In memory of my grandfather Alberto Hoffmann, who always inspired me with his wisdom and sense of humour and was remarkable in his personal and public life.
ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the narratives of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand and the role communication networks play in their migration experiences. Communication networks in this case include the formal channels they use (women's associations, organisations and professionals whose roles include migrant support; culture and language maintenance groups, child care and education organisations and playgroups, and business associations); and the informal and personal connections they have (family, friends and community). These networks can be both online (websites and social media) and offline (face-to-face meetings and events) and supported by more traditional media such ethnic media.

This was a qualitative investigation, conducted under the oral history and communicative ecology approaches and informed by a feminist theoretical framework. This meant respectively the collection of their narratives and the use of migrant women's voices to understand their self-development in a gendered and multiethnic society.

Communicative ecology mapping involved identifying the use of various communication channels and the environments and the flows of information these migrant women engaged with in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In order to map their communicative ecology, I used the methods of focus group discussions, oral history interviews and participatory photography, in which the participants were invited to tell their own stories through images taken and chosen by them. I also collected images from the Facebook pages I was directed to by the participants to enhance the mapping process with visual evidence. The goal was to pursue a thorough understanding of more authentic personal narratives. Also, it enabled relationship building in which it was possible to explore topics that were relevant for both interviewer and interviewee.

The findings indicated that formal and informal networks presented different uses and functions. Formal networks were comprised of women's business meeting, mother's groups, Latin American and ethnic diverse playgroups, daycare, job mentoring programmes, immigration advisors, English classes, psychological
and religious assistance, social and cultural activities and festivals, and conferences and training for professional development.

Informal networks involved family in their home countries or New Zealand, Latin American and non-Latin American friends, including groups of female friends. Community included groups of women in yoga and dance classes, neighbours, not-for-profit activities, community businesses, church, dancing clubs, fundraising events as well as cultural and sports gatherings.

This study demonstrated the existing complexity and interrelationship between the communication networks and the feminisation of migration. Migrating to a more multicultural and gender egalitarian country such as New Zealand facilitated these women’s empowerment. By actively establishing their formal and informal networks, they were able to renegotiate their gender status and roles within private and public spheres. Also noticeable was the importance of ethnic female role models and the growth of ethnic female entrepreneurship and leadership within their communities.

Communication networks were also linked to ways of overcoming acculturation challenges and maintaining their culture and language within a gender basis. The participants felt more comfortable with their co-ethnics and shared support with Latin American women to strengthen their femininity, which they considered an attribute of integration and success in the host society. Ethnic media was mainly important to the Brazilians. Some women of this study took the lead to engage and support the voices of the Brazilian community through its online magazine.

The use of online and social media facilitated and enhanced their transnational ties and established connections within the host society. They also used them for business purposes and to consume news from their homelands and New Zealand. Migrant women’s groups on social media played a significant role in the support and empowerment of themselves and other women.

In conclusion, the communication networks of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand served as women’s empowerment, emotional and professional support, to help with their motherhood challenges and to develop their leadership skills and to set up their own business. Most of all the women of this research project said they left behind a feeling of loneliness, isolation and homesickness and found themselves more established, happier and at home in New Zealand.
DECLARATION

Name of candidate: Luciana Hoffmann Nunes

This thesis entitled Gender, Migration and Communications Networks: Mapping the Communicative Ecology of Latin American Migrant Women in Aotearoa / New Zealand is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of Master of International Communication.

CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION

I confirm that:

- This thesis represents my own work;
- The contribution of supervisors and others to this work was consistent with the Unitec Regulations and Policies;
- Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and as fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: 2015-1035

Candidate’s signature:

Luciana Hoffmann Nunes (1426436)

Date:
To begin, I want thank the powerful energy that rules the universe and emanates love, harmony and balance. To God.

My ancestors, my homeland (Brazil) and the land and the ancestors of Aotearoa for coming before us and preparing the ground for our achievements.

My precious parents – Alice and Hélio – whose support and love are immeasurable; who many times abdicated from their dreams in favour of my dreams. No words can express how grateful I am to have them in my life.

The love of my life – Lucas – for always being there for me with his grounded feet, tender eyes and loving arms. For comforting me in my moments of doubt and sharing this beautiful life we share together. For our love in peace.

My supervisors. Dr Evangelia Papoutsaki – whose knowledge and ideas are fascinating and inspiring. I thank her for sharing her enthusiasm, for presenting me different perspectives and most of all for guiding me in this meaningful and necessary journey. Dr Sara Donaghey, who embraced this cause with us and provided insightful thoughts that helped me to improve this work. It was a privilege to work with them.

The women of this study who opened up their hearts and told their beautiful stories. Without them, this study wouldn’t be possible.

My family. My grandparents that are no longer physically among us – Ilsa, Hélio Ivo and Alberto Hoffmann, who left this world while I was doing this study. My grandmother, Adelina for her strength and longevity. Madrinha, my guardian angel. My brother Leonardo and my sister Alicinha; my nephew Lucas for always making me proud and laugh through our videocalls and my nephew Santiago and my niece Isadora for being so cute. Thanks also to my aunts and uncles Anneliese and Antônio Carlos, Anamaria and Wilson, Ana and Ademar; and my cousins Fábio, Christian, Felipe, Gabi and Gi. Mari, my sister-in-law; Juglans, my brother-in-law. I thank all for remembering who I am and where I come from.

My spiritual mentors. A devoted thanks to Romilda, who has been by my side the whole process with love and patience and has always helped me with a strong emotional and spiritual support; Whaea Lynda, with whom I have long and profound conversations about tikanga and who gave me my Maori name – Te Ao
Marama. I feel extremely honoured. Eliseu, who taught me about faith and how we
have the free will to lighten or darken our destiny. I can always sense his presence;
Stella, who encouraged me to be in Aotearoa.

The Unitec staff. The Communication Studies Department, specially Deborah,
Jocelyn, Elena, Lisa and Mun. The Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae team, specially
Whaea Lynda and Whaea Jess. And the Interloan team. I thank all for their support
and words of encouragement.

My friends. Special thanks to my Brazilian friends – Lu Godzi, Sassá, Chie,
Drinks, Dhyca, Vivi, Lu Dors, Ciça, Julia, Johnny; the friends I met in New Zealand –
the Latinos in Waikato, An and most specially to Lele who provided me with a
monitor to work better on this research project. Also, to my wonderful kiwi friends
and beautiful women – Sue, Sandra and Jan. To Neroli who had the gift to make
everyone feel special. To Angela and Glenn, for their support and kindness.

Last but not least, all the incredible people that have crossed my life and
have inspired me in so many ways.
# TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................... i
DECLARATION .................................................................................................................................... iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................................ iv
TABLE OF CONTENT .................................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW ........................................................................................................ 1
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 1
  Rationale and Purpose .................................................................................................................. 1
  Research Questions ....................................................................................................................... 2
  Operational Definitions .................................................................................................................. 3
    Communicative Ecology .................................................................................................................. 3
    Communication Networks – Formal and Informal ........................................................................ 3
    Ethnic Media .................................................................................................................................. 4
    Gender .......................................................................................................................................... 4
    Latin American Women .................................................................................................................. 5
    Migration ....................................................................................................................................... 5
    Migrants ........................................................................................................................................ 5

Context .............................................................................................................................................. 6
  Overall Migration trends in New Zealand and its cultural position .............................................. 6
  Latin American Migration in New Zealand ..................................................................................... 7
  Latin American Culture in New Zealand ....................................................................................... 8

Thesis Outline .................................................................................................................................... 10

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ...................................................................................... 11
  Migration ......................................................................................................................................... 11
  Migration and Identity .................................................................................................................... 12
  Ethnic, migrant and diasporic media and New Zealand ................................................................. 15
  Roles, importance and challenges of the ethnic media ................................................................... 17
  Gender and Migration .................................................................................................................... 19
  The feminisation of migration ....................................................................................................... 21
  Gender, migration and communication networks ......................................................................... 23
  Migrant women and the ethnic media, online and social media .................................................... 25
Child Care and Education ........................................................................................................87
Plunket, Mums and Bubs and Brazilian-Portuguese classes ..................................................88
Playcentre .................................................................................................................................90
Manitas Playgroup ....................................................................................................................91
Daycare .....................................................................................................................................94
Child Health Support ...............................................................................................................95
Business Associations ..............................................................................................................95
Formal Networks Summary .....................................................................................................96
Informal Networks ....................................................................................................................97
Family .........................................................................................................................................97
Friends .......................................................................................................................................98
Latin Americans ......................................................................................................................99
Non-Latin Americans ..............................................................................................................101
Community ..............................................................................................................................102
Woman related .........................................................................................................................102
Latin American related ..........................................................................................................103
Not specifically Latin American related ..............................................................................107
Informal Networks Summary ................................................................................................108
Online and Social Media .........................................................................................................108
Websites ....................................................................................................................................110
Social Media Channels ............................................................................................................112
Online and Social Media Summary .........................................................................................117
Ethnic / Migrant Media ..........................................................................................................117
Online Magazine .......................................................................................................................118
Online Newsletter ......................................................................................................................120
Ethnic / Migrant Media Summary ...........................................................................................120
Missing Elements in the Existing Networks ...........................................................................120
Final Summary ..........................................................................................................................121
Chapter Five: Discussion and Analysis ..................................................................................123
Theme One: Renegotiating Gender Values, Roles and Status ................................................124
Theme Two: Acculturation, Gender and the relevance of culture and language maintenance ..................................................................................................................134
List of Figures

Graphs
Graph 1: Ethnicity & Graph 2: Nationality .......................................................... 46
Graph 3: Location & Graph 4: Number of years in NZ ......................................... 47
Graph 5: Number of years in NZ & Graph 6: Relationship Status ......................... 47
Graph 7: Relationship Status & Graph 8: Number of Children ............................ 47
Graph 9: Level of Education & Graph 10: Occupation ....................................... 47

Profiles
Profile 1: Ana ........................................................................................................... 49
Profile 2: Coral ........................................................................................................ 50
Profile 3: Diana ........................................................................................................ 51
Profile 4: Gloria ....................................................................................................... 52
Profile 5: Julia .......................................................................................................... 53
Profile 6: Lorena ..................................................................................................... 54
Profile 7: Mercedes ................................................................................................. 55
Profile 8: Rosa ........................................................................................................ 56
Profile 9: Roxana ..................................................................................................... 57
Profile 10: Vitoria ................................................................................................... 58

Communicative Ecology maps
Communicative Ecology map 1: Ana ................................................................. 49
Communicative Ecology map 2: Coral ................................................................. 50
Communicative Ecology map 3: Diana ................................................................. 51
Communicative Ecology map 4: Gloria ............................................................... 52
Communicative Ecology map 5: Julia ................................................................. 53
Communicative Ecology map 6: Lorena ............................................................. 54
Communicative Ecology map 7: Mercedes ......................................................... 55
Communicative Ecology map 8: Rosa ................................................................. 56
Communicative Ecology map 9: Roxana ............................................................. 57
Image 7: Asamblea de Mujeres Hispanoparlantes flyer - Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino.................................85
Image 8: Organisation for the Latin American culture and language maintenance 87
Image 9: Plunket........................................................................................................................................88
Image 10: Brazilian Playgroup and Portuguese classes for children .............................................89
Image 11: Playcentre ..................................................................................................................................90
Image 12: Manitas Playgroup................................................................................................................93
Image 13: Business Associations ...........................................................................................................96
Image 14: Brazilian Cultural Events ......................................................................................................105
Image 15: Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa website.................................................................110
Image 16: NZ Brasileiríssimas website .................................................................................................110
Image 17: YepNZ website ........................................................................................................................111
Image 18: Latin American Facebook groups in NZ ..............................................................................115
Image 19: Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa front covers.............................................................................119
CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

Introduction

This study focused on the role played by communication networks in the migration experiences of Latin American women in Aotearoa/New Zealand. By following a qualitative methodology, communicative ecology and oral history approaches as well as a feminist theoretical background, I aimed for in-depth and rich data. The methods I used were focus groups, oral history individual interviews, participatory photography and the collection of images from the Facebook pages to which I was directed by the participants.

To introduce this research project, in this chapter I present the rationale and purpose, the research question and sub-questions, the operational definitions, and the context in which this investigation was undertaken.

Rationale and Purpose

As a woman and a cultural insider of the Latin American migrant culture in New Zealand, I had a personal interest in exploring how Latin American women experience migration in this country and the role formal and informal communication networks play in their lives. Women’s issues have always been at the core of my actions, personal stories and academic work. I chose to study gender, migration and communication networks because I believe that deeper understanding of those issues can contribute to migrant women’s empowerment and gender equity.

New Zealand is where I have been living for almost three years, and its multicultural environment and gender egalitarian society has encouraged me to explore the communicative ecology of Latin American migrant women’s groups. When looking at previously conducted research, I was unable to identify a single study that acknowledged Latin American women and their communities in the New Zealand context using either a feminist theoretical framework, oral history and communicative ecology approaches or both.
Mapping the communicative ecology through the narratives of Latin American women in New Zealand was a way of documenting and learning from the life stories of women who have chosen to leave their homelands and live in a different culture. Through a feminist approach, migrant women’s voices provided me with a deeper understanding of the power relationships of a gendered and multiethnic society, and insights for social change. Anderson and Jack (1998) state that an oral history pathway is valuable in its essence because it can uncover women’s perspectives:

A woman’s discussion of her life may combine two separate, often conflicting perspectives: one framed in concepts and values that reflect men’s dominant position in the culture, and one informed by the more immediate realities of a woman’s personal experiences. (p. 11)

Thus, by mapping the Latin American migrant women’s communicative ecology, investigating the narratives of their experiences as migrant women and understanding the role communication networks play in their lives in New Zealand, my goals with this paper were to:

• draw more attention to women’s migration and the ethnic media in New Zealand: the socio-economic and cultural impacts of gender, migration and communication networks.
• raise migrant women’s awareness of the possibilities of their communication networks in the New Zealand society.
• contribute to New Zealand’s multiethnic gender equality.
• contribute reliable and credible research for the academic field.
• contribute to New Zealand organisations, programs and campaigns focused on women, migration and communications networks.
• contribute to individual and societal change by generating evidence of migrant women’s challenges and empowerment.

Research Questions

This research project is based on the following main research question:
“What role do communication networks play in the migration experience of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand?”
The following sub-questions were used as a support to answer the main question:

- What is the communicative ecology of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand?
- How do Latin American migrant women organise their formal and informal communication networks?
- What is the role of the ethnic media for Latin American migrant women?

**Operational Definitions**

In this part, the following operational definitions informing this study are presented: *Communicative Ecology; Communication Networks; Ethnic Media; Latin American Women; Migration; Migrants; Narratives.*

*Communicative Ecology*

The term communicative ecology is related to the “complexity of local communicative environments” (Lennie & Tacchi, 2013, p. 13) as well as the various channels and flows of information and communication. It depends on many factors such as infrastructure, technology, social networks, education, age, gender and class. Thus, the communicative experience can be different for each person.

*Communication Networks – Formal and Informal*

‘Communication networks’, ‘immigration networks’, ‘social networks’, support networks, ‘interpersonal trust networks’ and ‘personal networks’ are some of the terms used by scholars (Boyd, 1989; Assis, 2000; Curran and Saguy, 2001, Tilly, 2007; Côte et al, 2015) with regard to the study of migrants’ networks. In order to differentiate them from such formal networks as organisations, immigration advisors, travel agents and labour recruiters, some studies use the term ‘personal networks’ to relate only to family, friendship and community ties (Boyd, 1989). For the purpose of this study, I prefer the use of communication networks to denominate all forms – formal and informal – of Latin American
migrant women’s ties in their migration experiences. However, to acknowledge other scholars and their contributing studies, I used all the terms mentioned above interchangeably.

Communication networks “are the patterns of contact that are created by the flow of messages among communicators through time and space.” Networks can include “personal contact networks, flows of information within and between groups, strategic alliances and so on.” Message refers to “data, information, knowledge, images, symbols, or any other symbolic forms that can move from one point in a network to another or can be co-created by network members” (Monge & Noshir, 2003, p.3).

According to Albee & Boyd (1997), “networks are one form of collective identity. They are a mechanism through which communication happens or can be enhanced. They also enable individuals to overcome isolation and begin the process of evolving joint actions” (p. 4).

**Ethnic Media**

According to Matsaganis et al (2011), ethnic media includes “media by and for (a) immigrants, (b) ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities, as well as (c) indigenous populations across different parts of the world” (p.xiii). Ethnic media proliferation is linked to processes such as technological innovation, international migration, world economic integration and policymaking open to multinational and multicultural intent.

More present than the printed media, the electronic media – cassettes, radio, television and the internet – serve as a way to convey ethnic minorities’ messages throughout their communities and elsewhere. These messages can be a way to promote different cultures’ values and beliefs to the wider public as well as the acceptance of the difference itself, contributing to more tolerant and harmonious societies (Browne, 2006).

**Gender**

For the purpose of this study, gender is considered to be the “social construction of biological sex, how we take biological differences and give them social meanings” (Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 1995, p. 6). Gender as a social construct is
rooted in normative sets of beliefs and ways of being. It is not limited though to maleness and femaleness, but it also includes man, masculinity and manliness as well as woman, femininity and womanliness. According to the authors, masculinism is generally the norm of being and the power of gender, which comes from gender behaviour patterns and shapes social, institutional and political realities.

**Latin American Women**

For this study, Latin American Women include women from the following countries: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa-Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela (New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.).

**Migration**

Migration for this study is the “permanent or semi-permanent change of residence of an individual or a group of people” (Oderth, 2002). It includes “both international and intra-national migration” and the idea of “the physical passage of migration from one place to another as only one event within migratory experience which spans old and new worlds and which continues throughout the life of the migrant and into subsequent generations” (Thomson, 1999, p. 24).

**Migrants**

Even though no precise boundaries are given, Samers (2010, cited in Spoonley and Bredford, 2012) makes a distinction between migrants and immigrants. The first live temporarily in a foreign country, the second are permanent residents. For the purpose of this study, I used the term ‘migrant’ for both types.
Context

In this section, in order to orient the reader, I outline New Zealand cultural characteristics, migration context and trends, as well as the Latin American migration history and culture in this country.

*Overall Migration trends in New Zealand and its cultural position*

New Zealand is a migrant country, as part of a nation-building project which nowadays approaches a modern, democratic and liberal society (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012). If, in the past, the society-building project aimed at an unofficially “White New Zealand Policy” or a “Better Britain” (Lowe, 2009), which means the settlement of traditional migrants from the United Kingdom and Ireland, the country changed in the second half of the twentieth century when influxes of Asians started to grow and be feared (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012; Ip & Pang, 2006; Lowe). Also, as a post-war movement, Pacific peoples migrated to New Zealand to address a skilled labour shortage. Maori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa, were acknowledged as tangata whenua (people of the land) through the legal and constitutional review of Te Tiriti O Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi).  

After the Labour Government policy reforms of 1986, New Zealand abandoned the ‘white-only’ flow of immigration to become a more culturally diverse society, with groups from different countries and ethnicities entering the country (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012). However, most of these ethnic groups were socially and culturally stereotyped, stigmatised and ostracised (Revell, 2012).

Despite opening its borders to people from any country in the world, New Zealand remains sensitive regarding the institutionalisation of a multicultural immigration policy as it happened in the United States, Canada and some democratic European countries (Lowe, 2009; Zodgekar, 2006). This is because a liberal multicultural policy approach can subvert bicultural power sharing

---

1 The Treaty was an agreement signed in 1840 between the British Crown and more than 500 Maori chiefs. As its principles of participation, partnership and protection weren’t honoured by the British Crown, a review of it in 1975 gave back to Maoris their sovereignty over Aotearoa lands. (Orange, 2012).
relations established between Maori and Pakeha\(^2\) in the Treaty of Waitangi (Lowe, 2009; Zodgekar, 2006; Liu, 2006). It is also argued that if assimilated into the vast sea of cultures, Maori culture could lose its indigenous status and rights (Lowe, 2009; Revell, 2012). As evidence of its biculturalism, New Zealand has two official languages (Maori and English) as evidenced by public signs in both languages and the use of rituals.

Due to its high status with migrants, New Zealand has established a selective system of points which targets skilled labour migrants. However the country recruits and selects people not only for economic but also for societal integration purposes, (Keeley, 2009 cited in Spoonley & Bedford, 2012), which means inclusion, participation and social justice (UNDSPD, n.d.) among its diverse ethnic groups.

Although China, the United Kingdom, India and the Philippines are the top source countries for residence approvals in New Zealand (MBIE, 2013), diplomatic and trading relationships with Latin America have been increasing since the second half of the twentieth century (Wilson, 2014). Aiming at strengthening economic, political and foreign engagement with the region, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign and Trading Affairs launched the Latin America Strategy (LAS) in 2010 (NZMFAT, n.d.). The LAS is based on business links and the development of new opportunities in areas such as agriculture, energy, clean technology, and fisheries, as well as in the education and tourism markets.

**Latin American Migration in New Zealand**

The first big wave of Latin American migrants to New Zealand happened in the 1970s and 1980s due to the military dictatorships that took over in many countries of Latin America. Escaping from Pinochet’s brutal government, more than 350 Chileans migrated to New Zealand as political refugees. With the arrival of more Chilean refugees because of the family reunification scheme, they outnumbered Argentinians by 1981. However, considering New Zealand as a ‘place of exile and not a new home’ some went to Australia and others returned home after the ‘summer of democracy’ in 1989 (Mannion, 1988 cited in Wilson, 2014).

---

\(^2\) Non-Maori European New Zealanders.
New Zealand also saw more refugees coming from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Colombia and Peru. Even though the wave of Latin American refugees in New Zealand almost ceased by 2001, some Colombians still migrate to the country running from the current civil war (Wilson, 2014; Schwass, 2005).

Mainly for economic and labour reasons, the second big influx of Latin American migrants started in the 1990s and doubled its population in New Zealand from 6,654 in 2006 to 13,182 in 2013. The Brazilian community became the biggest among the Latin Americans comprising almost one quarter of its population (Wilson, 2014). Following the Argentinian economic crisis in 2000, many Argentinians also choose New Zealand as their home (Schwass, 2005).

Among the Latin American residents in New Zealand 3,588 are Brazilians; 2,409 Chileans; 1,701 Argentinians; 1,155 Colombians; 741 Mexicans; 594 Peruvians; 447 Uruguayans; 150 Venezuelans; and 153 Bolivians (2013 New Zealand Census, 2014).

There are no separate records of Latin American migrant women and men in New Zealand (2013 New Zealand Census, 2014). However, in an overall gender analysis of permanent and long term migration into the country, data from the report Patterns of Gendered skilled and temporary migration into New Zealand of Department of Labour of New Zealand (2007) showed that between 1995 and 2004, there were slightly more female non-New Zealand citizens’ arrivals than males aged between 20-49 years. The report also states that New Zealand has a long history of gendered migration and this has affected the overall gender balance in the population. Despite a growing significance of the global feminisation of migration, including the feminisation of labour market related migration, this area has attracted little research or policy attention in the New Zealand context. (p. 1)

**Latin American Culture in New Zealand**

Latin American culture has been penetrating in the New Zealand society in many forms. Throughout the years, Latin American culture has been mingling in New Zealand through its activism, arts, rhythms, dance, music, language, sports and traditional food and celebrations. One of its notorious manifestations of political activism happened when Chileans protested in Wellington in 1990 against
the dictator General Pinochet. Another example comes from Wellington where there is a sculpture of the Colombian Silvia Salgado called ‘Nga korerorero’ (the ongoing dialogue) that represents communication and relationships among family and friends.

There is also a growing interest in the Spanish language, which, in 2012, was the second most popular foreign language learnt among primary and secondary students (The New Zealand Office of Ethnic Communities, 2014). The language is also part of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in universities such as the University of Canterbury and University of Auckland. Moreover, on a smaller scale, Portuguese courses are also offered in community centres, language schools and The University of Auckland.

The insertion of Latin American culture into New Zealand is equally seen in events such as Spanish meetups and masses, the Latin American and Spanish Film Festival, artistic exhibitions and celebrations of special dates for each Latin American country as well as soccer events and classes. Dance clubs with salsa, bachata, rumba and Zumba are very popular and gather people from different nationalities. Additionally, cultural and musical groups such as Brazilian Divas, Kantuta, Pachamama, Latinoaotearoa bring the Latin American flavour to New Zealand. And Brazilians celebrate their carnival in the summer throughout the country.

Latin American culture has also been present in ethnic media and community radio programmes (Brazil Mix; Oye Latino!; Radio Latinal; Rock del Sur; The Latin Hour), and in print and online outlets (Sudaca; Rolê NZ; Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa; Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato Online Informativo; Latin American New Zealand Business Council Online Newsletter).

Considering the above, this study aims at contributing to gender and migration issues research within the New Zealand context by examining Latin American migrant women in this country and the role communication networks play in their migration process.
Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided in six chapters.

Chapter One is an overview of this study. It has an introductory part, presents the rationale and purpose, the research questions, the operational definitions and the context in which the investigation took place.

Chapter Two provides a review of relevant theories and studies that guided me during my investigation. It is divided in two main parts. The first part examines concepts of migration, identity and ethnic media. In the second part, linking the gender component with the migration process, the feminisation of migration is analysed as well as the connection between gender, migration, communication networks and the migrant media. It also reviews specific study cases about gender and migration in the New Zealand context and that of Latin American migrant women worldwide.

Chapter Three outlines the research project’s design. It explains the qualitative methodological approach, as embraced by the communicative ecology mapping and oral history approach and a feminist theoretical framework. It also includes the methods of data collection, the sample and the thematic data analysis, as well as the ethical considerations and the outcomes and outputs of this study.

Chapter Four is divided in two parts: profiling the participants and the themes captured during data collection. These themes, in turn, are divided in two background themes (Pre-Migration and Migration Stages) and the main theme (Communication Networks) and their subsequent sub-themes. Also, visual evidence enhances the findings.

Chapter Five discusses and analyses the findings through three themes based on previous literature review. The discussion and analysis provide the argument to answer the research question and sub-questions.

Chapter Six concludes this thesis and provides direct answers to the research question and sub-questions, and concluding thoughts about this research project, its limitations, recommendations and suggestions for further study.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to present the theoretical background of this study, this section articulates ideas about gender and migration. In the first part, concepts of migration, identity and migrant media are discussed. Subsequently, in the second part, the feminisation of migration and the connection between gender, migration, communication networks and the migrant media is analysed, linking the gender component into the migration process. Furthermore, gender and migration in the New Zealand context and the specific case of Latin American migrant women worldwide are reviewed.

Migration

Although migration generates the blending of physical and racial features, it also enables the transmission of cultural characteristics. “The diffusion of cultures, including tools, habits, ideas, and forms of social organization, was a prerequisite for the development of modern civilization, which would probably have taken place much more slowly if people had not moved from place to place” (Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia, 2014, p. 1). Thus, migration processes are categorised as internal, international, temporary, permanent, illegal, labour and conflict-induced (Boyd and Grieco, 1998 and 2003; Curran and Saguy, 2001).

Driven by economic, social, political, environmental or personal reasons, people in the twentieth first century have been migrating more than ever. As an aspect of the globalised world, in this “Age of Migration” (Castles et al, 2009), there are about 232 million international migrants in the world of which 59% live in the Global North (United Nations, 2013). Besides, due to the dynamics of the global economy, patterns of migration as transnational flows of capital and skills are changing the division between richer North or poorer South, as East Asia and some parts of Africa and Latin America also challenging the dominance of the North. “Future migration will evolve to reflect those changes towards a more diverse world.” Thus, shorter-term mobility will take place due to urbanisation and population age. “People will become less migratory but more mobile, paradoxical though that might seem” (Skeldon, 2013, p. 27).
Migration and Identity

Because migrants are usually between two cultures and societies, the migration experience creates an alternative sense of identity. Stuart Hall (1994) in *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* argues that cultural identity has two different concepts. The first relates to the past, to essences, traditions and origins, a permanent and deep-rooted approach. This sense of ‘oneness’ is underneath any superficial and artificial ‘imposed selves’ (p. 223). It is stable and unchangeable. Alternatively, even while recognising the uniqueness of a culture, the second notion considers identity as an on-going process, related to the future, to the circumstances (political, economic, and social) that can build and rebuild its meaning eternally. It is more focused on “becoming” than actually “being”.

Migration brings a sense of displacement to those who move out from their homelands. It means to leave behind the mother nation but still to be attached to its ‘umbilical cord’ in an unknown territory. Migrants can cross physical boundaries and change scenarios, but do not entirely rip out the roots. Somehow, migrants tie themselves in the symbolic boundaries of their ‘imaginary homelands’ (Rushdie, 1992) where culture is always at the core. According to Jayasurya (1996 cited in Rivera et al, 2000), culture is related to “shared meanings and values, which are not static but capable of adjusting to new and changeable circumstances” (p. 64).

As a result of migration, the plurality of cultures in one society has generated power differences between cultural groups. That is how cultural minorities or ethnic groups are formed within the wave of the mainstream culture (Berry, 1997). For Waldinger et al. (1990) ethnicity means a “self-identification with a particular ethnic group” (p. 34). It relates to social structures to which ethnic groups are attached and arrange themselves through networks that allow economic, spatial and institutional interactions within the host society. Pursuing a sense of belonging, ethnic groups embrace a “set of connections and regular patterns of interaction among people sharing common national background or migration experiences” (p.33).

For development theory, ethnic identity starts in early adolescence and changes with age and acculturation. Casey and Dustmann (2010) state that the development of children’s ethnic identity is influenced by their “parents both in the
family home and through their ethnic socialisation practices” (p. 32-33). However, peers, schools and community also play a formative role in their choice of identity and it is common that children of migrants identify themselves with both cultures or deviate from their home values (Casey & Dustmann, 2010; Phinney et al, 2001).

Identity is also related to individualist and collectivist societies. Hofstede defines individualism and collectivism as follows

Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. (P. 51)

Thus, individualistic societies are based on the individual interests. There is only the nuclear family (parents and their children). Children are expected to leave their parental home as soon as they achieve autonomy and independence. When this happens, they usually reduce the relationships with their parents or even break them off. Identity relies on personal attributes, self-realisation and individual needs and goals. However, collectivist societies elevate the power of the group over the individual. Family structures consist of a number of people living closely together, also known as extended family. Children grow up thinking about the “we”. Identity is based on in-groups (family, community and ethnic groups) and the social networks to which one belongs. Usually collectivist societies present a tendency to out-groups’ derogation (Triandis et al, 1988; Hofstede, 2003; Kashima, 2001). According to Hofstede (2003), New Zealand has higher Individualism Index (IDV) values than Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru (p. 53). It is noteworthy that some studies (Podsiadlowski & Fox, 2011; Tassell, 2004; Berghan, 2007) have addressed both collectivistic and individualistic aspects of New Zealand depending on the ethnic group analysed. “One of the key differences between Maori and non Maori (pakeha/western) society is the Maori emphasis on the well-being of the group, as opposed to the western focus on the individual.” (Berghan, 2007, p.1)

---

3 For the purpose of this study, I used the model of national culture dimensions (Hofstede, 2003, n.d.) to analyse the differences between the Latin American and New Zealand societies.

4 The IDV indicates the degree of individualism in a country’s culture. (Hofstede, 2003, p. 261).
Being part of an ethnic minority is a challenge that can deliver the connotation of incorporating the mainstream culture and language instead of celebrating its own (Browne, 2005). However, the reconstruction of its own culture in the new country can be considered a strategy to deal with feelings of separation and loss and resistance to assimilating the host culture (Rivera et al., 2000). Through dance, music, food and their native languages, co-nationals share traditions, reinforcing and increasing their sense of identity and self-esteem as a buffer to deal with the external pressure (Aizipúra, 2008; Nesdale et al, 1997). Migrants can also deal better with acculturative distress and identity issues if they have constant contact with their family back in their home countries (Benitez, 2012; Willis & Yoh, 2002). This relates to the theory of socio-cultural and situational similarity proposed by Thoits (1986) and supported by Noh et al (1999) and Aizipúra (2008). The socio-cultural and situational similarity perspective analyses how individuals from similar socio-cultural and situational contexts share empathy about stressful circumstances. Thoits (1986) stresses that “both sociocultural and situational similarity enhance the likelihood of the perception and reception of empathic understanding, the condition under which coping assistance should be most effective” (p. 420).

It is possible that intercultural encounters lead to culture shock, psychological disorientation or distress due to migration processes or unfamiliar situations (Pedersen, 1995; Ward et al., 2001; Pantelidou, 2006). As cultural contact is likely to be stressful, “people in contact might assimilate the other culture, reject it, or change their identity to include both sets of cultural elements” (Ward et al., 2001, p. xii). Besides, cultural contact can lead to positive or negative situations and movements such as genocide, segregation, assimilation or integration.

As an initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment, culture shock is considered by educational model theories as “a state of growth and development which – however painful it might be – may result in positive and even essential insights” (Pedersen, 1995, p. 2). Experiences of culture shock will vary according to factors such as: characteristics of the host country, intrapersonal, interpersonal and biological factors (age, language skills, resourcefulness, appearance, health and social support). Pedersen (1995) divides the culture shock experience into five
stages: Honeymoon (excitement, curiosity and stimulation); Disintegration (homesickness, confusion, isolation and inadequacy); Reintegration (adjustment and reconnection); Autonomy (acceptance and confidence); Interdependence (acknowledgment of many realities and cultures).

According to Skeldon (2013), “migrating across international boundaries can be empowering for some, as they pursue, for example, higher levels of education or better job opportunities, while others flee political conflicts or environmental disasters” (p. 1). In terms of assimilation into the host country, apart from the restrictions and challenges of migration policies, migrants’ performances will usually be determined by their proficiency of the host language as well as having access to migrant networks.

Keeping a distinct ethnic identity does not necessarily create more difficulties in participating in the host society. If this is somehow assimilated, there may be no impediments regarding education, employment or even “civic and political participation, intermarriage and fertility behaviour, health and life satisfaction” (Hatton, 2014, p.44). Nevertheless, the evolution of ethnic identity will depend on the duration of the move, the investment in human capital, participation in the labour market and the family formation (Constant & Zimmermann, 2007).

**Ethnic, migrant and diasporic media and New Zealand**

Ethnic, migrant and diasporic media exist as a response to a lack of representation or misrepresentation of cultural and ethnic groups in the mainstream media. This last one, for Chomsky (1997) directs and diverts mass audiences through the leading channels of communication. It is also considered to be the elite media, the ones that dictate the agenda by determining a framework based on the interests of major companies, academies and governments. Because of its power structure, the author relates the mainstream media to a ‘doctrinal system’.

According to Elias and Lemish (2008), the mass media in the host country can play a significant role in helping migrants to learn about and integrate in the new society. On the other hand, it can disseminate negative stereotypes about migrants, which in turn can generate feelings of alienation towards them and
possibly social segregation. Considering its commercial nature, and apart from pointing out the negative aspects of ethnic communities, the mainstream media also fails to reflect the real situations and concerns of ethnic minorities or to cultivate relationships with them (Williamson & De Souza, 2006).

Similarly, New Zealand mainstream media have been slow in adapting to the bicultural feature of the country. Considering the growing of Asian and Pacific communities, the New Zealand mainstream media is, by contrast, facing the need to “reflect and respond to a rapidly changing and increasingly complex multicultural society” (Robie, 2009, p. 68). As stated by Noronha and Papoutsaki, (2014), the mainstream media in New Zealand does not fully address the needs of its several ethnic communities nor represent them in a balanced manner. With respect to that, and referencing Hollings’s study (2007) of the 2006 New Zealand census, the authors draw attention to the imbalance of ethnicities among New Zealand journalists of which 82% are European, counterpointing 12% who are Maori, 4.8% Asians and 1.8% Pasifika.

As the New Zealand bicultural structure still remains, Noronha and Papoutsaki (2014) suggest that more formal adoptions of multiculturalism or cultural diversity could favour ethnic media’s recognition and growth. It is important to notice that the acknowledgement of Maori identity and its language as official has helped create positive outcomes regarding the ethnic media and the representation of minorities in the media. As evidence of this, Māori Television was set up under the Māori Television Service Act 2003 and 21 Māori radio stations across New Zealand were set up as a result of a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal in 1986 concerning allocation of radio frequencies (Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014; Māori Television, 2013; Māori Language Commission, 2012).

The role and influence of ethnic media in New Zealand is mostly studied among Pacific Islands and Asian populations (Papoutsaki and Strickland, 2008; Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014; Robie, 2009). As a result of Papoutsaki and Strickland’s study (2008), due their under/misrepresentation in mainstream outlets, Pacific Islanders are listening to their stories in the diaspora media such as Pacific Radio Network as well as having access to mainstream news through a Pacific perspective and style. Also, Monteiro and Cruickshank (2006 cited in Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014, p. 20) emphasise that, through ethnic media,
Chinese, Indian and South African communities in New Zealand are negotiating their identities and role within the host country and having a credible source of information for their particular needs.

**Roles, importance and challenges of the ethnic media**

As ethnic minority populations grow around the world (Browne, 2006), ethnic media play an important role, whether maintaining cultural identities or hybridising them, as well as helping in socio-cultural separation or integration in the host country (Papoutsaki and Strickland, 2008; Matsaganis et al, 2011). According to Noronha and Papoutsaki (2014), having “access to such media gives them [ethnic communities] an avenue to understand more clearly issues affecting their community, a stronger sense of identity and social cohesion and a connection to a perceived transnational community” (p.17).

Ethnic media is also considered a support network for migrants because it preserves their cultural heritage, helping them to overcome feelings of nostalgia and strengthening solidarity among groups. Also, ethnic media are a means of publicity for in-community business (Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014). In New Zealand, small business enterprises have been a solution to and a mechanism against unemployment for migrants as well as a means of integration into the host society (New Zealand Federation of Multicultural Councils, 2014).

The impact upon and the role of ethnic minority media in the maintenance of language and culture, as well as providing useful information for migrants, can also be understood through 8 different structural elements proposed by Browne (2006, p. 12-15).

- Types of Outlets: radio, TV, cable, satellites, internet, accessibility.
- Levels of Service (Geography): international, regional (supranational), national, state/province, local, neighborhood.
- Policy: policies that encourage or discourage the portrayal of ethnic minorities, codes of practice.
- Financing: licensing, advertising, impact on the production, stability and adequacy.
- Operational Goals: main raison(s) d’etre, minority participation in the public sphere, attraction to particular public groups. Which goals are
predominant: “maintaining links with the ‘ancestral homeland’; preserving, restoring or advancing the use of minority language; providing and/or restoring a sense of pride in minority accomplishments (cultural, social, political, economic); combating negative stereotypes, especially those provided by mainstream media; indicating how minorities and mainstream can/do work together; serving as source of information on employment, health care, education, financial aid and others; illustrating that ethnic minorities are capable of operating media services.” (p. 14).

- Media Service and Minority Community Links: community board, participation, audience research, shared results.
- Primary Audiences: one’s own minority group, other minority groups, mainstream, age groups, genders, rural, urban, favourites, non-favourites, the excluded, establishments (media or group).
- Programming: focus (information, education and/or entertainment), representation, participation.

In relation to the above, ethnic communities can express and represent themselves whether through the traditional media (newspaper, magazine, television and radio) or more liberal means of communication such as dress, dance, music, cultural celebrations and events, for example. For Noronha and Papoutsaki (2014), these manifestations are considered equally important in understanding migrant communities and their attempt to maintain their cultural identity in the host country. For Georgiou (2013), the ‘new’ media or the digital platforms – especially the social media – are the place found by national and ethnic minorities to express themselves away from the constraints of mass media. Also, even though the ‘new’ media are considered liberating for minorities, they also pose threats to the nation’s cohesion. “Minorities either turn away or against the nation through their own distinct uses of digital platforms” (p. 80).

Ethnic media proliferation is linked to processes such as technological innovation, international migration, world economic integration and policymaking for multinational and multicultural intent. Its production and consumption also affects the mainstream media and societal landscape. Rigoni (2012) explains that
recent developments consider ethnic media in a “transnational framework that takes into consideration the diversification of information flows, strengthening of diasporic identities and advancement of parallel-mediated systems of self-representation” (p. 835).

Despite of this, ethnic media face challenges such as delivering information to their communities and generating revenue to maintain and develop its work. This can be related to its mainly regional incidence, fragmented markets due to the diversity of languages, lack of focused research about audiences, lack of awareness by media agencies regarding its existence and market potential as well as advertising beyond in-community business (Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014). Thus, ethnic minorities are not usually considered a regular audience or ‘regular folk’ by advertising planners even though they also have monetary power (Mahtani, 2001). It is noteworthy that, in New Zealand, financial viability poses a great threat to ethnic media survival (Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014).

**Gender and Migration**

Gender increases the challenge that women face as migrants. Duerst-Lahti & Kelly (1995) define gender as the “social construction of biological sex, how we take biological differences and give them social meanings” (p. 6). Gender as a social construction is rooted in normative set of beliefs and ways of being. It is not limited though to maleness and femaleness, but it also includes man, masculinity and manliness as well as woman, femininity and womanliness. According to the authors, masculinism is generally the norm of being and the power of gender, which comes from gender behaviour patterns and shapes social, institutional and political realities. Boyd and Grieco (2003) emphasise that, varying among societies and time, “gender is not immutable but also changes and, in this sense, is both socially constructed and reconstructed through time” (p. 3). Feminist studies have considered women’s struggle related not only to socially constructed biological differences but also to their ethnicities, races, cultures and classes (Hooks, 2015; Zavos, 2012; Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 2010).

The study of gender and migration has attracted more attention among scholars worldwide (Pyke and Johnson, 2003; Jolly, 2005; Palmary et al, 2010). Since 1960 research on migration has become gradually more gender sensitive,
and the idea of women as dependent on their husbands and less active in the migration decision and process was left behind (Boyd and Grieco, 2003; Assis, 2007; Assis, 2014).

According to Boyd and Grieco (1998), gender and migration research has focused mainly on patriarchy (dominance of men in the society), the interaction of power relations and interpersonal relationships before, during and after the migration process. Incorporating gender ideology into the migration process means considering the status of women. This refers to “women’s position relative to men and to each other, over the course of a lifetime within a particular socio-economic, cultural and politico-legal context” (Lim, 1995 cited in Rivera et al, 2000, p. 51). Boyd (2006) stresses that the status of women in the decision making is also related to the level of gender equality within sending societies and their families, which includes social beliefs about gender behaviours, access to information and resources. In this direction, Rivera et all (2000) add the relevance of migrant women’s understanding of non-migrant women as well.

Lim (1995 cited in Rivera et al, 2000) explains that women are considered to have seven main roles in the society: “producers or members of the paid and unpaid labour force, wives, mothers, housewives, kin, community members and as individuals” (p. 51). However, gender roles, relations and hierarchies change during migration processes, which are divided in three stages: pre-migration, that involves women’s status and roles as individuals in the family and society, as well as gender characteristics of the country of origin; transition across state boundaries, the legal panorama of both countries (origin and destination); post-migration, the impact of the entry status and how this influences the integration and settlement and in the status of women and men as well as the integration into the labour market (Boyd and Grieco, 2003).

Curran and Saguy (2001) highlight three important developments in gender and migration studies. The first has to do with the recognition of significant differences between men’s and women’s “motivations, risks, and norms governing and promoting their movement and assimilation as well as differential consequences” (p. 54 and p. 55). The second introduces the concept that social networks stimulate migration processes. The third considers the influence of household and community conditions in the migration decisions.
The feminisation of migration

Today women comprise almost half of the world migrant population (48%). However, they are the majority of migrants in Europe, the Americas and Oceania. This can be attributed “to differences in propensity to migrate, to gender selectivity in migration policies and to gender segregation in labour markets” (ILO, 2014, p. 10).

Female migration for employment known as the feminisation of migration has become a significant global phenomenon (Kawar, 2003; Piper, 2007). Piper (2007) emphasises that

the feminisation of migration is connected to at least four phenomena: 1. improved statistical visibility, partly related to a changed perception of women dominated migration as ‘work migration’ in its own right (see Rojas Wiesner & Angeles this volume); 2. the increasing participation of women in most, if not all, migration streams; 3. the increasing inability of men to find full-time employment in the origin countries; and 4. the growing demand for feminized jobs in destination countries. (p.4)

Instead of women only joining their husbands, they are also voluntarily migrating as skilled migrants and for professional reasons (Raghuram, 2004; Ryan, 2007). Thus, migrant women are increasing and maintaining the competitiveness of the host country and enhancing its development (UNFPA-IOM Expert Group Meeting, 2006; Chammartin, 2013). Moreover, “beyond their economic contribution, migrant women are the main source of physical and emotional support for older and younger family members” (UNFPA-IOM Expert Group Meeting, 2006, p. 3). Some studies have addressed the positive impact on women migrating from a patriarchal system to a more egalitarian society (Wei, 2007; Darvishpour, 2002; Rivera et al, 2000; Aizpúrúa).

Although migration is an empowering tool for women, visible and invisible challenges persist. They are still facing employment opportunities segregated by gender and other discriminatory policies, working below their qualifications and earning lower wages than locals and men. In terms of international migration, while men migrate to work in various economic sectors, women are more
concentrated in the service sector and undertake less-skilled work such as domestic and care work (Chammartin, 2013).

Motherhood and migration can mean more gaps in terms of gender inequality, as women leave behind their paid jobs and increase their dependency on their husbands or the welfare state (Wu, 2009). This is also part of the paradoxical issue of “brain drain” (concerning women and migration, the absence of qualified women in their origin countries) and “brain waste” (the underutilisation of their qualifications and skills in the host country) (Carr et al, 2005). Also, migrant women are still suffering from extreme exploitation and abuse, trafficking, forced or modern slavery and have less or no access to health care (UNFPA-IOM Expert Group Meeting, 2006; Chammartin, 2013).

By contrast, research about gender and ethnic migrant entrepreneurship (Pio, 2007a; Pio, 2007b; Meares, 2010; Baycan-Levent, 2010; Essers et al, 2010; Verheijen et al., 2014; Verdaguer, 2009) has shown that more migrant women are becoming business owners and overcoming discrimination and structural challenges in industrialised labour markets. Pio (2007a) analysed the pathway of Indian women entrepreneurs in New Zealand and divided it into four stages: their initial difficulties in entering the job market, their underemployment, followed by the setup of a micro enterprise and its expansion with the creation of opportunities for co-ethnics. Essers et al (2010) studied the concept of female ethnicity as a synonym for autonomy, agency and professionalism and its relation to Muslim migrant business women in the Netherlands. Their research showed how those ethnic women broke away from stereotypes of passivity and dependency and successfully established their business enterprises in the host society.

Femininity was also found to be a tool for empowerment among migrant women as a strong moral and character-strengthening quality and a way to grow and thrive in the host society, compensating for any loss of self-esteem and moral value. It also embraces a sense of solidarity and womanhood among migrant women as they help each other to enhance their feminine qualities (Dedirdirek and Whitehead, 2004; Cevajner, 2011). Third wave feminists have also acknowledged that the claim and the recognition of their beauty can be practice of self-expression and empowerment for women (Wissinger, 2011).


**Gender, migration and communication networks.**

Early research about gender and migration focused on men’s networks and considered women to be passive in terms of migration decision-making (Boyd, 1989). However, recent research has acknowledged that male and female migrant networks are different in type and quality and women have more comprehensive networks increasing their likelihood to settle permanently in the new society (Menjívar, 2000; Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Curran et al, 2005; Marcelli & Cornelius, 2001). “Social networks and gender are essential to understand migration and culture change” (Curran and Saguy, 2001, p. 55). Migrant and/or non-migrant social support networks can support and help them with psychological and socio-cultural adjustment (Ward and Rana-Deuba, 1999; Berry, 1997, Sonn, 2002).

Studies (Heering et al, 2004; Ryan, 2007) showed that migrant mothers find practical and emotional support through the more localised and child-oriented ties they tend to develop. However, this can imply a more marginalised participation in the public sphere (Edwards, 2004).

Migrant women’s networks with other women (co-ethnics or not) serve as a gateway to migration and settlement in a new country as they can help to overcome economic and social barriers (Boyd, 1989; Boyd and Grieco, 2003; Aizpúrua, 2008). Those networks are embedded in feminist principles of collaboration, nurturance, empowerment, agency and autonomy (Lott, 2007).

Some studies (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Castro, 1989 cited in Assis, 2007), find that well settled migrant women can inspire and help other women to find their means to social mobility and to renegotiate their status within the host society.

According to Boyd (1989), immigration networks include “family and friendship, community practices such as festivals, membership in associations and as ‘intermediaries’ such as labour recruiters, immigration consultants, travel agents, smugglers and other forms” (p. 639). Thus, migration articulated by personal and social networks is getting less rational and more strategically influenced by those networks. Being part of the transition process of those who migrate, these networks also bring the sending and host communities together.
Thus, the more established the networks, the bigger the chances migrants will succeed in the host country (Tilly, 2007).

Communication networks serve as social capital in migration processes, which means wider access to resources and benefits in the micro and macro structures of the sending and host society (Portes, 2000; Côte et al, 2015). However, the quality of social capital and access to support networks are also influenced by gender and ethnicity (Côte et al, 2015). Phizacklea (1999) paid attention to the importance of migrant women's social networks as tools for learning and developing employment opportunities as well as for individual and collective agency. They also represent social change as they can reformulate and create new paths for gender behaviours in the receiving society. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) studied how Mexican women in the US organised their own support networks and systems and succeeded in the new country.

Some studies (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Blanton et al 2000; Kwong et al, 2009) about female ethnic role models showed that successful stories about women from the same cultural background inspire other migrant women’s self-evaluation and motivation. By analysing the literature of Latin American and Caribbean migrant women, Castro (1989 cited in Assis, 2007) found out that migrant women play significant roles in networks of mutual support and the integration in society and the labour market. Resulting from that, apart from their individual experiences as migrants, those women stimulate and influence other migratory flows. Raghuram (2004), Ryan (2007) and Ryan (2011) studied how the formal networks (or weak ties) that migrant women create in their post-migration stage are affected by their educational qualifications and personal and professional aspirations. The study of Ryan (2007) about Irish nurses in Britain, their motherhood duties followed by the return to their skilled jobs, analysed the influence of other skilled professionals for those women to return to work.

According to Basu & Goswami (1999), ethnic resources are important for cultural and economic integration as well as for the success of migrant business enterprises. Verdaguer (2009) found that Salvadoran women’s networks in the United States facilitated their pathways into entrepreneurship in the host society. In the same way, Kwong et al (2009) found that among four ethnic groups of women in the UK, face-to-face contacts with other migrant entrepreneur women were
positive in terms of skill and self-confidence improvement, shared knowledge and the increase of their participation in entrepreneurship.

*Migrant women and the ethnic media, online and social media*

The participation of women in ethnic media has been growing, taking them to high levels of responsibility and allowing them to “change gender representation in default of gender relations” (Rigoni, 2012, p. 843). Ethnic media made for and by women usually embrace themes such as interpersonal relationships and inter-ethnic relationships, even though women are often stereotyped. However, as a result of social, political or religious activism and an “attempt to combine gender equality, engagement in the public arena and defense of minority rights”, some women in the ethnic media are being portrayed by “strong and positive images” (p.843). For example, in the study of Latin American migrant women in Spain and their representation in the ethnic media, Mendieta (forthcoming cited in Rigoni, 2012) describes how those women are presented as “active and subjects of their own stories” (p. 843).

As an evidence of outlets relating to ethnic media and women, the commercial magazine “Migrant Woman”, based in UK, produces content about “successful, professional and entrepreneurial women of all cultures and origins.” (n.d.) and have an annual conference – “Migrant Woman Talks” – that brings multi-ethnic speakers to talk about a variety of topics.

In terms of migrants in online and social media, some authors (Ryan, 2008; Willis & Yeoh, 2002; Portes et al, 1999; Vertovec, 1999) studied how new technology enables the maintenance of virtual transnational networks as well as ties within the host country. Migrants can maintain ties and contacts within their distant networks of family and friends as well as with co-ethnics, creating a sense of solidarity and better assimilation and integration processes (Dekker and Engebersen, 2010; Nedelcu, 2012; Benitez, 2012; Komito, 2011). Based on previous study about the use of the Internet by Romanian professionals in Toronto, Nedelcu (2012) studied how ICTs promote migrants’ virtual transnational habitus. Benitez’s research (2012) showed that online social networking such as Facebook, Twitter and Skype provide emotional support and a feeling of proximity for Salvadoran Transnational families. Dekker and Engebersen (2010) examined how social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration through the
maintenance of virtual transnational ties. Falicov (2005; 2007) proved that the frequent contact with emotional ties to their families and home countries are essential for migrants to deal with the physical separation from their familiar networks and to overcome a sense of not belonging in the host society.

For some feminist studies (Carstensen & Winker, 2007; Carstensen, 2009; Consalvo & Paasonen, 2002), the internet can connect women in a more democratic, gender egalitarian and new form of public space. Through this space, communities of women are built, promoting agency and the renegotiation of their identities. Madge and O’connor (2005) analysed the empowerment of new mothers on the internet through their online research project entitled Cyberparents. On one hand, virtual social support through a virtual community facilitated the interaction of new mothers with each other and provided resourceful information. On the other hand, traditional patriarchal relations seemed to be reinforced by a particular website.

*Gender and migration in the New Zealand context*

Like most countries, New Zealand endeavours to attract skilled migrants. If they migrate as a partner of a skilled migrant, women usually have similar qualification to their counterparts and want to work in their professional field. In addition to that, migrant women nowadays are more present in tertiary education. (Badkar et al, 2007).

Although the rate of female migrants makes up a little more than male migrants in the country (51.9% and 48.1%), male migrants continue to have higher rates of employment, work in a skilled job or skill shortage area and earn more from wages and salaries (Masgoret et al, 2009; Masgoret et al, 2012). Also, females with children under the age of 14 and the ones with English proficiency from poor to good were less likely to participate in the labour force (Margoret et al, 2012).

Despite the fact that New Zealand has a multi-ethnic gender equality path to follow, in some ways, the country promotes the advantages of ethnic diversity through its *Office of Ethnic Communities* and the *New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy*, for example. Also, it promotes higher status for migrant women or opportunities for their professional and personal developments in its...
Ethnic Women’s Network Project (Halliday & Waring, 2014), Ethnic Women Leadership Project (The New Zealand Office of Ethnic Communities, 2013) and Te Whaariki, the Early Childhood Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996). New Zealand also presents a high level of gender equality as stated in the Gender Inequality Index (United Nations Development Programme, 2015). Thus, as migration influences women’s notions of identity, relationships and gender perspectives, migrating to New Zealand can contribute to women having a better understanding of gender equality and work-life balance (Verheijen et al, 2014).

Even though research and policy attention are still lacking in New Zealand (Badkar et al, 2007; Verheijen et al, 2014), some studies have addressed issues about migrant women here (Abott et al, 1999; Rivera et al, 2000; Fraser and Pickles (ed), 2002; Badkar et al, 2007; Pio, 2007a; Pio, 2007b; Meares, 2010; Philipp and Ho, 2010; Verheijen et al, 2014; Troughton, 2015). Main trends in gender and migration research in New Zealand include the study of historical contexts as well as the analysis of migrant women in the work-force, entrepreneurship processes and domestic environment. Methods such as the use of biography, auto-ethnography, narratives and document analysis are more common among the scholars. Few studies use questionnaires as tools to study gender and migration in the New Zealand context.

The book Shifiting Centres: Women and Migration in New Zealand History (Fraser and Pickles (ed), 2002) is a compilation of different authors and presents the experiences of Maori, Samoan, Chinese, British, Irish, and German women migrating to New Zealand since the nineteenth century. The studies are related to traditions, sailing experiences on the way to New Zealand, the examination of historical policies such as the Empire Settlement Act and single British women as domestic servants, urban migration and refugees from the Nazism.

Other studies have analysed the current situation of migrant women in New Zealand. Troughton (2015) used auto-ethnography to express her perceptions about social behaviours, work force and motherhood as a migrant and social worker in New Zealand and the challenges and ways to ‘fit in’. Phillip and Ho (2010) interviewed six South African migrant women in Hamilton to discuss their sense of home in their representations of indoor (decoration and traditional food) and outdoor lifestyles (safety, family and new social networks).
Badkar et al (2007), studied skilled Asian migrants to analyse the increasing of female component in the migration flow. Pio (2007a) investigated the narratives of Indian female entrepreneurs and their inspirational cameos and the social, political, economic, political and psychological complexities involved. Similar work was done by Verheijen et al (2014), who analysed migrant women from different ethnicities and their entrepreneurship in New Zealand. In the opposite direction, Meares (2010) found out negative impacts on the migration experiences of highly-skilled South African migrant women into New Zealand. By using the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM), the author explored the relationships between professional career and domestic responsibilities and discovered that, due to the need for more household duties and childcare, the effects of international migration on those women were “downward occupational mobility; decreases in income and damaged career prospects; career redirection such as retraining or employment as cultural brokers; and under- or unemployment” (p. 474). Larner (1991) studied Island born and New Zealand born Samoan women and their labour market position during recession and economic restructuring. The author found out that Island born Samoan women were important in key sectors of the New Zealand economy whereas New Zealand born Samoan women were more dispensable for labour.

Wu (2009)’s research about Chinese skilled migrant mothers raising their children in New Zealand found that those women actively and strategically used their non-dominant cultural resources to succeed in the host society and provide their children with access to various forms of cultural and social capital. Rivera et al (2000), who studied the lives of four Latinas and their process of migration and settlement in New Zealand. Migrating as partner to their husbands and mothers of dependent children were part of the criteria of selection. Thus, the study focused on “family relationships; the interaction between domesticity and paid work; and culture and language maintenance” (p. 49). It concluded that, at the beginning, they had a powerless position as new settlers facing isolation, economic and social dependency on their spouses and difficulty in maintaining their native culture and language in the host country and among their children. However, by getting more qualifications in New Zealand, becoming more competent in English and being more actively present in the labour market, they managed to enhance their status
as migrants. “This study has shown the participants not as victims but as women actively involved in changing their particular contexts and resisting the power relations which influenced their situations” (p. 71).

**Latin American migrant women worldwide**

Even though they challenge the stereotypes, the majority of the studies have placed Latin American migrant women at the margins of both sending and host societies, sometimes portraying them as “submissive, subordinate and passive” (Rivera et al., 2000, p. 50). However, Latinas can be leaders of their communities and promote and advocate for its development and sustenance (Vasquez & Gomas-Diaz, 2007).

Research about Latin American migrant women have focused on the impact of migration in terms of family relations, sex workers, domestic work, intimate partner violence against them and mental health, reproductive health and sexually transmitted diseases as well in relation to socialisation, individual agency and empowerment (Rivera et al., 2000; Assis, 2007; Gruner-Domic, 2011; Cantero, 2005; Godoy-Ruiz et al., 2014, Ochoa and Sampalis, 2014, Côté, 2015; Araujo and González-Fernández, 2014; Oso Casas, 2010; Cobb-Clark and Kossoudji, 2000, Aizpurúa, 2008; Aizpurúa et al., 2011; Vazquez Laba et al., 2014).

Concerning health issues, Cantero (2005) analysed how migration changed the reproductive behaviour and increased menstrual dysfunctions of Manghrebian and Latin American women in Madrid; Ochoa and Sampalis (2014) described the perceptions among Latin American permanent residents and refugees in Canada about the risk of HIV, AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and their difficulties in accessing healthcare services. Some of the findings include the relationship between migratory status and “sexual abuse, abuse at work, language barriers and lack of social support networks” (p. 412); Godoy-Ruiz et al (2014) detail the impact of intimate partner violence against Latin American migrant women in Canada and depression as a consequence.

Along with depicting the lives and work patterns of the Latin American migrant women, Araujo and González-Fernández (2014) studied the insertion of Latin American migrant women into domestic work in Spain and its relationship to migration policies, family policies and gender regimes. The results show inequality,
considering how “national middle class women’s rights to conciliate their professional and family life have been achieved through denying ‘non-national’ female domestic workers a family life of their own” (p. 14). Relating family relations and migration, through interviews of 13 Latin American women in Melbourne, Australia, Aizpurúa et al. (2011) came to the conclusion that the migratory process did not change gender roles and values of female domestic and child-rearing duties.

In addition, Gruner-Domic (2011) highlighted the new identities and socialisation of Latin American migrant women in Germany and their individual agency and empowerment within ethnic and racial power relations. Oso-Casas (2010) conducted 45 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Latin American migrant sex workers in Spain. The author found out that those women were “active agents of their migratory, financial and affective trajectories” (p. 62). Cobb-Clark et al. (2000) studied the labour mobility patterns of unauthorised Latin-American women in the U.S. and concluded that just a small segment will remain in the secondary labour market.

Relating the level of gender equity and Latin American migrant networks in the U.S., Côte et al. (2015) affirm that, depending on the level of gender equity in each country, not only do different kinds of ties exist between female and male migrants, but also that migrants from different countries seek different sources of social capital. Assis (2007) studied the communication networks of Brazilian women in the U.S. concluding that those women use more help from friends and kin than men and articulate the networks within their families. Apart from that, gender relations are redefined in the migration process to U.S. as women negotiate their Brazilian component in a positive way, gaining more autonomy and becoming more empowered in the host country.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

This study followed the phenomenological paradigm. It used a qualitative methodology embraced by the communicative ecology and oral history approaches and a feminist theoretical framework.

The phenomenological paradigm considers subjectivities, personal interpretations and perceptions in which the reality is a social construct. In this approach, the researcher, somehow, ‘belongs’ to her or his research and seeks a holistic meaning. The purpose of this is to identify how phenomena work in a specific situation with specific actors involved (Lester, 1999). For O’Leary (2010), “the goal is to gain an intimate understanding of people, places, cultures, and situations through rich engagement and even immersion into the reality being studied.” (p. 114). In this way, phenomenology is mostly inductive and interpretive, which means it gathers data in depth rather than quantity in order to build a further theory. In this highly contextualised study – a qualitative methodology – I acknowledged the natural setting, my engagement as both observer and participant and the influence of other participants (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007).

In order to add more value to this research project and to go deeper into women’s voices, this study borrowed the mapping tool of the communicative ecology approach, the interviewing technique of the oral history approach and placed itself within a feminist theoretical framework.

The oral history approach includes the stories of people who might have been ‘hidden from history’ and haven’t been represented in traditional historical records (Perks & Thomson, 2003; Donaghey, 2014). Oral history considers not only people’s social contexts but also their “personal relations, domestic work or family life” that create “subjective or personal meanings of lived experience.” (Perks & Thomson, 2003, p. ix). This study considered interviews as dynamic conversations (Bozzoli, 2003) of a co-operative nature (Thomson, 2003) in which memories are evoked within an active relationship between the participants. This means that meaning is shared and the narrator recalls his or her past while creating interpretations of it (Perks & Thomson, 2003). According to Donaghey
(2014), “our identity and thus our narrative reflections are shaped by the specificity of time and place” (p. 96)

The use of oral history in this study served as an interaction between the researcher and the narrator in which it was possible to generate insights about the narratives of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand. Also, it enabled a way to understand how these migrant women make meaning of their subjectivities and experiences through their communication networks. As they are considered essential sources for feminist research (Bornat & Diamond, 2007), women’s personal narratives tell us about how they “negotiate their ‘exceptional’ gender status quo both in their daily lives and over a course of a lifetime” (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 5). Women’s narratives can, too, provide a deeper understanding of how the dynamics of gender roles and expectations work as well as “the interaction between social structures and the power of individual agency” (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 5).

Along with the oral history approach, I used communicative ecology mapping to explore the participants’ communication networks. The communicative ecology refers to the various forms, resources, activities, channels and flows of communication and information used by a specific group (Tacchi & Watkins, 2007; Hearn and Foth 2007; Lennie & Tachhi, 2013). Hearn and Foth (2007) conceive communicative ecology as having three layers.

A technological layer which consists of the devices and connecting media that enable communication and interaction. A social layer which consists of people and social modes of organising those people – which might include, for example, everything from friendship groups to more formal community organizations, as well as companies or legal entities. And finally, a discursive layer which is the content of communication – that is, the ideas or themes that constitute the known social universe that the ecology operates in. (p. 1)

As communicative ecology mapping enables a broader comprehension of the complexity of a specific group or community, Tacchi & Watkins (2007) suggest the researcher follow some enquires about the types of communication activity people
are engaged in, the resources available and the understanding of how these can be used.

In order to map the communicative ecology of the participants, I first looked at their different types of networks and defined the selection criteria (formal, informal, online, offline). The mapping was designed to strengthen the evidence from the focus groups, interviews and visual methodology by providing additional nuances and details of how they use their communication networks. The outcome of the communicative ecology mapping was presented in different ways through visuals and diagrams (wheels that represents relationships around a central idea); the participants’ small profiles that are a summary of their narratives; and the images provided by them and collected by me from the social media pages they mentioned. Detailed communicative ecology maps were presented using the following themes: formal networks, informal networks, online and social media and ethnic media.

The two approaches described above were informed by a feminist theoretical framework. Feminist theories differ along the history. For this research project, a feminist perspective is based on Hooks (2015) definition of feminism. For her,

feminism is not simply a struggle to end male chauvinism or a movement to ensure that women will have equal rights with men; it is a commitment to eradicating the ideology of domination that permeates the Western culture on various levels – sex, race, class to name a few – and a commitment to reorganizing (...) society so that self-development of people can take a precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires. (p. 194)

Thus, this study considered gender as influenced by the notions of culture and social construction. The feminist approach of this project acknowledged each woman’s thought and belief. It was not about considering only one truth, but recognising the existence of different truths that build our society. (Tong, 1998). In fact, the feminist approach referred to analysis not only of the positions of discrimination and exclusion, but also of the power and the agency occupied by
migrant women in terms of their class, race and ethnicity (Zavos, 2012; Anthias & Yuva-Davis, 2010).

Methods of data collection and analysis

Data sources and collection

O’Leary (2010) states that a common goal of phenomenology is to “describe distinct experiences of the same phenomenon” (p. 124). Informed and guided by this paradigmatic approach, I aimed at mapping the unique communicative ecologies of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand as shaped by their distinct migration and gender related experiences through focus groups, individual oral history interviews and participatory photography. The selection criteria for the participants relied mostly on cultural and national diversity. This is better presented in the sample section.

Focus group

A focus group gathers a group of people to discuss and perform collective activities around a shared issue (Kitzinger, 1994). For Collis & Hussey (2009), this is a way to know more about “feelings and opinions of a group of people who are involved in a common situation or discussing the same phenomenon” (p. 155). O’Leary (2011) states that focus group can be less structured, thus, the researcher is, instead of being only an interviewer, also a facilitator or a moderator. Being a more socially situated method, the focus group can “explore issues relevant to the person-in-context—so providing a valuable methodological tool for feminist psychology, and for feminist research more generally” (Wilkinson, 1998, p. 112). Because it is a co-construction of realities between people, a focus group avoids feminist ethical concerns such as power and the imposition of meanings on the participants. Besides that, through the interaction among each other, it allows a more high quality data to be collected (Wilkinson, 1998).

For this study, I conducted two focus groups in the North Island of New Zealand with a total of nine participants. The discussions provided me with

---

5 Refer to the Appendix Six for the draft questions for the focus group discussions.
insights and themes for the individual interviews and made me aware of the participants’ specific communication networks. There were two focus groups because one group was based in Auckland and the other in Hamilton. The initial idea was to conduct one focus group in Auckland and the other in Wellington because the organisations (Grupo Mamãe Brasileira and Mujeres in Aotearoa)6 I first approached were based in those cities. However, as only two participants volunteered from the Mujeres in Aotearoa, Wellington (the minimum was four) and five women from the Manitas, a Spanish Speaking Playgroup based in Hamilton volunteered to participate, I conducted the focus group in Hamilton instead of in Wellington. By approaching these groups, I achieved the goal of having more diversity in terms of nationality and ethnicity. In fact, the Hamilton focus group had women from five different countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico), while the Auckland focus group had women from three different countries (two from Brazil, one from Colombia and one from Peru).

Before the focus groups took place, I sent the participants information about my study, the purpose of the focus group and the consent form through email. Prior to the focus group discussion, the participants and I interacted while having some refreshments as recommended by research guidelines (Powell & Single, 1996). After that, a circle was formed to allow all participants face-to-face contact (Powell & Single, 1996). I then explained and clarified the purpose of the research project and the duration of the interaction as well as asking their permission to audio record. Also, the participants signed the consent form to agree with their participation and allow the use of the data collected in the focus group. During the discussion, I observed the participants’ interaction and verbal and non-verbal behaviour, took notes and audio recorded the participants’ narratives. The duration of both focus group discussions was around two hours. After two weeks of both focus groups, I personally transcribed them and sent the participants their records, thanking again for their participation, asking for their approval and offering the opportunity to change/correct anything they wished in their transcript. All of them approved. One participant asked to change the word ‘trauma’ to ‘worldview’.

6 Along with Manitas, the Grupo Mamãe Brasileira and Mujeres in Aotearoa are presented in the Sample section.
Interviewing for O'Leary (2011) is a method of data collection in which researchers ask respondents open-ended questions. According to DeVault and Gross (2012), interview research is “research conducted by talking with people. It involves gathering informants’ reports and stories, learning about their perspectives, and giving them voice in academic and other public discourse.” (p. 173). Through the interaction between interviewer and interviewee and the exchange of ideas, insights and feelings, interviews can provide deeper understanding of social and personal matters (Chirban, 1996). For Reinharz (1992), “interview has become the principal means by which feminists have sought to achieve the active involvement of their respondent in the construction of data about their lives” (p. 18). This perspective aims at breaking the idea of power relations between the interviewer and interviewee. As stated by Anderson and Jack (1998),

[...] we need to consider carefully whether our interviews create a context in which women feel comfortable to explore subjective feelings that give meanings to their actions, things and events, whether they allow women to explore ‘unwomanly’ feelings and behaviors, whether they encourage women to explain what they mean in their own words. (p. 163)

Grounded in memories (Truesdell, 2001), oral history interviews relate to personal narratives (Grele, 2013), which, through interpersonal interactions (Sypher et al, 2013), create and negotiate social selves and situations (Futrell and Willard, 2013). Based on the relationship of the participants, meaning is created during the conversation (Futrell and Willard, 2013) as individual memories pass through a process of selection and construction (Sypher et al, 2013). For Frisch (1990), oral history discloses “how people make sense of their past, how they connect individual experience and its social context, how the past becomes part of the present, and how people use it to interpret their lives and the world around them” (p. 188).

Refer to the Appendix Six for the draft questions for the interview.
The oral history approach in this phase of the research project meant explicitly a dialogue with shared authority that intended to reduce the power relations in the conversations allowing the narrators to also have ownership of the process (Donaghey, 2014). Shared authority, in this case, means that authority is negotiated among the participants and not owned by only one part (Frisch, 2011 cited in Donaghey, 2014). The interview was a more informal and open talk that was not imposed by a clearly defined beginning and end nor dictated by expected interpretations. The conversations displayed a sense of intimacy and interactiveness, in which I gently posed brief questions to allow and assist the women of this study to evoke their life memories and tell their stories (Bozzoli, 2003). Thus, shared authority in this study meant a collaborative process that resulted in balanced interaction and ownership between me and the participants during the production and the interpretation of the stories (Leavy, 2011). I also kept in touch with the participants, many times, asking them if they agreed with the transcriptions and profiles and clarifying any misunderstandings with them. Some of them took back some sayings and created new meanings.

For the research project, I conducted four oral history individual in-depth interviews with one participant from Argentina, one from Mexico and two from Brazil. The goal was to have at least two representatives from different Latin American countries. The purpose was concerned with generating their narratives by recording their memories and stories and having a deeper understanding of their experiences with and perceptions of their communication networks in New Zealand, and their experience as migrants. Through a specific-theme interview guide with open-ended questions, the interview was accomplished between within two hours.

The interviews were held at different dates and times after the focus group discussions, through which I identified key issues, themes, and contributing gender, migration and communication network factors that guided the individual interviews. The interviewees decided the place where the interview was to be held. This allowed the interviewees to feel comfortable in the interview setting. The interview started with an informal talk in order to create a friendly environment and put the participant at ease. After that, I explained the objectives and the procedures of the study and asked permission to audio record and use the data for
the purpose of the research project only if they signed the consent form. Within two weeks, I sent the transcription of the interview to each participant asking for their approval and offering the opportunity to change/correct anything they wished in their transcript. All of them approved.

After the interview, I invited each of the four women interviewed to contribute to the communicative ecology mapping by keeping a photo diary about their life and communication networks. This is better explained in my description of the participatory photography method.

**Participatory Photography**

The main purpose in employing a participatory photography method was to allow the research project to be a collaborative process where the participants would share “their lived experiences and present the world as they see it” (Cossey, 2013). As a socio-communicative space, participatory photography blends “subjectivity, society, critical analysis and expression” (Rabadán, 2014, p. 34) and encourages the participants to develop their narrative skills through their “expressive abilities to construct stories” (Rabadán, 2014, p. 34). From a feminist perspective (Williams & Lykes, 2003; Sutherland & Chen, 2009), participatory photography enables the participants to evoke their social, emotional and communicative experiences as migrant women as well as the insights of the likely hidden gender and migration issues in New Zealand society.

Thus, during the individual interview meetings, I asked the participants to keep photo diaries about their lives and communication practices as migrants in New Zealand. The four participants agreed to keep the photo diaries with at least one entry per week. However, only three have sent them to me. The three participants kept a photo diary for around one month. The initial idea was to meet after this time to discuss the photographs and their interpretations of the images they produced. However, for personal reasons, they couldn’t meet. Then, I asked them to choose at least four images, fill the template below and email them to me.

---

8 Refer to the Appendix Five for the Participatory Photography Guidelines.
My intent with the photographs was to have visual evidence of their communication networks. However, their photographs and their content were not really enough to meet the criteria of my thesis proposal which was meant to have a strong photo diary component in order to qualify it as participatory project. The majority of the images were mainly staged with people lined up in front of the camera. There weren’t enough photos of objects, media (magazines or flyers) or cultural events in naturally occurring settings that actually demonstrated visually the personal and the socio-cultural aspects of their lives to enhance my data collection. To partly address this gap in visual evidence, I collected photos from the Facebook pages the participants told me about during the focus group discussions and individual interviews to enrich my findings.

**Sample**

According to Collis & Hussey (2009), a sample represents a population. As this was qualitative research, it considered non-probability samples, which were not randomized, small in scale and “deliberately selected to reflect particular features of groups within the sampled population” (Ritchie et al, 2003, p. 78). O’Leary (2010) stresses that non-random samples “can credibly represent populations” (p. 109). As I explain below, for this study, I used purposive sampling and snowballing.

**The organisations and the participants**

This research project aimed at understanding the role that communication networks play in supporting the migration experience of Latin American migrant
women in New Zealand. Before I recruited the volunteers, I had first identified two main organisations with this purpose: Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa and Mujeres in Aotearoa. Later, through a coordinator of the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre\(^9\), I discovered the Manitas, a Spanish speaking playgroup which, even though is open to the wider Spanish Speaking community in the Waikato region, is mainly composed of women.

Established in 2009, the Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa is a non-profit group for Brazilian mothers and children based mainly in Auckland. Periodically, the group promotes events and celebrations of Brazilian culture. It also has specific events and Portuguese classes for children. The group has a Facebook page, a virtual group (Colo de Mãe) and in 2014 launched the online magazine Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa, which includes a broader concept of the Brazilian world in New Zealand. All materials produced by the Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa are in Portuguese only.

Mujeres in Aotearoa is a Latin American women’s group based in Wellington that aims to preserve and spread the Latin American culture and to share experiences as migrants and refugees. The group meets the first Saturday of every month and organises different activities for women, families and the community, such as dance groups and the annual Latin American festival in Wellington. The group also offers Spanish classes and activities for children. Its website provides information in Spanish, Portuguese and English.

Part of the Grupo Cultural Hipano-Latino Waikato\(^10\), the Manitas Spanish speaking playgroup is a weekly meeting for parents to bring their children to play and sing in Spanish and to teach them the Latin American culture and engage with other children from the same descent. Funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education, the group is open to anybody who wants to speak in Spanish and bring their children to do so. Inspired by the Playcentre philosophy,\(^11\) the group was created in 2010 by some women from the Grupo Cultural Hipano-Latino Waikato.

\(^9\) Managed by the Hamilton Multicultural Service Trust, the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre supports migrants to settle emotionally and professionally in New Zealand. This will be better explained in the findings chapter.

\(^10\) The Grupo Cultural Hipano Latino Waikato has the aim to promote and maintain the Latin American culture within its community in the Waikato region. This will be better explained in the findings chapter.

\(^11\) The Playcentre philosophy will be better explained in the Findings chapter.
They aimed at maintaining and passing on the Spanish language and culture to their children.

**Focus group**

The participants for the focus group were recruited through purposive sampling and snowballing. With the purposive sample, I aimed at achieving “symbolic representation and diversity” (Ritchie et al, 2003, p. 102) of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand. By using snowballing, the goal was to ask the already recruited women if they know other women that suit the criteria of selection. (Ritchie et al, 2003). Thus, selection relied on Latin American migrant women whether they participate in the aforementioned groups or not. As already stated, I intended to recruit participants with different nationalities, social and cultural backgrounds.

The participants were recruited firstly through the *Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa* and the *Mujeres in Aotearoa*, then, through *Manitas*, and the volunteers already recruited. I made contact through email with the leaders of the first two organisations mentioned above to ask them to send or post my recruitment message through their email list and/or website and social media platforms. Through these organisations, six women volunteered (four Brazilians from the *Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa* and two from the *Mujeres in Aotearoa*). After recruiting them, I used snowballing and asked those who had already agreed to volunteer if they knew other women that fit the criteria. Some of them posted on their social media pages and groups, and another two women from Auckland who were not members of any of those organisations volunteered. As no more women volunteered from Wellington or the *Mujeres in Aotearoa*, I invited the women from the *Manitas* to participate in my study. Three of them (Argentina, Chile and Mexico) accepted and the last one (Colombia) was recruited through my group of Latin American friends. My main selection criterion was based on ethnic and nationality diversity. Having this diversity, I aimed at gaining a more holistic understanding of the role that communication networks play in migration experience of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand. Thus, a minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve participants were expected to participate in this study. A total of ten Latin American women were involved. Although the majority
were urban based, two of them were living in rural areas. For the benefit and comfort of the participants, meeting time and venue were agreed among all (researcher and participants).

**Individual oral history interviews**

With the purpose of understanding the role the communication networks play in the migration experience of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand, I conducted four oral history individual interviews with Latin American migrant women. The criteria of selection for the interviews were the same as presented in the focus group session: non-random sample through purposive sampling and snowballing techniques, in order to obtain a diversity of Latin American migrant women in terms of nationality and socio-cultural backgrounds.

**Data presentation and analysis**

Regardless of the research approach, in order to achieve credible findings, data presentation and analysis needs to be rigorous and systematic. (O'Leary, 2010). Presenting and analysing qualitative data is considered a challenge as it is comprised of subjectivities and memories intertwined with personal experience and background. Moreover, it takes time and effort to use most of the data and represent all the participants (Hunter, 2010).

**Profiling the participants**

In the findings chapter, before data is presented, I present the participants’ general profile firstly through graphics that focus on their Ethnicity; Nationality; Location; Age group; Number of years in New Zealand; Relationship Status; Number of children; Level of Education; Languages Spoken; and Occupation. Secondly, I profile them individually through a summary of who they are, why they migrated to New Zealand, what they do here and the pathway they followed to be where they are today, based on their individual narratives. Along with that, I also present their individual communicative ecology maps visually. The communicative ecology maps were designed with images or logos that represent their formal and informal networks as well as the type of media they used (online, social media or
ethnic media). This visual presentation enhances the presentation of the findings chapter as they provide a summary of who the participants are.

**Thematic presentation and analysis**

Before presenting and analysing the data and considering the protection of the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, I coded the participants through pseudonyms. Ogden (2008) states that a “pseudonym is a fictional name assigned to give anonymity to a person, group, or place” (p. 692). Then, I transcribed and labelled all the interviews and data collected from focus groups, the individual interviews and photo diaries.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). Thus, a theme is comprised of important features within the data set that are captured through patterned responses or meanings. Although through thematic analyses the researcher organises and describes the data, he or she usually interprets the different aspects of it (Boyatzis, 1998).

In the data presentation and analysis stage, I re-read each transcription and re-analysed the photo diaries, identifying and coding each paragraph and image into themes and sub-themes (O'Leary, 2010; Hunter, 2010), “using the participant’s own language wherever possible” (Hunter, 2010, p. 48). I tried to capture the themes through a more inductive and data-driven approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990) to analyse the data even though I was influenced by theories and concepts beforehand. Thus, in the findings, the themes were categorised taking into consideration the participants’ pre-migration and migration stages as well as their types of communication networks (formal, informal, ethnic media and online and social media). Apart from that, the most significant quotes were highlighted. The writing up process, the communicative ecology maps, the photo diaries and the images from the Facebook pages were structured and placed according each theme in the findings.

In the discussion and analysis chapter, I captured three main themes that were fundamental to answering my research question and sub-questions. They represented patterned meanings and circumstances in terms of the role played by the communication networks of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand.
At a latent level and based on the previous literature review, the thematic analysis in this part identified and examined the “underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 90) from the findings.

After I finished the writing up process of these two chapters, I worked more on the visual elements of the findings, drawing communicative ecology maps for each participant and section as well as a general one. I also included in each respective section the photos I collected from the Facebook pages offered by the participants. These visual elements helped me to draw a more holistic conclusion.

**Ethical Considerations**

This study was approved by the Unitec Ethics Committee (UREC). I was committed to protect and minimise possible harm that can affect the participants during the research project. Thus, I did not reveal the participants’ names and faces in any circumstances, keeping them and their narratives in anonymity. I also blurred their faces in the photos they provided me to avoid their identification. Before the data collection (focus groups and interviews), I gave the participants first an explanation about this study and then a consent form to sign allowing me to audio record the meetings, and use the data collected for the purpose of the research project. All data collected remains in a safe place, confidential to me and my supervisors.

The use of Facebook images was conducted within the limitations of Facebook privacy setting. As this social media platform is public and as I used images from open Facebook pages and groups, I did not involve or associate individuals with bringing any type of defamation or harm, keeping their confidentialities and anonymities. I also indicated the sources of the images.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Through these findings, I bring to light the pathway I followed to answer my research question which looks at “What role communication networks play in the migration experience of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand”. The chapter is divided in two main parts. First, I present an overview of the participants and their profiles and second, I explore the themes that emerged in the focus group discussions, individual interviews and photo diary compilation of the Latin American Migrant Women (LAMW).

In the first part, I give an overview of the participants through ten categories and introduce them through their respective profiles. These categories include the following: Ethnicity; Nationality; Location; Age group; Number of years in New Zealand; Relationship Status; Number of children; Level of Education; Languages Spoken; and Occupation. The profiles are a summary of who they are, why they came to New Zealand, what they do here and the pathway they followed to be where they are today. It also includes an individual communicative ecology map of their communication networks in Aotearoa / New Zealand.

In the second part, the findings of the focus group discussions, individual interviews and photo diary compilation are presented through two background themes (Pre-Migration Stage and Migration Stage) and the main theme (Communication Networks). As migration is a complex process, the background themes provide in-depth information that can enhance and be related to their Communication Networks. In this manner, the background themes serve as support for the main theme as well as evidence of the links between their life experiences and the choices of their communication networks in New Zealand. By adding their direct quotations and photo diaries, I have opened a space for them to tell their stories in their own words and images. Each main theme is sub-divided in sub-themes that provide a more nuanced account of these women’s experiences.

In the following section, before the data is presented, the participants are introduced through the categories mentioned above, their detailed profiles and individual communication networks maps.
Profiling the participants

In total, ten volunteers participated in this study, of these, nine (Ana, Coral, Diana, Gloria Julia, Lorena, Mercedes, Rosa and Roxana) in the focus group discussions, four in the individual interviews and photo diary compilations (Ana, Lorena, Rosa and Vitoria). To refer to them or any person in their narratives, I use pseudonyms.

Considering the categories given in the introduction, five of them are Hispanic-Latinas, and five, Brazilian-Latinas. Additionally, the participants come from six different countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru), live or in Auckland (five) or in the Waikato region (five), are between 21 and 60 years old, their relationship status can be single (two), partner (one), married (five) or divorced (two) nine of them speak fluent English and one knows intermediate English; seven speak Spanish, four Brazilian-Portuguese, one speaks German and other, Te Reo Maori. Their levels of education vary between level 3 (one), level 7 (seven) and level 8 (two) (NZQA).

In terms of Occupation, five participants have a paid work; four have unpaid or domestic work and three are students. Due to the multiple abilities of the participants, some of them fit in more than one sub-category of the categories Language Spoken and Occupation.

The graphs below give a visual overview of the categories.
In order to better understand the thematic findings below, I summarise the participants’ narratives in comprehensive individual profiles that were approved by them, and present them along with a visual overview of their communicative ecology. The profiles consist of their lives in their home countries, reasons for migrating to New Zealand, their impressions of the country, their occupations, relationship status and the pathway they each followed to be where they are today. The order of their pseudonyms is alphabetically displayed.

12 The flags on the background and the vectors of the communicative ecology maps that represent family, friends, community and church were retrieved from www.freepik.com, accessed on 22/12/205. The logo of the social media platforms and the organisations were retrieved from their respective websites as indicated in the references.
Ana

Ana, 33, is a psychologist from Brazil, married to a South African man and has a 2 year and a half old daughter. She first came to New Zealand in 2009 to study English for a month. After that, she went back to Brazil to finish her degree in Psychology. At that time, she was working with Human Resources for almost five years. Feeling unhappy about how Brazil was and how people were corrupt, she decided to return to New Zealand. Then, she got divorced from her first husband and quit from her job. Although her initial plan was to be in the country for six months, she started a business course and realised that there was no point in going back to Brazil.

In New Zealand, Ana has worked in several different jobs, including cafés and bars. Nevertheless, it was when she became a HR coordinator for an engineering company she felt she was doing something she wanted.

In 2013, Ana left Auckland to live in Hamilton where she opened her own business with her Brazilian friend. With offices both in Auckland and Hamilton and a person working in Brazil, their business is about bringing students from South America to New Zealand. Ana is also one of the organisers of the Brazilian women’s networking meeting called NZ Brasileiríssimas that is held every two months in Auckland.
Coral

Coral, 59, was born in Santa Catarina, the south of Brazil but lived in Rio de Janeiro greater part of her adult life. Back in her home country, she studied Education in Languages and did a MBA in Business Administration, Management and Operations. Being in New Zealand for over 13 years, Coral works as a Senior Contracts Administrator at The Auckland University. She has one daughter and two sons. All of them are adults now. The boys live in New Zealand while the girl, in Brazil as well as her former husband who is also Brazilian.

After an episode of violence in Brazil – with a gun held at her head – she decided to leave her home country and move to New Zealand. Before living in Auckland, she lived in Christchurch for ten years. Her first job in New Zealand was as an immigration advocate. Apart from that, she taught Portuguese to kiwis that usually had Brazilian partners. Because she has been a translator for more than 25 years, Coral has her small translation business even though she has been translating less and less because of her job at the university. She also belongs to the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters.
Diana

Diana, 28, from Bogota, Colombia, is single and has been living in New Zealand for about 5 years. Back in her home country, she used to develop programmes for people that are displaced from their cities because of the violence. When the government changed, she got a job in international business, working with importation and exportation. However, she didn’t like it. She also studied French for one year and a half.

Feeling the need to do something different, Diana came as a tourist to New Zealand. Then, she took a management course for one year and decided to stay and live in the country. She worked in some cafés. At the moment, she is a student register in an educational company.
Gloria

Gloria, 34 years old, is originally from Chile. Back in Santiago, she was very busy working in three jobs. As a physiotherapist, she used to teach at the University and work in an intensive care. In her home town, she was a very social and friendly person who organised the parties.

Gloria met her husband – a New Zealander – in Chile. In 2012, she came to New Zealand with him and got married. She got pregnant while studying English at the university. Her daughter had a congenital heart disease and Gloria spent one month in the Hospital taking care of her.

Nowadays, Gloria is doing a part-time postgraduate certificate in Health Sciences (rehabilitation) at AUT and is also a home mom.
Julia

Julia, 35, is from Brazil and lived in countryside areas, including the south (Santa Catarina and Paraná) and northeast (Bahia) of Brazil, where she started studying Development Tourism at the university. She also had a job at the local council dealing with the local lawyer, the council and oil companies for grants to help the community. Although she had plans to build her recycling company, after her father passed away, she decided to move to New Zealand with her mother and brothers.

Married to a “typical kiwi bloke with little shorts, big socks and work boots that says ‘good ey, mate!’”, Julia has two children with him and an older Brazilian son who lives in Brazil with his father.

Julia is an advocate for Plunket in a Governance level and runs workshops about Adult and Early Childhood. Apart from Plunket, she belongs to NZ Space Trust, NZ Playcentre Federation and Auckland Playcentres Association.
Lorena

Lorena, 48, is from Guadalajara, Mexico. She is divorced, lives in Te Kowhai and has four children. Before coming to New Zealand, she lived in Seattle for five years where she studied English and Business and worked as a waitress in a Mexican Restaurant. There she met her former husband that is a New Zealander. In 1992, she came to New Zealand for the first time to visit her in-laws by then. After that, she spent 5 years in Mexico, moving to New Zealand in 1998 with her first child and her former husband. She was already pregnant of her second child.

Lorena was a home mom for around 10 years. When her fourth child turned five, she started looking for a job and that’s how she ended up working for the Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust in the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre. She’s been working there for nine years, nowadays, as a Settlement and Communication Coordinator. She is also the president of the Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato. Because of her job in the community sector, she recently started a paper about management and leadership in not-for-profit organisations.
Mercedes

Mercedes, 23 years old, is from Buenaventura, Colombia. When she was 15 she left Colombia as a refugee to live in Ecuador. There she lived for five years working in stores such as women’s wear, shoes and kid’s wear. Through a refugee organisation, she came to New Zealand with her mother and her seven siblings. She was 20. They first arrived in Mangare, south of Auckland, in a place where New Zealand receives the refugees when they first arrive in the country. After one month, she and her family were allocated in Hamilton. As a refugee, she receives house, study and a weekly financial benefit. She has been living in Aotearoa for more than two years and studies English at Wintec, in Hamilton. She has a son of 4 years old and a Chilean partner she met at the Church she used to go in Hamilton.

Mercedes said that she doesn’t go out much and her routine includes going to her classes, taking care of her son, going to the park with him and spending time with her partner. At the moment of this study, Mercedes wasn’t working but she said she gets support from the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre every time she wants to get a job.
Rosa

Rosa, 38, is an accountant from Argentina and came to New Zealand in 2006, but left her home country in 2003. While working for a bank accountant firm in Buenos Aires, she met her husband who is a New Zealander and was traveling in South America. Then, they went travelling to Europe, where they worked on boats and lived for about two years. After that, they went to Asia, back to South America and, finally New Zealand. It was summertime. Being referred by her bother-in-law, she got a job as an accountant straight away in the same account firm she was working in Argentina.

In New Zealand, she and her family have already lived in Auckland, Kerikeri, Raglan and Waiheke Island. Nowadays, they are living on a farm in Pirongia where her husband works as a sharemilker in an organic dairy farm. She deals with the administration and accountability of their business. Rosa has two daughters – one is one year old and the other 4 years old. She takes care of the children and works from home as an accountant as well.
Roxana

Originally from Peru, Roxana, 28, is single and has been living in New Zealand for five years. She goes to a Catholic Church, where they have masses in Spanish every second weekend. Back in her home country, she studied International Business and worked in the shipping industry. She came to New Zealand because her mother and sister were already living in the country. While she was doing a business diploma, she applied for the family stream visa. In New Zealand, she worked as a bar tender, later, for the Red Cross and other companies. She made her way back to shipping, where she is at the moment. She also took a postgraduate diploma in Supply Chain Management.
Vitoria

Vitoria, 40, just celebrated her 10th anniversary in New Zealand. She comes from Fortaleza, northeast of Brazil, where she used to organise big events like out-of-season carnivals that happen once a year and take more than one million of people to dance on the streets. Along with these, she also organised other events. And before that she was a teacher and an educator, specialised in Human Resources.

Vitoria came to New Zealand for a long holiday because her younger sister was living in the country. As she felt in love with the country, she decided to take a two-year business course even though her English wasn’t good enough.

After nine months living in New Zealand and working in a bar, Vitoria met her kiwi husband. She has two kids with him and has always lived in Auckland. When Vitoria felt pregnant in 2009, she started the group Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa which nowadays has 250 Brazilian moms. Due to her growing involvement with the Brazilian community, in 2014, she created the Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa, an online magazine for Brazilians living or interested in New Zealand. Thus, apart from being a home mom, the founder of the Brazilian moms group in Aotearoa, a magazine editor, Vitoria also runs a Brazilian Plunket playgroup.
Emergent Themes

As indicated above, the emergent themes are divided in two groups: Background Themes (Pre-Migration Stage and Migration Stage) and Main Theme (Communication Networks). The first group of themes provides a necessary contextual background to the Main Theme. Further details, explanations and links are given below.

Background Themes

This part embraces the themes that emerged from the focus group discussions and the individual interviews. It is thus divided in two themes. The first Pre-migration Stage is subdivided in Memories of life before migrating to Aotearoa / New Zealand and Reasons for Migration. The second The Migration Stage encompasses the following subthemes: Impressions, Cultural Differences and Cultural Shock and Stereotypes.

As stated in the introductory part of this chapter, the background themes serve as a support and connection to deeper understanding of the LAMW communication networks in New Zealand. Thus it was only possible for me to have an in-depth understanding of the role played by these communication networks when I pondered the participants’ life memories, feelings, impressions and the stereotypes they faced as Latin American migrant women in Aotearoa. That is why I carefully brought up their voices through details in the findings of The Pre-Migration Stage and The Migration Stage.

The Pre-Migration Stage

The Pre-Migration Stage consists of the narratives of the lives and feelings of the LAMW before migrating to Aotearoa / New Zealand as well as the reasons that led them to migrate.
Memories of life before migrating to Aotearoa / New Zealand

The memories of this section concern where they were living, their relationship status, occupations, situations and feelings about that time. Although memories cannot have a pattern because each person has diverse life experiences, there were some similar feelings or life situations, narrated by the participants, which are discussed below.

The participants studied come from six different countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru) and were at different stages in their lives before moving to New Zealand. Two (Coral and Lorena) were married with children, one (Ana) was married – later, divorced – with no children, two (Julia and Mercedes) were single moms, and five (Diana, Gloria, Rosa, Roxana, Vitoria) were single. Gloria and Rosa met their New Zealander partners in their home countries. Nine of them had a paid job and one (Lorena) was a home mum.

The majority of them were skilled working women, which means they had a paid job in their areas of qualification and were more economically active and independent. Some of them had recently got their qualifications, like Ana and Roxana who had finished their degrees and were working in their respective areas, Human Resources (Psychology) and the shipping industry (International Business). Others had busy and stressed lives, apart from being very social and organisers of the events, such as Gloria and Vitoria. In the case of Vitoria, she also organised events professionally.

Even though they are qualified and employed, some participants also had multicultural and multiple migration experiences. Their choices were influenced by family, the partners they met before migrating to New Zealand, the chances of developing their skills and their understanding of their cultural identity.

Rosa, who was an employee of a bank accountancy firm, met her kiwi husband in Argentina and went travelling with him to Europe, working on boats and getting in touch with New Zealanders for the first time.

*He kind of inspired me to go travelling. (...) I was following him. (...) Then, we decided to quit our jobs on boats and we decided to travel around Asia and we came to New Zealand for the first time, after our trip to Asia. Then we went to South America. We didn't know what we wanted to do.* (Rosa)
Lorena, who met her kiwi former husband in Seattle where she moved to study and work, expressed feelings of nostalgia and experiences of social alienation and reverse cultural shock. “I left my childhood there [in Mexico], friends whatever, people that I knew” (FGH). When she went back to Mexico, Lorena got married and became a home mum. About this time, she shared feelings of loneliness and isolation not only because her family was living far away but also because her husband was away most of the time due to his work as a helicopter pilot.

\[I \text{ had to start a new life in another city where I didn't know anybody. (...) And that was another shock in my own country. (...) I had to hire somebody to help me (...) just to breathe a little bit. And you know, not just talk to a baby 24 hours.}\] (Lorena)

Julia lived in different provincial cities in Brazil because of her father’s work. She dealt well with the cultural differences inside of her home country and easily found a job in the local council because of her English and computer skills. However, she suffered intense emotional distress because her father died unexpectedly. “Our lives turned upside down.” With this situation, she needed to financially support her family, which made her interrupt her studies and her plans to build a recycling company.

Other memories include the understanding of and identification with their own personal cultural identities. Coral, who was married and already had her three children, pointed out that she lived in Germany for two years because of her identification with her German ancestry. Mercedes, who lived as a refugee in Equador for five years, used to be the leader of a cultural group called “zanqueros” that would maintain customs, play instruments and dance. “I miss that because this occupied my time and made me happy.”

Reasons for migrating

The reasons for migrating vary according to the participants’ life situations. In this study, the motives were related to voluntary, impelled, economic, social, political, life-style, family reunion or partnered migration. In describing

\[^{13}\text{Translation from Spanish: “Yo extraño porque eso ocupaba mi tiempo y me hacia feliz.”}\]
push factors, some participants mentioned personal experiences of violence or dissatisfaction linked to their home country's context as well as their life circumstances. The pull factors were family members living in New Zealand, the context of the host country, their kiwi partners they met in their home countries or overseas, and pregnancy.

On one hand, evidence of the feminisation of migration phenomenon is underlined in this part, as some participants migrated independently in search of jobs, qualifications or better lives. That is the case of Diana, for example, who was unhappy with the shift in her career path from the social to the corporate sector due to a change in the Colombian government. “I was like, ‘I need to stop this. I need to do something different.’” Then she came to New Zealand for holidays and ended up staying to study and, later, found a job. This also happened with Vitoria who came to visit her sister – who was living in New Zealand at that time – and decided to take a two-year Business course. “I just fell in love with the country. (…) And I welcomed this change quite happily. Suddenly, after all that busy time in my life, I was just a student.”

On the other hand, it was implied that gender role beliefs still play a protagonist part in the decision to migrate. They also can be related to the brain drain idea of migration as some skilled women joined their husbands to come to New Zealand, leaving behind their professional careers. Gloria, Rosa and Lorena met their New Zealander partners in their home countries or in the US. The three of them shared that their decisions were shaped by their partners’ wish to go back and live in their country of origin. Thus, even though with certain resistance, they decided to move.

Lorena also had her first child and was feeling dissatisfied with her circumstances in Mexico. “I thought ‘well, yes, this sort of life I can’t be living like this, by myself. This was not what I pictured.’” For Rosa, the weather also influenced her choice. “Rick kind of convinced me. (…) We gave it a go coming during the summer and I love the summer.” Another reason for Gloria to definitely stay in New Zealand was because she got pregnant. “I wanted to stay in Chile really.”

Despite the fact that the participants could somehow chose to migrate, some of them were driven to leave their countries because of traumatic experiences that served as catalyst, and showed that life for them was getting difficult. Julia, was
angry about how the Brazilian authorities dealt with aspects of her father’s death. “We decided to have a new beginning out of Brazil. (...) We chose the furthest country in the map and that little country there ‘what’s the name? New Zealand!’”

Coral went through a violent situation in Rio de Janeiro with a gun held to her head. Her reasons to migrate also include the well-being of her family and it was influenced as well by her daughter’s rhetorical question after they made a complaint note at the police station: “My daughter said (...) ‘what are we waiting for to have one of us either dead or on a wheelchair?’” Below, her quotation is rich and contextualizes her reasons.

We decided that we wanted to give our three kids the opportunity to understand that their life could be different. That the values in life and in a society can be different to those they were familiar with in Brazil. And we took this very seriously and we thought ‘how can we do that?’ So, we started looking at the options. Canada was too cold. U.S. we didn’t like the mentality. Australia was too difficult for us Brazilians to get in. So we thought ‘oh, why not New Zealand?’ So, my [ex-] husband and I went on holidays to New Zealand to have a look and see if we liked the country and see how we felt. (Coral)

Adding to that, Ana said she was also unhappy with Brazil due to its corruption and found in New Zealand a better place to live. Her case suggests that she left behind a patriarchal ideology when she got divorced and quit her job because she wanted to migrate and her former husband didn’t. “My life was changing to New Zealand and there was no point for me to go back to Brazil.”

Family reunification and settlement for refugees are explored in the following examples. Roxana came under a family stream visa because her mother and sister already lived in the country. Mercedes migrated as a refugee with her family through an invitation of an organisation that helps refugees and had already helped her and her family to leave Colombia and move to Ecuador.
The Migration Stage

Linked to the Pre-Migration Stage, the Migration Stage consists in the LAMW’ impressions about New Zealand as well as how they perceived cultural differences and experienced cultural shock and stereotyping.

Adaptation during the migration process was experienced differently by each. Although facing some acculturation challenges, some had a positive integration. Others faced more intense cultural shock, intensified due to circumstances such as work exploitation, social marginalization, language barriers and stereotyping, apart from individual psychological characteristics. Below, some examples are discussed.

Feelings, Impressions, Cultural Differences and Cultural Shock

This subtheme relates to the impressions of the participants about New Zealand and its people, not only when they first arrived but also about how it has been for them until today. It also reveals their views and feelings in terms of cultural differences and cultural shock. Again, all of these are influenced by their backgrounds, situations and expectations. The discussions were around landscape, relationships with people, language barriers, difficulties in adaptation, gender perceptions in both Latin American and Kiwi cultures and cultural differences in child caring.

In contrast to their home countries, New Zealand for the participants was perceived as an organised, clean and beautiful place. “Because one comes from not so beautiful neighbourhoods in their country, isn’t? All very colourful, the nature was everywhere”14 (Mercedes).

With regard to their interaction with the host society, they said in New Zealand people are polite but diverged in terms of how close you can get to them and become friends. Mercedes and Vitoria, for example, had a good impression of the people overall, thus, a more positive integration. “They are very patient with the ones who don’t know English” 15(Mercedes).

---

14 Translation from Spanish: “Pues uno viene de bairros no tan bonitos de su país, no es? Todo mucho color, la naturaleza era por todos los lados.” (Mercedes)
15 Translation from Spanish: “Tienen mucha paciencia con los que no tenemos el ingles.” (Mercedes)
I just love how people smile to each other. (...) Some people might have a different experience but I’ve been very lucky with the people I met in New Zealand. People are very welcoming, very warming and very helpful. They’re good people. (Vitoria)

As previously observed, migration, as a complex process, can be harder for some people, whether at a personal or social and economic level. Other participants experienced a distinct cultural and social shock towards the New Zealand people. They expressed the view that New Zealanders are very reserved and not as friendly as people from their countries. “There is this fine line you would find in any kiwi for me that you can’t go across. You try to deal with it. You don’t have that ‘hey my friend I become friend of you and we can meet forever’” (Roxana).

It’s really hard until you get close to them enough and they’re going to invite you to have a coffee. So it feels like in Brazil we kind of accept the idea, if you work together, you’re almost friends or you can become really good friends. But here you’re just a colleague. I see this clear separation everywhere I worked.” (Ana)

It took a while for Coral to get in contact with Kiwis and her first experience demonstrated that they can have a negative impression about foreigners in general.

I knocked on my neighbours’ door and I needed a can opener. She was in fear, she was scared. (...)I have never experienced that before. (...)The, through work mainly and my son’s school, I made more connections with Kiwis and found them very nice. I love Kiwis. However, the eyes are there (...) maybe of lack of complete trust because of being a foreigner.” (Coral)

In some cases, a positive relationship with their own ethnicity or other migrants was also noticed as a strategy to overcome any migration distress or a sense of exclusion. Thus, they usually remain more socially separated from mainstream society, exchanging mainly with migrants to feel more comfortable and secure.
I’m living in a 100% Latin American environment in New Zealand. (...) I feel 100% Latin American and I don’t feel very close to people from here. I found them very different from me. (...) They are really respectful but (...) sometimes, I have that no really easy relationship with them. (Diana)

Cultural shock was also related to the kiwi drinking culture that was commonly observed by the participants. “We don’t drink as much. (...) If you go to a kiwi friend’s house 5 o’clock with the kids, there is always wine.” (Vitoria). Apart from that, some said that too much politeness and the use of alcohol can signify a lack of spontaneity, and superficial relationships.

“They are more open when they are drunk. I was having fun but I felt most of my friendships weren’t very deep. I missed my culture. (...) We are quite warm people. (...) I like spontaneous when a friend tells me I go to your place without a lot of notice. Everything was too organised for me.” (Rosa)

The participants also talked about the distant and colder family ties and the lack of spirit in special dates such as Christmas. In some cases, it is implied that these impressions were also intensified by feelings of nostalgia, homesickness and estrangement.

Nine o’clock on Christmas Eve I was in bed! I couldn’t believe it! (...) Nobody cares! For us, we celebrate on the 24th (...) My family is really open, outgoing, you can say loud, everybody together, sharing meals and cooking. In New Zealand I didn’t see sort of engagement. (...)It all so much surrounded by the alcohol drinking. I don’t come from this culture (Lorena)

Most of the kiwi families seem that they don’t have issues or problems. In South America, we have lots of dramas and we share our dramas whereas here people are more reserved to tell how they feel. My husband (...) even me being his wife, was not so open to tell me when something was bothering him because this kiwi way of ‘I need to deal with this.’(...) I like to share. I’m open.
(...) Especially with his family, I expected to have a relationship is not going to happen. (Rosa)

In a way, acculturative distress was also triggered by a sense of loss of familiar settings and social and personal relationships, which led to feelings of depression, frustration and homesickness. Roxana commented that the first year in New Zealand was the most depressing and frustrating due to the novelty of the country without family and friends and the lack of knowledge of where to go for food and entertainment, for example.

Little by little, I created some resilience and carry on learning how you have fun, where you get things. (...) I never imagined to move to another country. (...) You travel a little bit inside of South America but it’s sort of home. But here is like a huge jump and a huge change for me. (Roxana)

In the case of Gloria, she had to deal with her daughter’s heart condition and she felt isolated and not supported by her husband’s family. “They didn’t like me because I’m a Catholic. I felt really so depressed back them. I stopped talking. And for me I’m very into socialising.”

Again, a kind of reverse cultural shock is indicated – this time – in Julia’s experiences with Brazilians that exploited her brothers. “My brothers worked for them as slaves for 3 dollars an hour.” This led her to avoid contact with her own ethnic group in New Zealand for more than ten years. “I decided after that ‘that’s it! No socialising with Brazilian people anymore. (...) I’d hear Brazilian people on the streets I was ‘arghh! Away! Away!”

Julia also talked about how she was exploited and mistreated by her bosses while working in a café. “The kiwi people treated me like horrible, yelling and saying lots of bad words. (...) They treated them [migrants] all submissively.” However, she had a better experience with another boss. “He was more spiritual and welcomed me to meet New Zealand and got me the koru.”

Language was another issue for them because they felt the Kiwi English was too fast or hard to understand the accent. Lorena couldn’t understand her in-laws.

16 Koru is a Maori symbol based on the unfurling fern frond that represents the creation.
“It was like ‘oh my goodness! I learned to speak English. I speak English! What’s happening here? And after a couple of days I got used to the accent.’”

Ana mentioned that she felt she couldn’t get a job opportunity because of her level of English even though she had studied the language for three years in Brazil and worked five years in her area (HR). “They probably couldn’t see the value. They were like I don’t think it’s time to understand what you’re saying because first you go and learn English. (...) I wasn’t rubbish.”

In terms of gender differences, the participants’ perceptions interplayed with gender cultural values and status as well as with how it was for them to be a woman, a migrant and a Latina in New Zealand. Some of them talked about how they see the differences between Latin American and Kiwi women. They said that the Latinas are more feminine, sensual, tidier and sexier people who look after themselves and “smell good and walk in a soft way,” (Julia) while the kiwi women do not worry much and sometimes they drink like men do, which for some is in exaggeration. Julia said and she her mother could recognise the ethnic background of the women on the streets by the way they walked. Moreover, she told how she used the Brazilian characteristic to her advantage to grow. “Until today wherever I go it’s easier for me if I put some nice clothes, nice smell and I identified myself as a Brazilian woman, shaking hands, business like.”(Julia)

The participants also talked about how gender differences are perceived in both Latin American and Kiwi cultures. While in Latin America women are seen as more fragile and expected to have certain female roles, in New Zealand women are stronger and more independent in terms of life choices, as is stated in Ana’s narrative.

Because I have a girl, if she was born in Brazil I’d prefer she was a boy. Because when you’re a man in Brazil, you have a lot more options. You’re freer to decide where you go and what you want to do (...) as if it we were incapable. So when Jane was born here in New Zealand I was happy for her because here we don’t have that thought. They see themselves as strong as men. (...) When I visit schools here and they have carpentry, some other things that we in Brazil think this is for men, the girls do because they like. (Ana)
The participants also mentioned the difference between how men approach women in New Zealand and how they show more respect for them than in Latin America. “I noticed that kiwi girls wear little tiny skirts. I don’t see in the construction buildings them whistling like the Latin Americans. They don’t touch women how it is in Salvador, Brazil” (Julia).

It is implied, too, that their perceptions of gender values are centred on Latin America’s more patriarchal society, which means that the value they place on themselves can be based on men’s attitudes. “Rick was very polite and very nice and I wasn’t sure if he liked me. With South Americans, especially guys, they compliment you a lot. They are very affectionate and expressive” (Rosa).

Regarding education and bringing up children, the women said Latin Americans are more protective with and concerned about their babies. They also found that New Zealand is a more individualistic culture, in which they don’t receive much help from family members in taking care of their children as they do in their countries of origin.

Lorena mentioned how her in-laws wanted her to leave her son crying while she wanted to feed him. “It was a little bit stressful that I had to do things they want me to do.” Ana gave examples of how babies in New Zealand are more expected to get into the parents’ routines than in Brazil, where the parents change their plans because of their kids. She explained how she would breastfeed her daughter in any place whereas another Kiwi mother she knew needed to hide it. “These little different things make you feel you’re not at home. All the time there is a constant reminder you don’t belong here even though you’re trying to fit in.”

Also regarding children’s education, it is important to point out that, through Playcentre in New Zealand, some women learned leadership skills and how to be the first teachers of their children, to encourage their self-confidence and independence through positive attitudes instead of rebuking and telling them off (the cultural norm of education in Latin America). This will be better discussed in the Communication Networks part, in Child Caring and Education.

It is worth noting that the maintenance of their ethnic roots was also experienced as a challenge within their families. As culture and language are meaningful for them in terms of their own identity, some women said they had to deal with the idea of their children feeling more Kiwi than understanding or
celebrating the culture they come from. Despite the fact that Lorena advocates for the Latin American culture and language maintenance, she revealed that her children don’t like to speak Spanish. She said it was harder to keep speaking Spanish at home because she had a kiwi partner. She mentioned the sadness she felt when her Mexican friends were surprised with her children not speaking Spanish and not being as tidy as people expect them to be in Mexico. “My kids were happy that way. (...) Now you see their kids (...) answering to my friends in English. It’s not easy.”

Coral shared similar feelings regarding her children’s decisions about their identities of being Kiwi, Brazilian or having half of both. “I have one son who feels Kiwi, the other one is happy in New Zealand, but feels Brazilian, and my daughter decided to stay in Brazil. It’s about decisions you have to make for ourselves. We can’t make decision for our group in terms of our identity.”

Stereotypes

In this section, I present the positive and negative stereotyping the participants talked about, how New Zealanders perceive Latin Americans in general and specifically Latinas. They expressed their experiences within New Zealand society and the stereotypes created by the media. They also shared their perceptions about their own ethnicity or the wide Latin American group.

It was a common feeling among the participants that Latin Americans are seen as more open, warm and creative that go well and easily with people. Coral told she got a job because of her presumed Brazilian good people skills. Roxana shared a similar view about that when she stressed the importance of using the “Latin American flair” which presupposes confidence.

Nonetheless, because Latinas are more open and outgoing, participants felt men would think “Latina means easy.” Roxana said that “going to parties, (...) you have a group of kiwis that come and find you are Latina they just go puff! All the way thinking that they can take you to bed.”

Some of them narrated episodes of being harassed, such as Julia who needed to change the way she would talk with customers in order to adapt to Kiwi culture and demonstrate a certain distance. “I used to say ‘I missed you! Why you didn’t come yesterday?’ So I had to learn: you don’t say ‘I missed’, you say ‘I haven’t
seen you.’ Cause then I had kiwi men following me.” Also, because of her accent, Julia felt uncomfortable with harassment comments made by some Kiwi men that were doing some building for her. “On one occasion, I was saying ‘Should we put this rope here close to the centre?’ He was like ‘no, no. I’ll get that rope to tidy you up with your accent like that’. And he knew I had family and children.” (Julia)

It is implied in Roxana’s narrative that stereotypes are connected to cultural differences and values about women in general, and the image that Latinas have worldwide. In her case, this involves cultures in which women can be seen as secondary and treated with disrespect. “Particularly with Indian and Arabic people, they can’t stop looking at your ass or your boobs. And even if they are supervisors or managers, it’s a daily thing.”

In addition, the way men in New Zealand perceive Latin women can also lead to abusive behaviour some have suffered. However, this can be related to the type of people of certain public establishments.

I was shocked the first time someone slapped onto my ass in a bar in Britomart. (...) The second time, (...) I punched the guy. But then I just relaxed into that. It might have happened a couple of times more but also with other Peruvian girlfriends. We avoid going to certain places.” (Roxana)

Still relating to Latin American female stereotypes, some had to rethink the vocabulary they used to culturally identify themselves in order to avoid uncomfortable and offensive situations. For example, the Brazilian participants stated that they were often associated with the Brazilian wax. ‘I never say, I’m Brazilian.’ I always say I’m from Brazil’ (...) because the first association people do is with the Brazilian wax. Then, the funny smile, the cheeky smile and eventually the question ‘Do you all wax Brazilian in Brazil?’” (Coral). For Julia, who is still feels invaded with this situation, this type of question comes from men that are “not culturally sensitive, intellectual or never travelled overseas.”

In other circumstances, dating a Brazilian woman was considered the same as having a Ferrari. “Even if you’re not the Brazilian miss, the beautiful Brazilian in the bikini. You’re just a normal woman but people are like ‘oh you’re dating a Brazilian. You’re lucky.’” (Vitoria)

Moreover, it seems that the media play an important role in the construction of stereotypes. People in New Zealand culturally identify the
participants through their national identifiers such as a famous person or a well-known issue in their countries. This is the case of Diana who, on one hand, felt good about being related to Sofia Vergara, a Colombian Hollywood actress. On the other hand, she felt offended with comments related to the narcotic trafficking problem in her country. “The most popular of my country is ‘do you have cocaine?’” Some examples include an immigration officer asking her twice if she wasn’t bringing cocaine into the country and her colleague, a chef who once put a white powder in his nose and approached her asking if she wanted some. “Sometimes is really offensive, but I just try to ignore them.”

In the same manner, the media can enhance stereotypes because of Latin American social and economic issues such as relatively lower levels of education and opportunity and the means to build a better life, for example. Lorena stressed how generalised Latin Americans are on the media and mentioned a New Zealand show called “Freaking Latinas Maid”, in which Latinas are portrayed as using their sensuality to steal men.

I don’t like generalization. I mean, Latin women are beautiful and feminine and generally, people say ‘here she comes. Watch out your wallet, your money’ (...) When I saw on TV Freaking Latinas Maid in New Zealand. I felt ‘oh no.’ Again, these gorgeous Latin women being maids and sleeping. (...) Just with the title, I felt sad. (...) Don’t portray us like that because we are not just that. (Lorena)

After approaching these background themes, in the following section I present the Communications Networks the Latin American migrant women chose to use in New Zealand. Findings under this theme provide evidence of how their pre-migration and migration experiences described above often influence their choice of communication networks.

**Background Themes Summary**

The background themes showed that the memories and the reasons for migration are related to different stages in the women’s lives. Some were single; others, married; and others already had their children. The majority of them were skilled women. On one hand the feminisation of migration phenomenon is evident, as some women decided to migrate on their own. On the other hand, gender role
beliefs still play an important role when it comes to migration, as some of them migrated because of their partners, in line with the phenomenon of brain drain.

During the migration process, adaption was felt in various ways as some of the participants chose an integration path whereas other chose to engage more with their own ethnic group or other migrants. This was seen as a strategy to overcome a feeling of exclusion and acculturative distress in the host society. Some cases of cultural shock regarding language barrier, people’s behaviour, traditional celebrations and stereotypes were also felt among the participants. For them, although Latin Americans are seen as more outgoing and open, sometimes, this can lead to misunderstandings about the Latin American women, who can be considered as “easy”.

In the following part, these issues are addressed within their communication networks in New Zealand.

**Main Theme: Communication Networks**

The focus of this study is on the communication networks of the Latin American migrant women in Aotearoa / New Zealand. However, I wouldn’t have reached a better understanding of the role played by them if I couldn’t have had a comprehensive overview of their lives and feelings in their pre and post-migration stages. This part also addresses those sub-questions relating to the Latin American migrant women’s communicative ecology; the way they organise their formal and informal communication networks; and the role played by the ethnic media.

I present the communication networks used by the LAMW who participated in this study as follows: **Formal Networks (Women’s associations; Organisations and Professionals for Migrant Support; Culture and Language Maintenance; Child Caring and Education; Business Associations); Informal Networks (Family, Friends, Community); Online and Social Media (Websites; Social Media Channels); Ethnic / Migrant Media (Online Magazine; Online Newsletter); Missing Elements in the Existing Networks.** All data from this part derives from the Focus Group Discussions, Individual Interviews and Photo Diary Compilation. In order to not identify the participants and keep their confidentiality, I used the technique of blurring the faces anytime there were people in the images.
Before I detail each communication network, I introduce a general communicative ecology map based on the findings, and place a communicative ecology map for each sub-theme. Also, whenever it is possible, I display photos about their networks from the Facebook pages they mentioned to visually enhance the findings.
Formal Communication Networks

The Formal Communications Networks are the ones which present a formal organisational or associative structure or serve as professional support to migrants. In this section, I divided them in Women’s Associations, Organisations or Professionals for Migrant Support, Culture and Language Maintenance and Business Associations. Although in New Zealand there are other formal networks for Latin American migrant women, such as Mujeres in Aotearoa, the ones discussed below are the ones mentioned and used by the participants of this study.

![Communicative Ecology map 12: Formal Networks](image)

**Women’s associations**

During data collection, two associations (NZ Brasileiríssimas and Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa) set up for Brazilian migrant women in New Zealand emerged. However, there was a Spanish speaking playgroup called Manitas that is not made only for women, but the participants are mainly women and they also

---

17 According to its website, MIA-Mujeres In Aotearoa is “a group of Latin American women in Wellington, New Zealand, who join to preserve and spread our culture, and to share our experiences as migrants and refugees. We meet the first Saturday of every month and we organise different activities for women, families and the community.” (n.d.) Source: http://mujeres.org.nz/.

75
meet informally outside the playgroup to spend time together and share experiences. This would be better approached under the Child Caring and Education sub-theme.

These women’s associations serve to connect themselves, share their experiences in their native language, empower each other, motivate them through stories of successful migrant women and connect with their culture through food, dance and traditional parties. In the case of Mamãe Brasileira, the organisation also represents a support for raising bilingual children through its playgroup and Brazilian-Portuguese classes for children.

Regarding the NZ Brasileiríssimas, it was through her business of bringing Latin Americans to study in New Zealand that Ana felt the necessity “to connect and get organised” more with the Brazilian women that live in Aotearoa. That is why she and her business partner, Eduarda, conceived and founded this Brazilian women’s networking meeting that happens every second month in Auckland. “We get to know people that are here for many years and I never heard of them.”

The aim of the NZ Brasileiríssimas is to help those women thrive in the host country by providing a space for them to meet and promote Brazilian women’ business in New Zealand together. Speaking in Brazilian Portuguese, they share successful stories, do make-up, swap clothes and dance Zumba, for example. The meeting takes around four hours and the participants also bring Brazilian food to share. Ana emphasised that organising the NZ Brasileiríssimas has do to with celebrating and empowering women – who are strong – as well as giving her daughter those strong females models, showing her she can do whatever she wants. “I think it’s more empowering to be only women than like guys and girls because (...) you feel is open and you can talk about what you want and people respect you.”

Ana and Eduarda post photos and disclose details from the meeting through their websites and social media (their business Facebook page, the website of the meeting and some groups for Brazilian women in New Zealand such as Mulheres na Nova Zelândia.) In fact, the website is written half in Portuguese and half in English because – as Ana said – that is how they communicate now. Also, on their website Ana is planning to promote the faces of the women behind their business. “I think it would be a nice way to say ‘wow you’re doing something nice.’”
The *NZ Brasileiríssimas* does not receive any outside funding and does not have any financial goals. The place where the meeting takes place is at Ana’s office in Auckland, the women’s collaboration is volunteered and the meals are shared.

In the photo below, Ana is shown with her friends in one of the *NZ Brasileiríssimas* events. The three of them arrived at the same time in New Zealand and studied together. The image is evidence of the phenomenon of the feminisation of migration, in which women choose to migrate by themselves seeking better lives and qualifications. It also represents how women persevere in their migration goals by strengthening friendships with people from the same ethnic group.

“[This photo] is very important, a gathering of strong Brazilian women that share the love for NZ and are make a living here. It represents another step towards our goal that is to have a strong network of Brazilian Women in business in NZ.” (Ana)

In the same vein, supporting and empowering Brazilian women in Aotearoa mainly in terms of motherhood, the *Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa (Geba)* was created by Vitoria in 2009. When she got pregnant, she felt she wanted to connect
with Brazilian mothers to share experiences of pregnancy and raising children in her mother tongue. As a mother, she felt growing stronger in her a sense of womanhood, of women helping and supporting each other. Vitoria strongly felt that it was her duty as a woman to understand other women and the problems they might face, especially with raising children. She also noticed that the womanhood she talks about is much stronger in New Zealand than in Brazil because Brazilian women tend to judge and compete with each other. So to find the Brazilian mums in New Zealand, she used a now defunct social media channel called Orkut.

That is how Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa was created and nowadays has more than 250 members. The group serves as a support for Brazilian mums as well as a way of introducing Brazilian culture to their children. The group has a closed Facebook group, Colo de Mãe, that connects Brazilian moms around New Zealand.

*It’s a very supportive community and the moms of some of them don’t speak very much English. They just ask ‘oh my god, my kid is waking up six times at night. I don’t know what’s happening.’ (…) Or ‘can anyone can recommend a good hairdresser?’ Any woman thing. And any time someone has anything to sell or donate, they put in the group as well.* (Vitoria)

The group also organises a weekly Brazilian-Portuguese speaking playgroup and Brazilian-Portuguese classes for children, a monthly meeting, Moms and Bubs, for the new Brazilian moms, and traditional celebrations such as Carnival and Festa Junina. As a result of the group’s activities, Vitoria also created an online magazine, Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa – which initially was called Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa. This will be explained in the section Ethnic / Migrant Media under the Online Magazine heading. Other social activities of the GMBA include gatherings only for the mums. In one of those, Coral talked about raising bilingual children for 50 Brazilian moms in the defunct Brazilian bar Ipanema in Auckland.

---

18 As a Catholic tradition, the Festa Junina (June Festival) also known as Festa de São João (St John Festival) celebrates the nativity of St John the Baptist as well as the beginning of the winter in Brazil. The festival also addresses the Brazilian rural life through its typical food, activities and clothes.
Mamãe Brasileira uses a Plunket\textsuperscript{19} space to meet and receives funding from the Brazilian Embassy in Wellington. The moms also do fundraising events such as watching a movie in a cinema with all the family. The group activities for the children are also discussed in the Child Caring and Education item.

Ana, Coral and Julia – also members of the NZBrasileiríssimas group – are also in contact with Vitoria and Mamãe Brasileira. All of them agreed that Mamãe Brasileira is important for culture and language maintenance, especially among their children.

I admire Vitoria so much for the efforts she puts into it. She truly believes in teaching children Portuguese. It’s important for constructing our identity because us migrants living away from our home country we’re all dual, we have a dual identity and it’s not easy to live with a dual identity. You have to be very much in peace with your own identity and the reasons you left your homeland to come here and to adapt, to settle in and to be happy here. I always put a lot effort and value into it because I wanted my children – who came as adolescents and almost adults – to not to feel split inside. (Coral)

\textsuperscript{19}The Plunket organisation is presented in the sub-heading Child Caring and Education.
Organisations and Professionals for Migrant Support

In New Zealand, there are not-for-profit organisations which specifically help migrants to emotionally and professionally settle into the country, helping to reduce any migration distress, cultural shock, and social marginalisation. This can be through job mentoring programmes, for example, immigration advisors, English classes, psychological and religious assistance, social and cultural activities. The participants in this study who used services from the organisations listed below expressed feelings of being supported, increasing their self-confidence and sharing the same experiences as other migrants.

Lorena talked about her work as a settlement support and cultural event coordinator for the Hamilton Multicultural Service Trust (HMST). Because the Trust has other organisations as partners, her role focuses on the wellbeing of people by connecting them and building bridges between them and filling the gap in the needs of the community.

Lorena’s job is based at one of the services offered by the HMST, the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre (WMRC), a building managed by the Trust that embraces projects such as the migrant employment project, that “supports skilled migrants to find a job by connecting them to different employers and give them support in the whole pathway of employment” (Lorena); Decypher (interpreting and translation services); Community driving school; Computer in home; English courses; Free immigration advices; Child caring (Plunket); and Settlement support and Cultural events. “I love this place. I love cultures. I love people” (Lorena).

Working in the Trust for almost 10 years, Lorena went through different positions, starting as a receptionist of the WMRC. Her decision to find a job indicates a break away from established gender roles – being a home mum and a housewife – and triggered by her divorce with children already at school age.

I came here and there was a course about how to look for a job, how is the employment system in New Zealand. They teach all the interview skills, CV. I was in heaven. (...) I was getting that confidence. You sort of feel supported. We’re all in the same sort of situation. ‘Well, I’m not alone. It’s ok. We’re all looking for a job. We’re doing our best. (Lorena)
Ana had a similar type of support to get a job in her area from the now defunct OMEGA (*Opportunities for Migrant Employment in Greater Auckland*). Through this organisation, she was introduced to an HR person who mentored her during 16 weeks. In the mentoring programme, Ana would learn about her area in New Zealand (Human Resources), how to write a cover letter, her CV, be prepared with interview skills and be introduced to job recruiters that were also able to help her to find a job.

*I think having someone in New Zealand who could vouch for myself was what changed my situation because it’s always hard when you get your first job here. They don’t have a reference or they don’t bother to check; or they think you’re not going to be good because you can’t express yourself as good as in your own language. (...) I think that was what changed for me – the network I connected with this person. (...)And I felt like ‘ok now I achieved something that I really wanted before.’* (Ana)

Some professionals for migrant support are linked to successful and established networks from the same ethnic group in the host country. Before deciding to migrate to New Zealand, Coral received orientation from a Brazilian immigration lawyer who helped herself and her family with information about the pros and cons of the migration process. “*My ex-husband is a doctor and with a Brazilian qualification to get registration in New Zealand is no successful case. We knew that would be very difficult for him to register and we decided to come anyway.*” The immigration lawyer then became her friend and offered her training and her first job in New Zealand as an immigration advocate in the German division of his office. “*I wasn’t confident enough with my English to find a job.***

Other services used by the participants as support were religious. Roxana used the Catholic Social Services in Ponsonby where a Chilean psychologist helped her and her family with “*emotional resettling.*” The organisation is run through donations.
Culture and Language Maintenance

Under this heading, I present the groups and meetings related to culture and language maintenance the participants mentioned in their narratives: Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa; Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato; Casa Espana Language School; Churches for Spanish speaking people; Colombian Association NZ.

The participants said they want to maintain and exercise their cultures and languages in the host society as well as promote where they come from by bringing people together through different social and cultural activities. This related to the notion of connecting themselves to a well-known identity and having a home-like feeling in the host society.

However, some of them presented a level of acculturative stress at some stage of their migration process while dealing with their own ethnic group in New Zealand and therefore chose to separate from it and assimilate into the host culture. This was already highlighted in Julia’s case as she had a traumatic experience in Brazil before migrating, and was exploited by Brazilians in New Zealand. Other examples are given in the section of Informal Networks, Community.

It was also found that among the participants there is a willingness to attempt to make their cultural identity thrive as long as possible for the following generations. For them, an effective way of doing this is to be surrounded by people of the same ethnic upbringing. That is why Vitoria still keeps the Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa alive – to give Brazilian women the opportunity to share cultural experiences and language as well as passing them on to their children. “My kids have Brazilian friends and can listen to Portuguese. (...) Lots of us are very well adapted in New Zealand (...), but there is something very special with your Brazilian friends. They know your country, where you lived, the things you used to do.”

82
Another group that has the same goals – but open to the wider Spanish Speaking Latin American community – is the *Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato (GCHLW)* of which Lorena has been president since 2009. This leadership position enables her to apply for funding and run the meetings. The association was created in 2004 by a Uruguayan man who, wanting to pass his culture and language to his kids, developed activities within the Latin American community for 20 years.

The *GCHLW* is funded by different organisations, has a Facebook page, sends newsletters through email and organises activities for the Latin Community in the Waikato region. The activities include the *Festival de la Primavera* (Spring Festival) that has been being held in the last 12 years in the Hamilton Gardens. The event brings people together from various cultures to celebrate the arrival of spring and share a Latin American experience through food and traditional dances and art. In addition, the group created the playgroup *Manitas* in 2010, which will be further examined under *Child Caring and Education*. 

Image 4: Five years celebration flyer of the Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa  
Source *Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa* Facebook Page (n.d.).
Image 5: Festival de la Primavera (Spring Festival) – Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino
Source Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato Facebook page (n.d.).

Image 6: Flyer of Festival de la Primavera (Spring Festival) – Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino
Source Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato Facebook page (n.d.).
Although nowadays the group is run only by women, Lorena said this is not a rule. However, she stated that women can be more passionate about the community: “There were males in the committee, but males are harder some time to find the time to give to the community.” Despite culture and language maintenance being the main focus of the Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato, the group also promotes activities for women to share their needs and opportunities as well as to support each other as the Asamblea de Mujeres Hispanoparlantes\textsuperscript{20}.

![Image 7: Asamblea de Mujeres Hispanoparlantes flyer – Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino](Image 7: Asamblea de Mujeres Hispanoparlantes flyer – Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino)

Source Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato Facebook page (n.d.).

Apart from those groups, there are other types of activities the participants attend for culture and language maintenance such as the Latin America & Spain Film Festival, meet-ups, language schools and churches. Lorena, in her photo diary, indicated the importance of the Latin American & Spain Film Festival at Waikato University because it brings different cultures together. She pointed out that the women from the GCHLW Committee are also friends she enjoys going out with.

\textsuperscript{20} Spanish Speaking women Assembly. (English Translation).
Roxana and Diana said they like attending *The Auckland Spanish Language Meetup Group* that takes place every third Wednesday of the month in a bar (Mecca Café) in Auckland. The meet-up allows Latino and non-Latino migrants to get to know each other and speak in Spanish. In their narratives, it was also implicit that this type of event gives them a sense of pride regarding where they come from. Diana said “*people are really interested in your culture. They are like ‘I want to go to your country. Give me an advice. Where should I go?’ That’s really nice.*” This helps reduce the impact of any negative stereotype they have faced as demonstrated by Diana’s example of uncomfortable comments regarding the cocaine industry in Colombia.

Roxana also said she frequents the activities of the *Casa Espana Language School*, where they have classes for different languages, organize some events such as movie sessions in Spanish and the Spanish Market and give discounts to Spanish speaking people. This represents a sense of cultural continuation and self-esteem rising.

In terms of religion and church attendance, Roxana goes to the Spanish speaking masses in a Catholic Church in Auckland, where she gets to know the Latin American community. Mercedes was going to a Christian church in Hamilton run for the Spanish speaking community. However, because of a conflict between the organisers, she does not go there anymore. According to her story, this denotes a situation of separation within the same ethnic group due to cultural behavioural traits as well as religious power imposition. Rosa called this the “*super Latino*” trait.

*We, Latinos, are very conflictive. (...) Now, they took the priest out. (...)He is a really good pastor. He had the young people playing sports, nice meetings and he read the bible for us in a way that pleased us. But these people...*
occupied the church and everything is too serious. I mean, the church doesn’t prohibit me anything (...) only God prohibits me. (Mercedes)

There is an also Colombian Association NZ, founded in 2006 in Auckland of which Diana is member. They have a Facebook page where they post news and organise events like Sunday lunches in a Colombian Restaurant with national food and live music. Although it is a way of connecting with her culture, it also indicates a separation from the mainstream culture as she expressed herself feeling 100% Latin American and not having an easy relationship with Kiwis.

Child Care and Education

Under this heading, I discuss the organisations the participants use for their children’s care and education. Their involvements are with Plunket, Playcentre, Playgroups and Daycares and Health Support for Children. Some of them are specifically for culture and language maintenance; some have diverse ethnicities. The women explained how they found their networks and friendships through
these organisations. They also learned leadership skills, how to be a better mum and educate their children in a positive way. Below, I detail each one.

**Plunket, Mums and Bubs and Brazilian-Portuguese classes**

Created in 1907 and run by volunteers, *Plunket* is a not-for-profit national organisation that supports the development of healthy families through parenting advice and support, child health promotion and health education. Their services are addressed to children under five and their families. Thus, the organisation offers nurse services, home visits, clinics, mobile clinics, parenting education courses and car seat rental services. They also organise coffee groups or playgroups for parents, who had children of the same age and live in the same area, to bring their children to play together and meet other parents. "**This is something we don’t have in Brazil. (...) You know the whole reason for that is to create these friendships and to support.**“ (Vitoria)

![Plunket](Plunket.png)

Julia and Vitoria are the ones who use *Plunket* facilities and services. Julia advocates for *Plunket* at governance level and helps to improve the premises of some playgroups.

Also part of the *Plunket* Committee, Vitoria is the coordinator of the *Brazilian Playgroup*, another activity promoted by the *Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa*. Actually, she also uses the *Plunket* space for the Brazilian-Portuguese classes and the new mums’ meetings of the *Mums and Bubs* group.

The Brazilian-Portuguese classes started in 2012 and are taught every Saturday morning by a Brazilian female teacher. According to Vitoria, they offer prices accessible to the Brazilian Community without compromising the quality of the classes. This was only possible because of fundraising events, the embassy’s financial support and the use of a *Plunket* space. However because of the economic
crisis in Brazil, the group didn’t receive any financial support by the embassy in 2015.

Vitoria also created the monthly *Mums and Bubs* meeting to introduce and support the new Brazilian mums. Although they meet in a Plunket space, organising and bringing those mums together is part of her role in the GMBA. This is particularly important to her because where women who don’t know a lot of people in New Zealand can feel supported, share experiences and make close friendships. “You just need to provide a place in a way that they can meet.” (Vitoria)

Vitoria linked this with the importance of having a place the Brazilian community can call “ours”, where they have a library with books in Brazilian-Portuguese, the language classes for the children, the *Mums and Bubs* and the Playgroup. For that, she reiterated the idea of the place being in a central location with easy access to allow people to participate in the activities.

Still relating to Plunket Playgroups aimed at Latin American culture and language maintenance, Julia said that there had been a very popular Latin American Spanish Speaking playgroup in one of the Plunket facilities. However, it closed down because the Plunket nurses complained about the noise. For her, it seemed “cool” and she would like to be more involved in the organisation of those
groups and perhaps have a musical festive group and incorporate “our Latin loud noises.”

Playcentre

Managed by parents, Playcentre is a cooperative that has the philosophy of the parents being the first and best educators of their children under the age of five. Its educational programme includes “learning in child development, play and learning, parenting skills, planning and delivering early childhood education, facilitation and management skills.” (Playcentre, n.d.).

Especially with Playcentre, the participants that attend or attended its workshops and playgroups expressed a feeling of being privileged to have the opportunity to learn the skills they learned. “I felt I was learning positive tools of how to raise my children better in this culture” (Lorena). It was also a place where they could find support and a relief from their busy household chores. “I needed to get out of the house. So I started joining Playcentre which parents can stay there, you can bring babies. It was just wonderful.” (Lorena)

Frequently, they explained that in their cultures, children are often discouraged, spanked, given a whack and told off. However, through Playcentre, in New Zealand, they have studied and learned how to positively manage their children’s issues, encouraging their self-confidence and autonomy, and developing their own personal and maternal skills. “[You learn] how to respond to challenges underneath their learning processes. (...) When they are fighting instead of saying
'give it to him!', you say 'we only have one of this. What are we going to do? We take turns.'” (Rosa).

Lorena said that “it was an eye-opening and I felt better as a mom. (...) My family didn’t praise me a lot. It’s something they expect from you. (...)I learn that ‘awesome, you did it!’ how to praise (...) and encourage them.” In this sense, joining *Playcentre* represents a strategy to assimilate and integrate in the host society, leaving behind the negatives aspects of their culture of origin. “It’s not only about building the puzzle, but also building their self-esteem and help them to solve problems which we don’t think about as Latinos. (...) I feel so close to my kids because of that.” (Lorena)

In fact, Rosa suggested that *Playcentre*, provides tools for self-study of how parents can have autonomy in terms their child’s education, instead of leaving this role to a professional.

*[Playcentre] gives a lot of information that make sense for me how to bring up my children more confident and secure. (...) I want to be there for my children and make sure that they are well-rounded individuals and they won’t have any issues or traumas from childhood. (Rosa)*

As a facilitator for *Playcentre*, Julia said she learned how to play the piano, ukulele and speak Te Reo Maori. “Now, I pass it on.” Also, when she needed it, she found herself supported by their counselling sessions (with *Plunket* as well). She is proud of making her own network of friends through *Playcentre* and *Plunket* because her connections before that were only made through her husband. “He is in my world now in New Zealand of parents that are mostly kiwis but, yes, there is Colombians, there is Americans. We’re all connected.”

**Manitas Playgroup**

Part of the *Grupo Cultural Hipano Latino Waikato*, the *Manitas Playgroup* is a weekly meeting for parents to bring their children to play and sing in Spanish, “teaching them the culture, but also for them to engage with other kids that are from the same descendence.” (Lorena). The group is funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Education and open to anybody who wants to speak in Spanish and bring their children to do so. In 2010, inspired by the *Playcentre* philosophy and aiming at maintaining and passing on the Spanish language and culture, Lorena, who had a
baby of around 3 months, was one of the initiators of the playgroup along with other ladies who had little kids. “We wanted to teach our children our language.”

For her, Manitas is a way to find support and empowerment as well as to acknowledge a part of her cultural identity that can be left out when a partner is from a different culture. “You’re pretty much on your own. Then, you start to connect with people from your own culture as well. That motivates you. You speak more Spanish to your children.”

In order to keep it stronger and underline the importance of the playgroup, the Manitas is also incorporated in the Spring Festival celebrations of the GCHLW. In the last event, mothers and children got together to sing a traditional song. “It’s just amazing to see the generations, babies and all these little ones singing.” (Lorena)

Along with that, Rosa and Gloria take their children to Manitas as well. “I started going to Manitas to connect with Spanish speakers around the area.” (Rosa). Apart from their personal cultural needs, this intention is also related to the idea of raising their children bilingual and for them to understand their roots.

Specifically Rosa, who found Manitas through google, said she feels supported among the mums not only in good times but also in difficult times. They can help by taking care of her daughter or taking the girl to the playgroup when she could not when she had her second child. Besides, as it is a smaller and more constant group than Playcentre, everybody gets to know each other and the children can feel more secure in this, particularly if they are more exposed to the Spanish language. “You get to know the little ones and their moms, instead of seeing difference faces all the time.”
Gloria started going to Manitas and into a more active social life after her daughter had recovered from her surgery. “I started to make friends, my daughter too.” For her, the group serves mainly for their children’s multicultural development. “They will be bilingual and keep your culture.”

Rosa explained that Manitas has a similar structure to Playcentre of free play. “The child chooses what they want to do, but because it’s a smaller group, they interact between each other more.” They are also introducing some activities such as “canciones” [singing] and “historias” [storytelling]. The group is no longer under Lorena’s coordination and one of the moms is now in charge.

Another point regarding the Manitas playgroup is that it helped Rosa’s mother to feel more integrated when she came to visit her in New Zealand. Thus, this type of network can also give the support to migrants in terms of their relatives when they spend some time with them in the host society.
Daycare

Daycare is a kindergarten where any parent in New Zealand may leave their children during the day. They also have activities with the kids, but, the parents are not usually with them all the time. Ana takes her daughter to a specific Daycare centre that is part of a Trust in Hamilton, which she feels it is a more flexible and relaxing environment, “like going to your aunt’s house.” However, the centre is closing down because it was bought by a big chain. “I don’t want to put Jane in this chain of daycare because they don’t see her as child that needs all this nurturing, but as a business.” Through her experience of trying to keep the daycare centre, Ana found kiwi people quiet, in the sense that they don’t like to protest. “I was just frustrated they don’t make any noise.”

In this centre, Ana made connections with some mums because of her daughter’s friends. However, Ana does not consider them close friends, just people she knows because of her child. As these people are New Zealanders, this corroborates the idea stated by the participants before, that relationships with those from the mainstream society are usually more distant and reserved.

Ana used the experience with daycare to celebrate her culture with her daughter, in this case, the Brazilian Independence Day, where she took the Brazilian flag and traditional food. She showed in her photo diary that this is an attempt to keep the Brazilian culture alive in her daughter’s life. It also relates to an attempt to introduce and share the Latin American culture with the host culture.

“This is a very special memory as my mum also made really good friends when she came to visit me given she did not speak any English, it was very important for me to find good friends who speak.” (Rosa)

Photo Diary Rosa 1
Child Health Support

Another function of the networks the participants presented was Child Health Support. This is the case with Gloria, whose daughter had a congenital heart disease and found support from two organisations in New Zealand: Heart Kids NZ and Waikids. She said they were really supportive and the only connections she had during this time taking care of her daughter, when she was feeling isolated: “I didn’t have any friends. So they became people I knew.” It is implied in her narrative that, in contrast to her country of origin and as New Zealand is a more developed country, migrant families with sick children can be better supported in terms of resources and human capital. “The support network when you have a sick child is really great in New Zealand. They sent us frozen food. They put some people to look after my daughter for ten hours a week.”

Business Associations

Business Associations have to do with the support migrants receive for their professional careers in New Zealand. The two Business Associations mentioned during data collection were the Latin American New Zealand Business Council and the Organic Dairy Producers Group.

The Latin American New Zealand Business Council is an organisation that supports business between New Zealand and Latin America by sharing information with its members and advocacy at government level. Roxana said this association gives support for her to develop her professional side through conferences and training.
Rosa is a member of the *Organic Dairy and Pastoral Group* because of her business and financial responsibilities with the organic farm where her husband is a sharemilker. This association promotes monthly discussions and forums where farmers meet to talk about their business and share ideas regarding sustainability, finance and personal issues related to organic dairy farming. This is not specifically for Latin Americans but for organic dairy, sheep, beef farmers and general pastoral industries in New Zealand. Through this association, Rosa gets updates about the industry, learning more about regulations and possible suppliers.

![Image 13: Business Associations](sourceLatin American New Zealand Business Council (n.d.); Organic Dairy Producers Group (n.d.).)

**Formal Networks Summary**

In this sub-theme, I presented the Formal Networks of the participants in five areas (women’s association, organization and professional for migrant support; culture and language maintenance; child caring and education; business associations). As stated above, these formal networks serve as means of empowerment, personal and family support, emotional settlement, professional development as well as keeping their culture and language alive in the mainstream society.

In the following sub-theme, Informal Networks, I present the role of the family, friends and the community in their lives as migrants in New Zealand.
Informal Networks

Informal Networks are related to the participants’ connections with their families, friends and community.

Family

Communication with the family was considered very important among the participants as a way of keeping their personal and cultural references. Some of them still have strong ties with their families in their home countries or overseas. Roxana and Mercedes have family members living in New Zealand. For other participants, New Zealand is the place where they started their own family or found a better way of living. That is the case of Lorena, Ana, Rosa, Gloria, Julia, Vitoria and Coral.

Others presented a feeling of not being so close to their relatives in their country of origin as here. In Mercedes case, this situation has always been this way. “We have always been my mother and my siblings. We have been like this as family. And there is nobody to miss.”21 Apart from catch up meetings, her family networks –

---

21 Translation from Spanish: “Siempre hemos sido mi mami y mis hermanos. Hemos sido así como familia. Y no hay nadie a quien extrañar.”
mother and brothers that live in New Zealand – also support her with childcare, provided mainly by her mother.

The other participants communicate with their families through social media (WhatsApp, Facebook and Skype). This will be further developed under the heading Online and Social Media.

The family networks can also help with getting a job and settling better in New Zealand. Rosa’s brother-in-law had connections in New Zealand with one of the partners of the same firm she worked for in Argentina as an accountant. Through him, she got an interview and was hired. She got the job because she had worked in the same company in Argentina and also because of her brother-in-law’s connection. “It felt more familiar. It helped a lot to get the job. (...) That made life a little bit easier to go back to something I knew, that I felt more comfortable with.”

It was also discovered that some of the subjects consider their close friends in New Zealand as their “adopted family”, who follow their children’s development and growth. That is exemplified in Lorena’s photo diary. Ana also feels her best friend and business partner – who is Brazilian – takes a role as the aunt of her daughter. This indicates their tendency to maintain the values of the societies they come from, which are collectivist. This means that they rely on the power of the group and their extended families.

Friends

In this part, I separated Latin American and non-Latin American friends. Both sets include male and female friends and there are some women’s groups of friends in each. Overall, the participants reiterated the idea that having friends from the same cultural background means a better integration into the host
country and, as stated above, a sense of home because of the language as well as the understanding of the feelings about where they come from.

**Latin Americans**

The participants talked about their Latin American friends being both from the different Latin American countries or the same as theirs. Usually, when it came to women’s groups of friends, the participants presented a better engagement with women from their own nationalities.

Networking with friends is thus a way of having support or even deciding about the city they would live in. That was exemplified by Coral, when she said she decided to migrate to New Zealand and went to live in Christchurch “because of the Brazilian friends. (...) You go where you know someone.”

In the situation of Ana, her best Brazilian friend became her business partner and she considers her as family, like the aunt of her daughter that always spoils her a lot, brings her chocolate and plays.” In her photo diary, she expressed how important this friendship is in terms of being family-like and thriving together in New Zealand. She also talked about her close group of Brazilian friends.

“My close groups of Brazilian friends. It’s very important to have time together, to celebrate in our own way, speak our language.” (Ana)

Eduarda is like a family for me, we have a great relationship (work and out of work), she treats my daughter as a niece. [This photo] represents a great relationship, far away from home but we people that share the same goal in life, same foundations.”(Ana)
In addition to that, the women referred to some more structured meetings of girlfriends such as the *Girls’ Club*, a catch-up meeting of 12 Brazilian girlfriends that takes place the last Friday of each month, and of which Vitoria is part. In this group, Vitoria said she sees the Brazilian women talk more openly about things that might be embarrassing to her kiwi girlfriends such as “*sex, ex-boyfriends and silly things. It’s just hilarious.*” They also don’t have the drinking culture as it is with the kiwi women, “*it’s not about the alcohol at all.*”

When Lorena’s children were growing up and she became more social, she started to make friendships with Mexican women. Again, the feeling emerged of being more family-like. Thus, Lorena and her friends would catch up also to create things such as Christmas decorations and jewelry, which they would sell in shops, markets, at festivals and private parties. “*It was awesome because we would still get together, chatting away but do something and because we are so capable.*”

Roxana, Diana and Rosa explained how they get along better with Latin Americans (or other migrants) than Kiwis. They said they feel more supported and comfortable with sharing their experiences and traditional food in their own language or with other migrants. As stated above in the migration stage, this was also related to need to have deeper and warmer friendships than the ones they were having with New Zealanders.

In the photos below, Rosa sustains the idea of a closer friendship with her Latin American girlfriends she met through the *Manitas* playgroup.
Non-Latin Americans

Some participants mentioned relationships with their non-Latin American friends. Coral gave an example of a British friend with whom she made a good connection, being able to about the same interests and things. For her, it was an interesting cultural exchange where her friend could get to know the Latin American culture. "She keeps saying to me of how much she has learned through becoming familiar to my Latino friends."

Vitoria has a group of friends composed of Kiwi women called the Book Club. Apart from discussing books, they also go out and organise weekends together. For her, although the relationship with them is not as open, the group is just as important as the Girls’ Club. Having the Kiwi women friends with older kids, allows her to learn a lot about that. “I quite like to hear their stories about school, about things I don’t have with the Brazilian friends because they all have little kids younger than mine.”

In addition, she noticed cultural differences at gatherings. While in New Zealand, the girls go to a corner and the boys to another to catch up and do girls’ and boys’ things, in Brazil, they mix.
In New Zealand, you don’t have extended families. You don’t have the nannies we have in Brazil. So quite often one of you will go out and the other one will stay at home with the kids. This is why you end up having the girls’ night and the boys’. In Brazil, (...) moms and dads sort of can go out together. (Vitoria)

As indicated in Child Care and Education, many of the participants’ friendships were made through their children, whether through Plunket, Playcentre or Kindergarten. “I started building my networks, making friends by joining Playcentre. (...) I had three good friends that I could go for a walk.” (Lorena)

**Community**

This part presents the participation of the Latin American migrant women in the community. That can be through activities related only to women, with Latin Americans in general or non-Latin Americans. It also displays the difficulties they have in getting in touch with their own Latin American community in New Zealand.

**Woman related**

The involvement in the community that is woman related includes more physical activities such as squash club, yoga and Zumba classes and sanga (group of yoga teachers). Lorena was involved in a squash group in which she could build some friendships. According to her, the group had only female members. “They just happen to be women. It’s not something that I choose. I don’t mind mixing with males. In fact, I like it because (...) they hit really hard and I like hitting hard. When I play with the males, it’s like ‘yes!’.”

In the yoga and Zumba classes, Lorena says there is a group that started with women who volunteered to teach those classes and they meet each Saturday at the Waikato Migrant Resource Centre. Being in a group of 8 women, for her, is empowering and an opportunity to share their skills and support each other. Although the group represents a community activity, Lorena also considers those women her friends, as stated in her photo diary.
Rosa talked about a group of fellow yoga teachers (sanga) she belongs to and feels supported by. As they are only older women, she expressed how she feels as “having lots of moms.” Apart from that, she conveyed the idea that, being more sensitive and having similar experiences, women share more things with each other than men. “You kind of can relate more when you have an issue and something you need to work out.”

Latin American related

The Latin American community relates to people who are acquainted through business, church communities, Language classes, dancing clubs, fundraising events, cultural and sports gatherings. These serve not only to engage with Latin American people but also to share the Latin American culture and language with New Zealanders and other migrants. Some of them were already mentioned above in Formal Communication Networks, Culture and Language Maintenance.

Before, continuing with this part, I want to highlight the differences I found among the participants regarding the sentiment of belonging to the wider Latin American community. It was implicit in their narratives that there is the language barrier between the Brazilian-Portuguese and Spanish that can create separation. While those from Spanish-speaking countries think of themselves as Latin Americans, the Brazilians are not thought – or consider themselves – as Latinos or Latinas. “We’re kind of more isolated as they are. Because we don’t speak Spanish is not so easy to be together and feel that we’re speaking the same language.” (Ana). Below, Vitoria endorses Ana’s statement:
I have to be honest. I don’t really get connected with the rest of the Latin American community. I do have a couple of friends that are Colombians, Argentinians but by coincidence. I don’t really get to know what they’re doing. I feel really Brazilian but not connected to the Latin American Community.” (Vitoria)

In her photo diary, Ana presented a casual meeting at the Hamilton Gardens with students from Brazil that came to New Zealand through her business. It can be implied how she is acting as a catalyst to increase the Brazilian community in New Zealand.

“It is important because it is a register of our success in a way (bringing Brazilians to study in NZ). It represents a good day with nice Brazilian people that we have the opportunity to know through work.” (Ana)

Being part of Community Education at the University in Christchurch, Coral had the experience of teaching Brazilian-Portuguese to New Zealanders who had Brazilian partners. She felt it was nice to have Kiwis interested in the Latin American culture in this way.

Furthermore, in New Zealand there are some bars, night clubs and dance schools that promote the Latin American traditional dances. “I go for Zumba, salsa and bachata.” (Diana). In those, there are people from different nationalities and this also represents an insertion of Latin American culture into the New Zealand society.

Bringing a Latin American experience into the New Zealand community in a similar way, Ana participated in a fundraising event for a lady with cancer. On this occasion, she brought a Brazilian traditional sweet (Brigadeiro) to help in the event.
It is noteworthy though that some of the participants mentioned personal difficulties in connecting with the Latin American community due to their previous experience of reverse cultural shock. As already indicated above in Lorena’s and Julia’s examples, this meant an acculturative separation from their ethnic backgrounds. In searching for new beginnings and identities, they chose to avoid what they considered the negative aspects of their culture of origin. However, all of this was remediated with positive experiences with Latin Americans that made them want to reconnect with their roots.

After Julia met a Panamanian and a Cuban lady at her children’s school, who took her to a Latin party and Zumba classes, she realised that “I had too much of conservative kiwi already on me.” In touch again with the Brazilian rhythms and...
dance, she said that she had rescued her sensuality and identity. “I started putting my big earrings back on, (...) some nice tights. (...). It gave me some confidence as a woman.”

Julia also felt she wanted to introduce her culture to her children. “I didn’t pass Portuguese to my children, which I regret and I’m working hard now.” For that, she got in contact with the Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa and enrolled them in soccer classes. As the sentiment of rescuing her identity was growing inside of her, she joined drumming classes and started to connect with Brazilian groups on Facebook and found the Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa online, “the most and very informative magazine for the Brazilian community.” Then, she got in touch with the Brazilian mums’ Plunket Playgroup.

In Lorena’s case, the first time she tried to connect with Latin Americans in New Zealand was at a barbeque promoted by the president of the Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato. On that occasion, she felt more comfortable with the host’s wife who was a New Zealander. “Because Latinos are just checking you out. I was living in the country and being so relaxed. And I come to this again. I started to feel uptight, like judged because Latinos we tend to [do this].”

However, after meeting her Mexican friends, being invited to be the MC of the Latin American Spring Festival and, later, becoming part of the GCHLW, she felt more comfortable with being involved with Latin Americans. “I have this feeling of acceptance of everybody and I feel they feel accepted as well.”

Corroborating that, Lorena showed in her photo diary another example of her involvement with the Latin American community through the GCHWL. She presented her support for the Eagles Latin Football Club which participated for the first time in the Jambo Kids Ethnic Soccer Festival, which “supports and promotes cultural integration and social inclusion through sport” (Jambo, n.d.).
Roxana said she finds structural difficulties in connecting with Peruvians in New Zealand because they don’t have an embassy or a consulate in the country. Thus, she said she met Peruvians little by little whether by chance or in the church she goes to. “That’s the first starting point: to locate a Peruvian. Unless you know someone else, you wouldn’t be able to.”

Not specifically Latin American related

With respect to community activities not specifically for Latin Americans, the participants talked about their relationship with neighbours, educational community, collective gardening and CrossFit groups. It is important to remember that the experiences with playgroups are also part of community relations, but I have already gone thoroughly through them in the part of Formal Communication Networks, Child Caring and Education.

Rosa talked about her experience within her community and how meaningful it is for her to know her neighbours, even though she is living on a farm. “You think you’re a little bit isolated, but you’re not. For her, it is important to have face-to-face meetings such as barbeques, just to get to know them and not be so much virtually connected to people. “We lost that sense to know who is living next to you. Knowing that you can have good friendships or not, but at least knowing your neighbours, and maybe you have some support when you need.”

Julia participated in not-for-profit activities in her community, such as collective gardening; Ana found in CrossFit, a constant group where people care for each other. “The guys remember ‘look you didn’t come. What’s happening?’ I felt really better.”
In terms of educational institutions, Gloria and Lorena said they also had or have networks through their studies. Gloria’s first networks in New Zealand were through her English classes at the University. Doing a paper for management and leadership in not-for-profit organisations at Unitec, Lorena is building new networks with her classmates, who she finds “genuine, loving and caring. It’s just like love is in the air. It’s just beautiful.”

Informal Networks Summary

In the Informal Networks, I showed the importance of family, friends and community for the participants. Family for them represented a way to keep up with their cultural and personal references. Some of them have family members in New Zealand; others connect with them through social media. Friends were also considered by some as their “adopted family”.

They found a better engagement with friends from the same ethnic background due to a feeling of familiarity. Nonetheless, relations with non-Latin Americans were considered positive, an “interesting cultural exchange.” The participants also feel supported and empowered within their communities, mainly through activities with other women. Through Latin American groups and events, they find a way to maintain their cultures and languages. They also noted the importance of having a good relationship with neighbours and being involved with not-for-profit activities and education.

In the subtheme below, I draw attention to the role of online and social media in their personal and professional lives.

Online and Social Media

In this part, I refer to online media relating mainly to websites, which function more to disseminate information rather than for interaction between people as it is on social media.

The participants use online media to find or promote information about their interests in New Zealand such as the website of the Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aoteaora and its online magazine (Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa), the website of the NZBrasileiríssimas and Ana’s business website (yepnz.com). They also check news from websites in New Zealand, worldwide or from their home countries.
Sometimes they get this news first hand on social media and through it they access the website where the article is hosted. Besides, it was found that, among the participants, some still consume online media from their own countries in order to get to a feeling of it and participate in some discussions; some don’t because they feel more connected to what is going on in New Zealand than in their countries of birth.

The participants mentioned several uses for social media. They can use it to communicate with their family and friends back in their home countries or to connect with the Latin American community or other people from other nationalities in New Zealand. Thus, social media plays a role in virtual maintaining communication networks but is also a platform to organise meetings with their friends and relatives as well as with any community they may want to. Also, social media was considered the main platform from which get news from their countries of origin, New Zealand and worldwide. Getting online connections with their culture back home whether through their friends, family or in consuming news is related to the extent of their choices of assimilation into or separation from the mainstream culture. All of the online and social media discussed during data collection is described below.
Websites

Three main websites were put forward by the participants as tools to connect people and promote their interests and business, Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aoteaora, NZBrasileiríssimas and Ana’s business website (yepnz.com). All of these websites are written in Portuguese, except the NZBrasileiríssimas, which also has parts in English.

The Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aoteaora presents information for Brazilian mothers in New Zealand regarding playgroups, Brazilian-Portuguese classes for children, the New Zealand educational system and data from the New Zealand census about the Brazilians in the country. The NZ Brasileiríssimas is being developed to promote Brazilian women’s business in New Zealand. As Ana said, the idea is also to introduce the women’s faces behind their businesses.
Ana’s business website (yepnz.com) is made for Latin Americans who want to study in New Zealand. The website has information about the business itself, its staff and partners, the benefits of studying in New Zealand, different options for study programmes, a guide for exchange students they wrote (*Guia do Intercambista YepNZ*), a manual for negotiating the working holiday visa and links to social media. The website is the first gateway to their networks with their clients.

When discussing the consumption of online media from their home countries, the majority of the participants said they are more interested in what is happening in New Zealand and worldwide. In this regard, they mentioned that consuming less material from their countries of origin has to do with the feeling of not relating so much to it anymore, and the demands of their lives in New Zealand such as taking care of children, and other activities. “I’m more interested in knowing what’s happening here because it has to do a lot with the work that I do. So what’s up in New Zealand and all the policies, immigration, the parties, who is doing what, who’s supporting who” (Lorena).

Some participants get links for the news on the social media. Ana, who used to watch Brazilian soap operas online, said she checks Brazilian news “very rarely; only if it’s something very big, very bad, a protest to change the president. Otherwise, I don’t see much, only when my friends post it and maybe it’s interesting.”

Vitoria said she has the pages of news from Brazil on her Facebook page organised in her categories of interest: politics, religion and fashion. “But you do see less and less. I think you just scrape the surface, just the main things.”
Other participants who have lived less than five years in New Zealand said they still check news from their home countries and some do as a daily routine, like Diana and Gloria who check the online platform of newspapers from their home countries.

**Social Media Channels**

Different social media channels play different roles in the migration and gender experience of the participants in New Zealand. As already observed, they can use it to communicate with relatives and friends overseas, to connect with their community or other communities in New Zealand, participating in discussions group and for business purposes. The Social Media Channels used by the participants are Blogs, Skype, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram.

Skype is one of the tools the participants use to talk to their family and friends in their home countries. Some of them communicate with their family through WhatsApp and Facebook as well, being the WhatsApp considered as an easier and more frequently used tool of communication, in which they also organise chat groups.

Vitoria said that the technology of social media facilitate communication between herself and her family back in Brazil. When she got to New Zealand, ten years ago, she needed to buy a special card to call them. “It was so different (...) we could only call from a landline (...) On WhatsApp, we talk every day. Today this facilitates a lot. And we spent so much money to buy the card.”

The most significant result of connecting with their family back in their home countries through social media was the feeling of participating in their lives and vice-versa. Diana commented her mum still worries about her the day she doesn’t call. Ana even observed that, without the communication with her family, she couldn’t stand to stay in New Zealand, due to a sensation of loneliness and isolation. “With Skype, you can see them. (...) My dad, in several occasions, called me because they were celebrating someone’s birthday and they wanted us talk to them...”

---

22 Translation from Portuguese: “era tão diferente (...) só dava pra ligar do telefone fixo. (...) No whatsapp a gente se fala todo dia. Hoje facilita muito. E gente gastava tanto dinheiro com cartãozinho.”
at the same time. It’s not of course like being there. At least you’re not so left out of their lives.”

Apart from communicating with their families, social media also serves as a tool for their business which is the case of Ana. She finds Facebook an easier and quicker tool to spread information and, on a smaller scale, her business blog and website. However she doesn’t use WhatsApp much because the clients don’t leave her alone. She explained that the in Brazilian culture people expect to receive an immediate reply whereas in New Zealand people are more aware that they will get a response when it is possible to do so.

Even though she considers social media an important marketing tool, Lorena explained that all information shared and sent online relating to her work is dealt with by a third person. However, she also has the administration of it. On the personal side, she said she prefers to deal with things around her instead of spending time and putting herself out there online. Nonetheless, because all her family is on Facebook, she only uses it to connect with people that she cares about and are far away from her. On WhatsApp, she connects with a group of girlfriends in Mexico. Through it, they are planning a trip to Barcelona. “I haven’t seen some of them since high school. So that’s very important. I need to choose my time to what is really priority and important for me.”

Linked to this idea, despite being fascinated by social media, Vitoria illustrated how people should not let social media take over their lives because they can waste a lot of time doing nothing by using the expression FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out).

When speaking of their engagement on social media, some participants commented on Facebook groups and their different forms of interactions. They said they use it to buy and sell things, find flatmates, connect with the community, check the news or as support for them or to help others. Vitoria has more 4,000 pages on Facebook categorised by themes of her interest. Also, she belongs to various groups of Brazilians around New Zealand where she promotes the Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa and feels the necessity of contributing with relevant information. Being well-settled in New Zealand, she can be considered as having the role of supporting people whether they live in the country or are wanting to migrate. “If I can say something different, I can help or I can talk about the magazine,
'Oh I'm a nurse I want to go there.” Then I put the link of the magazine ‘why don’t you read the main magazine, there is an article about revalidating your diploma’.”

In addition to this, being the administrator of the Colo de Mãe, the Facebook group of the Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aoteaora, Vitoria finds it a supportive tool for Brazilian mothers in the country. “We’ve been helping each other with information and things (...) because people have no one and they need some help.”

The examples she gave were about a Brazilian woman who had been living in New Zealand for around nine months and contacted her through social media. The woman said she had recently discovered she was 36 weeks pregnant and didn’t know what to do, how the maternity system worked in New Zealand and also how she could get advice and basic things for the baby. Vitoria put her in contact with a Brazilian midwife and posted on the Colo de Mãe for any mom who could donate anything for her. There were plenty of replies to the post and the woman is feeling better supported now. In a similar situation, another woman who went through domestic violence and needed to live in a shelter didn’t have money or anything else.

Although not feeling completely ready to immerse herself in Brazilian culture, Julia is part of the Colo de Mãe and she uses it to see what’s happening and if she can help with anything around children and playgroups. She emphasized that, even though she hasn’t been to any events yet, she still feels part of it.

Ana also is part of the Colo de Mãe and through it she went once to a Brazilian traditional event, Festa Junina, for children. However, she didn’t know any mother with kids at the same age as her daughter and she felt hard to participate in the same groups.

Still connecting with the idea of women’s support through Facebook, Rosa explained she finds support and advice as a member of a Facebook group of Argentinian mothers in New Zealand. In fact, she got in touch with an Argentinian mum who lives in Huntly, and communicates with her once in a while because she feels this woman is isolated on a farm with only her husband and kids. In this group, she also gets to know about other Argentinian women’s business and skills.

In a broader gender classification of Facebook groups, Ana mentioned the Mulheres na Nova Zelândia, which was created by one of her students and serves to share women’s issues and promote business and events as the NZ Brasileiríssmas.
“The Facebook group started because they wanted to know “where is a good place to do waxing?” or “where can I get my medicine?” However, she said she does not find time to keep up with the group and she has a person who handles the social media for her.

In a more general use of Facebook groups, as indicated above, some participants receive and share news, information about events in New Zealand, buy and sell things and connect with Latin Americans or people from other ethnicities living in New Zealand. Roxana talked about a popular group called Latinos in New Zealand – where she found a place to live and made good friends – and others such Peruanos en New Zealand, Brasileiros em Nova Zelândia where she gets to know about the Latin party.

Image 18: Latin American Facebook groups in NZ
Sources  Latinos in New Zealand (n.d.); Peruanos en New Zealand (n.d.); Brasileiros em Nova Zelândia (n.d.).

While belonging on Facebook to several groups of Brazilians in New Zealand but not being a very active member, Coral brought to light that it doesn’t mean that because they are all Brazilians, a connection will be established. “We meet so many Latinos or Brazilians where you would never connect with them over there. The fact that we have a similar background doesn’t mean we need to be friends.”
Ana belongs to many groups on Facebook about mums and kids, Brazilians in New Zealand, studying, working and traveling in New Zealand. When she sees some interesting and positive news about Brazil she also shares it with her friends. The other day I saw on Facebook on NZ Herald (...) a Brazilian tattoo artist, she was tattooing people who had a scar on their bodies to make that thing meaningful. (...) I shared with my friends because when something is good about Brazil, you need to share.”

Ana was the only one who talked about blogs, Youtube, Twitter and Instagram. She and her business partner and were approached by well-known blogs in Brazil to write about their stories in New Zealand “from English students to entrepreneurs in New Zealand” and they got good feedback from the readers. “This was a big thing in Brazil. (...) I started to receive so many emails. I was ‘oh my God, we’re not prepare to deal with all that.’” Still today, they receive emails from people who read their posts in those blogs.

Through YouTube, Ana organises weekly hangouts with people in Brazil that are interested about New Zealand. The hangouts are live and last 20 minutes. Because of its interactive nature, people can send questions beforehand and during the session. She also provides audio recordings of themes she thinks people want to know about such as which schools are good in New Zealand. “They in Brazil like to see videos. (...) They like someone explaining. They don’t wanna read lots of materials. They wanna see it, they wanna listen.” Below, in her photo diary, Ana shared the hangout promotion post which indicates also a completely female participation as the speakers are exclusively women who live in New Zealand.

“I believe that this is how things are now, we are in NZ but we are able to connect with people in Brazil. It means future, technology, connection.” (Ana)

Photo Diary Ana 6
Concerning Instagram and Twitter, she found that in Brazil people use more Instagram than Twitter, so she decided to use it for her business.

**Online and Social Media Summary**

In this part, I show how the participants use online media to promote their interests and business as well as to check news from their home countries, New Zealand and worldwide. Although some still consume media from their home countries, others do it less as they considered themselves more connected to New Zealand issues. Social media is the most important tool for them to connect with their families and friends back home as well as the Latin American community and other communities in New Zealand. Some of the participants showed a strong presence on social media for support and empowerment between them and other women.

In the following sub-theme, I discuss the role played by the ethnic media in their migration experiences.

**Ethnic / Migrant Media**

This part addresses the sub-question regarding the role of ethnicity in the migration experience of the Latin American women in New Zealand. I found ethnic/migrant media, among the participants, relevant mainly for the Brazilian Community. There is one main online magazine, *Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa*, specifically for Brazilians whether they live in Zealand or are overseas and interested in coming to the country. The *Grupo Cultural Hispano Latino Waikato* email a fortnightly Spanish newsletter, *Informativo*, to the Spanish speaking Latin American community in the Waikato Region. There are a few radio programmes made in New Zealand for the Latin American community. Some participants mentioned having heard about the existence of some radio programmes for the Latin American community in New Zealand. However, none of them said they were a listener of a particular Latin American radio programme.
Online Magazine

As already stated, the online magazine *Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa (MBA)* is made for Brazilians who have lived for a while in New Zealand, the recent arrived ones, and those who are overseas and want to know about the country to visit, study or migrate. Created by Vitoria in 2014, the magazine was initially produced to celebrate Brazilian mothers in New Zealand. *“We all went through some really hard paths in our lives to be here today and (...) have something to tell. The first magazine we chose a Brazilian midwife. Everybody wanted to read because she’s popular.”*

As its reach got beyond the *Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aoteroa*, she realised that was a gap to fill within the Brazilian community in general. The magazine therefore changed its name from *Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa* to *Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa* and now embraces the voices of Brazilians who are doing interesting projects or business in New Zealand, information about entertainment, study, visa and other subjects that are relevant for the Brazilian community. *“I am together with all the people (...) who want to portray Brazil in a nice side.”*

Concerning the financial resources for the MBA, Vitoria explained that, although she sells some ads, this is a not a make-money project; the amount she gets from those is to pay the graphic designer, the website that hosts the magazine and the photographer. It may also cover some phone call costs as well.

The writers are volunteers and mainly women. It is read by around 2.000 people, of whom 60% are in New Zealand, 30% in Brazil and the rest overseas. Vitoria cannot access more detailed gender information about the readers.
However, most of the feedback Vitoria receives comes from women. “I always say ‘why we are not presidents in every country in the world’ because we have this ability to put things together and look after this. I think we’re just not as ambitious or we just don’t put ourselves out there as we should, as we could.”

Ana is one of the collaborators of the MBA and has written articles about the New Zealand educational system. “The educational agents in Brazil don’t take time to research and explain in details.” She explained she shares the MBA multiple times with her clients because they can “get a really good grip” of what is happening with the Brazilian community in New Zealand. For example, how people are living, raising their children and finding success as well as the problems they face. For her, the importance of writing for the magazine is also related to the idea of people getting to people and what they are doing. “It’s really nice to have a channel to communicate and to have a voice here.”

As shown above, for Julia the MBA is the most informative magazine for the Brazilian community, and that was how she started to connect with the Brazilian Plunket playgroup.

To celebrate the first year of the magazine, Vitoria organised a cocktail that brought together some people from the Brazilian community including the Brazilian ambassador to New Zealand and his wife. The event offered typical Brazilian food and music. It also promoted the Brazilian catering businesses and musicians in the country. “There was a great vibe. Everybody was happy.”

Because she can see the potential growth of the MBA, at the moment, Victoria is working in partnership with a Colombian woman to publish some
articles written in Spanish in the magazine. They have already starting translating into Spanish more general articles that can serve all communities, “to reach the Latin American community as well exactly because we should to work together, mingle a bit.” For her, what is meaningful is “the whole talking to people” and the challenge of putting the magazine out every month.

Online Newsletter

The Grupo Cultural Hispano Latino Waikato (GCHLW) has an online newsletter, Informativo, for the Spanish speaking Latin American community in the Waikato Region. In the newsletter, they send useful news and list activities that are relevant for their audience, and don’t display any ads. According to Lorena, they have around 400 people in their mailing list, some of whom communicate with them asking how they can help and what is happening. Others just participate once a year and some don’t want to be engaged. “Some people like to be involved with the people that come from the same culture. Others ones they don’t (...). Everybody has their own reasons” (Lorena).

Ethnic / Migrant Media Summary

I found that ethnic media is not used indiscriminately by the participants. It plays an important role in communication for and connecting the Brazilian community in New Zealand. It also showed that some women take the lead to engage and support the voices of the Brazilian migrants, which is exemplified in the case of Vitoria, who created the online magazine.

The following sub-theme presents what the participants feel is missing from the existing networks available to them.

Missing Elements in the Existing Networks

The participants expressed their expectations or wishes in terms of their existing communication networks. Gloria explained she feels there is not much publicity about the organisations which support migrants or have activities for people of the same cultural background. “I didn’t know about this Migrant Centre or
the Hispano Latino group. (...) I met a Chilean in an event just by accident. Then she told me about them.”

Ana drew attention to a lack of commitment and regularity among the Brazilian women who go to the NZBrasileiríssimas. She wants to have a more formal and stable group. “I also need to understand how the Brazilian people work because sometimes they all wanna go and they get all excited. And they don’t wanna commit. I don’t know if all Latin Americans are like that but with us it is very common.”

Rosa pointed out that she would like to have networks for her own personal goals and not focused solely on their children. In this regard, she talked about her wish to join a women’s association in Te Awamutu, the biggest town around her area, where women from different nationalities get together to share their business experiences. As she wants to do something with her skills (yoga and accountancy), she thinks, when her children get older, she can connect with these women to learn more and perhaps gather some clients for the future.

Final Summary

In this chapter, I presented and explored two background themes that I considered essential in understanding the main theme and answering my research question of “What role do communication networks play in the migration experience of Latin American migrant women in Aotearoa / New Zealand?” Although the background themes (Pre-Migration Stage and Migration-Stage) did not directly address this question, they served as a gateway and supported a more in-depth exploration of the role of Communication Networks of the LAMW in Aotearoa / New Zealand.

The first theme explored the participants’ memories of life before migrating to Aotearoa / New Zealand and their reasons for migration. The second theme, Migration Stage, looked into their impressions of the host country and its people as well as their perceptions and experiences regarding cultural differences, cultural shock and stereotypes.

The third theme of Communication Networks located the LAMW communication networks around five subthemes: Formal Networks (Organisations for Migrants Support; Culture and Language Maintenance; Women’s Associations; Child Caring and Education); Informal Networks (Family, Friends and Community);
The communication networks of the LAMW in Aotearoa / New Zealand did not always fit in only one category. In several cases they overlapped each other. For example, through some formal networks the participants also found community activities as well as good friends. Apart from that, some of their friends they consider to be their family in New Zealand. Family is very important for them, taking into consideration mainly the care and education of their children and the collectivist society they come from.

The findings also show how some women were more active in searching and building new networks of their own whereas others were shown to be more passive. Some women presented leadership skills in engaging and giving voice to their communities.

The impact of the communication networks on the participants’ migration experiences was shown overall to be positive in terms of assisting them to overcome a gender and patriarchy related value system. The networks presented a break from established gender roles and resulted in some of these women becoming more empowered. As evidence of the feminisation of migration phenomenon, the networks strengthened their decision to migrate and helped them to increase their self-confidence to thrive in the host society.

Both formal and informal networks are meaningful for the participants and their roles overlap. They can serve as personal and professional support mechanisms that provide a whole host of helpful tools for job mentoring, culture and language maintenance, child care and education, health care and emotional wellbeing, self-development, and stronger friendships. It was implied in the participants’ narratives and photo diaries that they left behind sentiments of loneliness, isolation and homesickness in favour of a situation where they are more settled and happier with a home-like feeling.

The discussion and analysis of the above findings and the importance of these communication networks in relation to gender and migration is provided in Chapter Six, which situates my findings within the relevant literature provided in Chapter Two.
Chapter Five: Discussion and Analysis

Based on the literature review, this chapter discusses and analyses the findings. In order to understand in depth the role played by the communication networks in the migration experience of Latin American Migrant women in Aotearoa, the findings are discussed within the relevant literature on gender and migration studies. Also, a feminist theoretical background is employed to analyse some topics. The emerging insights from this discussion help answer the research question and sub-questions and the implications regarding the importance of the LAMW communication networks in Aotearoa / New Zealand.

The chapter is divided in three themes – Theme One: Renegotiating Gender Values, Roles and Status; Theme Two: Acculturation, Gender and the relevance of culture and language maintenance; Theme Three: Latin American migrant women and the online and social media. It also includes a section on Overlapping themes that explores how these communication networks overlap with the three themes in terms of gender perspectives, acculturation processes, culture and language maintenance and the role of online and social media.

Theme One discusses the complex relationship between the feminisation of migration phenomenon and the Latin American migrant women’s communication networks, the way they renegotiate their gender roles through their passive or active engagement within their networks and the role of children. It also discusses ethnic women’s entrepreneurship and leadership within their communities.

Theme Two discusses the implications of the relationships between the communication networks and gender, acculturation and culture and language maintenance. It brings into the discussion the role of ethnic media and how it is not relevant for all women of this study, except for the Brazilians.

Theme Three discusses the use of online and social media by the participants as well as the importance of their virtual transnational networks and the connections they established in New Zealand.
Theme One: Renegotiating Gender Values, Roles and Status

In this part, I analyse the complex interaction between communication networks and the phenomenon of the feminisation of migration as well as how these networks empowered the participants, leading them to break away from established gender roles. This can be related to their active or passive engagement within their networks, the solidarity of womanhood; their leadership positions within their ethnic communities; and the importance of family and the role of children in their lives as migrant women in New Zealand.

The women of this study commented on their challenges in their pre and post-migration stages. Some of them spoke of leaving behind a feeling of dissatisfaction with their lives or the social context of their countries of origin, including cases of violence. Economic migration, then, was not the main cause for the majority of the participants to migrate. Their reasons were mainly related to an increase in the quality of life for themselves and their families.

In one case, the participant decided to get divorced, quit her job and move to New Zealand. Others faced negative stereotyping for being migrants and Latin American women in the host society. These were related to their accent, the Latin American way of dealing with people - being outgoing and more open – and the social issues and cultural characteristics of their home countries – the cocaine industry in Colombia and the Brazilian wax, for example.

The feminisation of migration was observed among the participants who had the initiative to migrate by themselves in search of better lives, qualifications and job opportunities. This is in accordance with some studies (Raghuram, 2004; Ryan, 2007) that present more women (than men? than in previous years?) migrating alone as skilled migrants and entering the professional stream of the host society.

On one hand, the findings of this study showed that the phenomenon of the feminisation of migration was strengthened by personal ties the participants developed in their migration processes. On the other hand, the need to establish communication networks in the host society is also a characteristic of gendered patterns in international migration. Early research has considered men and their networks crucial for the migration processes whereas women had a passive role.
(Boyd, 1989). However, current studies (Menjívar, 2000; Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003) have found that male and female migrant networks differ in types and quality. Having more comprehensive networks, migrant women are more likely to settle permanently (Curran et al., 2005; Marcelli & Cornelius, 2001). Their female networks are also more relevant in terms of providing information and contacts to overcome economic and social barriers (Aizpúrua, 2011).

The informal networks established by the participants in order to migrate and achieve success in New Zealand were usually linked to people from the same cultural background and those who had similar migration experiences, as studied by Boyd (1989) and Waldinger et al. (1990). However, formal networks such as job mentors and programmes offered by migrants’ organisations played the role of validating their professional careers and that implied a change in their life situations (Ryan, 2007). Gender influenced their migration settlement in both formal and informal networks. This means that they found themselves more supported and inspired by other women (migrants or non-migrants). The experiences of well settled migrant women have shown to some participants that overcoming migration challenges can also be a means to social mobility and subsequent renegotiation of their status within the host society (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Mahler, 1999; Castro, 1989 cited in Assis, 2007).

This study showed that, even though they are highly skilled, most of the participants faced hardships in entering the New Zealand job market as a result of the lack of English proficiency and local work experience, apart from the limitations imposed by family and motherhood duties. They spoke of how they felt discriminated against and devalued for being migrant and female, and indicated a sense of low self-esteem which led them to positions of underemployment or unemployment at the beginning of their migration process. This finding is part of a trend in the labour situation of migrant women in New Zealand in general, as demonstrated in different studies (Wei, 2003; Wei, 2007; Badkar et al., 2007; Pio, 2007a; Pio, 2007b; Meares, 2010; Verheijen et al., 2014; Troughton, 2015; Rivera et al, 2000).

Those challenges served as drivers for the participants to actively seek social and ethnic support in order to develop their professional careers or start their own business enterprises, increasing their sense of freedom, satisfaction and
self-confidence. They managed to overcome ideological and social oppression for being Latin American women in a society that still has a multi-ethnic gender equality path to follow. This relates to the feminist school of thought that incorporates not only the socially constructed biological differences of gender in women’s struggle but also their ethnicity, race, culture and class (Zavos, 2012; Anthias & Yuva-Davis, 2010).

It is noteworthy that participants’ professional development was also possible due to New Zealand’s favourable conditions and open immigration policies which allow migrant women to personally and economically thrive in this country. It is implicit in the participants’ narratives that they found in New Zealand more grounded feminist values and gender equality, as I will demonstrate further in this chapter. This indicates a similarity with the study of Riverea et al (2000) and Azipúrua (2011) who studied Latinas in New Zealand and in Australia respectively.

Organisations and professionals that support migrants in their career seemed to be crucial if some participants were to achieve a better professional status in New Zealand (“Having someone in New Zealand who could vouch for myself was what changed my situation because it’s always hard when you get your first job here”, Ana). These formal networks created a bridge between those migrants and possible employers or people in a more privileged and established position within the New Zealand society. The networks helped them with information about the New Zealand employment system and strategies to succeed, becoming a credible reference for them as well. The relationships formally created by the participants and the outcomes from those were also affected by factors such as their educational qualifications and personal and professional aspirations. Similar findings were discussed by Raghuram (2004), Ryan (2007) and Ryan (2011). Ryan (2007) studied Irish nurses in Britain, their motherhood duties followed by their return to skilled jobs. The study examined how networking with other skilled professionals beyond their personal and family ties significantly helped those women to return to work as nurses.

Even though formal networks served as a gateway for some participants to enter the labour market, informal ties such as extended family were also a source of support for them to find a position in their professional areas. One participant
drew attention to the relevance of her brother-in-law’s connections for her to be hired in the same firm she used to work in her home country ("It felt more familiar. It helped a lot to get the job," Rosa).

An important discovery was the Brazilian women’s meeting (NZBrasileiríssimas) that promotes the businesses of those women and shares their successful histories to other migrants. This organisation represents how migrant women created the room and the opportunities to develop their careers and change their personal situations in the host society. The fact that this network is organised by migrant women denotes a turning point in their resources within New Zealand. This resonates with Verdaguer’s (2009) study about Peruvian and Salvadoran entrepreneurs in the United States. The author found that Salvadoran women’s networks facilitated their ascension to business ownership.

My findings correlated, then, with the gender and ethnic migrant entrepreneurship research which showed the increasing number of migrant women who became business owners as a way to overcome the discrimination and structural challenges in industrialised labour markets (Pio, 2007a; Pio, 2007b; Meares, 2010; Baycan-Levent, 2010; Essers et al, 2010; Verheijen et al., 2014; Verdaguer, 2009). On one hand, formal networks bridged the participants with the host society. On the other hand, their personal ties also helped them to achieve their entrepreneurship goals. The participant who has a business of bringing Latin American students to New Zealand emphasised the importance of having a business partner – also one of her best friends – from the same gender and ethnic background. She pointed out how she and her business partner joined their knowledge and experience together to succeed. While one knew about the regulations and bureaucracy needed to open and manage a business in New Zealand, the other had contacts with schools in this country from her previous work. She also said that their body of employees is basically composed of women from her country of origin that were or are students they brought to New Zealand.

This example corroborates the study conducted by Essers et al (2010) about female ethnicity and Muslim migrant business women in the Netherlands. The authors emphasised how the concept is related to female autonomy, agency and professionalism. Their study demonstrated how those ethnic women
challenged the stereotypes of passivity and dependency by successfully establishing their business enterprises in the host society.

It also in accordance with Pio’s (2007a) study that analysed the pathway of Indian women entrepreneurs in New Zealand through four stages: the first difficulties of migrant women in entering the job market, their underemployment followed by the setup of a micro enterprise and its expansion with the creation of opportunities for co-ethnics. It is also indicated in this case a sense of cultural similarity due to greater affinity, empathy and trust among people from the same ethnic background and gender. Aizpurúa (2008) – who studied the acculturation process of Latin American migrant women in Australia – found that most of the participants of her research were more able to share migration and acculturation challenges with their co-ethnics. The socio-cultural similarity will also be discussed in the following theme – *Acculturation process and Culture and Language Maintenance*. Thus, ethnic resources play an important role in the establishment and the success of migrant entrepreneurships as well as for the cultural distance attenuation between the sending and receiving societies, leading to a greater economic and cultural integration (Basu & Goswami, 1999).

Gender values and expected roles varied between the sending and receiving societies. While Latin America is considered more male dominant, the participants found in New Zealand a more liberal and equal society (Rivera et al, 2000; Aizpúrúa, 2008). This was reflected in their newly acquired sense of independence, self-confidence and self-esteem. As New Zealand provides more structural opportunities for women and migrants whether in its immigration policies (*New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy*), higher status for women or opportunities for professional and personal development (e.g. *Ethnic Women’s Network Project* and *Ethnic Women Leadership Project*), these women found themselves more empowered in the host society.

One participant found that in New Zealand women are stronger and more independent. This gives her the opportunity to have her daughter among strong female models. (“Because I have a girl, if she was born in Brazil I’d prefer she was a boy. Because when you’re a man in Brazil, you have a lot more options. You’re freer to decide where you go and what you want to do”, Ana.). Some studies (Wei, 2007;
Darvishpour, 2002) have also found that migration to a more gender equal society was positive for women who came from a male dominant country.

Wei (2007) investigated the gender differences between professional Chinese migrants in Zealand. She found that the migration process for the women of her study resulted in a life with a better welfare system and greater freedom for women’s self-development with a minimum of social intervention and restriction from patriarchal ideology. This also correlates with the study of Darvishpour (2002) which investigated Iranian families in Sweden and found that the women from those families achieved more power and resources in the host country, which does not present such strong patriarchal cultural norms for gender roles as Iran.

The empowerment of the women of this study was directly related to their ability to organise themselves through or participate in women’s associations or more informal groups of women. This ability was influenced by the type of the society they come from. Latin American countries are considered collectivist societies, while New Zealand is an individualist society (Hofstede, 2003). In a collective society, the power of the group is important for individual support and identity formation. There, identity is based on in-groups (family, community and ethnic groups) and the social networks to which one belongs (Triandis et al, 1988; Hofstede, 2003; Kashima, 2001).

It was also noticed that the strong females models mentioned above mainly concerned women from the same cultural and ethnic background in the sense that they achieved success in the host society even though they are both migrants and women. Female ethnic role models have a great impact in this process as those women can resonate more with other women from the same cultural background. These models serve as inspiration as well as enhancing their self-evaluation and motivations (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Blanton et al 2000; Kwong et al, 2009).

The role model effect among female migrants was also studied by Kwong et al (2009) who investigated entrepreneurial activity, attitudes and the social connections of four groups of ethnic minority women in the UK. The authors found that having face-to-face contacts with other ethnic female entrepreneurs can

---

23 This analysis was based on the Hofstede’s model of national culture dimensions (Hofstede, 2003; n.d.).
enhance migrant women’s skills, knowledge and self-confidence as well as reduce their fear of failure and, in turn, increase their participation in entrepreneurship.

In this study, I also noticed that the brain drain phenomenon was a result of two moments in the participants’ migration processes. The first has to do with highly skilled women migrating to be with their Kiwi partners. The second happened when those women decided to leave behind their professional development in the host society due to their choice of becoming full-time mothers. De-skilling was perceived when it came to the increase of motherhood and domestic duties due to the lack of help from extended families. Studies (Rivera et al, 2000; Wei; 2003; Aizpurúa, 2008; Meares, 2010) have shown that migrant women lack family support in the host country and this influenced their professional careers and, as a consequence, their personal power. The positive impact of their networks in overcoming these challenges is discussed below.

As with many studies (Rivera et al, 2000; Wei; 2003; Aizpurúa, 2008; Meares, 2010) about gender roles and migration, this research project showed that traditional gender values still dictate the division of domestic and childcare responsibilities. As already mentioned, this is intensified by the lack of extended family support. As a result of the accumulation of household responsibilities and the lack of information and knowledge about networked resources, these women, at some stage of their lives as migrants, felt isolated and depressed. Not only did motherhood and domestic duties divert some of the participants from their professional career aspirations, but also from possible connections outside their private lives. However, the more they developed, widened and strengthened their communication networks, the better they felt about themselves and their situation in the new country. The impact of the communication networks on the participants’ migration experiences was shown to be positive with respect to overcoming the gendered and patriarchal ideology, as some women became more empowered and presented a form of break away from established gender roles. It is important to emphasise again the structural conditions present in New Zealand regarding this because the country provides many organisations that help and support women with their issues and with child care and health. The country also presents higher levels of gender equality than their countries of origin, as stated in the *Gender Inequality Index* (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).
Thus, more mechanisms were available to them to defeat socially constructed female oppression and subordination.

Gloria, a highly qualified physiotherapist in her home country, after migrating to New Zealand became a housewife and later a stay-at-home mom. Although she experienced depression, New Zealand organisations helped her with her daughter’s heart disease. ("I didn’t have any friends. So they became people I knew.") Some of the participants still use their professional skills to small extent. Even though her time is mainly focused on her daughters, Rosa still works as an accountant and administrator from home and for her husband’s farming business. She finds in a business association knowledge resources about financial and strategic issues of the industry.

Lorena pursued her professional development after getting divorced, having children at school age. The role of an organisation which emotionally and professionally supports migrants settling into the host society was crucial for her. She found herself among other migrants who were also seeking jobs and being helped by this organisation. ("I was getting that confidence. You sort of feel supported.") As also shown in Azipúrua (2011) and Rivera et al (2000), finding a way to provide herself with financial stability allowed her to experience higher levels of wellbeing and self-motivation. This, in turn, encouraged her to develop other types of networks that helped other Latin American women with their emotional settlement and the maintenance of their culture and language with their children. This will be further discussed in the second theme.

Although traditional male and female roles still persist within their private lives, the majority of the participants engaged, whether more actively or passively, in organisations or group of friends focused on women’s issues and interests. New Zealand women are included in these groups, but the connection with women from the same or similar cultural background had the greater impact on their lives, as already stated. It was proven that the ability to make and sustaining friendships outside their domestic environments was fundamental if the participants were to rely less on their partners and become more integrated within their communities (Ryan, 2007).

For some women, the informal networks derived from formal networks of child care and education. ("He is in my world now in New Zealand of parents that are
mostly kiwis but, yes, there is Colombians, there is Americans. We're all connected” Julia). For others, the relationship with migrant women from the same cultural background presented a stronger sense of filling the gap created by not having extended family in New Zealand. (“Eduarda is like a family for me, we have a great relationship (work and out of work), she treats my daughter as a niece” Ana; “My friends are my adopted family in NZ. [They] have seen my kids grow so they play a big role in my kids’ life” Lorena). Again, maintenance of culture and language was based on the collective tradition of their homelands in which family structures consist of a number of people living closely together and supporting each other. They rely on the extended family and children grow up thinking about the “we”. (Hofstede, 2003). For the participants, the friends they met in New Zealand were also considered their extended family.

Ryan (2007) presented similar findings regarding the support Irish women with no local kinship networks found in female friends in terms of childcare. She also stressed how their geographical proximity allowed those women to help each other with their children and consequently to return to work. In my study, the importance of geographical proximity was more related to emotional support and participation in activities focused on child care, culture and language maintenance and migrant women’s professional development.

Ana felt that being only a mother wasn’t enough and this triggered her search for resources to open her own business, as already mentioned above. In this sense, leaving her daughter in daycare was the way she found to pursue her professional aspirations. Her example illustrates a break away from gender social expectations. However, her most significant contribution to migrant women’s empowerment was the creation of the Brazilian Business women’s meeting (*NZ Brasileiríssimas*). This represents how migrant women organise themselves to help, support and inspire each other to direct their professional careers in the host society. As stated by Phizacklea (1999) the importance of migrant women’s social networks is that they serve as a tool for learning and developing employment opportunities and for individual and collective agency. It also shows how women’s migrant networks have been reformulating and creating new paths for gender behaviour in the receiving society. As seen in Hondagneu-Sotelo’s analysis (1994) about Mexican migrants in the US, Mexican women have also organised their own
support networks and systems to thrive in the new country. The already mentioned ethnic female role model effect is fundamental for this process.

The evidence above counterbalances Meares (2010) study that showed how migrating to New Zealand has caused disruption and damage to the careers of South African women due to the increase and intensification of their domestic and family responsibilities. This finding is not also in conformity with Azipurúa (2008), who found the migration of Latin American migrant women to Australia – though leaving behind a traditional society to a more egalitarian one – did not represent a substantial social change in those women’s status. They needed to have flexible jobs in smaller business, with lower pay and closer to their homes to take care of their children. My study contrasts with Azipurúa (2008)’s research because the majority of the participants were highly skilled and managed to use the more egalitarian principles of the host society to succeed.

Coming back to the role of children, the participants expressed the opinion that the bond with them is their most important one and directs their networks. It was implied that this was also related to the expectation that they maintain the traditional female roles of being a good wife and mother (Azipúra, 2011). In order to develop their skills as mothers, the participants looked for organisations in New Zealand that could assist them with their children’s care and education. In turn, they also made friendships which increased their sense of self-esteem and integration into society. As mentioned above, ties with women from the same ethnic background are decisive in this sense because they share similar values and same language. (Ryan, 2007; Rivera et al, 2000) as found in the Brazilian mother’s group (Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa) and the Hispanic-Latin playgroup (Manitas).

Some participants found in organisations for child care and education a tool for their personal and motherhood skills development. By bridging the cultural differences regarding parenting between their home countries and the host society, they achieved positive outcomes in their relationships with their children. This relates to how the New Zealand way of educating children leaves parents and children with positive attitudes and appraisement, contrasting with the Latin American way that relies on more aggressive and negative aspects.
Even if motherhood somehow de-skilled the participants in the sense that they left behind their professional careers, some of them found themselves developing other skills instead. Being a full-time mom gave Vitoria the opportunity to become leader within her ethnic community and to create a network that supports and empowers mothers from the same ethnic background. (“This whole womanhood (...) grew really strong in me after I had my kids. (...) My duty as woman is to understand you as woman and I know that we do have problems and we need to understand each other.”) Her practice was shown to be effective in promoting social change by organising Brazilian mothers through the feminist principles of collaboration, nurturance, empowerment, agency and autonomy (Lott, 2007). According to Vasquesz & Gomas-Diaz (2007), Latina leaders are central for the community as they take the role of promoters and advocators, contributing to its development and sustenance.

Theme Two: Acculturation, Gender and the relevance of culture and language maintenance

Different ethnic cultures present different construction of gender divisions, movements for acculturation and bonding and bridging networks (Anthias & Yuva-Davis, 2010; Curran and Saguy, 2001; Ryan, 2011). In this study, it was found that communication networks influenced acculturation and gender perspectives. The participants showed how they dealt positively with their acculturation processes in terms of overcoming and challenging the gender role ideology embedded in Latin American culture. If in Latin America women are historically seen as submissive, subordinate and passive (Rivera et al, 2000), in New Zealand they encountered a society where they could resist and subvert those deep-rooted gendered power relations. It is also true that their gender struggles took place in the host society as well. However, migrant and/or non-migrant social support networks represented an effective resource to help them with their psychological and socio-cultural adjustment (Ward and Rana-Deuba, 1999; Berry, 1997).

Some of the women of this study seemed to cope more easily with acculturation and gender roles conflicts as they engaged with organisations for child care and education and migrant support and developed friendships with
locals or non-Latin American migrants. The connection with organisations focused on their children’s development represented one of their strategies for assimilation and integration into the host society. It also enabled them to renegotiate gender roles in their private lives by liberating themselves from their busy domestic chores and making outside connections. (“I needed to get out of the house. So I started joining Playcentre, (...) building my networks, making friends” Lorena). Also, these organisations helped them to developed leadership skills and, in contrast with their culture of origin, discover more positive approaches for raising their children. Studies (Heering et al, 2004; Ryan, 2007) about women’s networks have shown that migrant mothers develop more localised and child-oriented ties that help them with practical and emotional support. However, this implies that their participation remains marginalised from the public sphere (Edwards, 2004). The women of this study have shown more agency and participation in both mainstream society and the Latina American community in New Zealand. Even with their motherhood duties, some of them manage to study or work from home or organise women's meetings.

According to Ryan’s (2011) study about Polish migrants in London, migrant women have successful established localised ties with mothers including mainstreamers. However, these connections were not as close as with mothers from their ethnic group. On one hand, this can be related to this study as some participants said they feel more at home by joining Latin American-oriented playgroups or comparing their group of New Zealand and Latina female friends. On the other hand, some participants mentioned that they learn more about raising children with their New Zealand group of female friends. In fact, Vitoria found the sense of sisterhood is much stronger in New Zealand than in Brazil. The informal ties some participants developed with non-Latin American female friends were considered “an interesting cultural exchange” (Coral) and positive in terms of assimilating and integrating into New Zealand’s multicultural and more gender egalitarian society.

While some women integrate and assimilate well into New Zealand culture, others found in ethnic networks the support to overcome migration challenges and acculturative distress. As also shown in Rivera et al. (2000) and Aizipúra (2011), by being in contact and sharing experiences with Latin American migrants in the
receiving society, Latinas found a way to transcend isolation and alienation. In my study, however, a work exploitation experience led one participant to keep away from Brazilians for almost ten years.

This sense of being at home in New Zealand facilitated a better integration because of their native language, traditions and shared understanding about where they come from, but by reinforcing ties to their places of origin, these networks seemed to limit opportunities for them to develop ties with the larger society (Curran & Saguy, 2001). (“I feel 100% Latin American and I don’t feel very close to people from here. (...) Sometimes, I have that no really easy relationship with them” Diana).

This study confirmed, although with some ambivalence, the relevance of the theory of socio-cultural and situational similarity proposed by Thoits (1986) and supported by Noh et al (1999) and Aizpúrua (2008). The socio-cultural and situational similarity perspective relates to individuals from similar socio-cultural and situational contexts and how they share empathy about stressful circumstances. Bringing gender into this perspective, and as already seen, the women of this research project seemed to feel more supported and empowered by women from the same or similar cultural background. However they also found themselves having good relationships with their New Zealand friends, mainly the ones who have children and participate in social activities with them. This indicates that their children also play a role in helping them to have a positive integration into New Zealand culture.

Culture and language maintenance was widely emphasised by the participants as they expressed how much they missed contact with the Latin American way, being warmer, more affectionate and spontaneous people. Sharing their traditions with their co-nationals through dance, music, food and their own language represented a way to reinforce their sense of identity as well as a buffer to deal with external pressure and increase their self-esteem (Aizipúra, 2008; Nesdale et al, 1997). The associations and groups that organise cultural meetings were the most significant in allowing the participants to deal with an identity that is always changing and becoming (Hall, 1994). (“It’s not easy to live with a dual identity. You have to be very much in peace with your own identity and the reasons you left your homeland to come here and to adapt, to settle in and to be happy here”
Coral). However, frequent contact with their family back in their home countries also helped them with any acculturative distress and identity issues they might have faced (Benitez, 2012; Willis & Yoh, 2002).

The participants’ sense of identity was also related to the way they dealt with the wider community. Understanding and dealing with their “dual identity” seemed to be a way to participate in the New Zealand society. That is why women tend to get together as they need to renegotiate their identities and make them meaningful.

They found their participation in churches, meet-ups, and community support useful to deal with psychological adjustment. As found in Sonn (2002) who studied “coloured” South Africans and Chileans in Melbourne, community ethnic support can serve as a buffer against external social pressures, helping migrants to become more resilient against the challenges they face in the new society.

Motherhood and migration generate greater gaps in gender equality, due to women’s decreased participation in paid work and increased dependency on their husbands or the welfare state (May, 1992; Wu, 2009). However in this study, culture and language maintenance among the participants’ children was found to be a way of empowering themselves as they joined organisations such as Playcentre and Plunket or created playgroups to raise bilingual children. This movement is strong in New Zealand as can see through some studies (Wu, 2009) and New Zealand Te Whaariki, the Early Childhood Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996) and its Playgroup Funding programme (Playgroup Funding Handbook, n.d.). Migrant women are in the forefront of the creation of these connections and integration of their families within the broader community. It also shows how the context of the host society influences the potential migrant women have to empower themselves. One example is the Spanish speaking Manitas playgroup, which was started by Lorena and receives funding from the Ministry of Education.

Wu (2009)’s research about Chinese skilled migrant mothers raising their children in New Zealand showed how those women actively changed their particular contexts and resisted power relations that relate to gender and migrant inequalities. For the author, even though they have limited access to dominant
cultural and social capital, those Chinese women actively and strategically used their non-dominant cultural resources to succeed in the host society and provide their children with access to various forms of cultural and social capital.

Even though the general ethnic community represents a positive tool for integration into society, it is mainly with their co-ethnic female friends that they developed a more protective and integrative relationship. These relationships help them to deal with the stereotypes people from other cultures hold about Latinas. Some talked about how men from more patriarchal cultures (e.g. Arabic or Indian) can harass them at work, for example, on a daily basis. Roxana seemed to feel more comfortable and secure going out with her group of Peruvian girlfriends as they all have passed through some harassment episodes and can help and support each other. (“We avoid going to certain places. (...) We learnt that we have to go with your own group, your own friends that know what kind of fun you’re gonna have”). Thus, the relationship and shared experience with her co-ethnic female friends helped her to overcome and deal with discrimination within work and social environments (Aizipúra, 2008).

It was also proven that re-connection with Latinas after avoiding their ethnic group for a long period also helped them to rescue their Latin American femininity. This happened with Julia who – after avoiding Brazilians for almost ten years – decided to join a Latin party and Zumba classes with some Latinas, leading her to experience a sense of rescuing her sensuality. (“I had too much of conservative kiwi already on me. (...) I started putting my big earrings back on, (...) some nice tights. (...). It gave me some confidence as a woman” Julia). This is in agreement with the third wave of feminism that acknowledges that women claiming for and recognising their beauty can be a practice of self-expression and empowerment (Wissinger, 2011).

All the women of this study felt that in comparison with Kiwi women Latinas are more feminine, sensual, tidier and sexier, and look after themselves better. This sense of femininity expressed by them seemed to have acquired a different meaning and been enhanced after migration. It represented a strong quality to grow and thrive in the host society, compensating any loss of self-esteem and moral value as migrant women (Dedirdirek and Whitehead, 2004; Cevajner, 2011). (“Until today wherever I go it’s easier for me if I put some nice clothes, nice
smell and I identified myself as a Brazilian woman, shaking hands, business like” Julia). The networks such as women’s associations and group of girlfriends that the women of this study connected to were proven to be essential in the validation of their Latin American femininity. For example, some meetings would include dance, yoga classes or make up lessons.

This was also found in Cevajner’s research (2011) about hyper-feminine performances of migrant women from the former USSR who worked as caregivers in Italy. Hyper-feminine performances have to do with ritualistic apparatus (Goffmann, 1956 cited in Cevajner, 2011) – posture, make-up, hairstyle and clothes – as well as a sense of self-confidence. In her study, she discovered how those migrant women claimed personal dignity and social recognition through their hyper-feminine attitudes as an outcome of moral and character-strengthening efforts. In addition, the study identified the importance of solidarity among women who share same goals in the recognition of their womanhood.

As seen above, culture and language maintenance was strengthened through face-to-face or on-line relationships with friends, family, organisations, women’s associations and ethnic community. By contrast, ethnic media seemed not to have a great importance for all of them in this regard. As seen in the findings, some participants had heard about the existence of Latin American radio programmes, but did not listen to any. It was observed that ethnic media was more important for the Brazilian community. This also represented how they interact with the host society by promoting a positive image of their countries and renegotiating their gender roles through leadership within their ethnic community and promoting strong Brazilian women as in Victoria’s example that created the online magazine Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa.

Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa was first established to celebrate Brazilian mothers in New Zealand. This is in correlation with Rigoni’s (2012) argument about the growing participation of women in the ethnic media and the way gender representation is changing. For the author, the participation of women in the ethnic media represents a social and political activism that portrays strong and positive images about ethnic women. It is related to the attempt to achieve gender equality, engagement in the public arena and defence of minority rights. The creation and use of ethnic media by the participants in this research project
corroborate Mendieta’s study (forthcoming cited in Rigoni, 2012) about Latin American migrant women in Spain and their representation in the ethnic media as active in and subjects of their own stories.

As the impact of Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa extended beyond the Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa, Victoria incorporated stories of successful Brazilians in New Zealand into the magazine. The extension of the magazine to the wider Brazilian community plays the role of a support network by preserving the Brazilian cultural identity and helping in the promotion of Brazilian business in the country through articles and ads (Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014). Thus, it represents ethnic and social cohesion and connection (op. cit). Monteiro and Cruickshank (2006 cited in Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014, p. 20) have shown that Chinese, Indian and South African ethnic media in New Zealand create a way to negotiate ethnic identities and roles within the host society as well as is a credible source of information that shares their ethnic needs.

In other ways, the magazine also addresses how Brazilians are positively hybridising themselves within the mainstream society, and in the future is going to embrace the wider Latin American community with the introduction of articles in Spanish. This represents an attempt to demonstrate positive outcomes for socio-cultural integration in the host country (Papoutsaki and Strickland, 2008; Matsaganis et al, 2011).

Theme Three: Latin American migrant women and the online and social media

In this study, online media was found to be a significant way for the participants to find or promote information about their interests in New Zealand. Websites serve as tools to promote women’s meeting, ethnic media and business (Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa, Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa, NZBrasileirissimas, yepnz.com). However, social media represented the most important tool for them to use to network in New Zealand or overseas. According to some authors (Ryan, 2008; Willis & Yeoh, 2002; Portes et al, 1999; Vertovec, 1999), new technology enables the maintenance of transnational networks as well as the creation of ties within the host country. For some participants, maintaining their emotional ties
with their families and home countries proved to be essential in dealing with the physical separation from their familiar networks and to overcome a sense of not belonging to the host society (Falicov, 2005, 2007). This was seen in Ana’s example. Through skype she feels she can connect with her references in her country of origin and virtually participate in some important occasions. (“It’s not of course like being there. At least you’re not so left out of their lives” Ana). She even expressed the view that without social media to communicate with her family and friends, migration would be harder and she would feel a sensation of loneliness and isolation.

Transnational networks through social media gave new meanings to the participants’ migration experience. They were found to be a way of maintaining their culture and language as well as their ethnic identities and emotional ties, through the contact with their families and friends in their home countries and through Latin American social media groups in New Zealand (Grupo Cultural Latino Waikato, Latinos in New Zealand, Peruanos en New Zealand, Brasileiros em Nova Zelândia). Through these groups, they also exchange practical information such as finding a place to live or buy and sell things.

Even more, through social media migrant women found a tool for support and empowerment as seen in their participation in many Latin American online women’s group (Mulheres na Nova Zelândia, NZ Brasileiríssmas). This represented a way to undermine gendered power relations (Falicov, 2007). In women’s Facebook groups, for example, the participants feel they can have a voice that is not going to be censured or ridiculed. They feel they can talk about any women’s issue. Some of the participants created groups for discussion and support and are helping other migrant women to settle in New Zealand. (“The Facebook group started because they wanted to know “where is a good place to do waxing?” or “where can I get my medicine?” Ana). Some groups are specifically developed for co-national mothers as the Colo de Mãe, which is a platform to help and introduce Brazilian mothers and promote traditional events for their children. (“We’ve been helping each other with information and things (...) because people have no one and they need some help” Vitoria). This finding is partially related to Madge and O’connor (2005)’s online research project entitled Cyberparents that analysed the empowerment of new mothers on the internet. The authors found that virtual
social support helped women to cope with their new experiences as mothers. The internet was effective in creating a virtual community that enabled new mothers to interact with each other and provide resource information, increasing their sense of empowerment and ameliorating any potential alienation process. On the other hand, a particular website about parenting seemed to reinforce traditional patriarchal relations. I have found, as already stated, that online and social media were important tools for women’s empowerment and challenging of established gender roles.

Thus, a sense of solidarity enabled the participants to feel part of the community they left behind as well as integrating them into the new community of the host society (Komito, 2011). Feminist studies about the internet have shown that women can connect themselves in a more democratic, gender egalitarian and new form of public space. It strengthens women’s movements and feminists’ issues by building solidarity within communities of women as well as promoting agency and renegotiating their identities (Carstensen & Winker, 2007; Cartensen, 2009; Consalvo & Paasonen, 2002).

Again, the dilemma of acculturation emerges. A strong online engagement was perceived with the participants’ ethnic communities in the host society, particularly with co-national women, as well as with their family and friends back in their homelands. This is in accordance with some studies (Dekker and Engebersen, 2010; Nedelcu, 2012; Benitez, 2012) about new technology, social media and their impact on migrants. Nedelcu (2012) studied the role played by ICTs in promoting migrants’ new transnational habitats based on a previous study about the use of the Internet by Romanian professionals in Toronto. The author emphasised that even without face-to-face interactions, migrants can maintain and strengthen distant bonds and a sense of closeness with their families through online ongoing exchanges. A similar finding was made by Benitez (2012) about Salvadoran Transnational families and their ICT and communication practices. The author showed that online social networking such as Facebook, Twitter and Skype provide a new sense of transnationality among families in terms of emotional support and proximity. In this paper, Ana’s case illustrates this as well as Diana’s example about her daily communication with her mother in Colombia. (”The day I don’t call her is like ‘what’s happened to you? What’s going on? Are you ok?’“)
Dekker and Engebersen (2010) examined how social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. The authors found that social media is crucial for migrants to maintain ties and contacts within geographically dispersed networks of family and friends as well as to organise ties with co-ethnics in their assimilation and integration processes. This corroborates with my findings as exemplified by the Colombian Association NZ, mentioned by Diana that brings Colombians together through Facebook by posting news and organising events such as Sunday lunches in a Colombian Restaurant with traditional food and live music.

Deviating a little from Dekker and Engebersen's (2010) research, my findings also demonstrated that even though social media was considered a platform for the participants to keep up with their culture and language, cultural similarity is not a synonym for affinity. (“The fact that we have a similar background doesn't mean we need to be friends” Coral).

Despite this, the women of this study felt that, through online and social media, they can participate in New Zealand society without much discrimination by engaging with mainstreamers through organisations, for example, of migrant support or business. This was also found in the consumption of media and news. Although some of them still consume media and news from their home countries to keep up-to-date and feel a connection with their homelands (Willis & Yeoh, 2002), others prefer to be more aware of what is going on in New Zealand, indicating more assimilation and integration within the host society. However, they also seemed to be proud to share positive news from their home countries on their social media channels. (“I shared with my friends because when something is good about Brazil, you need to share” Ana). This is a way to break down generalised stereotypes embraced by the media about Latin Americans such as the cocaine industry or their questionable characters mentioned in the findings. Thus, in continuation with the role played by the ethnic media, migrant social media have been shown to be a tool to promote positive images of their ethnic groups.

The link with their countries of origin through social media was also seen through their business activities, as in Ana’s weekly hangouts with Brazilians about New Zealand and its education opportunities. These women have been creating a bridge between their homelands and the new land. (“I believe that this is
how things are now, we are in NZ but we are able to connect with people in Brazil. It means future, technology, connection” Ana). We can, therefore, see how agency and autonomy impacts their gender situations as migrant women (Assis, 2007; Assis, 2014) in New Zealand.

Overlapping Themes

There is a fine line delimiting the three themes discussed and analysed in this chapter – Theme One: Renegotiating Gender Values, Roles and Status; Theme 2: Acculturation, Gender and the relevance of culture and language maintenance; Theme Three: Latin American migrant women and the online and social media. Most of the time, they overlap with each other. As shown, the feminisation of migration influences the communication networks and vice-versa. Those networks – whether they are online or offline, formal or informal – have provided the participants with practical and emotional resources and human capital for their development and success in the host society. Virtual transnational ties presented an important way to keep up with their homeland and overseas cultural and family references.

While those women have been dealing with acculturation and the maintenance of their culture and language through these networks, they are also finding the ground to empower and support each other, overcoming traditional gender roles within their private and public lives. Therefore the women of this study, although some more than others, have actively transformed their gender and migration experiences in New Zealand with their communication networks.

Motherhood and its consequent need to maintain their culture and language in their children has been shown to be a strong influence on the participants’ communication networks. They network through playgroups, websites and social media groups of mothers. Ethnic media was proven to be important to the Brazilian women of this study, a space where those women have a voice and can promote and help the Brazilian community in general. However, for the other participants ethnic media did not have a great impact.

The most important finding of this study relates to the awareness and the effort those migrant women have demonstrated in terms of their personal and professional growth and possibilities within New Zealand society. The way the
participants are formally and informally organising themselves with their female co-ethnics to promote ethnic migrant business, inspire others and help with emotional and cultural support represents a breakaway from the Latina stereotypes. A paradoxical situation lies between breaking away patriarchal values and keeping their culture. On one hand, a more gender egalitarian society as New Zealand provides room for the women of this study to empower themselves. On the other hand, they also succeed in the new country by keeping the collectivist aspect of their homelands and organising themselves in groups and associations to support and empower each other. These women seemed to know how to renegotiate their gender and migration experience. They recognised that patriarchy did not enable them and, at the same time, they knew how to retain what was important to them from their cultures: femininity and family values. Thus, the participants took the opportunities given in a more gender egalitarian society to empower themselves by creating and engaging with different types of networks, especially the gender-based ones.

Final Summary

In this chapter, I have analysed and discussed the communication networks related to the feminisation of migration and Latin American migrant women’s empowerment in New Zealand. Influenced by the collectivist aspects of their culture and breaking away from masculinist values, those women are active in the establishment of their formal and informal networks. I have also drawn attention to the importance of ethnic women’s role models and the growth of ethnic female entrepreneurship and leadership within their communities.

Communication networks for the participants are linked, too, to acculturation and culture and language maintenance. As some women explained, they feel more comfortable with co-ethnics than with mainstreamers. Based on their culture and the contact with their female co-ethnics, femininity was considered an attribute of integration and success in the host society. Ethnic media was shown to be important mainly to the Brazilians. Apart from that, the use of online and social media is a way to keep up with their virtual transnational ties as well to establish connections within the host society. They also used them for
business purposes. Migrant women’s groups on social media played a significant role in the migration experience.

The discussion and analysis of the key findings in this chapter has demonstrated the role played by communication networks and their implications for the migration experiences of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand. It has also provided ways to address the answers to my key research question and sub-questions. The next and final chapter will provide the answers to each question and present concluding thoughts, the limitations of this research project as well as recommendations and suggestions for future studies.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This research project set out to explore the communication networks of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand using a variety of data collection methods with the aim of addressing the following key research question. In this concluding chapter, I provide direct answers to this question and the sub-questions based on the findings and their discussion in the previous two chapters. I also restate the significance of this research project, discuss its limitations and provide recommendations for further study.

Answering the research question based on the sub-questions

In order to address the main research question, I first provide answers for the three sub-questions.

S.Q 1 What is the communicative ecology of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand?

As seen in the findings, the communicative ecology of the Latin American migrant women of this study is composed of formal and informal networks, online and social media as well as ethnic / migrant media. Their formal networks are comprised of women’s associations (Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa and NZ Brasileiríssimas); organisations and professionals for migrant support (job mentors, immigration advisors, HMST, GCHLW, Catholic Social Services, and the defunct OMEGA,); child care and education (Plunket, Brazilian Plunket Playgroup, Mums and Bubs, Playcentre, Manitas Playgroup, Daycare, Waikids and HeartKids NZ); culture and language maintenance (Grupo Mamãe Brasileira Aotearoa; Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato; Casa Espana Language School; Churches for Spanish speaking people; Colombian Association NZ); and business associations (Latin American New Zealand Business Council and the Organic Dairy Producers Group). Their informal networks include their communication with their family in New Zealand and overseas, their connection with friends (Latin Americans or non-Latin Americans) and communities (women related; Latin American related; not
specifically Latin American related). Their use of online and social media embraces websites they have created for motherhood, Latin American migrant women’s empowerment and business purposes. It also includes social media channels through which they connect with the Latin American community and general communities in New Zealand and overseas as well as promote their business and women’s activities. Ethnic migrant media is used by the Brazilian women through the online magazine *Mundo Brasileiro Aotearoa* and by the women from the Grupo Cultural Hispano-Latino Waikato through its online newsletter, *Informativo*.

**S.Q 2 How do Latin American migrant women organise their formal and informal communication networks?**

As indicated in the answer to the question above, the formal networks of the women of this study are structured in women’s associations, organisations and professionals for migrant support, culture and language maintenance, child care and education, and business associations. Their informal networks are organised by family, friends and community.

Both their formal and informal networks are organised in terms of support for their motherhood challenges and raising their children bilingual (GBMA and Manitas), for professional development, women’s empowerment and to maintain their culture and language in New Zealand. Their networks are based on their need to connect with their homelands through family and friends, with their culture through organisations and associations as well as to have a better integration in the host society. Women’s issues are at the core of their networks. In fact, some of them created associations or group of friends to share experiences with other Latin American, migrants or Kiwi women (NZBrasileirissimas, Girls’ Club, Book Club). Some of them organised yoga and Zumba classes with other women as well. They can have face-to-face meetings or participate in social media groups and have online connection with their family friends. They also use their networks to promote their business activities.

Evidence of the feminisation of migration was shown as individual migrant women felt the need and took the initiative to create networks that directly address their needs. As an empowering and proactive process, these initiatives
showed that new forms of migrant connections are created by the fact that women are migrating for personal reasons and generating gender based migrant networks to succeed in the new country (Raghuram, 2004; Ryan, 2007).

**S.Q 3 What is the role of the ethnic media for Latin American migrant women?**

Findings from this research project indicated that traditional ethnic media are not as significant for all the participants as are their other formal and informal networks and their use of online and social media. This might be because some women are more concerned with their personal environments and connections and not so involved with the wider Latin American community. However, for the Brazilian women, ethnic media provided an opportunity to one participant to become a leader within her Brazilian community and open a space for other Brazilian women and men to have a voice. Ethnic media, then, served as a way to celebrate Brazilian women in the New Zealand society, to promote Brazilian business and positive images of Brazil as well as to better integrate into the host society and the wider Latin American community, as evidenced by the prospect of future partnerships with Spanish Speaking Latin Americans.

**R.Q What role do communication networks play in the migration experience of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand?**

In this thesis, I explored how the feminisation of migration and communication networks influence each other as well as how Latin American migrant women’s empowerment has been manifested in New Zealand. The findings indicated that women migrating for personal and professional reasons (Raghuram, 2004; Ryan, 2007) related to the creation and establishment of gender based communication networks (Aizpúrua, 2011; Ryan, 2011) in New Zealand, a more gender egalitarian society. This led to their empowerment by breaking away from the established Latin American patriarchal ideology and maintaining their cultural assets such as femininity and family values. Some women felt more
empowered in New Zealand (Aizpúrua, 2011; Rivera et al, 2000) and were proactive in creating their own networks with other women to address their needs in the host society. The wider and more established the networks of the women of this study have been, the more they could renegotiate gender roles and expectations within their private and public lives. New Zealand presents more gender equality than most Latin American countries, as indicated in the Gender Inequality Index (United Nations Development Programme, 2015) and through its Ethnic Women’s Network Project (Halliday & Waring, 2014) and Ethnic Women Leadership Project (The New Zealand Office of Ethnic Communities, 2013). Also, some women mentioned that the fact that men were seen to have more choices and privileges in their home countries meant they frequently felt discouraged to pursue their goals. New Zealand has enabled the participants to establish their informal and formal networks. This can be related to co-ethnic organisations for women’s migrants’ support, for example.

Ethnic female role models (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Blanton et al 2000; Kwong et al, 2009) seemed to play an important role for those women to thrive in the host society. Although motherhood has held back participants’ personal and professional development, some have developed leadership skills within their ethnic community or even started their own business enterprises. Evidence from this study shows that this was made possible through the networks they sought to be part of in New Zealand or created themselves.

As evidence has shown in this research project, culture and language maintenance, along with the more challenging process of acculturation, are related to gender roles and expectations of both sending and receiving societies (Aizpúrua, 2011). Thus, communication networks are embedded in those variables. Some women in this study have dealt more easily with their acculturation processes as they were more open to or have more positive experiences with both migrant and non-migrant connections. However, socio-cultural and situational similarity (Thoits, 1986) has been proven to be the most effective influencing factor enabling the participants to establish their ties in New Zealand, mainly with their female co-ethnics. Being in contact with Latinas has been shown to be crucial for them to strengthen their sense of femininity and family structure and use it as an advantage to grow in the host country (Dedirdirek and Whitehead, 2004; Cevajner,
As shown above, ethnic media did not play a crucial role for all the women of this study, only for the Brazilians. In their case, it represented a way to promote not only Brazilian women and their businesses, but also all the positive achievements of the Brazilian community in general within New Zealand. (Noronha and Papoutsaki, 2014). It also presented a way to integrate the wider Latin American community into the host society, as demonstrated by the prospect of future partnerships with other Latin Americans.

Online and social media had an important impact on the migration experiences of the Latin American women of this study. They used those as tools to maintain their virtual transnational ties as well to establish connections within the host society (Ryan, 2008; Willis & Yeoh, 2002; Portes et al, 1999; Vertovec, 19990). Online migrant women’s groups played a crucial role for the participants as they felt more comfortable about sharing women’s issues such as personal concerns or motherhood. The use of social media was also important for the participants to be able keep up with their families. This helped them to overcome the feeling of being “left out” of their lives. Social media was also shown to be significant for their business and for getting news from their homelands or their New Zealand communities. Thus, an overall use of social media for the participants represented a significant tool of empowerment, agency, autonomy and solidarity (Falicov, 2007; Carstensen & Winker, 2007; Cartensen, 2009; Consalvo & Paasonen, 2002) as well as acculturation and culture and language maintenance (Dekker and Engebersen, 2010; Nedelcu, 2012; Benitez, 2012).

Concluding thoughts

This study showed the role played by communication networks in the migration experiences of ten Latin American migrant women in New Zealand. This qualitative investigation combined the oral history and communicative ecology approaches with a feminist theoretical background, which enabled me as the researcher to create a space where the participants’ voices could stand out without interference and to understand their self-development in a gendered and multi-ethnic society. (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007). Through the oral history approach I was able to collect the participants’ narratives (Reinharz, 1992; Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Hoopes, 1979) about their lives and communication
networks. Employing feminist theoretical lenses enabled me to understand the diversity of women’s issues in terms of their different cultural backgrounds and ethnicities (Hooks, 2015; Zavos, 2012; Anthias & Yuva-Davis, 2010; Tong, 1998).

Mapping the communicative ecology of the Latin American migrant women in New Zealand was essential to pursue a holistic understanding (Leenie & Tacchi, 2013) of their group structure and their social interactions. The communicative ecology approach was pivotal in this study as through it I was able to map their communication channels and environments as well as flows of information (Tacchi & Watkins, 2007; Hearn and Foth, 2007; Lennie & Tacchi, 2013), providing me with vital evidence of their impact on the participants’ migration experience. This allowed me to understand how they used different resources, communication channels and flows of information as a support for their migration experience as well as for their empowerment (Ryan, 2007; Ryan, 2011; Felicov, 2007; Carstensen & Winker, 2007; Cartensen, 2009; Consalvo & Paasonen, 2002; Dekker and Engebersen, 2010; Nedelcu, 2012; Benitez, 2012).

Thus, aiming at an in-depth understanding and more authentic personal narratives (O’Leary; 2010; Chirban, 1996; Reinharz, 1992; Anderson and Jack, 1998), I used the methods of focus group discussions, oral history individual interviews and participatory photography through which those women were invited to create their own narratives through a photo diary compilation of their networks (Cossey, 2013; Rabadán, 2014; Williams & Lykes, 2003; Sutherland & Chen, 2009). The participatory photography was not as successful as I expected because they did not present a strong cultural component or evidence of the types of media used by the participants. However, the visual elements I collected online from the social media pages mentioned by the participants helped me to draw a more holistic and composite visual image of their activities and networks.

I found that by leaving behind a more patriarchal culture as Latin America (Rivera et al, 2000) and keeping what is important for them, their femininity and family values, the participants were able to organise their networks within a more gender egalitarian and multicultural society. This facilitated their initiative and enhanced attitudes towards their own empowerment as well as other Latin American migrant women in New Zealand. The feminisation of migration was evidenced by some women migrating for their own reasons and creating gender
based migrant networks to fulfil their needs as migrant women in the host country (Raghuram, 2004; Ryan, 2007). This is a proactive and empowering process (Rivera et al, 2000; Aizpúrua, 2011). Thus, their communication networks served as emotional, professional and health support, job mentoring, for the development of their leadership skills, to set up their own business and to make strong friendships. Also, they played the role of helping them with their motherhood challenges as well as maintaining their culture and language within the host society and through contact with their homelands (Rivera et al, 2000; Aizpúrua, 2011). Some women said that they left behind a sentiment of loneliness, isolation and homesickness for a situation where they are more settled and happier with a home-like feeling.

The most important insight given by this research project was how these women renegotiated their gender and migrant identities in New Zealand. They empowered themselves within a more gender egalitarian society by deciding what to leave and what to keep from their cultures. Cultural and gender renegotiation happened by retaining what is valued by them (femininity and collectivist aspects) and ejecting what no longer serves them (male dominant values).

At a personal level, this study took me through an unexpected intellectual and emotional journey. Undertaking this type of research was not a straightforward process. I had to familiarise myself with the methods I was using, to discipline myself with time and planning and to throw myself into the unknown – and sometimes painful – exercise of digging through thoughts and analysis. All of this made me stronger and more aware of women’s internal and external struggles. Certainly, this was a valuable period of reflection about the society I come from and how old patriarchal values can be transformed from the inside through my experience as migrant and woman in New Zealand.

Limitations

Even though I put a lot of effort to ensure genuine, in-depth and credible research, I also faced limitations during the research process.

The first has to do with the sample size and limited context. I analysed the impact of communication networks on the migration experience of ten Latin American women in two specific regions of New Zealand – Auckland and the
Waikato. Thus, my findings cannot be generalised. (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007; Lester, 1999). As I conducted a qualitative investigation, the findings I pursued generated more in-depth and richer data (O’Leary, 2010) that was only possible through the methods I used: focus group discussions, oral history individual interviews, participatory photography and visual collection from Facebook pages.

This leads to my second limitation, the use of participatory photography. My intent with this method was to allow the investigation to be a collaborative process in which the participants could tell their stories through the images they would produce themselves, a process which would have enabled them to also reflect on their migrant experiences (Cossey, 2013; Rabadán, 2014; Williams & Lykes, 2003; Sutherland & Chen, 2009). The photographs would have been visual evidence of their communication networks. However, the resulting photo diary component was not as strong as expected, as the majority of the images were staged, and lacked cultural context and evidence of the types of media used by the participants. Thus, in order to partly fill the gap in this part of the project and also visually enhance my findings, I went through the Facebook pages they mentioned and collected visual evidence of what they referred to during our interviews.

The third issue had to do with objectivity. As already stated in the research design chapter, the nature of a qualitative investigation is intrinsically subjective, which can compromise its credibility (O’Leary, 2010; Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007; Lester, 1999). This study was influenced by my gender, my cultural and intellectual background and world outlook (Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007). However, my experience as a journalist, photographer, translator and language teacher, as well as my cultural insider’s position, helped me to build and maintain relationships with the participants and to develop this communication-based research project with rich written and visual elements.

The fourth limitation was the language in which the interviews were carried out. I opted by interviewing in English, but made it clear to the participants they could also express themselves in their own language if needed as I am a Brazilian-Portuguese native speaker and have an advanced level of English and Spanish. All of the women involved including myself have Spanish or Brazilian-Portuguese as native language. Even though the majority of the participants had an advanced level of English, some misunderstandings might have happened, influencing the
results. However, the few times I detected a possible misunderstanding, I contacted the respective participant to clarify it.

Despite the limitations I described above, this study contributed in-depth and rich data about the role communication networks played in the migration experience of Latin American migrant women in Aotearoa.

**Recommendations**

The communication networks of the Latin American migrant women in New Zealand are complex and have many other aspects that invite exploration. As communication networks vary with context and time, more specific investigation focusing on participants from other New Zealand regions could lead to different directions and new understandings of how the communicative ecology of migrant women impacts upon their migration experiences. Because my research addressed women from the Auckland and Waikato regions, Latinas from other New Zealand areas may have different communication network experiences, for example.

As the collaborative component of this study was not as successful as I expected, a more participatory investigation – whether with visual or written inputs – about migrant women’s communication networks may contribute other important findings. Also, a cross-cultural study or an investigation that links gender and migrants’ socio-economic and educational backgrounds could present different outcomes, as women who migrate out of necessity instead of lifestyle change may have different networks. Some examples include a comparison between Latinas and other ethnic group in New Zealand or even Latinas in New Zealand and in other countries. More studies about Latina entrepreneurs in New Zealand as well as migrant women and leadership in this country could also contribute to the understanding of migrant women’s experiences.

Additionally, based on my observations, I would like to make other recommendations that bring together researchers and organisations focused on community engagement and development, migrant and gender matters and for policy reference. It is important that those work together to better identify migrant women’s issues within their acculturation processes through gender, integrationist and multicultural lenses, including psychological and motherhood assistance as
well as professional development. This could be related to community projects that consider gender, ethnic entrepreneurship and community leadership, for example. Also, support to migrant mothers that lack any type of family or social support network to help take care of their children should be taken into account. They can then pursue their personal and professional goals, increasing their self-confidence and sense of well-being.
REFERENCES


Hunter, Sally V., Analysing and representing narrative data: The long and winding road, Current Narratives, 2, 2010, 44-54.


Kitzinger, J. (1994). The methodology of Focus Groups: the importance of interaction between research participants. Sociology Of Health & Illness, 16(1), 103-121. doi:10.1111/1467-9566.ep11347023


the three waves of the Longitudinal Immigration Survey. Labour and Immigration Research Centre of New Zealand. Department of Labour of New Zealand.


Appendix One: Information for Participants

"Gender, Migration and Communication Networks: mapping the communicative ecology of Latin American migrant women in Aotearoa / New Zealand"

This study focuses on the narratives of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand and aims at exploring the role communication networks play in their migration experiences. In this sense, communication networks mean the formal (organisations, ethnic media, immigration advisors, travel agents and labour recruiters) and informal/personal (family, friends and community) ties existing in their lives as migrants.

This is a qualitative investigation and will be conducted under the communicative ecology mapping, oral history and feminist approaches. Collecting their narratives is a way of documenting and learning from the life stories of those migrant women, who have left their homelands in an attempt to establish their lives in a different country. Through a feminist approach, migrant women’s voices can provide an in-depth comprehension of the power relations of a gendered and multietnic society and insights to promote social change. Thus, in order to map their communicative ecology, the researcher will use the methods of focus group, oral history interviews and photo diaries. The goal is to pursue a thorough understanding and more authentic personal narratives. Also, it enables relationship building in which is possible to explore topics that are relevant for both interviewer and interviewee.

With all that said, the researcher shall collect your views, narrative, notes and photos about the role formal and informal communication networks play in your migration experience.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This does not stop you from changing your mind if you wish to withdraw from the project. However, because of my schedule, any withdrawals must be done within 2 weeks after you have attended the focus group or I have interviewed you. The focus group and the interview with you will be recorded and transcribed.

Your name and information that may identify you will be kept completely confidential. All information collected from you, including your photo diary compilation, will be stored on a password protected file at Unitec for a period of 5 years and only you, the researcher and my supervisors will have access to this information. Apart from that, your focus group participation, interview, the transcription of it and your photo diary compilation will be kept secure from unauthorised access on a password protected file in the computer of the researcher for a period of 5 years.

After concluded and approved, the research project will be made public as the researcher aims at publishing an article for a New Zealand, regional or international journal such as Communication Journal of New Zealand, Oral History in New Zealand, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies and/or Journal of Research in Gender Studies as well as presenting it at a conference. Also, a copy of this study will be available to the Unitec Library.

In addition, I understand that if you want to receive any information resulting from the project, the researcher will share with me at my request by contacting the researcher.

Please contact me if you need more information about the project. My number is 0221 765 192 and my email is luciana.hoffmann.nunes@gmail.com.

At any time if you have any concerns about the research project you can also contact my supervisor Dr Evangelia Papoutsaki, phone 815 4321 ext. 8746 or email epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1035)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (30/06/2015) to (30/06/2016). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix Two: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

“Gender, Migration and Communication Networks: mapping the communicative ecology of Latin American migrant women in Aotearoa / New Zealand”

I have had the research project explained to me and I have read and understand the information sheet given to me.

I understand that I don’t have to be part of this if I don’t want to and I may withdraw at any time within two weeks after the focus group or the interview with me is undertaken.

I understand that everything I say is confidential and none of the information I give will identify me and that the only people who will know what I have said will be the researcher and her supervisor.

I understand that my discussion with the researcher will be recorded and transcribed.

I also understand that all the information I give, including my photo diary compilation, will be stored securely on a computer at Unitec for a period of 5 years. I also understand that my focus group participation, interview and photo diary compilation will be kept secure from unauthorised access on a password protected file in the computer of the researcher for a period of 5 years.

I understand that after concluded and approved, the research project will be made public as the researcher aims at publishing an article for a New Zealand, regional or international journal such as Communication Journal of New Zealand, Oral History in New Zealand, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies and/or Journal of Research in Gender Studies as well as presenting it at a conference. I also understand that a copy of this study will be available to the Unitec Library.

In addition, I understand that if I want to receive any information resulting from the project, the researcher will share with me at my request by contacting the researcher through her telephone number (0221765192) and email (luciana.hoffmann.nunes@gmail.com) or her supervisor Evangelia Papoutsaki, phone 815 4321 ext. 8746 or email epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz.

I understand that I can see the finished research document.

I have had time to consider everything and I give my consent to be a part of this project.

Participant Signature: ………………………….. Date: ……………………………

Project Researcher: ………………………….. Date: ……………………………

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1035)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (30/06/2015) to (30/06/2016). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Participant Information Form: Focus Group

My name is Luciana Hoffmann Nunes. I am currently enrolled in the Master of International Communication degree in the Department of Communication Studies at Unitec New Zealand and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

This study focuses on the narratives of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand and aims at exploring the role formal and informal communication networks play in their migration experiences.

I request your participation in the following way: in the focus group. Lasting up to 2 hours, the focus group shall be audio recorded for the purpose of this study, including master thesis, conference and New Zealand, regional and/or international journal publishing.

You will not be identified in the Thesis. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person apart from the researcher and her supervisors. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given, and you can, if you wish, ask to see the Thesis before it is submitted for examination.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting. If you have any queries about this study, you may contact me or my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

You can contact me whether on my mobile (022 176 5192) or through my email (luciana.hoffmann.nunes@gmail.com).

My supervisor is Dr Evangelia Papoutsaki, phone 815 4321 ext. 8746 or email epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1035)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (30/06/2015) to (30/06/2016). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Participant Information Form: Individual Interview and Photo Diary Compilation

My name is Luciana Hoffmann Nunes. I am currently enrolled in the Master of International Communication degree in the School of Education at Unitec New Zealand and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for a Thesis course which forms a substantial part of this degree.

This study focuses on the Latin American migrant women in New Zealand and their narratives and aims at exploring the role that the communication networks play in their experiences.

I request your participation in the following way: in the interview and the photo diary compilation. The interview shall be audio recorded for the purpose of this study, including master thesis, conference and New Zealand, regional and/or international journal publishing. During the interview meeting, I will ask you to keep photo diaries (at least one entry a week) about your communication practices as migrant in New Zealand. After three weeks or one month, we will meet again to discuss your interpretations about the photographs produced.

You will not be identified in the Thesis. The results of the research activity will not be seen by any other person apart from the researcher and her supervisors. You are free to ask me not to use any of the information you have given, and you can, if you wish, ask to see the Thesis before it is submitted for examination.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find your involvement interesting. If you have any queries about this study, you may contact me or my principal supervisor at Unitec New Zealand.

My number is 0221765192 and my email is luciana.hoffmann.nunes@gmail.com.

My supervisor is Evangelia Papoutsaki, phone 815 4321 ext. 8746 or email epapoutsaki@unitec.ac.nz.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2015-1035)

This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from (30/06/2015) to (30/06/2016). If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix Five: Guidelines for the use of participatory photography

Guidelines for the use of participatory photography

Aiming at mapping the communicative ecology of Latin American migrant women in New Zealand more holistically, I will also use the method of participatory photography. This method allows the research project to be a collaborative process where the participants share experiences through photos taken by them. As a socio-communicative space, the participatory photography encourages the participants to develop their own narratives through images.

Regarding the use of participatory photography in this study, during the interview meeting, I will ask you to keep a photo diary about your life and communication practices as a Latin American migrant woman in New Zealand. After one month, we will get in touch again to talk about the photographs and your interpretations of them. Thus, the photographs you take and choose will serve as visual evidences of your communication networks.

Please choose a minimum of 4 images that relate to your life and your communication networks in New Zealand. Below, you find some questions to help you to complete your photo diary compilation.

These guidelines are important for me to understand the importance of each photo for you. Please, complete them for every image you choose.

1- What’s happening? (meeting, event, organisation, family/friends, media, online/offline, social media...)
2- Where and when this is taking place?
3- Is it a casual or frequent thing for you?
4- Why did you choose this image?
5- What’s the importance of this moment/situation/person for your life being an Argentinian, Brazilian or Mexican / Latin American migrant woman in New Zealand?
6- What’s the meaning of this photo for you? What does it represent in your life?

I hope you enjoy this process!

If you have any question, please, don’t hesitate to contact me:
Luciana Hoffmann Nunes: telephone number (0221765192) and email (luciana.hoffmann.nunes@gmail.com).
Appendix Six: Draft questions for the focus group discussions and individual interviews

**Draft questions for the focus group discussions and individual interviews**

Before the discussions I introduced myself, expressed my appreciation for their participations and explain briefly the research purposes. I also gave them a small survey to fill with information about country of origin, age, occupation, education level, years in New Zealand, languages spoken, relationship status and number of children, organisations they belonged. I then asked if all the participants agrees with the audio record of the focus group.

The following questions guided the focus group discussion. I used the questions as well to give the opportunity to the participants to interact with each, allowing other related issues to emerge. I did not anticipate any of those issues.

**Warming up questions**

1) Life back home (country and city of origin, occupation by then, impressions about that moment)
2) Why did you decide to come to NZ? And when did you come? (reasons, expectations, preconceptions, impressions on the first arrival, language barrier examples, details).
3) What are your experiences as a Latin American (or from your own ethnic group) migrant and a woman in New Zealand? In fact, do you feel part of the wider Latin America community or only from your own ethnic group? How is that?
4) Stereotypes: Are there any? For you, what are the perceptions of New Zealanders or other migrants have about your country of origin in general and about the women of your country of origin?

**Communication Networks**

5) How do you communicate with the Latin American and your country of origin community in New Zealand?
6) What Latin American communication networks and channels do you have and use in New Zealand?
8) Are there any women's groups/association (formal and informal)? If yes, why do you choose to use them as compared to the general groups?
9) How do you organise yourself around these female networks? How did you get to be in them? Did you start any yourself? Why? How? How memberships and activities are negotiated?
10) What is the importance of each communication network for you as a migrant woman in New Zealand?
11) What about the NZ mainstream media, how do you feel about the NZ media covering Latin American or Brazilian, Argentinina, Chilean... issues?
12) What others communication networks do/did you use in your migration process and life as a migrant in New Zealand? Are there any specific media for your own ethnic community? Do you use it? How?

Appendix Seven: Participant Profile

24 Basically, the individual interviews followed these guidelines. However, I also asked them more in-depth details about the communication networks they have mentioned during the focus group discussions. Some other networks also emerged during the individual interviews that I explored as well.
Participant Profile*
*Note that I will not be giving your real name when I do your profile in the findings. Because of that, if you want, you're free to choose a pseudonym for me to refer to you in my research.

1. Name:

2. Preferred pseudonym:

3. Age:

4. Country/hometown:

5. Occupation:

6. Years in New Zealand:

7. Current city you're living in:

8. Status (single, partner, married, divorced, children):

8a. Nationality of your partner/husband and your children:

9. Education level:

10. Languages Spoken:

11. Do you belong to any association or organisation of any kind? If yes, please, mention.

12. Anything else you would like to add as part of your profile?
Full name of author: Luciana Hoffmann Nunes

Full title of thesis/dissertation/research project: Gender, Migration and Communications Networks: Mapping the Communicative Ecology of Latin American Migrant Women in Aotearoa / New Zealand

Department Of Communication Studies

Degree: Master of International Communication. Year of presentation 2016

EITHER:

I agree to my thesis/dissertation/research project being lodged in the Unitec Library

(including being available for inter-library loan), provided that due acknowledgement of its use is made. I consent to copies being made in accordance with the Copyright Act 1994.

and

I agree that a digital copy may be kept by the Library and uploaded to the institutional repository and be viewable world wide.

OR:

(2) I wish to apply for my thesis/dissertation/research project to be embargoed for a limited period as per Academic Policy 12 Conduct of Student Research, Guideline 12/8.

Reason for embargo: ...................................................................................................................

Supervisor Approval: ...................................................................................................................

Dean, Research Approval: ...........................................................................................................

Embargo Time Period: ...............................................................................................................