seeing and being (including Carr et al., 2003; De Verthelyi, 1995; Dey, 2005; Gibson-Graham, 2003; Khuri, 2004; Lugones, 1987, 1998, 2003, 2006; Mahalingam and Reid, 2007; Pratt, 2002; Ramsey et al., 2007; Rosenthal et al., 2007; Salvadori, 1997; Volet and Ang, 1998). The chapter is organised into four parts. The first (section 10.2) discusses women’s sources of information about and expectations of Women Across Cultures as recalled in research interviews. The second (section 10.3) considers women’s later reflections on their involvement in the group, linking these with their earlier expectations and the theoretical literature that framed the group’s establishment and practical organisation (as discussed in Chapter Five). The third section (10.4) discusses some complicating data on women’s refusals of and withdrawals from the group, and limits to the group’s usefulness as suggested in research interviews. The chapter concludes by outlining some theoretical, methodological, political, and practical implications (section 10.5); considering how in practice, Women Across Cultures troubled my theoretical and methodological rationale, my political concerns, and my initial research questions.

10.2 Sources of information and expectations of Women Across Cultures

As discussed in Chapter Five, Gibson-Graham (2003) argues that development of intersectional social sites requires the development of shared activities likely to bring strangers together over time and cultivate trust between them. I would add that these activities must also be actively publicised; and that word-of-mouth endorsement and existing connections are also helpful for bringing people together and facilitating trust. Of the nineteen women I interviewed who were also involved in Women Across Cultures, nine had heard about the group through personal sources. These included fellow students, friends, or flatmates (seven women); a university chaplain (one woman); and a lecturer
Seven of these women then came to Women Across Cultures already knowing someone else who was involved in the group. Of the remaining two women, one had received a personal endorsement from others involved in the group, and one was accompanied in person by her partner’s lecturer (who had told her about the group). The remainder of the nineteen women had heard about Women Across Cultures through various avenues of publicity: four through posters or flyers publicising group activities, four through international offices at their educational institutions, and one through a university divisional office email.

Of the sixteen women who spoke during our interviews about Women Across Cultures, eleven recalled their initial expectations of the group. Women’s expectations both reflected and troubled my initial research questions. While in most cases, women indicated that they had come to Women Across Cultures looking for social connection, friendship, or encounters with ‘others’, they imagined otherness or difference from and across multiple locations (i.e. not just in relation to international-ness and New Zealand-ness), and had diverse expectations of the kinds of social connections likely to be developed through the group.

Ten of the eleven women who recalled their expectations of Women Across Cultures described them as positive. Recalled expectations included the possibility of developing social connections with other women across various lines of commonality and difference; learning about other people, cultures, places, perspectives, and languages; and finding communicative opportunities. For example:

Anita: I chose to become involved in Women Across Cultures because this programme is especially for people from abroad and I felt that through this medium I will meet so many people from different places and cultures... I like meeting people, knowing about their culture, what they think and all those different languages they speak (ISP from India, interview 1/2, 2005).

Fiona: I really like ... that people have different world views and different ways of looking at things and understanding things and different ways of experiencing for example, Kiwi culture. It’s interesting to talk to people that have different experiences.... Because it is different I think depending on where you’re coming from (postgraduate international FFPS from Norway, interview 1/1, 2005).

Sixteen of these nineteen women described their sources of information in research interviews, while I knew about the other three anecdotally.
Two women (Sharon and Violet) stated that they had joined *Women Across Cultures* specifically hoping to meet "Kiwis" (or in Sharon's words, "native people"):

Sharon: I still like try to seek more opportunities to meet up with the native people here so that’s why when I saw the Women Across Cultures...I came here (undergraduate international EXCS from Taiwan, interview 1/1, 2006).

Violet: That’s also one point why I come to this... Women Across Cultures. It’s like... there might still be a small chance you know [laughing], just to get to know [Kiwis] (undergraduate international FFPS from Malaysia, interview 1/2, 2005).4

I discuss Sharon and Violet's expectations of making (white or non-Asian) "Kiwi friends" in relation to their experiences of the group in the next section (10.3). Notably, however, as well as hoping to meet Kiwis through *Women Across Cultures*, Violet was also attracted to the group because it did not just centre 'Kiwi-ness', and because of its explicit inclusion of children or "family":5

It was like so interesting... at least the basic idea is like... anyone from different culture, especially students... including Kiwi, and you can bring your children. It’s like, also a family concept. So I think it’s interesting..... a good opportunity to get to know other cultures instead of... just looking for Kiwi culture (interview 1/2, 2005).

My research questions imagined 'intercultural interaction' in largely binary terms (as if international students/students' partners and New Zealand students are discrete and oppositional categories, as discussed in Chapter Six). Some women's stated expectations of the group revealed much more complex understandings of intercultural interaction, international-ness, New Zealand-ness, and connection. For example, Janice, a Pākehā New Zealand student was also an international student's partner, and already had many social connections in her higher education world. Janice linked her desire to attend *Women Across Cultures* activities with both her international marriage and her desire for new friends outside her existing programme of study, explaining that she had joined hoping to "meet new people" and to "talk about my experiences [living] with...[an] international husband" (interview 1/1, 2005). Stella, who located herself as both a "Permanent Resident" and a person "from overseas" referred to herself as not a New Zealander. Both Stella and Anita apparently understood *Women Across Cultures* as a

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4 Sharon used the terms "Kiwi" and "native" interchangeably throughout her interview, and Sharon and Violet indicated elsewhere that they imagined Kiwi-ness in relation to whiteness or non-Asian-ness. How women in my project identified themselves, others, and each other is discussed more fully in Chapter Six.

5 For an example of *Women Across Cultures* publicity material see Appendix II.
space for international or transnational people. Stella explained that she hoped to make friends through the group both with other people “from overseas” and with (New Zealand-born?) “Kiwis”:

I thought it was very interesting..... [And] I wanted to make some friends as well because every lunchtime I’m lonely [laughs]... Other than that, because I’m from overseas even though I’m a permanent resident I thought it would be interesting to meet people from other countries, and also meet Kiwi students as well (undergraduate NZ student from Korea, interview 1/2, 2005).

Deanna also described meeting with other “international[s]” as a key reason for coming to Women Across Cultures, saying “A reason why I joined [was]... somehow I expected there [would be] other international students or international people, and to exchange, it’s a way to connect, it’s a way to get to know them” (international PhD student from Switzerland, interview 1/2, 2005). In her use of the term “international people” alongside the narrower descriptor “international students”, Deanna apparently constructed being international not only in relation to enrolment status but also in relation to shared experiences of transnationality. Like Anita and Fiona (above), Deanna did not imagine Women Across Cultures in binary (international-New Zealand) terms, but envisaged it as a site in which to meet and connect with other people who had lived elsewhere or in multiple places.

Some women’s expectations troubled my research questions by highlighting New Zealand students’ need for support and connection. Although my research questions indicated an interest in whether or to what extent Women Across Cultures fostered support and a sense of connection for international students and partners of students in higher education, Laura and Wakuwaku (New Zealand students from USA/Fiji and Japan respectively) linked their decision to join Women Across Cultures to the isolation that they had experienced in impersonal higher education contexts (see Chapter Eight); and Arui (a New Zealand student from the PRC), to a general sense of isolation as a recently-arrived migrant. In addition, Arui indicated that she had joined Women Across Cultures looking for opportunities to practice conversational English.

Two women who cited negative or more cautious expectations of Women Across Cultures were Xena (whose partner was an international student from Ireland) and Violet (an international student from Malaysia). For both women, the thought of meeting with a group of strangers was scary; for Xena, because she was worried that she would be
isolated as an English-speaker and for Violet, because she knew no-one involved in the group. Here Xena, who had come to Women Across Cultures in response to a personal invitation from an acquaintance, recalls (and recoils from) her initial negative expectations of the group:

I suppose I kind of was a little bit nervous about the thing at the start because... oh gosh! Actually I’m just remembering what I did think..... I think at the time there were a lot of Asian.. girls and I thought ‘no one’s going to speak English’ [V laughs], so I’m a racist too. I kind of thought ‘ohh well they’ll all be fine. They’ll all be able to talk to each other and I’ll feel like such an outsider.’ I suppose I was feeling like an outsider anyway (interview 1/2, 2005).

Based on her acquaintance’s description of Women Across Cultures, Xena had imagined the group as a kind of safe house for “Asian” women from which she (as an English and Gaelic-speaking woman from Ireland) would be excluded (Pratt, 2002). She therefore anticipated that Women Across Cultures would be uncomfortable, isolating and difficult, expectations that Xena later acknowledged as problematic (or in her words, “racist”). Although (as discussed in the next section), Xena’s expectations of the group were later challenged, they can also be seen as ‘natural’, given her sense of strangeness as a newcomer both to New Zealand and to the other women in the group (see Gibson-Graham, 2003). Xena’s caution highlights the courage required to initiate contact with strangers through a group like Women Across Cultures, especially when everyday life already involves the hard work of contact across lines of unfamiliarity (also see Ho et al., 2007; Pratt, 2002).

For Violet, an international student from Malaysia, linguistic or ‘cultural’ unfamiliarity in Women Across Cultures was apparently less of a cause for caution than interpersonal unfamiliarity. Violet described how she had tried to persuade some of her Malaysian friends to accompany her to a group activity without success, but had then chosen to come to a group meeting alone despite her fear and their refusal:

The first time... there’s like a whole bunch of new people, you know, who are they? So... I wanted to get my friend, but at the end [she] .... doesn’t want to come.... It was like so terrible. But I was like, ‘I still want to go’ [laughing]... Somehow I was thinking it’s a new group... everyone is new. I won’t be the only one [laughing]! (interview 1/2, 2005).

Elsewhere in our interview, Violet noted that in actively seeking interaction beyond her Malaysian peer-group, she was unusual. She referred to her friends’ preference for interaction with their co-national peers, indicating that this preference was
understandable, involving less uncertainty and a greater degree of comfort (interview 1/2, see Chapter Six). As revealed in the quote above, however, Violet also actively countered her hesitations about coming to *Women Across Cultures* with the knowledge that everyone else in the group would also be “new”, and a stranger (Gibson-Graham, 2003).

It is interesting to reflect in the light of women’s expectations on the theoretical framework underpinning my establishment of *Women Across Cultures* (see Chapter Five), and my earlier concerns as to how women might read my involvement in the group. In relation to the former, and in Pratt’s (2002) terms, women imagined the group as both a safe house (space in which to share and construct common understandings) and a contact zone (space in which to encounter differences or strangers); not necessarily as just ‘safe’ or just ‘strange’ (for example, see Violet and Xena above). With my own involvement, women’s expectations of the group troubled simplistic notions of sameness, commonality, difference and power. Women constructed difference plurally and from multiple locations; for example, as a source of interest (Nikki, Violet, Janice and Stella); as offering opportunities for learning (Fiona, Deanna and Anita); and sometimes, as a point of commonality (Anita, Deanna, Janice and Stella). Also Deanna, Stella and Violet imagined “shared understandings” not in relation to constructed or real homogeneity (Pratt, 2002, p. 15), but in relation to parallel experiences of dis-location, being international, or being a newcomer.

### 10.3 Women’s reflections on *Women Across Cultures*

Women’s reflections on their involvement in *Women Across Cultures* continued to challenge my research questions, theoretical framework and methodological concerns. Different impressions of the group as an intersectional site were interwoven throughout their/our accounts and at different moments and in different ways, the group functioned as a “community” of strangers (Gibson-Graham, 2003, p. 53), a safe house, and a contact zone (Pratt, 2002). For some women, and on some occasions, it was “comfortable” and “relaxing”. For others, and at other times, it was uncomfortable, risky and hard work (Pratt, 2002). *Women Across Cultures* offered some women an important source of

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6 Possible ‘readings’ highlighted in Chapter One included *Women Across Cultures* as an attempt to foster (homogenised) sisterhood; or as the subjection of ‘others’ to a white academic gaze.
practical information and support, and some described it as a site that had allowed them to see and be in new ways (Lugones, 2006). Conversely, some women also expressed disappointment about their involvement in the group, or described it as fostering moments of self-doubt and uncertainty. In the remainder of the chapter I discuss the commonalities and disjunctures evident in women’s reflections in relation to three substantive themes that emerged in both interview and observational data: Women Across Cultures as a site for being together, accessing information and support, and learning to be and see differently.

**Being together**

As noted, for some women, Women Across Cultures offered an enjoyable site in which to ‘be’ and ‘do’ with others (Gibson-Graham, 2003); for example, as Nikki put it, “It’s really… nice to meet, and…. even though we don’t speak so deeply with all the people, it really helps just to meet a friendly face” (undergraduate international FFPS from Norway, interview 1/1, 2005). Xena, Nikki, Arui, and Stella described the group’s “atmosphere” as friendly, accepting and welcoming. Laura and Wakuwaku (both New Zealand students and recent immigrants) associated Women Across Cultures with a reduced sense of isolation and increased sense of wellbeing in a higher education context. Both Laura and Wakuwaku described the group as offering opportunities for social interaction that were quite different from those available in lecture or tutorial contexts (see Ramsey et al., 2007; Rosenthal et al., 2007). Both women expressed regret that Women Across Cultures or another similar “international networking group” (as Wakuwaku put it) had not existed when they first began university study. Wakuwaku stated that such a group would have reduced her initial sense of “struggling” alone in a completely new study environment. Xena, contrasting her earlier expectations with her experiences of Women Across Cultures, re-constituted the group as “comfortable” and “friendly” rather than as reinforcing her sense of strangeness or isolation. She said, “I have to say it’s been a very friendly atmosphere. People aren’t…suspicious of each other. I think it’s a very comfortable environment… and I have enjoyed it a lot more than I thought I would enjoy it” (interview 1/1, 2005).
In identifying specific factors that contributed to their enjoyment of *Women Across Cultures*, women partly echoed Gibson-Graham’s (2003) practical suggestions for community-building, and partly, Pratt’s (2002) notion of a safe house. In terms of the latter, Yukiko and Laura troubled my earlier worries about ‘women’ as a category of analysis and basis for a social group (see Chapter One). Echoing Pratt, they linked the fact that *Women Across Cultures* was a women-only space to a sense of “safety” and “comfort”. First Yukiko:

[Referring to *Women Across Cultures*] Oh it’s awesome! [laughter]... I just want awesome [laughter] in big letters... It’s really great support system and.. very safe environment because we are all women. It’s kind of sexism but... I found [it] safe (postgraduate international FFPS from Japan, interview 1/2, 2005).

And Laura:

I’ve never really been a part of a women’s group before, and.. I just find it really relaxing... it’s a space where you can just be yourself and not really care about if your hair’s brushed and all that [laughter] (postgraduate NZ student from USA/Fiji, interview 1/2, 2005).

Like Gibson-Graham (2003), Stella and Janice emphasised as positive the openness of *Women Across Cultures* to women’s comings and goings. Stella did not link her sense of security in the group to its homogeneity or a sense of communality (see Pratt, 2002), but to the fact that she could be involved in *Women Across Cultures* as and when she liked: “Because it’s voluntary meeting [I] just very feel free and feel secure as well” (interview 2/2, 2006). Echoing Noble (2005) Arui associated her security in the group with the recognition that she had received from other group participants. Arui, whose arrival in New Zealand from the PRC coincided with the group’s establishment, described it as having offered her a warm welcome and sense of acceptance, and as increasing her communicative confidence both within the group and beyond (see Lugones, 1987):

- A Yeah I feel so happy to join your group.... It’s given me so so much help.
- V Right, just confidence that you can talk to people?
- A Yeah confidence yeah, really, and nobody need worry [that they will] be ignored, or be joked or something…. relax.
- V It’s a relaxed place for you?
- A Yeah I really hope your group will continue, continue, continue (undergraduate NZ student from the PRC, interview 1/1, 2006).

Arui indicated that the recognition her communicative attempts received not only improved her sense of confidence communicating in conversational English, but also her willingness to take communicative risks.
Echoing Gibson-Graham’s (2003, p. 70) emphasis on the value of non-goal-oriented events to bring people together and cultivate engagement between them, Janice distinguished between *Women Across Cultures* and her other university activities. She highlighted the group’s distinctiveness as a source of enjoyment: “I like the fact that it’s very low key and… it’s not adding on an extra paper or anything like that. It’s more just fun and … just hanging out” (interview 1/1, 2005). Similarly, Wakuwaku contrasted the “intimacy” of *Women Across Cultures* with the impersonal nature of class or tutorial contexts, describing *Women Across Cultures* as facilitating more “personal” interactions than were likely to occur in classroom contexts. Wakuwaku also suggested that the group’s centering of plurality facilitated openness to others beyond their academic interests, and beyond their immediate public lives:

This group is more sort of intimate in a sense, because if you go to…the class or tutorials, that has a different atmosphere and it’s [a] much more huge group, and people are not there to talk about their cultural backgrounds or you know anything like that. Whereas *Women Across Cultures*, what people [are] interested in [is] not what they do much because ... other people do different studies, but more or less what their life has been like back in their home country and their culture and that sort of area, more sort of personal (NZ PhD student from Japan, interview 1/1, 2006).

Four women emphasised the significance of *Women Across Cultures* as a site for being with strangers (Gibson-Graham, 2003); people who they might otherwise not have met. For example, Janice, a New Zealand student, described *Women Across Cultures* as allowing her to meet “European” international students for the first time, and Wakuwaku, students from multiple departments and backgrounds:

This is a sort of social network group isn’t it, so you got to know... international student from different departments, to start with, and of course different age and different nationalities and different social or cultural background (interview 1/1, 2006).

In this regard, Laura, Deanna and Wakuwaku pointed to the resistant possibilities of *Women Across Cultures*; how by bringing strangers together the group was resistant both to fragmentation between differently-situated people, and to assimilating or reductive assumptions about ‘others’ (Gibson-Graham, 2003; Lugones, 2003). Echoing Gibson-Graham (2003, p. 67), Laura suggested that groups like *Women Across Cultures* are resistant to fragmentation in that they cultivate engagement rather than separation and suspicion between “Kiwi society” and “other groups”. She said:

I think something like that is definitely needed because from my observations what happens is people come and generally stick with their own cultural group because… Kiwi society as a
whole is so kind of inward looking and not really reaching out.... Other groups tend to become like that as well (interview 1/2, 2005).

Similarly, Deanna described how through Women Across Cultures she had met and overcome her “fear” of “Asian” women (discussed later in the chapter). Wakuwaku alluded to Women Across Cultures as resistant to assimilating or reductive assumptions. She highlighted how her involvement in the group had allowed her to become aware that international students are not homogeneous (all “Asian”):

I knew there are quite a few international students... but they are sort of merged into other students and I... couldn’t quite tell - other than Asian student because they’re obvious - but how many different nationalities... the students are from and so Women Across Cultures I just realised, ‘Wow! Yeah there are so many people from different nations and which I didn’t really know’.... to me it was [an] encouragement (interview 1/2, 2006).

Arui used the words “home” and “family” to describe her sense of affiliation with the women she had met through Women Across Cultures. Interestingly, she also suggested that this sense of affiliation may have a wider effect than the group’s immediate locality:

A I feel that [a] very good aspect of Women Across Cultures is inside the group the ladies from all over the world..... I think it’s a way to connect with... all [the] world...
V ... so it’s something bigger, even thought it’s just this small group.
A Yeah.
V It can become bigger...because people go back.
A Yeah they go back and they have their own friends and it keeps growing, and when I went back to China, I all the time remember,... and sometimes because I still get the email [laughter].... I was there, but I’m not there really....I really feel it’s something there....inside my heart is there.
V That’s great, so you could come back, it’s where you can come back to?
A Yeah when I come back, I come back to a group, I feel really like [I] go back home to family (Arui, NZ undergraduate student from the PRC, interview 1/1, 2006)

Arui emphasised that since those involved in Women Across Cultures were from (and would live) all over the world, the group could be seen as developing a sense of connections or “shared understandings” both at a local level and beyond (Pratt, 2002, p. 15). In the statement above, she reflects on the group as not only facilitating her sense of fit in New Zealand, but also resulting in broader inter-national networks of connection, affiliation, and belonging (Noble, 2005).

For two women, Women Across Cultures as a site for engaging with others was initially disappointing. Sharon, who had expected that Women Across Cultures would offer opportunities for meeting “Kiwis”, said, “I didn’t find... a lot of Kiwi people in the club here” (interview 1/1, 2006). Sharon’s observation is interesting given that at most
group meetings the women present were about half and half international and New Zealand students. Apparently the (predominantly Asian) New Zealand students present did not fit Sharon’s imagined ideal of white/non-Asian New Zealanders (see Hall, 1996, Chapter Six). Notably, I invoked the same imagined ideal when eliciting Violet’s reflections during our first interview on how *Women Across Cultures* had shaped her perceptions of New Zealanders. Although I knew that the women present at most meetings were approximately half and half New Zealand and international students or students’ partners, I commented, “Actually there aren’t that many New Zealanders in *Women Across Cultures* now. It’s mostly turned into an international student group”. Violet had agreed, echoing Sharon’s disappointment. She replied, “That’s true, that’s true” (interview 1/2, 2006).

Sharon and Violet also indicated that for them, “being together” was not “the ground and the fullness of community” (Gibson-Graham, 2003, p. 68). When reflecting on their involvement in *Women Across Cultures*, both indicated that they had hoped for deeper friendships than those that they had developed through the group. For example, as Sharon says here:

> S I think it’s a really good... opportunity to meet people, but it’s kind of hard to get really into a long-term relationship, or not really a long-term relationship
> V Just to get close to people.
> S Close or friendship. Just really cultivated friendship (interview 1/1, 2006).

Violet suggested that the potential for *Women Across Cultures* to foster deeper friendships might be limited because of its relative infrequency:

> I got to know some people even though still not really at [a] deep level.... I mean it’s a bit hard because .. we have fortnightly meetings.... in between we don’t contact each other (interview 1/2, 2005).

Although the two women’s disappointment could be read as revealing varying expectations of what constitutes ‘deep’ friendship (see Ho et al., 2004), Violet’s reflections on *Women Across Cultures* as a site for being together with others had changed markedly by the time of our second interview. I discuss this in the following section.

Echoing Pratt (2002), some women explicitly referred to their contact with others in *Women Across Cultures* as involving hard work. Both Alexis (a New Zealand student) and Sharon (an international student) lamented a sense of not knowing what to talk about...
in group meetings, and expressed concerns that their uncertainty was indicative of personal deficiency. First Alexis:

Like to be honest, I’m a little afraid of Women Across Cultures because I just can’t make conversation [laugh]!... I’m useless... And I know I shouldn’t worry about it but... I’ve got a personal thing about being boring as well. I think I’m boring (postgraduate NZ Pakeha student, interview 2/2, 2006).

And Sharon:

Whenever I was in the club I tried to talk to people but sometimes I just don’t know what to talk about... I think I should take some courses to teach me how to you know speak... what to talk about, how to be a social person (interview 1/1, 2006).

Although both women indicated that their sense of social uncertainty was not limited to Women Across Cultures meetings, their allusion to the challenges inherent in groups where differences are central is worth noting (Gibson-Graham, 2003; Lugones, 2003; Pratt, 2002). After one particular group meeting, my journal entry revealed similar misgivings. This occasion occurred near the end of the project, and involved a pre-arranged group outing at which none of the women present knew each other, although I knew all of them. Here is what I wrote:

How should I behave when I am the hub and no-one else knows each other? I am sitting here, trying to dream up things to say that will connect these women. I happen to know that Laura has had a really tough month supporting a friend with mental illness... I greet her with “How are you?”... No one else knows about the difficult month she has had... how much can I say? What can I ask that doesn’t expose her or cut us off from the others present, while still acknowledging her pain and the pain of her friend?... Trying to keep this community thing going whoever turns up each week is hard work, I have to be open to judgement from all sides, to risk looking a total fool, doing things wrong... alienating some, including others... offending, confusing, and appearing inept (Journal, 22 September 2006).

As discussed in Chapter Five, Lugones (1987, 2003, 2006) acknowledges communicative unease as inherent in intersectional sites such as Women Across Cultures. While acknowledging its difficulties she also advocates for accepting unease as inherent in interaction across differences, and as positive in that it demands an openness to others’ non-transparency and a “significant extension of [one’s] own intercultural journey” (Lugones, 2006, p. 81; also see Haigh, 2002). I describe below how some women spoke explicitly about the ways in which Women Across Cultures had extended their ‘intercultural journeys’, but first, I consider how for some women, the group was also source of information and support.
Accessing information and support

*Women Across Cultures* functioned as a source of information or point of access to information in three ways: first, through sessions which focussed explicitly on practical issues; second, as a point of access to staff; and third, as a site in which women could informally share information with each other concerning practical issues, coping strategies etc. As an example of the former, Yukiko and Fiona both recalled a session in which we discussed strategies for coping with winter in a cold house and a cool climate. Both women emphasised the usefulness of this session in a practical sense and Yukiko also expressed appreciation of our intentions in organising it:

Y It’s great that you... introduced... winter gears....
V ...I felt a bit silly because most people there come from much colder countries than New Zealand. [Laughs].
Y [Laughs] It’s just so sweet and... not only, I could gain knowledge but it’s more than that. I felt.....warmth... [laughter]. Yeah, so it’s helpful. (interview 1/2, 2005).8

In linking the practical usefulness of the session and its (emotional) ‘warmth’, Yukiko’s statement highlights how different support functions may be intertwined (also see Ramsey et al., 2007, Chapter Three). Like Anita in the previous chapter, Yukiko experienced the dissemination of practical information as also communicating human care.

Another way in which *Women Across Cultures* functioned as an access point to practical information and support was through the involvement of two international office staff during each year of the project. One staff member was present at most group events, and (international and New Zealand) students and students’ partners alike were able to ask their advice on practical matters. Reflecting on this, Jordan, like Yukiko, noted how for some women in *Women Across Cultures*, access to information and (practical, social, and emotional) support were intertwined. She said, “It’s just such a wonderful thing... some sort of support network that’s informal and provides... people... with an access point to staff which is in a safe environment” (Pākehā NZ postgraduate student, interview 1/1, 2005).

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7 Much of the student accommodation in the city where *Women Across Cultures* was based has no central heating and is poorly insulated (see Chapter Nine).

8 I co-organised and co-facilitated this session with an international office staff member.
Often, practical information was shared informally by women in *Women Across Cultures* meetings. Sometimes this occurred in discussions that followed presentations or activities, sometimes over tea and coffee in ones and twos, and sometimes via email or when women met with each other between group meetings. In my research journal I recorded many observations of women spontaneously sharing practical information relating to coursework, flating or tenancy issues, medical issues, and community services and events. Women also shared their coping strategies; for example, how to cope when lonely or homesick, how to deal with difficult personal relationships, where to access health care, and how to deal with disrespectful immigration officials. One discussion around strategies for coping with homesickness occurred after a presentation in which Alexis, a New Zealand student, gave an oral account of her recent month-long trip to the PRC. Alexis had intended to share photographs of the trip, but since the data projector would not work, spoke instead about her experience of travelling, and her surprise at feeling completely foreign, alone and homesick. After her presentation, a discussion occurred spontaneously in which women shared their own experiences of being foreign in New Zealand and elsewhere, and discussed/elicted practical suggestions for coping when homesick or feeling dis-located. I recorded the many aspects to this discussion in my research journal:

Nikki talked about how much she is missing meatballs, potatoes, carrots and gravy, and about how she finds writing to be a form of therapy. She commented that since she does not have time for this while studying, she feels 'unbalanced'. Yukiko asked about how to come up out of the lowest point of culture shock. I shared my sister’s advice to visit the public library if I was feeling bad, and how helpful I had found this in West Virginia. Frances agreed, and said that in Norway this was helpful for her because she would meet other internationals there. Frances also talked about her trip to Ireland to see her mother’s relatives as a teenager. She talked about how sensitive she had felt when they made jokes and she couldn’t understand what was funny. She said she had felt like a ‘stupid North American’. Frances commented that when learning Norwegian, she also felt that Norwegian humour was the last thing she learnt to understand. She suggested that in social environments, this makes you feel really isolated. Yukiko talked about the importance of getting out, and finding other people, not just being alone when feeling low. And Laura talked about how when she went back to the USA after living away for many many years, she found that going to concerts, learning dance, and listening to music was really helpful in overcoming her sense of disorientation (Journal, 3 June 2005).

Occasions such as this one problematised my earlier concerns about *Women Across Cultures* as reinscribing discourses that ‘other’ or that essentialise some people’s lives (Ang, 2003; Ippolito, 2007; Mohanty, 1991b, see Chapter One). The discussion was not essentialising or unidirectional, but rather involved “bidirectional [multidirectional]?”
learning” through open and reciprocal discussion about women’s dissimilar and similar experiences of shifting between socio-geographical worlds (Mahalingam and Reid, 2007, p. 261; also see Gibson-Graham, 2003).

Some women spoke explicitly about Women Across Cultures as a source of “support”. One of these was Violet, whose second interview differed markedly from her first. In 2006, after eighteen months of coming regularly to Women Across Cultures activities, Violet referred to the group not just as a forum for meeting people (see previous section), but also as a “functioning... support group”:

Vt I think that....people might see it as a social group, but at the same time it’s actually functioning as a support group, so that’s what is really helpful....
V ...How has it functioned as a support group? I’m interested... if you could talk about that a little bit more?
Vt During the meeting times you can chat with others and you probably can talk to them about what you are facing in your study or in your daily life, so... if they know how to deal with it they will tell you. That will be a good way, and other times it’s like...just meeting on campus and going the extra effort to have lunch together, or have a cup of coffee or those sort of things, so that would kind of build up the relationship (interview 2/2, 2006).

In her statement above, Violet highlights multiple forms of support that she accessed through Women Across Cultures: social support through being with and talking to others (Gibson-Graham, 2003); practical support through hearing others’ ways of dealing with practical issues; and emotional support through developing friendships with others (Ramsey et al., 2007; Rosenthal et al., 2007). The significant shift in Violet’s perception of Women Across Cultures (from a site for developing superficial friendships to a functioning support group) suggests the importance of recognising that the development of (emotionally) supportive connections between strangers does not happen instantly. As Gibson-Graham (2003, p. 67) argues and Violet revealed, they take time and “multiple opportunities” for people “to encounter each other”.

Two other women whose interviews emphasised the ‘support’ function of Women Across Cultures were Deanna and Xena. Deanna described Women Across Cultures as having functioned as a protective and healing “community” during a period when she had felt very isolated in her academic environment. Echoing Pratt’s (2002) description of a ‘safe house’ she credited her connections with other women in the group as having kept her “comfortable” and “well” despite other issues that at the time, had threatened her emotional wellbeing (also see Lugones, 1987). Like Stella, Deanna did not link the
communality afforded her through *Women Across Cultures* to homogeneity, but she did emphasise the value of shared understandings as allowing a person to offer helpful and relevant support (see Pratt, 2002, p. 15). Some examples of shared understandings that Deanna identified included shared experiences of solitary thesis study; being older and less involved in younger students’ peer networks; and being “international”, or having moved across social and geographical worlds (Lugones, 1987).

Xena, who constituted *Women Across Cultures* as both a contact zone and a safe house (Pratt, 2002), reflected on the wonder of receiving emotional support from strangers in the group and in other groups that she belonged to following the birth of her first baby. She said:

> There was a lot of hospitality and generosity from people around me that I experienced and was really touched by…. it was amazing actually. It was quite an amazing experience to see how you’re here in a country, these people who don’t really know who have adopted you,… people from church and… the group (referring to *Women Across Cultures*) that [I had] gone down to… with the baby,…and seeing all the people who had thought about you and realising that there are people there and people do care and it was just a really nice thing… Without the networks it would have been impossible (interview 1/2, 2005).

For Xena, care expressed by strangers with no familial obligation to care was “amazing” in its unexpectedness and generosity (Gibson Graham, 2003). Echoing Deanna, she emphasised how this care was protective of her well-being as a new mother away from familial supports and in an unfamiliar place (see Noble, 2005; Rosenthal et al., 2007).

**Learning to be and see differently**

This section returns to *Women Across Cultures* as a site for learning to be and see in new ways (Haigh, 2002; Lugones, 1987, 2006). Moments of such learning were evident in five women’s accounts and were also described in my research journal. They did not necessarily result from unease or uncertainty (as discussed) but also from respectful and careful discussion across and about similarities and dissimilarities (Mahalingam and Reid, 2007). For example, on one occasion, Arui gave a presentation about her home town and province in the PRC. As part of her presentation, she discussed some behavioural norms in New Zealand that had initially ‘jarred’ for her, and contrasting behavioural norms that were to her, more familiar. Group discussion afterwards turned to the question of acceptable host and guest behaviour, as my research journal recalls:
Yukiko asked what the custom is when someone has guests over to their home in China... whether the expectation is that guests help out, or just sit and be waited upon. Arui said that in China, the guest is like an 'emperor'. He or she is expected to just sit, eat and enjoy. Yukiko said that this was helpful. She has a Chinese friend who gets annoyed when she tries to help. Yukiko explained that in Japan, guests always help the host clean up after the meal, etc. Laura commented that in the part of the USA where she was born, there is a similar expectation of guests helping, whereas in New Zealand, she finds that hosts expect the guest just to be waited upon (Journal, 20 May 2005).

In our interview later, Yukiko recalled this conversation as an example of how her sense of safety in the group was not predicated on homogeneity or even necessarily agreement (in contrast with Pratt, 2002). She remarked on how Arui’s presentation and the ensuing discussion had allowed differences and uncertainties to be explicitly and respectfully explored, and had resulted in her (and my) understandings of self and other being extended (Lugones, 2006):

Y I found safe... And great diversity.... It’s very interesting to see how they have harmonised.... with agreement and with disagreement even... With both we can harmonise.
V ...Can you think of an example, of where you’ve seen that?
Y ....China... experience of China and then... we shared the difference of... hosting... [in] different cultures.
V Yeah, yeah.. the hospitality expectations,... I really liked the way you asked about [that] because I didn’t know. It was interesting.
V Yeah, I didn’t know either, so... it’s great... this kind of thing (interview 1/2, 2005).

Stella, Violet, and Deanna similarly described ways in which Women Across Cultures had allowed them to see themselves and others in new ways through offering opportunities for open and respectful discussions and interactions. Stella described her view of “other countries” as having been enlarged through the presentations and discussions in the group:

Through... those people’s presentations, I really like them not only because you learn about other cultures but also you talk about them and through those presentations you just have the wider view on the things [that] happen in other countries (interview 2/2, 2006).

Violet explained that through group presentations and discussions, she had learned to understand and be open to ways of being and behaving that were unfamiliar to her or “different”: “You get (to appreciate) something about different cultures, [that are] different from ours, they have their reason behind, you know, it’s so interesting [laughs]” (interview 1/2, 2005).

I have already noted how Women Across Cultures had for Deanna, allowed her to see “Asians” differently. Here she explains the significance of the opportunities the group
had offered not only for being with “Asian” women, but also for communicative “exchange”:

I think Asians [are] something special for me here because... I always found it more difficult to approach Asian people.... Actually, really I had very little to do with Asians that didn’t grow up [in Switzerland] or in other western culture..... With Women Across Cultures I felt like I can ask questions... I think if I would go for a coffee with some Asian girl... maybe they don’t want to talk about [such questions] and then [in] Women Across Cultures I feel like they probably want to talk about [them] or they’re interested in this as well and it’s [a] really nice exchange.... I guess that’s as well for Asians the difficult thing here [is].... I guess it’s the same, that they are afraid, just as I was maybe afraid of them. And yeah I think Women Across Cultures does make this link and for me it’s easier to understand them (interview 2/2, 2006).

Deanna’s statement highlights three factors that led to new understandings and new ways of seeing herself and others (Lugones, 2006). The first, as discussed earlier, was being with “Asian” women, people who she had previously had little to do with. The second was explicit (non-dominant) discussion in which (as Deanna read it) both people in the exchange were “interested” in each other’s ways of being and seeing and neither was located as a kind of dominant norm (see Mahalingam and Reid, 2007). The third was the development of links or the ability to recognise others as “fully human” (Noble, 2005, p. 115), similarly fearful in the face of perceived difference. I read Deanna’s use of the term “understand” (in her statement above) very differently from the kind of (dominating) understanding that involves an-other’s reduction or translation “into sameness” or difference (Lugones, 2003). Deanna’s new understanding involved recognition of her own fearfulness, and of those she had previously feared as active subjects, not just as different/distant ‘others’ (see Fine, 1994; Ross, 2002).9

Like Deanna, Xena also described how a shift in her sense of self and other occurred through speaking with “Asian” women in Women Across Cultures. This statement contrasts markedly with her expectations of the group (see section 10.2):

X [Referring to Women Across Cultures] It’s made me feel less like the only outsider. Like I’m not particularly outside because you know for me it’s relatively easy, I’m a European. I speak English, it’s easy, easier. But I’ve realised that there are a lot of people out there who are not New Zealanders, like you kind of think everyone else is from New Zealand and they all know what’s going on and I’m the only one so it does kind of help you to realise there’s actually a lot of people out there who are finding things reasonably culturally difficult... I was nearly crying one day when... I was chatting to one girl... and

9 For Deanna, the “exchange” fostered through Women Across Cultures (see her statement above) has continued beyond the project’s conclusion. She continues to visit women she met through the group both in other parts of Europe and in Asia.
her difficulty with the language and feeling she can’t go out of the house, and I just thought “oh my goodness”. I realised that it was so important to have somewhere... to come where it is all foreigners... and from different experiences just to help people to feel=

V = that foreignness is actually a point of commonality.=
X = Yes a shared experience, this is tough (interview 1/2, 2005).

In contrast with her earlier expectations, Xena’s interactions with other ‘outsiders’ in Women Across Cultures meetings both validated and reduced her own sense of being an outsider (Carr et al., 2003). She also described a new awareness that outside-ness is both a shared and an uneven experience in New Zealand (Mahalingam and Reid, 2007), how a sense of “fit” may be less forthcoming when one’s first language is not English (Noble, 2005, p. 114).

As participant, researcher, and co-facilitator, my own “intercultural [and interpersonal] journey” was also extended through my involvement in Women Across Cultures (Lugones, 2006, p. 81). Two moments within the group especially challenged my preconceived ideas and assumptions about others, and highlighted “the complexities embedded in the lives of women who are dissimilar” (Mahalingam and Reid, 2007, p. 256) and the importance of holding complexity central (Lugones, 2006). The first followed a group meeting that involved two presentations: a brief presentation from the student association women’s representative to publicise the upcoming Women’s Week, followed by presentation from two international exchange students from the Netherlands (Journal, 29 July 2005). As part of her presentation, the women’s representative described an upcoming sex toy party for women on campus, admonishing women to have an “open mind” and to come along. Then, when discussing their ‘home’ country, the second two speakers emphasised the Netherlands’ “progressive” euthanasia, drug-taking, abortion and prostitution laws, and showed explicit photographs taken in Amsterdam’s red light district. After the two presentations the group was unusually silent and, conscious that some of the women present were Buddhist, Catholic, and Muslim, I assumed that offence had been caused either by the presentation content, or by the implication that those who found it offensive were regressive or closed-minded. A later discussion with Xena (a devout Catholic) problematised my assumptions. When I asked how she had found the session Xena replied that although it had felt uncomfortable she had also found it interesting and had enjoyed a “really good” discussion afterwards with
the person sitting next to her. Contrary to my expectations, Xena had not been offended as such. The second occasion occurred towards the end of the project, and involved a discussion with Stella in which she made some suggestions as to what might be addressed in future *Women Across Cultures* meetings. In the following discussion, Stella resolutely reclaims the category ‘women’ and (like Yukiko and Laura earlier) problematises my concerns about assuming similarities across women (see Ang, 2003):

S Something that maybe we can put more in the meeting ... [is] the women’s issues... especially health problems, just especially for women and the crime issues, like rape.
V So you’re talking about safety, personal safety in the [names city] context for people? Or...
S All (the different aspects), yeah that would be good... even just learning self-defence skills, I don’t know [laughs]...
V That’s a great suggestion I like that one [laughter]. Yeah, and maybe someone to come along and talk about, do you think, sexual health?... Like... someone from Family Planning?
S That would be really great.
V Because a lot of people don’t know that these services exist, yeah.
S Yeah I thought about those things because it’s a women's group (interview 2/2, 2006).

On both occasions described above, my assumptions about what might cause other women offence or be seen as problematic were troubled and challenged. In the first instance, my concerns over the discomfort or riskiness of presentation content, and in the second, my anxiety not to ‘reduce’ others by assuming all women have the same concerns were shown to be based on reductive assumptions. Although offence and discomfort in social sites like *Women Across Cultures* may be an ever-present possibility (Gibson-Graham, 2003; Lugones, 1987, 2003, 2006; Pratt, 2002), these interactions highlighted how an obsession with reducing or avoiding risk or offence risks reducing and infantilising those who have their own views on what is comfortable or unsafe. This is not to suggest that no consideration should be given to how interactions or conversations might offend others, but to highlight the danger of assuming that I can judge what another person might find offensive (Lugones, 2006). After the conclusion of the project, when discussing this matter with a friend, she remarked that making preemptive assumptions about what another person or group of people might find

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10 Just because Xena was not offended does not mean that other women present did not find the meeting’s content offensive.

11 For example, that all religious people will necessarily be offended by discussion about sex toys or so-called progressive legislation, and that women necessarily share no common interests or concerns.
offensive is the "flip side of racism." She stated "It has a different intention, but the same effect": the relegation of some people to essentialised, bounded 'boxes' (see Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007).

10.4 Some limitations

The systematic collection of comparative data as to why women did not come to Women Across Cultures or in some cases, why they came and left, was beyond the scope of this project. Some suggestive evidence is included in my research journal and women’s interview accounts. First and as stated, Violet described her friends’ refusal in terms of their perception of shared Malaysian identity as more “comfortable” than interaction across differences and unfamiliarity (interview 2/2, 2006). Another reason indicated by some women who enquired about the group, was a preference for large-scale, programmed social events rather than a co-facilitated, low-key social space. A further possibility was ‘gate-keeping’, especially for women who were partners of international students. Although I endeavoured to publicise the group as widely as possible off campus, through community noticeboards, newsletters, and so on (see Appendix II), Women Across Cultures was most visibly publicised within the higher education institutions involved. Women partners of students were therefore largely dependent on their male partners recognising the group as relevant to them, collecting and passing on information.

I encountered an apparent gate-keeping response directly at an interfaith group meeting in February 2005 at which I had given a presentation about Women Across Cultures and elicited feedback and suggestions. On this occasion, a male student representative of a particular religious community was asked by the meeting organiser if he would be willing to distribute flyers about Women Across Cultures at his religious centre. The man responded: “I have nothing against it, but I don’t think our women will be interested; if they have problems they can talk to their husbands and children” (Journal, 17 February 2005). This man may have disseminated the flyers regardless of his opinions about the group’s relevance, or he may have been right in assuming that the

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12 I do not identify the religious community in question for reasons of anonymity.
women in his acquaintance would not be interested in being involved. Regardless of the outcome, this exchange highlighted the possibility that for some women access to Women Across Cultures may have been blocked by men’s assumptions that they were not interested, and a subsequent failure to pass on information.13

Known reasons for women’s withdrawal from Women Across Cultures were often practical: for example, returning ‘home’ (elsewhere in New Zealand or overseas), changed study and work commitments, timetable clashes, heavy course requirements, inclement weather, illness, or the birth of a new baby. Some women were more actively involved in other clubs and social activities or became involved in other commitments after having been in the group for a while. Some women developed their own independent social networks as a result of being involved in Women Across Cultures, and then stopped coming to regular meetings and activities. For example, a doctoral student involved in Women Across Cultures initiated a separate doctoral students’ support group; and other women, who did not always come to group activities still often met socially or maintained email and phone contact in their own time.

In terms of those who came to Women Across Cultures activities, it is notable that relatively few New Zealand-born New Zealanders were involved across the two years of the project, and second, that the group as a whole was not representative of the student ‘body’ in the city. Both Deanna and Violet suggested that an absence of New Zealand-born New Zealanders was not surprising, since unless someone has “been abroad” (Deanna) or experienced being “foreign” themselves (Violet) they are unlikely to want to mix with “internationals” (or engage in world-travelling, Lugones, 1987). Also, Deanna suggested that this was not necessarily a limit, emphasising the value of Women Across Cultures as a forum for those who were “internationals” or for any who chose to be involved, saying, “I think maybe what I want to emphasise is that even if there aren’t too many [New Zealand-born?] Kiwis... I think it doesn’t matter. I think it’s great to have it” (interview 1/2, 2005). In terms of my second point (above), it was not until 2007 that the

13 Conversely, another case highlighted the importance of getting men ‘on side’ when establishing a group intended to include their partners. One man who belonged to the same faith community as that mentioned above recognised the group’s relevance to his (then overseas) partner, and in 2005 signed up to receive group emails on her behalf. This man was the sole male on the group email list throughout the duration of the project and his partner joined Women Across Cultures immediately once she arrived in New Zealand in February 2007 (after the project’s completion).
first Arabic-speaking women became involved in *Women Across Cultures* for example,\(^{14}\) and during 2005 and 2006, no indigenous and few women from the Pacific region came to group activities, as Laura noted:

I have noticed that people of particular ethnic groups will be more likely to come... like not too many Pacific Islanders come along, and probably a lot of that is just ...maybe how word gets around and... the kind of things that people are likely to [enjoy doing] (interview 2/2, 2006).

In her last statement (above) Laura indicates that the involvement of some women and not others is not necessarily a problem, but perhaps indicative of word-of-mouth information or endorsement of the group not having reached certain networks, or of people’s different preferences (see Rosenthal et al., 2007). Laura’s comment suggests the importance of many different kinds of social spaces on higher education campuses, whether intentionally intersectional or constituted as “homogenous...communities” (Pratt, 2002, p. 15), since these may serve different (and equally valuable) functions for different people (see Ramsey et al., 2007; Rosenthal et al., 2007). Her comment also emphasises the importance of recognising that for some students (and in my project, partners of students) *not* being involved in a particular social group may be an active and legitimate preference (see Rosenthal et al., 2007).

A further limitation of *Women Across Cultures* in terms of my research objectives was that most international students and students’ partners interviewed indicated that it had not affected their general view of New Zealanders. Anita, whose views of New Zealanders were already positive prior to her involvement in *Women Across Cultures* described the group as having shown her that: “New Zealanders respect and value people from other cultures as well” (ISP from India, interview 1/2, 2005). Other women, who expressed highly critical views of New Zealand-ness initially, repeated these (sometimes, more adamantly) during their second interview (see Chapter Six). Nikki alone resisted making generalisations about New Zealanders. She described generalisations as problematic since she had met “so many different people” through her involvement in both *Women Across Cultures* and other social groups in New Zealand (interview 1/1, 2005).

\(^{14}\) I do not intend to suggest here that the presence of Arabic-speaking women during 2007 somehow made the group more ‘representative’, but to note how *Women Across Cultures* seemed to attract women unevenly over the course of the project and beyond.
In terms of the practical organisation of *Women Across Cultures*, Sharon and Violet (in her first interview) suggested that meetings may have more effectively facilitated connections between people if they had been held more frequently than once every two weeks. Simultaneously, Violet acknowledged that finding extra meeting times is difficult when those involved have different class timetables, and when there are no designated ‘clubs times’ in class timetabling. Violet’s point highlights the impossibility of a given social group being accessible to all students in a higher education context, and suggests that formally timetabled space for on-campus social activities may ensure that students who wish to be involved in them are not excluded.

Two further limitations of *Women Across Cultures* concern its fluctuating size and the impossibility of pleasing everyone involved. Because they had no idea who or how many women would turn up each week, an open and “generous spirit” was required from facilitators and presenters (Gibson-Graham, 2003, p. 65). This presented obvious challenges when organising food-based activities and outings. At the same time, and as already noted, for Stella and Janice, the openness of *Women Across Cultures* to women’s comings and goings was positive, and Alexis (echoing Gibson-Graham, 2003) emphasised the importance of valuing whoever came: “If ten people go, great. That’s because...you hear about...students being isolated, and if they feel less isolated for one morning a week...so much the better” (interview 2/2, 2006). In response to my question regarding how the group might be run in a way that might consistently attract more women, Wakuwaku emphasised the value of both its smallness and being open to people’s casual participation:

W …..I can’t really think of other ways because students are …in a way busy…. If you have it outside of the school hours like at the weekend, again I think you don’t have much attendance, like they have their own sort of socialising or whatever. I think this is a good system to have, just having like a once a fortnight meeting and people who can come just come along and…because of the small number I think we get to know each other really well.

V So you see it as a positive thing rather than necessarily a sign of failure.

W I think so…. And also people have so many different things going on in their life so you can’t really expect to have people all the time and but also you start seeing some regular people and those are keen to interact with other people and so it’s sort of almost like self-selection in a sense…which is also good I think (interview 1/1, 2006).

Violet described how at her ‘home’ university in Malaysia an hour a week was kept free of timetabled classes in order to allow Muslim students to attend Friday prayer. She explained that this ‘free’ space in the timetable was used by many non-Muslim students for social activities and meetings. Arguably, this was still not a designated space for social activities, since praying Muslims were excluded from participation.

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15 Violet described how at her ‘home’ university in Malaysia an hour a week was kept free of timetabled classes in order to allow Muslim students to attend Friday prayer. She explained that this ‘free’ space in the timetable was used by many non-Muslim students for social activities and meetings. Arguably, this was still not a designated space for social activities, since praying Muslims were excluded from participation.
In terms of pleasing everyone, I have noted throughout the chapter the riskiness inherent in some group meetings, and my recurring worries about ensuring some people’s comfort at the expense of others. However, as discussed, offence and discomfort is always possible in intersectional sites such as Women Across Cultures (Gibson-Graham, 2003; Lugones, 2003, 2006; Pratt, 2002). While women’s sense of safety or security may be increased through a group’s openness and the use of ‘ice-breakers’ such as shared food, to mitigate risk entirely in a group that is criss-crossed by multiple differences is neither possible nor necessarily desirable. A preoccupation with safety risks reducing differences to sameness, or assuming difference where there may be commonality (see previous section).

10.5 Concluding thoughts and epilogue
To return to the chapter’s aims (see section 10.1), ten of the eleven interviewees who discussed their expectations of Women Across Cultures indicated that these had been met. In addition, Xena, whose expectations were negative, described the group as having been a helpful source of support and connection during a tumultuous personal time. Partners of international students involved in the group (Anita, Xena and Janice) described it as enjoyable, comfortable, and a source of connection. Anita, Xena and Arui as newcomers to the city, also found it a helpful source of practical information. Of the nineteen interviewees who were members of Women Across Cultures over part or all of the project’s duration, eight were international students or partners of international students and nine were New Zealand students. As such, Women Across Cultures effectively promoted interaction between international and New Zealand students. In addition, it was a site in which a New Zealand/international binary was problematised, and multiple ways of being and seeing were explored through presentations, discussions, interactions and conversations. Sharon’s account was an exception. Despite her involvement in the group she remained disappointed in her lack of “Kiwi” friends, and her imagined ideal of (white, non-Asian) New Zealand-ness remained apparently unchallenged.

I count Roja and Janice here as New Zealand students, although Roja had previously been an international student and Janice was also married to an international student (see Chapter Five).
As noted throughout the chapter, the data considered here complicates my research questions, methodological concerns, and theoretical perspectives in relation to Women Across Cultures. New Zealand-ness and international-ness emerged as blurred and slippery categories of identification. Interactions that occurred in the group were multidirectional, occurring across more than a two way (international/local) binary and more complicated and multifaceted differences and commonalities than ‘culture’.\textsuperscript{17} In Women Across Cultures, differences were certainly a source of discussion, curiosity, confusion, and richness; but they were shifting and complex so that (as Xena and Deanna discovered) moments of surprising commonality and connection also sometimes emerged. Women Across Cultures was clearly in some respects and for some women, a source of human connection, practical information, social and emotional support; but it was also a ‘shifty’ space with unpredictable and, at some moments, uneasy outcomes. In addition, for some women, Women Across Cultures was a site of refusal or disengagement. Although as acknowledged earlier I have little formal data about this, clearly, some women did not choose to be involved in the group and some came once or a few times and did not return. A group of regular attendees did emerge during each year of the project, but from week to week, Women Across Cultures was made up of different women.

Implications from this chapter relate to theory, research, policy and practice. The first is the need to “worry the clear distinctions” (Fine, 1994, p. 80) between international-ness and local-ness in internationalised higher education whether in research or other forms of representation (for example, marketing or report writing), or in teaching and support provision. Women Across Cultures highlighted the complexity subsumed under both categories and the multiple commonalities and differences between and across them. Sharon and Violet’s (initial) interview accounts also highlighted the likelihood of disappointment resulting from overly-simplistic and unmet expectations or imagined ideals about others (also see Chapter Six). How those responsible for marketing New Zealand as an education destination and those conducting research in internationalised education contexts might represent a more highly differentiated (less

\textsuperscript{17} Women Across Cultures was not just an ‘intercultural’ group (see Chapter One), but one in which many differences and commonalities were central.
Eurocentric) view of New Zealand-ness would be well worth further consideration. Sharon’s account also suggests that research relying on the use of categories like ‘international’ and ‘New Zealand’ as if transparent may be limited in its usefulness unless it also explores the meanings that participants attach to the terms used.

The second implication that I draw from this chapter is related to the first and has to do with the preoccupation in some New Zealand international education literature with international students’ ‘integration’ or otherwise, and with ‘intercultural interaction’ understood in binary (local/international) terms (for example, see Deloitte, 2008; Ward, 2006; Ward and Masgoret, 2004; Ward et al., 2005). The data considered in this chapter suggests that a preoccupation with ‘integration’ as a comfortable endpoint may be overly simplistic, given that moments of connection and understanding occurred throughout the project alongside moments of unease and discomfort. While some women attributed new learning to their involvement in Women Across Cultures this learning was not so much an arrival at some final understanding or destination as a learned recognition of the limits to one’s understanding and an openness to realities that had not been or could not be comprehended fully. In terms of a preoccupation with international/local student interaction (for example, see Ward, 2006), this study suggests that efforts might be better directed at fostering sites in which moments of connection can occur between students in general, students understood as more complexly-situated subjects than binary or any other categorisations might suggest. A preoccupation with international/local interaction could result in a failure to see and affirm interaction and moments of connection between students within and across the various differences subsumed within international-ness and local-ness.

The third implication is theoretical and concerns both the value and difficulty of “thinking at the limit” (Hall, 1996, p. 1) in order to construct intentionally intersectional spaces. While Lugones’ (2003) impure community, Gibson-Graham’s (2003) ethics of the local, and Pratt’s (2002) contact zones and safe houses usefully express an understanding of people both as plural and non-reducible or assimilable to each other, none of these alone are quite adequate for expressing or conceptualising the different ways in which women experienced Women Across Cultures over time. Although Women Across Cultures allowed shifts to occur in my own and others’ ways of seeing themselves
and others, as discussed above, it did not involve an endpoint where the group had “knitted” irrevocably (Gibson-Graham, 2003, p. 67), or when the “awakening of a communal subjectivity” had occurred for all involved (p. 68). Nevertheless, some women emphasised the value of the “community” and “safety” that they had experienced in the group. Just as the accounts in this chapter suggest a need to worry the clear distinctions between people (Fine, 1994, p. 80), so they also suggest a need to ‘worry’ a preoccupation with clarity and endpoints (integration, adjustment etc.). Perhaps more constructive is a focus on the kinds of practices and interactions that make moments of engagement, connection, and understanding possible, while recognising that moments of retreat, disengagement and disconnection will also occur and are not necessarily signs of failure.

The fourth implication is practical and partially an epilogue. In Chapter Five I described how following the conclusion of my project, *Women Across Cultures* was taken over by staff at one of the participating educational institutions. In the first year, numbers initially remained reasonably stable, and more partners of international students started coming as they found out about the group through other women in their networks. Towards the end of 2007, numbers dwindled as the group was publicised and planned less actively than previously and a decision was made in early 2008 to close it down. The intentional development of intersectional spaces requires people with the time and commitment necessary for maintaining an organisational role, specifically, a commitment to maintaining and creating activities and opportunities likely to bring people together over time despite shifting numbers and people’s comings and goings (Gibson-Graham, 2003). While a preoccupation with endpoints may be problematic, without ongoing opportunities to be and do together, moments of understanding between people are unlikely to occur. Also, while organisational momentum is important, so is an intentional sharing of organisational control with others involved in the group (Gibson-Graham, 2003). The personnel and resources necessary for maintaining such a dedicated space may be hard to access when budgets are tight, numbers fluctuate, and the numbers involved are small relative to the entire student (and partner) population. Also, the patience required to build networks and trust, and maintain relationships may be difficult for the staff concerned in a context of tight timetables, thirteen-week semesters, and a
preoccupation with 'outputs'. The data in this chapter suggests that if the espoused aims of internationalised education are to become more than rhetoric in practice, then the intentional fostering of risky, hopeful, inefficient, and energy-consuming intersectional spaces (whether in classroom contexts, community organisations, or as social groups) is a crucial necessity.
Chapter 11 – Discussion

11.1 Overview and summary
This thesis has endeavoured to bring a critical feminist lens to internationalised higher education policy and practice in New Zealand. It has done this by foregrounding the experiences and perspectives of a group of women in a higher education context, and considering these in relation to the broader discursive and social contexts within which they/we live and study. The thesis has problematised the use of straightforward categories as a basis for research, policy, pedagogy, and student support provision, while noting how discourses and practices that reinforce separation between ‘international’ and ‘local’ students and public and private worlds continue to structure women’s lives unevenly. Its findings complicate dominant constructions of internationalised higher education, international-ness and New Zealand-ness and suggest some future directions for policy, research and practice in internationalised higher education.

Three themes run through the thesis. The first is the interplay between discourses, representations, institutional practices and women’s day-to-day lives in internationalised higher education. The second is how dominant discourses and representations are also contingent and open to contestation. The third is how interpersonal interactions are sites in which dominant discourses and representations can be either reinscribed or disrupted. I elaborate on these themes below in relation to the previous chapters’ findings. I then revisit my research questions to consider the broader implications of the thesis for research, policy and practice in internationalised higher education.

Discourses, representations, institutional practices and women’s lives
Policy, research and interpersonal interaction in internationalised higher education does not occur in a vacuum, but within broader structural contexts shaped by historically grounded discourses, politics and exclusions. With internationalised higher education in New Zealand, policy development has emerged from a socio-historical context shaped by British colonisation and the application of neoliberal ideologies to social policy in general and education in particular. Chapter Two drew connections between the current
‘International Education Agenda’ (Ministry of Education, 2007a) and the broader context within which this strategic policy text was developed. Chapters Six through Nine considered the ways in which, for the women in this project, policy and broader discursive representations were reproduced in institutional practices and human interactions on and off campus.

Chapters Six and Seven situate women’s experiences in internationalised higher education in relation to the stated priorities of the ‘International Education Agenda’: strengthening New Zealanders’ sense of “national identity” and ensuring New Zealand’s “economic transformation” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 9). Chapter Six traced how Eurocentric views of nationhood structured my research interviews, shaped some women’s expectations of studying in New Zealand, and were encountered by some women both inside and outside their educational institutions through erasure, harassment and/or physical violence. Chapter Seven considered the implications of ‘export education’ discourses for five of the seven full-fee paying international students involved in my study: educational practices that revealed more of a concern with attracting student dollars than maintaining transparent practices and ensuring students’ wellbeing. Chapter Seven also noted how three women, including one New Zealand student, described being constructed by others as both a wanted source of revenue and an unwanted foreigner. The chapter echoed Collins’ (2006) caution that the conflation of otherness and full-fee paying enrolment status in ‘export education’, as it is currently enacted, risks promoting the racialisation and commodification of predominantly Asian full-fee paying students, and excluding some New Zealanders from nationhood.

Chapter Eight examined discourses and representations as they shape teaching and learning contexts, discussing how some women associated ‘independent learning’ with unclear expectations and a lack of course-related advice, a lack of pedagogical guidance, teachers’ apparent disinterest or unavailability, and personal isolation. Chapter Nine identified how the valorisation of independence and autonomy in internationalised higher education has material consequences beyond the classroom (Madge et al., 2009). These include inattention to the presence of international students’ partners and families, a lack of clear and accurate information and advocacy relating to accommodation and tenancy issues, and a lack of access to and information about maternity care for international
students and their partners. Chapter Nine noted the irony that while some international education literature represents international women students and women partners of international students in terms of their ‘disadvantage’ (see Chapter Three), little attention has been paid to the ways in which a failure to acknowledge their presence may result in disadvantage.

**Dominant discourses and representations as contingent and open to contestation**

Chapters Six through Nine drew connections between discourses, representations, institutional practices and women’s lives, but they also highlighted how dominant discourses and representations are contingent and open to contestation. Chapter Six revealed the force of Eurocentrism as a basis for constructing nationhood and ‘difference’ in New Zealand, but it also showed how women troubled a static view of nationhood, dominance and difference. Chapter Six described interview accounts in which women spoke about European-ness and whiteness as unstable bases for identification (Hall, 1996) and difference as a condition of possibility (Brooks, 2004; Davies, 2006). It also discussed women’s use of “double vision” as a survival strategy (Lugones, 2006, p. 79); their construction of New Zealanders as lacking rather than dominant, for example, as linguistically ignorant, uncaring and inexperienced. Chapter Seven examined how full-fee paying students in the project not only expressed frustration about being constructed as consumers and commodities in an education ‘marketplace’, but also actively took up consumer identities to resist unsatisfactory or unscrupulous institutional practices. While noting how women in the project actively contested difficult or dominating circumstances, Chapters Six and Seven also showed how some circumstances may be more difficult to contest than others. For example, Chapter Six discussed how some women experienced erasure, harassment, and abuse despite actively resisting being constructed as ‘other’; and Chapter Seven, how some full-fee paying international students felt unable to complain or withdraw from study, even if dissatisfied.

Chapter Eight problematised assumptions of international students’ difference and of Western academic traditions as coherent, ‘pure’, or necessarily superior to ‘other’ teaching and learning approaches (see Doherty and Singh, 2005). The chapter identified teacher-centred, impersonal lecturing approaches in New Zealand undergraduate classes
as isolating and alienating for both international and New Zealand students in the project. It also identified how for some women the reification of ‘independent learning’ in undergraduate and postgraduate pedagogies translated into a lack of teacher or supervisor guidance. Chapter Eight noted how both international and New Zealand students emphasised the importance of interpersonal connection between staff and students; and teaching characterised by clear and explicit guidance, and engaging and interesting delivery. The chapter also cautioned against generalising about students based on enrolment category; describing international students who found ‘independent learning’ in New Zealand freeing, and New Zealand students who found it extremely lonely.

Chapter Nine highlighted the material implications of policies and practices that assume students’ autonomy but it also problematised straightforward discourses of women’s (or international student partners’) disadvantage (for example, see Howes, 2001; Scheyvens et al., 2003). The chapter highlighted women’s intentional and creative strategies for negotiating new and unfamiliar living contexts. Strategies identified included women’s deliberate and determined pursuit of necessary practical information even when not immediately accessible; efforts to be with other people and to develop supportive social networks even when this seemed difficult (also see Chapter Ten); and pursuit of personal projects in order to keep busy. Chapter Nine problematised an academic and policy preoccupation with fostering interaction across an international/local student binary (Deloitte, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2007a; Ward and Masgoret, 2004), highlighting how many kinds of social networks facilitated women’s sense of belonging and agency. The chapter suggested the importance of policy that supports students and their partners’ active place-making (Dyck, 2005), for example, by facilitating opportunities for social engagement through on-campus activities and links with broader community groups and services; addressing the current gap in maternity care provision for international students and their partners; and ensuring their access to clear, accurate and transparent information and when necessary, advocacy support in relation to accommodation.
The significance of interpersonal interactions

Interpersonal interactions emerged throughout the thesis as sites in which discursive separation between people was taken up and enacted. For example, Chapter Six described interactions in which women’s ‘difference’ in New Zealand was reinscribed through erasure, harassment and abuse. Chapter Seven described interpersonal interactions in which full-fee paying international students were constructed by educational institution staff as a source of export revenue. Chapter Eight noted how in teaching and learning contexts, encounters with unhelpful or disinterested staff members and sometimes, the unavailability of staff for interaction, reinforced women’s sense of isolation.

The thesis also highlighted how interpersonal interactions offer strategic possibilities for disrupting or subverting discursive separation between people. Chapter Six described instances in which women deliberately countered others’ indifference or racism by actively initiating conversation and interaction. Chapter Seven noted how some women used interpersonal interactions to contest educational institutions’ demands for and use of fees. Chapters Seven and Eight described how interpersonal connection with caring staff members and other students reduced a sense of being seen only as a source of revenue, and/or fostered women’s wellbeing in teaching and learning contexts. Chapter Nine highlighted how helpful individual people (including peers, peer mentors, staff and community members) were a crucial source of practical information when negotiating new and unfamiliar living contexts. The chapter identified emotionally supportive connections with other people (including staff, students, and community members) as contributing to a sense of belonging, security, and agency in a new place.

Chapter Ten described Women Across Cultures as a deliberate strategy aimed at fostering social interaction between women and exploring the limits of a women’s group as a forum for social interaction. Although for many of the women involved, the group effectively fostered both social connection and access to practical information, women also experienced Women Across Cultures differently across time. Women Across Cultures functioned as both a safe house and a contact zone for the women involved (Pratt, 2002), facilitating opportunities to share and discover common concerns and experiences, but also to encounter differences in ways that were not always comfortable. Chapter Ten affirmed the value of developing intentionally intersectional spaces where.
social interaction is likely to occur, whether in classrooms, student clubs, or community contexts. However, it cautioned that such spaces are also inevitably uneasy at times, marked by misunderstanding, mismatched expectations and a sense of risk. While highlighting the personal and sometimes broader significance of moments of understanding resulting from social interaction, Chapter Ten also problematised a view of ‘integration’ as a static and comfortable endpoint (for example, see Ward and Masgoret, 2004). It suggested the importance instead of working to foster moments of connection between people in internationalised education, while recognising that moments of disconnection or misunderstanding are also inevitable. Chapter Ten cautioned that the intentional development of intersectional social spaces in internationalised higher education requires personnel able to provide ongoing organisational momentum; the deliberate development of activities likely to bring people together over time; and an openness to people’s comings and goings, engagement and refusals (Gibson-Graham, 2003).

11.2 Implications of the thesis and directions for future research

Key implications of the thesis relate to my three research questions, policy, research and practice. My first research question was how the international/local student binary underscoring much research, policy and practice in internationalised higher education relates to the material lived realities of ‘international’ and ‘local’ women students. This thesis has highlighted the importance of destabilising straightforward identifications at all levels. Like Rhee (2006, p. 609), I concur that “monolithic and monologic discourse[s] of international[-ness]” and New Zealand-ness are equally problematic, as are “pure…oppression and liberation” as frameworks for understanding women’s living and study experiences. Pedagogically-speaking, this thesis has highlighted how all students come to higher education with unique prior experiences, expectations, and aspirations. The construction of students in binary terms therefore risks promoting reductive assumptions of students’ ‘difference’ or ‘sameness’ that are not only unhelpful as a basis for teaching and learning, but also highly inaccurate. More productive would be attention to what constitutes effective and responsive pedagogy in internationalised higher
education, and to the characteristics of teaching practice that is open to “the possibility of both commonalities and differences at all times” (Madge et al., 2009, p. 43).

Future research could explore ‘international’ and ‘local’ students’ perspectives of what constitutes clear and engaging communication, and strategies for fostering strong and supportive connections between students and staff in higher education contexts. While large-scale surveys may be useful for providing a broad picture of students’ patterns of interaction with each other (for example, see Deloitte, 2008; Ward and Masgoret, 2004), this thesis has shown that such surveys are likely to be limited in their usefulness if they draw on particular identifications (such as ‘New Zealand’ and ‘international’) as if transparent. Further in-depth qualitative research is necessary alongside large-scale surveys in New Zealand to allow a nuanced understanding of the meanings students attach to specific survey categories (for example ‘international student’, and ‘New Zealander’), and to highlight patterns of ‘in-group’ interaction that may be masked in students’ responses to predetermined survey categories.

The commonalities and differences across women revealed in this thesis suggest a need for further research that considers social interaction, pedagogical and support questions in internationalised higher education beyond a simple international-local student distinction. The experiences of full-fee paying international students highlighted in Chapter Six suggests a need to look more closely at the different circumstances surrounding international students’ enrolment in New Zealand; for example, how being a study abroad, exchange, full-fee paying, or postgraduate international student might shape students’ expectations and experiences in specific ways. Chapters Eight and Nine suggest a need to consider the specific pedagogical and support needs of other sub-groups of students, for example, ‘mature’ students, students in particular academic programmes, and students with families.

My second research question asked how research that centres women (including international and New Zealand students and partners of international students) might foster new insights in terms of policy, research and practice in internationalised higher education. By foregrounding women, this thesis has problematised policies and practices that both valorise independence and assume students’ autonomy (see Bullen and Kenway, 2003; Johnson et al., 2000; McConaghy, 1998). International and New Zealand women
alike highlighted the importance of social connection and a sense of belonging within educational institutions and classrooms, and of staff members demonstrating human care and responsiveness in their interactions with students. Women also revealed the personal cost of studying without adequate guidance and support, or access to necessary information and healthcare provision. The study highlighted how assumptions of students’ autonomy in higher education may also have uneven consequences, for example, disproportionately disadvantaging people who are far from social and familial supports, do not have access to comprehensive maternity care, and/or to on-campus information and support services.

This study has several implications in terms of women in internationalised higher education. The first is the need for data to ascertain the numbers of women (as well as men and children) who accompany international students to New Zealand. The current disregard for partners and families of international students is a failure to acknowledge both their legitimate presence in New Zealand (Noble, 2005) and the significant role they play in shaping students’ studies (Scheyvens et al., 2003). The provision of work visas for partners of international doctoral students and of access to ‘free’ public education for their children is a positive policy development. Existing gaps in healthcare and student insurance cover also require urgent policy attention or at least, up-front acknowledgment in marketing and enrolment information for prospective students (Haigh, 2002). Further, since the wellbeing of students’ partners and children is not protected by the current Code of Practice (unless they are also international students), urgent consideration should be given to central and local government responsibility for their wellbeing. Future research could consider the extent to which international students’ partners and families in different New Zealand cities currently access campus and community groups, support services, agencies, and advocacy; and if necessary, ways of improving their access to appropriate support, advocacy, and information.

Since this study only included a very small group of women whose partners were studying, a project exploring the experiences and perspectives of a larger group of women would be worthwhile. A larger-scale project could also consider women’s experiences in different geographical centres in New Zealand. Future research could consider the experiences and perspectives of international and New Zealand students’
partners and dependent children alongside each other, as well as the experiences and perspectives of men whose partners are studying. Research could also examine how specific practices in higher education institutions reinscribe or reduce the separation between public and private worlds for both students and staff.

My third research question asked how an 'intercultural' social group might interrupt an international/local binary for women involved in it, and what the (im)possibilities of developing and maintaining such a group might be. Although women’s accounts of Women Across Cultures were overwhelmingly positive, I have already noted how women also experienced the group as a risky and/or uncertain space and that the group was constantly shifting in terms of who was present. The account of Women Across Cultures in this thesis highlights how in seeking to disrupt separation between people in internationalised higher education, there is no quick-fix solution. As Ippolito (2007) notes, separation in practice is a natural consequence of separation in policy, and the “broader cultural politics of naming” that marks the provision of education nationally and globally (Rizvi, 2004, p. 39). As such, while interventions such as Women Across Cultures may for some people and at some moments disrupt us/them separation in internationalised higher education, they must also be accompanied by a “broader ‘social’ response” (Madge et al., 2009, p. 43): that is, concurrent moves to disrupt us/them separation in enrolment practices, marketing rhetoric, policy, pedagogy, research, and media representation.

Finally, this thesis affirms the value of double vision as a basis for interaction with others at an interpersonal level, and for re-imagining internationalised education more broadly (Lugones, 1987, 2006). Double vision recognises women in internationalised education as “fully human” intentional subjects, even when subjected to dominant constructions, assumptions and/or practices (Noble, 2005, p. 116). It also affirms women’s necessary creativity and intentionality when negotiating new or unfamiliar living and learning worlds and confronted with dehumanising (commodifying, racialising) practices and policies (Lugones, 1987). Double vision as a basis for considering human experiences is not the idealisation of agency as exercised in “pure opposition to the order that it opposes” (Loomba, 2003, p. 257), but recognition of how
that ‘order’ shapes our seeing and acting, and refusal to grant it ascendancy (Lugones, 2006).

In practice, double vision in internationalised education demands responsiveness to the viewpoints of women themselves and recognition at all levels of the complex and uneven circumstances that shape their everyday lives both similarly and differently (see Madge et al., 2009). This complexity could be examined further through research considering women’s and men’s identity work alongside each other; and their experiences of living, studying, and interacting with others over a longer period of time than this thesis allowed, for example, through undergraduate to doctoral study, and from initial enrolment until graduation. Future longitudinal and ethnographic research could also examine international and migrant students’ transnational identity work in relation to New Zealand higher education, and factors that shape their expectations, experiences and perspectives prior to, during and after transitions between different living and learning contexts (after Ichimoto, 2004; Mayuzumi et al., 2007; Rhee, 2006). Research could explore how interpersonal connections developed in internationalised higher education contexts are maintained or otherwise post-graduation.

In Chapter Six I suggested ‘exchange’ as a way of imagining internationalised education that is more likely than ‘export’ to foster understanding, openness to others and the development of global citizenship skills (see Ministry of Education, 2007a). Sharon’s negative experiences and disillusionment as an exchange student however offers a useful caution in this regard. ‘Exchange’ as a basis for policy and enrolment practices is unlikely to foster connection between people unless it is also played out at an interpersonal level in students’ ‘homes’, classrooms and community contexts. As noted in Chapters Six to Eight, future research is needed to consider how interpersonal exchange might be more effectively fostered in classrooms and wider communities, through curricula, social activities and support provision. Just as Noble (2005, p. 112) argues that “apparently mundane incidents of social incivility...have greater resonances than the personal inconveniences of individuals”, so this thesis highlights how moments of civil interpersonal exchange may also have resonances beyond individuals’ personal enjoyment and sense of connection. For example Arui, Deanna and Violet alluded to a
‘ripple effect’: how strangers’ civility in New Zealand fuelled their own resolve to be civil to and initiate exchange with strangers elsewhere.

Haigh (2002) suggests that in any context, reciprocal exchange is unlikely unless those involved are open to seeing themselves and others in new ways (also see Lugones 1987, 2003, 2006). How pedagogy and curricula might be developed to destabilise rather than promote static understandings of self, other, New Zealand-ness and international-ness requires ongoing, urgent attention. This highlights a need to recognise teachers not only as teachers but also, as learners (Madge et al., 2009). Unless teaching staff recognise their own partiality and are open to both their students’ complexity and to new ways of teaching them, their classrooms are unlikely to be spaces in which exchange occurs except as a result of students’ own creative capacity (Haigh, 2002). This study has focussed on internationalised education from the perspectives of women students and students’ partners. Future research could consider the parallel perspectives of teaching and support staff to examine conditions that may constrain their ability to teach and support students and students’ partners effectively.

In conclusion, ‘exchange’ at a one-to-one level, although significant, is limited in its effects while broader policy frameworks continue to differentiate between students and groups of students through enrolment practices and discursive representations that ‘other’. It is disingenuous to promise students’ enrichment, increased openness to others, and “integration” through internationalised higher education (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 9) while refusing to alter practices and policies that reinscribe difference between people. If internationalised education is to offer opportunities for “learning to live together” (International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, 1996, p. 18; also see Chawla and Rodriguez, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2007a; Sensoy, 2007), then ongoing critical and reflexive attention to how discourses, policies and practices may promote or disrupt separation between people is an ongoing and vital necessity.

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1 One such example is Yukiko’s strategy of initiating interaction with New Zealand students when they were sitting alone before class (see Chapter Six).
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Appendix I: Publications and presentations emerging from the work in this thesis

Peer-reviewed publications and presentations


Invited conference presentations:


Other conference presentations:


Plus five departmental seminars
Appendix II: Avenues for publicising *Women Across Cultures*

**On campus in print**
- Outside lecture theatres
- Library notice boards
- International office notice boards
- General student notice boards
- Student health centre
- Chaplaincy office
- Disability information and support centre
- Pacific Island students’ centre
- Foundation studies centre
- Women’s room
- Parents’ room
- Students’ association reception and helpdesk drop-in centre
- Students’ association clubs and societies building
- Students’ association diary and other promotional material

**On campus via email**
- International office e-newsletter
- Divisional/departmental emails where possible

**On campus in person**
- Orientation week ‘clubs days’
- International student orientation expo
- Foundation studies programme expo

**Off campus in print**
- Preschools in close proximity to campus
- Primary school close to campus (posters and in newsletter)
- Local maternity hospital
- Local supermarket notice board
- Student halls of residence

**Off campus in person**
- Local interfaith group meeting
- Local multiethnic council
Appendix III: Examples of Women Across Cultures promotional material

Are you an international student, an international student’s partner, or a Kiwi student wanting to make new friends?

You are invited to join

Women Across Cultures

...an intercultural group for women associated with the [university] student community.

PRESCHOOLERS ARE WELCOME

Who? Women Across Cultures is a student club that includes women from all over the world. It was established in March 2005 by the International Student Advisers and Vivienne Anderson, a PhD student, as part of a research project looking at ways of supporting international women at [university].

What? Listening to guest speakers; sharing food, ideas and experiences; making new friends; finding out more about [city].

When? Every second Friday, from 10-11 a.m. (although many of us stay and chat until 12 p.m.). We also have evening 'potluck' meals twice times a year to include family, friends and flatmates. Friday meeting dates for 2006 are: March 3, 17, 31; April 28; May 12, 26; June 9; July 14, 28; August 11, 25; Sept. 8, 22; Oct. 6, 20; and Nov 3.

Where? [location]

How? Just come along! If you want further information, come and see the International Student Advisers, or e-mail: Vivienne.Anderson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee.
You are invited to a
‘pot-luck’ meal

hosted by
Women Across Cultures

An intercultural group for women associated with the [university] student community.

Who can come? You, your family, friends and flatmates

What do we bring? Food/ drink to share and a gold coin per person to cover disposable cups, plates etc. (maximum $4 per family)

When? Wednesday 19 July at 6.00pm

Where? [location]

Further information? See the International Student Advisers, or email: Vivienne.Anderson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz
Appendix IV: Women Across Cultures programme 2005-2006

2005

March 4  Introductions and things to do in Dunedin
March 18 New Zealand presentation
April 1  Norway presentation/waffle making
April 15 Fiji/ Cook Islands dance

Mid-semester break (Friday April 29, pot-luck family meal)

May 6  Volunteer Centre/surviving winter in Dunedin and housing issues
May 20  China presentation
June 3  Culture shock and China trip
June 17 Japan presentation/sushi making

Mid-year break (Thurs July 30, pot-luck family meal)

July 15  Bagpiping presentation
July 29 Students’ association advocacy/women’s week
         Holland presentation
August 12 Culture shock and adjustment from an international student’s perspective
August 26 Pilates demonstration and ‘have a go’ session

Mid-semester break

September 9 Japanese language introduction
September 23 Appalachian dance
October 7  Green Ribbon Month/ Dunedin Abrahamic Interfaith Group
October 21 Hawaii presentation
November 4 Thanksgiving celebration/ end of year farewells

2006

O-week  Potluck evening meal
March 3  Introduction to Dunedin: brochures and timetables, things to see and do
March 17 What do we want to do this year?
         World Council of Churches Brazil trip presentation
March 31 Cycling/ walking trips in NZ and Japan presentation
April 28 Taiwan presentation
May 12  Anthropology research in Cambodia
May 26 Mexico presentation
June 9  Unbirthday Party – sharing party games and birthday traditions

Mid-semester break
O week 2  Potluck evening meal
July 14   Kiribati dance
July 28   Glacier research presentation and slide show
August 11 Cook Islands dance 2
August 25 Sushi-making 2
September 8 Museum cafe
September 22 Botanic Gardens cafe
October 6 Preparing for returning 'home'
October 20 Preliminary findings of the Women Across Cultures project - research presentation/eliciting feedback
November 3 End of year celebration and lunch
Appendix V: Information and consent forms

February, 2005

How can international women be included in the life of tertiary institutions?

INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

What is this project about?
If you are a woman who is either enrolled as an international student or whose partner is enrolled as an international student at the [university], you are invited to join an intercultural women's support group, Women Across Cultures. This group is being established as part of a research project in partnership with advisers from the [university] International Office, and will meet for two hours every two weeks during semester time. Women Across Cultures will provide an opportunity for international and New Zealand women associated with the [university] to relax and talk with one another, and share food and traditions from their countries of origin. If you have preschool-aged children, you are welcome to bring them with you to Women Across Cultures meetings. Women Across Cultures will initially run for a period of two years. I will gather information about group members' perspectives and experiences as a 'participant observer' in Women Across Cultures meetings, and through in-depth interviews with twelve group members. These observations and interviews will help me to find out whether groups like Women Across Cultures are a useful way of helping international women associated with the [university] to feel included in university life.

Specifically, the aims of this project are:

• to document the process of setting up and running Women Across Cultures at the [university];

• to find out more about the adjustment needs and experiences of female international students, and female partners of international students at the [university];

• to find out about the parallel living, study, and adjustment experiences of female 'Kiwi' students;

• to find out whether Women Across Cultures is a helpful way of supporting female international students and female partners of international students;

• to find out whether involvement in Women Across Cultures helps women in the international student community to feel included in the life of the [university];

• to find out whether involvement in Women Across Cultures influences 'Kiwi' women's perspectives towards international students and their partners; and

• to find out whether groups like Women Across Cultures are an effective way of promoting friendships between 'Kiwi' women and international women on campus.

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The project will form part of the requirements for a PhD in Education at the University of Otago.

Who can be involved in this project?
All women on campus (both staff and students) are invited to participate in the intercultural support group Women Across Cultures. However, if you are a New Zealander or international student, or the partner of an international student, this group is especially for you.

What will participants be asked to do?
You can be involved in this project in a number of ways. Firstly, you can come along to group meetings whenever you are able as a member of Women Across Cultures. While we will meet during semester time for two hours every two weeks for a minimum of two years, I will gather information as a 'participant observer' only from March to August, 2005, and March to August, 2006. This will not require anything special from you, just that you come along and participate in group meetings as usual. Attendance at group meetings is in no way compulsory. The group is intended to be a source of friendship and support for you, and you are free to come and go as you choose.

If you are the female partner of an international student, or a female international student at the [university], I would also like to talk to you about your experiences of adjusting to life in Dunedin and your perspectives on what might make the adjustment process easier for you. If you are happy to participate in this part of the project, I will interview you twice, once near the end of 2005, and once near the end of 2006. You can choose where to be interviewed, and each interview will probably last for about an hour. If you agree to be interviewed, I will give you the general interview questions beforehand so that you can clarify anything that is confusing, although each interview may develop slightly differently depending on the answers given. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions that make you feel hesitant or uncomfortable. You can withdraw from either Women Across Cultures or the interviewing part of the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

It is hoped that all international participants in this project will find it a positive and helpful experience as they get used to living in Dunedin. It is intended that Women Across Cultures will provide opportunities for building friendships with other people who are going through similar experiences, and with New Zealand women in the University community. At the end of the project, research findings will be presented back to participants at a meeting of Women Across Cultures.

What are the rights of participants?
You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. You can be involved in Women Across Cultures but choose not to be interviewed, and if you wish, you can stay away from group meetings when participant observations are taking place (from March to August, 2005 and 2006). If you are interviewed you may refuse to answer particular interview questions.
What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

From March to August 2005 and March to August 2006, I will be keeping written notes on Women Across Cultures meetings, in particular the perspectives and experiences women talk about and my own impressions of how the group is going. If I want to write down something that a person says word for word, I will ask them for permission to do so.

During September to November 2005 and September to November 2006 I will be interviewing twelve members of Women Across Cultures who are either international students or students’ partners, or New Zealanders enrolled at the [university]. International women interviewed will be asked a number of general questions about how they experienced their first few months in New Zealand, what made it easy or difficult for them to get used to living in Dunedin, and whether or not they have found their involvement in Women Across Cultures to be valuable. These interviews will be recorded on audiotape and then typed as an interview transcript. All interviewees will be invited to check that the typed version of their interview is accurate.

Information gathered will be used to answer the key research questions (see aims above), and will be written up as a PhD thesis which will be available in the library at the conclusion of the project. A written summary of research results will also be prepared for research participants and presented at a meeting of Women Across Cultures. In addition, the results of this project will be shared with staff at the [university] International Office, and may be published or presented at conferences.

At the beginning of the project you will be invited to choose a code name. This code name will be used in written notes and interview transcriptions, and will help to ensure that all information gathered throughout the project remains anonymous. As well, people whose names you mention during interviews or Women Across Cultures meetings will also be allocated code names.

Only my supervisors, a transcription typist and myself will have access to any personal information gathered, written notes, interview recordings and interview transcripts, which will be stored in a secure place. At the conclusion of the project any personal information gathered which might make you identifiable will be destroyed immediately. In line with University policy, all other data relating to the project will be destroyed five years after the project's conclusion.

What if I have any questions?

If you have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, or if you would like someone to explain this information sheet to you, please contact either:-

Vivienne Anderson
Faculty of Education
Telephone: (03) 479 8812
Email: vivienne.anderson@stonebow.otago.ac.nz
February, 2005

How can international women be included in the life of tertiary institutions?

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request more information at any stage.

I know that:

1) my participation in the project is entirely voluntary;

2) I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without disadvantage;

3) I have the right not to answer any interview questions which make me feel hesitant or uncomfortable;

4) any information gathered which may make me personally identifiable will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project;

5) typed transcripts of my interviews will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed;

6) the results of this project may be published and will be available in the library but every attempt will be made to ensure that I remain anonymous.

I agree to take part in this project.

................................................................. .............................................
(Signature of participant) (Date)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee
February, 2005

How can international women be included in the life of tertiary institutions?

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPATING NEW ZEALANDERS

What is this project about?
If you are a woman who identifies as a citizen or permanent resident of New Zealand and you are associated in some way with the [university], you are invited to join an intercultural women's support group, Women Across Cultures. This group is being established as part of a research project in partnership with advisers from the [university] International Office, and will meet for two hours every two weeks during semester time. Women Across Cultures will provide an opportunity for international and New Zealand women associated with the [university] to relax and talk with one another, and share food and traditions from their countries of origin. If you have preschool-aged children, you are welcome to bring them with you to Women Across Cultures meetings. Women Across Cultures will initially run for a period of two years. I will gather information about group members' perspectives and experiences as a 'participant observer' in Women Across Cultures meetings, and through in-depth interviews with twelve group members. These observations and interviews will also help me to find out whether groups like Women Across Cultures are a useful way of fostering friendships between international and New Zealand women at the [university].

Specifically, the aims of this project are:

- to document the process of setting up and running Women Across Cultures at the [university];
- to find out more about the adjustment needs and experiences of female international students, and female partners of international students at the [university];
- to find out about the parallel living, study, and adjustment experiences of female 'Kiwi' students;
- to find out whether Women Across Cultures is a helpful way of supporting female international students and female partners of international students;
- to find out whether involvement in Women Across Cultures helps women in the international student community to feel included in the life of the [university];
- to find out whether involvement in Women Across Cultures influences 'Kiwi' women's perspectives towards international students and their partners; and
- to find out whether groups like Women Across Cultures are an effective way of promoting friendships between 'Kiwi' women and international women on campus.
The project will form part of the requirements for a PhD in Education at the University of Otago.

Who can be involved in this project?
All women on campus (both staff and students) are invited to participate in the intercultural support group *Women Across Cultures*. However, if you are a New Zealander or international student, or the partner of an international student, this group is especially for you.

What will participants be asked to do?
You can be involved in this project in a number of ways. Firstly, you can come along to group meetings whenever you are able as a member of *Women Across Cultures*. While we will meet during semester time for two hours every two weeks for a minimum of two years, I will gather information as a 'participant observer' only from March to August, 2005, and March to August, 2006. This will not require anything special from you, just that you come along and participate in group meetings as usual. Attendance at group meetings is in no way compulsory. The group is intended to be a source of friendship and support, and you are free to come and go as you choose.

If you are enrolled as a student at the university, I would also like to talk to you about your experiences of adjusting to life at the University, your previous experiences interacting with international students, and your perspectives on your involvement in *Women Across Cultures*. If you are happy to participate in this part of the project, I will interview you twice, once near the end of 2005, and once near the end of 2006. You can choose where to be interviewed, and each interview will probably last for about an hour. If you agree to be interviewed, I will give you the general interview questions beforehand so that you can clarify anything that is confusing, although each interview may develop slightly differently, depending on the answers given. If you are happy to be interviewed, you have the right to refuse to answer any interview questions that make you feel hesitant or uncomfortable. You can withdraw from either *Women Across Cultures* or the interviewing part of the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

It is intended that involvement in *Women Across Cultures* will allow participants to build new friendships and gain new understandings in a mutually supportive environment. At the end of the project, research findings will be presented back to participants at a meeting of *Women Across Cultures*.

What are the rights of participants?
You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. You can be involved in *Women Across Cultures* but choose not to be interviewed, and if you wish, you can stay away from group meetings when participant observations are taking place (from March to August, 2005 and 2006). If you are interviewed you may refuse to answer particular interview questions.
What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?
From March to August 2005 and March to August 2006, I will be keeping written notes on Women Across Cultures meetings, in particular the perspectives and experiences that group members discuss and my own impressions of how the group is going. If I want to write down something that a person says word for word, I will ask them for permission to do so.

During September to November 2005 and September to November 2006, I will be interviewing twelve members of Women Across Cultures who are either international students or students' partners, or New Zealanders enrolled at the [university]. New Zealanders interviewed will be asked about their experiences adjusting to life at the [university], and what sorts of factors have affected their experiences as members of the University community. They will also be asked about previous experiences of interacting with international students, and their perspectives on their involvement in Women Across Cultures. These interviews will be recorded on audiotape and then typed as an interview transcript. All interviewees will be invited to check that the typed version of their interview is accurate.

Information gathered will be used to answer the key research questions (see aims above), and will be written up as a PhD thesis which will be available in the library at the conclusion of the project. A written summary of research results will also be prepared for research participants and presented at a meeting of Women Across Cultures. In addition, the results of this project will be shared with staff at the [university] International Office, and may be published or presented at conferences.

At the beginning of the project you will be invited to choose a code name. This code name will be used in written notes and interview transcriptions, and will help to ensure that all information gathered throughout the project remains anonymous. As well, people whose names you mention during interviews or Women Across Cultures meetings will also be allocated code names.

Only my supervisors, a transcription typist and myself will have access to any personal information gathered, written notes, interview recordings and interview transcripts, which will be stored in a secure place. At the conclusion of the project any personal information gathered which might make you identifiable will be destroyed immediately. In line with University policy, all other data relating to the project will be destroyed five years after the project's conclusion.

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If you have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

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February, 2005

How can international women be included in the life of tertiary institutions?

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING NEW ZEALANDERS

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request more information at any stage.
I know that: -

1) my participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2) I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without disadvantage;
3) I have the right not to answer any interview questions which make me feel hesitant or uncomfortable;
4) any information gathered which may make me personally identifiable will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project;
5) typed transcripts of my interviews will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed;
6) the results of this project may be published and will be available in the library but every attempt will be made to ensure that I remain anonymous.

I agree to take part in this project.

.............................................................................................................................................................................. ..........................
(Signature of participant)  (Date)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Interview One

1) Tell me about yourself - where you come from and why you came here.
2) Tell me about your family (back home/ here in New Zealand).
3) Tell me what you were doing before you/ your partner started studying at the [educational institution].
4) What was it like for you when you first arrived in [city]/ [university]?
5) How do you find studying/ living in [city]?
6) Is there anything that you find hard?
7) Are there things that you like?
8) How has it been for other members of your family (your partner/ your children/ your parents)?
9) How did you find out about Women Across Cultures?
10) Why did you choose to become involved in Women Across Cultures?
11) How have you found Women Across Cultures so far? (Has it been helpful for you? Why/ why not?)
12) Has your involvement in Women Across Cultures influenced how you think about New Zealanders? Please explain...
13) What hopes/ plans do you have for the rest of your time in [city]/ at the [university]?
14) Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences so far as an international student/ student’s partner in [city], or your involvement in Women Across Cultures?

Interview Two

1) Tell me about how the past year has been for you (since I spoke to you last).
2) Tell me about your other family members - how has this year been for them (back home/ in New Zealand)?
3) Do you think that you have changed in any way over the last two years?
4) Have there being things that have been difficult for you?
5) Have there been things that you have enjoyed?
6) How have you found Women Across Cultures? (Has it been helpful for you? Why/ why not?)
7) Last time I interviewed you, you said that you joined Women Across Cultures because.... Has your involvement in the group met your expectations? Why/ why not?
8) Do you have any suggestions as to how [your university] could have provided better support for you and your family during your stay here?
9) Last time I interviewed you, you said that your hopes/ plans are.... Have you achieved these? What hopes/ plans do you still have for your time in [city]?
10) What do you hope to do when you finish/ your partner finishes studying in [city]?
11) What advice would you give an international student/ international student’s partner planning on coming here?
12) Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences as an international student/ international student’s partner, or your involvement in Women Across Cultures?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPATING NEW ZEALANDERS

Interview One

1) Tell me about yourself - where you come from and why you are at the [university].
2) Tell me about your family, either back home or here.
3) Tell me what you were doing before you started studying at the [university].
4) What was it like for you when you first arrived in [city]/[university]?
5) How do you find study life?
6) Is there anything that you find hard?
7) Are there things that you like?
8) How did you hear about Women Across Cultures?
9) Why did you choose to become involved in Women Across Cultures?
10) How have you found your involvement in Women Across Cultures so far?
11) Before being involved in Women Across Cultures, what experiences have you had interacting with international students or people from countries other than New Zealand?
12) Has your involvement in Women Across Cultures influenced how you think about international students or people from overseas? Please explain...
13) Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences as a student in [city], or your involvement in Women Across Cultures?

Interview Two

1) Tell me about how the past year has been for you (since I spoke to you last).
2) Tell me about your other family members; how has the last year been for them?
3) Do you think that you have changed in any way over the last two years?
4) Have there been things that have been difficult for you?
5) Have there been things that you have enjoyed?
6) How have you found your involvement in Women Across Cultures?
7) Has your involvement in Women Across Cultures affected how you think about international students or people from overseas? Please explain...
8) Last time I interviewed you, you said that you joined Women Across Cultures because.... Has your involvement in the group met your expectations? Why/ why not?
9) Last time I interviewed you, you said that your hopes/plans are.... Have you achieved these?
10) What do you hope to do when you finish studying at the [university]?
11) Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences as a student in [city], or your involvement in Women Across Cultures?
Appendix VII: Themes that emerged from interview data

1 ‘Self’
   1a) sense of self
   1b) home country/ies
   1c) transnationality
   1d) family
   1e) religion/spirituality
   1f) agency/choice
   1g) powerlessness/limited choice
   1h) changing ‘self’
   1i) reasons for change
   1j) wellness/illness
   1k) time in New Zealand
   1l) other
   1m) NZ as a place
   1n) being misread

2 Study
   2a) previous overseas study/work experiences
   2b) previous NZ study/work experiences
   2c) current course of study/ role
   2d) reasons for being at [city]
   2e) initial adjustment
   2f) expectations vs. reality
   2g) coursework
   2h) positive learning experiences
   2i) negative learning experiences
   2j) supervisory relationship
   2k) aspirations
   2l) other
   2m) juggle
   2n) teaching
   2o) staff
   2p) advice for staff/university
   2q) advice for students

3 Living
   3a) previous living experiences/situations
   3b) initial adjustment
   3c) housing
   3d) current living situation - flatmates/family
   3e) home as sanctuary
   3f) home as stressful
   3g) aspirations
   3h) other
   3i) returning home
4 Out and about
   4a) [City] as a place
   4b) community members
   4c) immigration
   4d) healthcare
   4e) childcare/schools
   4f) banks
   4g) other government organisations
   4h) travel
   4i) other
5 Hard things
6 Good things
7 Support sources/ coping strategies
8 Women Across Cultures
   8a) source of information
   8b) reasons for coming along
   8c) perspectives
   8d) other comments
   8e) suggestions
   8f) limits
9 ‘Others’
   9a) previous experiences
   9b) NZ students/ NZers
   9c) international students/ ‘internationals’
   9d) ‘others’
   9e) outsider-ness/insider-ness
   9f) differences/commonalities
   9g) friendship/co-operation and barriers
   9h) racism
   9i) communication
   9j) gender
   9k) kindness
   9l) other comments
   9m) rationalising racism
   9n) Western-ness
10 Family issues
   10a) previous adjustment experiences
   10b) current adjustment experiences
   10c) other
11 Future plans
12 Miscellaneous
13 Binaries
14 Money
   14a) financial issues
   14b) commodification
   14c) marketing