Abstract

This thesis evaluates the ability of the Auckland region to successfully house its resettling Ethiopian refugee population, from a rights-based perspective focusing particularly on identity and representation. Tempering the analysis with an understanding of refugee identity as lived experience, I assess the interactions between Ethiopian culture and the material manifestations of contemporary state housing policy. Much of the literature concerning refugee resettlement inquires into areas pertinent to the capitalist goals of the “host” nation, such as the language acquisition and employment prospects of resettlers. In line with this, prominent research in New Zealand follows an established ghettoization analysis of black African geographic proximity and does not pay sufficient attention to the role of refugee women in resettlement. Alternatively, my research begins with a framework that takes its lead from the recent emergence of post-ghettoization arguments, and critiques current definitions of successful resettlement.

Throughout the thesis, the Eurocentrism of social housing policy is traced to housing outcomes for ethnic minority groups, beginning with the history of state housing policy and its relation to migrants, and focusing on the three key areas of access, design and location. I draw upon specially tabulated Census data for the Ethiopian population, demonstrating how immigration policy has shaped the resettling population, and the impacts of this on the housing outcomes for refugees. An attendant focus on ethnicity and location provides argument for the positive resources offered by the proposed geographic clustering of Ethiopian refugees, ultimately leading to an argument for tenants’ greater choice in the social housing allocation process. Primary to this argument is a specific, politically motivated understanding of the significance of houses as homeplaces for black ethnic minority groups, and the special role of women within them. More abstractly, and in response to the economic drive of much current literature, the thesis seeks to theoretically reconcile the refugee experience of forced displacement, with concepts of home. At the same time, the research aims to inform policy from within the bounds of capitalist social relations within the nation-state, which is itself a precondition of exile.
In loving memory of

Elizabeth Marie Ellery

1978-1999

With admiration
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Introduction

Background, Rationale and Structure of this Thesis

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unbearable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home; its essential sadness can never be surmounted.


If your neighbour is crying today, there’s no reason why you won’t be crying tomorrow.

Ethiopian proverb.¹

My connection with Ethiopian culture and the experiences of refugees resettling in New Zealand began several years ago in Christchurch, where I became close friends with neighbours who had recently arrived from a refugee camp in Sudan. Reflecting on this now, I can see how my neighbours typified those most harshly affected by neo-liberal reforms of the era. They were a large household by New Zealand standards, comprising of a single mother with six dependent children, and were state house tenants (Crothers 2000:199-120). In addition to the problems faced by residents of the impoverished neighbourhood we shared, my friends faced racist abuse from neighbours and were often frightened for their safety, particularly since there was no adult male in their household. The very small size of the Ethiopian population in Christchurch, in addition to the sprawling layout of the city, and coupled with their limited transport options,

¹ Quoted from Sorenson (1992:219).
meant that the family were distanced from other Ethiopians, and therefore the support they could receive was limited.

As a result of further reflection, I noticed discrepancies between the most high-profile literature on African refugees, and the experiences of my friends. Namely, the community studies research of Love Chile presents as problematic for three main reasons. First, housing problems faced by refugees are described as stemming from a lack of property rights (Chile 2002:362). This approach entails a view of housing rights as somehow operating outside capitalist social relations, and thus requiring the bolstering of property rights in order to be realised. Following this logic, the impact of social housing policy on citizens is marginal to the fulfilment of individual property rights. I argue that rights to housing must instead be assessed from a philosophical assertion of decommodification and universality, thus elevating housing above property distribution, which is inevitably curtailed. Hence, I seek to uncover the key elements of a housing policy necessary to uphold successful social housing for refugees.

Second, I argue that Chile ignores the ways in which housing results in different outcomes according to gender. While Chile (2002:363-364) does recognise some of the problems faced by refugee women, he focuses on discrimination in the public sphere, with its predominantly financial concerns. Rather, I suggest that an examination which includes refugee women’s roles in the private realm, in which housing is so often presumed to be located, is required for a balanced understanding of resettlement and the role that housing plays in it. Third, the ghettoization theory that appears to inform Chile’s research problematizes co-ethnic black African refugees living in close proximity. Considering this proposal, with the knowledge that my own neighbours
shifted to Auckland in order to be closer to more Ethiopians, I suggest an inquiry into some of the recent post-ghettoization literature emerging from abroad and it’s relevance to my topic.

These three areas I critique in Chile’s work prompt me to suggest three primary areas for inquiry that have so far gone unaddressed in New Zealand literature: the contribution of housing policy to successful resettlement of refugees and the subsequent ability of the Auckland region to accommodate refugees, the role of women in resettlement, and the post-ghettoization exploration of ethnicity and location. This follows recent prompts from the likes of geographer Kevin Dunn (1998:504) who points out that “the application of new cultural theory to the issue of ethnic concentration, and contemporary reassessment of established theories, is long overdue”.

As such, the first chapter in this thesis is a literature review, which also sets out a framework for the evaluation of refugee housing in resettlement, by systematically reviewing literature pertinent to uncovering political and gender aspects of the topic. In the review, I assert that refugee housing in resettlement must be considered in the philosophical context of housing as a universal right. I also demonstrate the relevance of gender and new understandings of refugee identity, while asserting a post-ghettoization argument about the interrelated significance of ethnicity and location. Proposals for clustering are introduced via the concept of homeplaces, which propels discussion about boundary creation, political mobilisation and the role of women.

The second chapter traces the exclusion and inclusion of Maori and Samoans into state housing, as two ethnic minority groups who arrived in the Auckland region primarily as
migrant populations. This chapter explores the outcomes of housing policy for these two groups, focusing on the three key areas of access, location and design. This functions as an historical context for contemporary refugee state housing experiences. In particular, I focus on the pakeha ideals manifested in these three aspects of state housing. This sets the scene for the third chapter, which introduces the policy currently governing refugee flows from Ethiopia to New Zealand. The importance of questioning the role of Ethiopian women in resettlement is made evident here, as my analysis of global and local policy reveals bias that works to disadvantage Ethiopian refugees in general, but has especially negative repercussions for women’s resettlement opportunities. The importance of theorising the role of women is grounded in my critique of the frequent application of the term “successful resettlement”, which inevitably sets the humanitarian grounding of refugee policy in terms of established capitalist social relations.

In turn, the fourth and fifth chapters locate the Ethiopian population within the state housing stock of Auckland. The fourth chapter focuses on the issues of access and design. First, it draws on my previous analysis of immigration policy in order to demonstrate how the residence status types it prescribes to refugees, have continuing impact on housing outcomes long into resettlement, since they determine access to state housing. I raise the issue of the tensions that this causes among refugees, and between refugees and other stakeholders, with reference to the as yet academically undeveloped understanding of popular constructions of blackness in New Zealand. This links to the important theme of neighbouring, and exemplifies some of the issues within discussions of ethnicity and location. Further, I raise the need for improved education regarding housing systems, and the necessity of policy that upholds housing rights in culturally appropriate ways. The second part of the fourth chapter looks at the design of state
housing, addressing the issue of overcrowding that is already evident for extended, often ethnic minority households in Auckland. Again, this section refers to the outcomes of immigration policy, raising the issue of women’s dependency on male sponsors, tempered with findings that reveal the greater reported housing satisfaction of those most likely to be living in overcrowded conditions. While detailing some gendered issues that arise with overcrowding, my resolution of these apparently conflicting findings, draws on the concept of homeplaces to demonstrate the positive link between ethnicity and close proximity to co-ethnic households.

The fifth chapter addresses the issues of location, in the first instance, challenging Chile’s assertion of co-ethnic black African refugee clustering and his application of a homogenised black African identity. After reviewing my own research, which instead exposes the extensive geographic dispersal of Ethiopians, I propose some alternative, positive takes on clustering. The subsequent discussion draws on ethnographic literature and demonstrates the role of women in Ethiopian communities. This leads to my assertion that housing policy should account for the potential that co-ethnic clustering can offer the Ethiopian community, via the creation of homeplaces. Finally, the sixth chapter offers some concluding remarks and policy proposals.
Methodology

The Multiple Method Approach

Because there is very limited literature concerning African migrants in New Zealand, I have decided to draw upon an interdisciplinary, multiple method\(^2\) approach to ensure that my thesis is not reliant on one body of research, or a singular methodological approach, which could easily create a skewed perception of the population. My multi-method approach is largely based on the analysis of statistical data from the New Zealand Census, in conjunction with ethnographic literature, while sporadically incorporating my own media analysis. Theoretical input is gleaned from development, refugee and housing studies literature. This methodology allows me to investigate the gaps in current knowledge about the population, and to critically examine the story of the population from various social and institutional perspectives. This approach is also invaluable in allowing me to make effective use of comparison between New Zealand housing and immigration conditions and those of other nations, particularly Australia, Canada and the United States, who have Ethiopian refugee populations as well as national foundations of indigeneity and colonialism.

Qualitative Research

Because of the relatively small size of the Ethiopian community, it is not currently possible to ensure to participants the appropriate anonymity necessary for qualitative research. Therefore, the one methodological area I do not cover in this research project is that of participant observation or interviews. The main issue in foregoing this type of

\(^2\) As described by Reinharz (1992:197-108).
interaction lies in the danger of generalizing the experiences of the community in Auckland. My focus on the issues surrounding Ethiopian identity, culture, and gender will go some way to overcoming this concern. In the end, this research is intended as means to suggest the importance of theorizing refugee housing in New Zealand, as a way of signalling the complexities of incorporating refugees into the country. Therefore, my reliance on multiple resources achieves a balanced discussion of wide-ranging themes, which would not be possible if sustaining an analysis of specific case studies.

The New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings

The New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings is held once every five years, and I draw on specially tabulated data sets from the two most recent; 1996 and 2001. It is to these I refer when no other reference is given. The nature of Census data availability ensures that purchased Census data that relates to small groups of people, protects the communities and individuals’ privacy, by randomly rounding data to base three. In my project, this means for example, that the numbers indicated for particular suburbs may be greater than the actual population dwelling in the suburb in question, and so forth throughout the data. There are additional rules restricting some parts of the Census information as a further insurance of non-identifiability. This means that all data I requested regarding the Ethiopian community was only available at the Auckland regional level, with further breakdowns unavailable. For instance, my interpretation of Ethiopian distribution throughout Auckland suburbs cannot be enhanced by similar suburban breakdowns of religion or ethnicity.
Gender Analysis

Because the mapping of the Ethiopian community in Auckland refers to quantitative data analysis as much as ethnographic literature, it is vital to ensure that gendered aspects do not go unaccounted for. As such, I am attentive to some of the core methodological features of feminist cross-cultural research, especially the critical evaluation of the available information, thus creating a solid basis for further investigation in this area. Additionally, my attendant focus on women throughout the thesis is of particular relevance to a contemporary understanding of housing, since women experience houses in a uniquely dichotomous way, as places of both security and family, and as of isolation and subjugation, an experience which is not readily reflected in statistical information.

Addressing Ethiopian Ethnicity

Any discussion of community raises a range of questions about the application and meaning of this term. The complexities of these ideas are evident in the Ethiopian case, as with any other refugee movement. The term “Ethiopian”, as applied in my writing, denotes nationality only and does not necessarily indicate ethnicity. This approach is necessary for transmitting exact statistical information to the body of my research, since Census data records Ethiopian identity in this way. Nevertheless, the political implications of the term must be signposted here, since a homogenised Ethiopian ethnicity is propounded by members of the historically elite ethnic group, the Amhara.

As noted earlier, a breakdown of the Ethiopian population by ethnicity is not available in Census data. So while I argue for the facilitation of Ethiopian identity (re)-formation, social relations, and the creation of boundaries as aspects of home, my discussion does
not take into account the different ethnic groups encompassed by this argument. Since theoretically, my topic seeks to reconcile exile and home within the bounds of the nation-state, using Ethiopian nationality in this way facilitates a coherent reply in the interests of informing policy. At the same time, there is evidence that ethnic differences, which are undoubtedly central in disputes in the homeland, change significantly in countries of resettlement. For instance, John Sorenson (1992:201) remarks how factors in countries of resettlement, such as racism, contribute to the acknowledgement that exile is “a fecund space for elaborating new forms and ways of organising experience, creating new affiliations, associations, and communities, for developing new identities”.

And in New Zealand studies, too, the interactions between Ethiopian groups has been identified as an emotional and practical resource, with one participant wishing that people “would help each other like that back home” (Skilling 2001:35), and another citing that the Ethiopian community was “very useful” (NZIS June 2004:142).

Taking note from John Sorenson (1992:205) I take up an approach in which the heterogeneity of the Ethiopian diaspora is recognised, while focusing on understanding concepts of boundary creation and the operations of the community in relation to institutions. In addition to Sorenson’s suggestions, I add an analysis of the creation and maintenance of diasporic communal identity, and take up concepts of boundary, identity and representation. These sometimes highly abstracted concepts are dealt with here as phenomenon that have important material outcomes and preconditions, and which are understood in this thesis as sources of culturally appropriate resettlement support.
Literature Review: Refugee Housing in Resettlement

This chapter builds a theoretical framework for the evaluation of refugee housing in resettlement. The framework’s interdisciplinary composition allows for the context specific analysis contained in the subsequent chapters, to address the multifaceted policy issues and contradictory rhetoric that the topic encapsulates. This chapter lays a foundation for the contextualisation of global social processes, drawing together the three key areas of housing, migration and identity. Because this thesis seeks to inform policy, the theoretical synthesis laid out in this chapter and the subsequent evaluation of the state housing, negotiates refugee rights to housing within the liberal paradigm.

Various factors complicate a rights-based analysis of refugee housing. The liberal democratic conception of rights, the individual, and the nation-state, as expressed in the social contract, systematically excludes non-whites (Mills 1997:12) and women (Pateman 1988:4) from full citizenship. The liberal notion upon which refugee law is based, relies on “a free, autonomous, rationale contract-making individual”, to the detriment of acknowledging gender and the rights transgressions that occur within the private sphere (Oswin 2001:349). Indeed, the nation-state is dialectically related to exile, as well as to those who embody exile; refugees (Peters 1999:19, Said 1994:139). Contemporarily, the liberal proposal is framed by global inequalities, wherein refugee movements are increasingly blockaded by the “gatekeeper mentality” of the rich nations (Lacroix 2004:149). According to B. S. Chimni (2001:151) the restrictive policy of these states is where the global refugee crisis is most lucidly manifested. Perhaps this is because it is also these nations that covet the economic dividends of globalisation, when globalisation itself is seen by displaced people as a rejection of their suffering, “as it
superannuates the divisions (ideological, geographical, polemical) that underwrite...exile” (Rudolphus Teeuwen 2003:11).

While recognising these predicaments, as I mentioned before, this thesis seeks to inform policy, and therefore operates from within the bounds of the liberal rights paradigm. Refugee theorist Natalie Oswin (2001:356-357) also argues that in spite of the pitfalls of discussing refugee interests within rights based paradigms, rights must nonetheless be further “interrogated”, due to their “powerful material consequences”. Elizabeth Colson (2003:3) too, asserts the importance of recognising that “labels have consequences in real life”. And in line with these two, Martha Nussbaum (2000:105) agrees that “even a highly moralized globalism needs the nation state at its core, because transnational structures…are insufficiently accountable to citizens and insufficiently representative of them.”

Hence, the cornerstone of the theoretical synthesis outlined in this chapter begins with the philosophically based housing policy of Peter King. King (2003:668) premises the indivisibility of housing and broader rights, providing a foundation that asserts the universality of the right to housing, and suggests a strong argument for cultural pluralism within this. I show how King’s argument is particularly important for refugees, yet does not sufficiently allow for migration, instead relying on the contractual relationship between citizen and state remaining intact. Because King does not take migration into account, his theory at first appears to be in collusion with some of the problems of the liberal rights stance, particularly the problem of property as a central facet of liberal arguments. Thus the second area I address is the challenge to the centrality of property rights. In reconciling these issues I review King’s argument for
the de-commodification of housing, before turning to the feminist, ethics-based development approach of Martha Nussbaum. With a particular focus on Nussbaum’s concept of affiliative capabilities and pluralism, her work proves useful for it’s re-focusing of rights in the direction of social relationships.

Next, in order to address two areas of difficulty, namely, questions of the private sphere and ethnic minorities, the relevance of bell hooks’ homeplaces theory becomes apparent. Addressing broader capitalist patriarchal structures, the theory of homeplaces affirms the innate connections between housing, ethnic minority appropriation of space, and the fulfilment of rights, particularly co-ethnic social relationships as political manifestations of solidarity. This concept is then contextualised within New Zealand’s bicultural policy framework, and some features of Ethiopian diasporic experiences of housing and community are forwarded as signposts to main issues taken up in the rest of the thesis. I then turn to the emerging concept of “refugeeness” in order to account for migration and how it shapes refugee identity. This concept proves particularly useful because it enables the consolidation of abstract and practical elements of the topic. Refugeeness also encompasses macro and micro social processes relevant to refugee housing in resettlement, including a focus on gender and discourse. Last, I briefly review the current standpoint on black refugee housing in the Auckland region.

**Housing as a Freedom Right**

Housing theorist Peter King argues that philosophically, housing is a freedom right, on the grounds of what he refers to as the “situatedness of rights”. The situatedness of rights is the idea that in order for rights to be fulfilled, they require a physical space where an individual is free to perform them (King 2003:667). According to King
(2003:667), this justification for housing as a freedom right places it on par with other freedom rights, such as sleeping and eating. Interestingly, this justification concomitantly elevates housing’s importance amongst other freedom rights. As King puts it, housing is possibly:

One of the most significant rights, if not the most significant. This is because it acts as a bedrock for all the others, in that all rights must be situated (King 2003:666).

Indeed, as King (2003:668) remarks, the right to a place from which to enact all other rights, does not necessarily equate to housing, but it would be “perverse to argue otherwise”.

Housing’s central role in legitimating individual rights to a “place to be”, leads King (2003:670) to conclude that housing policy should strive to “see the significance of housing per se”, as well as utilising it as a necessary basis for broader rights fulfilment. King (2003:669-671) also suggests the possibilities inherent in this freedom right argument for cross-cultural policy formation, thus leaving substantial leeway for arguing the case for cultural diversity and tenants’ choice within housing policy. In this way, King’s argument links closely to refugee resettlement issues because, as Marie Lacroix (2004:155) points out, the concept of “choice” is oppositionally aligned with the imposition of refugee identity and experience. Evidently, housing provision, and choice within it, signals a resolution of the loss of a right to a place to be which is inherent in the refugee experience.
Feminist Approaches to Refugee Rights and the Problem of Property

Considering the situatedness of housing, King’s argument appears to rely on the benefaction of the capitalist market for upholding housing as a freedom right, thus sustaining the established operation of property rights that concomitantly contribute to the creation of displaced people. Indeed, feminist refugee theorists have heavily critiqued the centrality of property rights within liberal discourse. For instance, drawing on the work of feminist legal theorist Jennifer Nedelsky, Oswin (2001:358) describes property as the “problematic central metaphor of rights discourse”. According to Oswin (2001:349), feminists have struggled to resolve the position of refugee women, due to the underlying problem that:

Refugee law is founded upon a liberal rights narrative which relies upon gender neutrality and ‘universalizability’. The tacit subject in refugee law is a free, autonomous, rational contract-making individual whose rights are violated in the public sphere by the state.

Oswin (2001:358) points out that the free exercise of property rights under capitalism inevitably results in the unequal distribution of property rights and their material aspects. Further, Oswin argues that the particular social construction of property rights focuses on individuals seeking state protection from the conflicting claims other individuals, thus locating property in a strictly private manner (Oswin 2001:359). As another critic of the social contract, Carole Pateman (1988:4), has pointed out, even those things deemed to be located purely in the public sphere cannot be adequately analysed without consideration of the private sphere, since the public and private
constitute two “mutually dependent halves of the story”. Similarly, Oswin (2001:359) asserts that analysing property solely within the private sphere, neglects the influence of the state in the so-called private spaces of the house and the market, with particular gendered outcomes. For instance, laws governing marriage, education, inheritance and property, shape women’s access to market participation as well as their position in domestic matters.

However, Oswin (2001:351) warns that in an attempt to make refugee women more visible, a common feminist blunder has been to “flip the bias” of liberal thought, leading to an exaggerated focus on the private rather than public matters. The primary problem is that heavily favouring an analysis of the private realm often disregards the ways in which the public and private overlap. In this way, theorists may fail to recognise how issues conceived of as located in private spaces, are in fact interconnected with the broader, public structures of social power (Oswin 2001:351). Moving towards a reconciliation of this “tension between the individual and the collective”, Oswin (2001:358, quoting Nedelsky) suggests recognition of people as more than “atomistic individuals”. This involves replacing property as the basis of rights with a basis of “rights as relationship”, including an emphasis on the “structures of relationships” (Oswin 2001:360). This proposal also addresses the feminist tendency to prioritise women’s gendered oppression, often at the expense of other experiential variables, such as ethnicity and class.

The Decommodification of Housing

In answer to established critiques, such as those outlined above, King manages to distinguish property rights from the right to housing, and once again this relies on the concept of the situatedness of rights. In line with Oswin, King (2003:667) concedes that
“freedom rights do indeed clash”, and that consequently, property rights result in unequal distribution. However, King (2003:667) removes the conflict between the right to property and the right to housing on the basis that:

There are certain rights we must have, homeless or not, if we are to carry out our basic functions. These too are freedom rights, in that we must be free to be in a place before we can undertake these basic functions. But the situated nature of this freedom means that certain rights can only be fulfilled when the property rights of some are overruled.

Disconnecting the right to housing from socio-economic claims in this way, I argue that King acknowledges the role of the state in the “private” realm of housing, just as Oswin calls for. In this way, King’s argument functions to remove the gender, class and ethnic biases associated with access to housing within capitalist markets. But King’s distinction between rights to property and rights to housing is able to add an important ramification, beyond recognition of the influence of the state on the private realm (Oswin 2001:351, Nussbaum, 2000:262); King (2003:670) implicates the responsibility of the state in ensuring equality in rights to housing, and elevating housing within welfare provisions, over and above property rights and competing socio-economic claims.

Thus, the value of King’s (2003:670) approach to rights, is that it serves as a bridge between individual rights, and the reality of society as collectivity. In a sense then, King moves towards Oswin’s conception of “rights as relationship”. For instance, rather than relegating social housing in particular and as a result, institutionalising “the very social exclusion it is intended to remedy”, this approach relates housing to other welfare
provisions such as “health, education and transport” (King 2003:670). Thus, the core problem for Oswin (2001:359), that rights, which at first appear neutral and universal, serve to “mask ubiquitous power relations which distance and alienate individuals from one another”, is resolved, through an emphasis on that which is “common and universal to us all” (King 2003:670).

What we are left with then, is a framework for analysing refugee rights to housing in resettlement that promotes the role of the state, not in protecting individual housing rights from those of other individuals, but rather, charging the state with the primary responsibility of ensuring individual rights to housing. As King (2003:667) points out, his argument is strongly influenced by studies of homelessness, which is apparent in his use of the concept of situated rights. This concept of “a place to be” is central to the expediency of King’s theory for my study of refugee housing. I suggest that homelessness and exile align closely, because the denial of the right to a “place to be” lies at the core of each, and following this, there is a dearth of broader rights associated with both dilemmas.

In making this argument, I must contest King’s assumption that housing alone upholds situated rights; as the condition of forced migration makes abundantly clear, the nation state also has a foundational role here. My focus on refugee resettlement questions the assumption that the mere inclusion of refugees into the nation state resolves their lack of a place to be. In practical terms, this equates to the granting of permanent residency. Indeed, the rights paradigm that philosophically and practically frames international development and refugee discussions, demands that the broader rights of refugees in resettlement are addressed. In answer, I suggest the importance of the right to housing
in resettlement as a further step in restoring refugees’ right to a place to be, as demonstrated by King’s elevation of housing as an absolute necessity for fulfilling broader rights. Therefore, because of my focus on refugee rights, I maintain that Oswin’s suggestion of re-examining the role of relationships and identity in rights frameworks, retains its value. I begin by addressing Oswin’s conception of “rights as relationship” via the more detailed feminist ethics-based framework of Nussbaum.

**Nussbaum’s Capabilities Approach**

In addition to philosophical theories of homelessness, Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach markedly informs King’s argument. In particular, King (2003:668) draws upon Nussbaum’s work to justify a certain quality of housing and to expand on the capabilities, or rights, that housing supports. I too apply Nussbaum’s capabilities approach to the construction of my housing evaluation framework. I am interested in one particular aspect of her work, the concept of affiliative capabilities, which I discuss after first briefly outlining Nussbaum’s overall approach. At this point it is worth noting Ingrid Robeyns’ (2000:8) comment that despite their focus on development issues, capabilities frameworks are versatile enough to be of value in various contexts, including policy evaluation in developed nations.

Nussbaum’s capabilities approach arises from a feminist philosophical perspective on development. According to Nussbaum, nation states should measure development from an individualistic means based in ethics, rather than previous utilitarian or resource-based approaches. As Nussbaum (2000:60-61) points out, problems arise in economically based measurements because they frequently subsume issues of gender and the distribution of resources within the household. For instance, Becker’s model
relied on the concept of an altruistic head of household (Nussbaum 2000:63), and Sen’s entitlement analysis did not disaggregate claims to resources within the household by gender (Indra 1999:13). As in Oswin’s critique, this is another illustration of ignoring the impact of societal power structures upon the “private” sphere.

On these grounds, Nussbaum (2000:65) effectively argues for a measurement of development that is individualistic, thus managing to reconcile gender issues in development with the individually based liberal rights paradigm. For now, what is most important to note is that Nussbaum’s approach moves away from economic measurements, which count resources, preferences or functionings. Instead, her capabilities approach considers what individuals “are actually able to do and to be”. To this end, Nussbaum (2000:78-80) proposes a list of universal components deemed necessary for human flourishing: life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses (including imagination and thought), emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one’s environment.

**Housing in the Capabilities Approach**

Nussbaum deals with housing as a “core functional capability”, and in this way, supports King’s assertion of housing’s interconnectedness with other rights. While Nussbaum does not explicitly mark housing as a primary basis for rights, as King does, she does treat it differently than other capabilities. Despite conceptualising housing within the capability of “control over one’s environment” (in a material rather than a political sense), Nussbaum emphasizes the distinct nature of housing, due to its necessary link to material provisions. Nussbaum (2000:60) argues that material control over one’s environment must be substantiated by the role of the state in ensuring individuals have the material necessities that are required to exercise the full range of
capabilities. In this way, Nussbaum’s approach gels with King’s in implicating the role of the state in ensuring the universal fulfilment of individual rights to housing.

**The Significance of Affiliative Capabilities**

For the purpose of evaluating ethnic minority housing, the real significance of Nussbaum’s work lies in her concept of affiliative capabilities. This concept fleshes out the feasibility of refocusing rights towards relationships and collectivity, the need for which is evident in the understanding of forced displacement discussed above. Importantly for minority groups, affiliative capabilities include ideas such as non-discrimination and equality. But beyond this, they include the ability of individuals to partake in a diverse range of social relationships (Nussbaum 2000:79). Nussbaum (2000:244) contends that ensuring diverse forms of these relationships is one of the most important capabilities, because affiliative capabilities “suffuse” all the others. While affiliative capabilities include a wide range of social relationships, the family is a central focus. Nussbaum (2000:246) urges that because most people are born into a family, and since the family institution deeply affects every aspect of an individual’s capabilities, policy must be especially attentive to it.

So in sum, King recognises housing as central to upholding broader rights, while Nussbaum on the other hand, identifies affiliative capabilities as key amongst other capabilities for the purpose of human flourishing. Thus we are left with two areas that have especially significant impact on broader capabilities: Nussbaum’s emphasis on the family, and King’s interest in housing. Despite the apparent differences in emphasis between the approaches of King and Nussbaum, they are very closely aligned, due to the concept of the household. As posited by King, the rights of individuals are situated, and therefore entitle them to the material realization of the right to a place to be, in other words, a house. At the same time, Nussbaum (2000:79) emphasizes the many affiliative
rights of individuals, including the right to live with other people and to have the family, as an institution that supports this capability, protected. My approach, in synthesizing these two arguments, proposes that upholding individual rights to housing must be aligned in policy with upholding the affiliative capabilities of the individuals within the household. I argue that housing can be thought of as a material precondition of full affiliative capabilities and consequently, housing policy is conceived of as playing a dual role in the flourishing of broader capabilities. Before I explain the importance of this argument for refugees, I first need to outline Nussbaum’s take on domesticity and pluralism.

**Nussbaum’s Allowance for Pluralism**

Nussbaum makes substantial room for pluralism and diversity. The complexities involved in considering ethnic minority rights to housing are raised at this point. How should policy at once facilitate individual capabilities from the basis of the house, as well as allow for various cultural beliefs about the role of women in the private realm? Nussbaum’s quest for a universal feminist approach to rights counters established feminist scepticism of Universalist approaches, as well as arguments for cultural relativism. Nussbaum (2000:59) argues that diversity in itself is a social good, yet that this does not equate to an argument against universal capabilities. Nussbaum explains that in fact the capabilities approach supplies an excellent basis for the flourishing of difference while offering universal measures.

Nussbaum’s distinction between functionings (what people choose to do) and capabilities (what people are able to do) is of central importance here. Nussbaum’s (2000:41) most succinct illustration of this point is that her capabilities approach:
Certainly does not preclude any woman’s choice to lead a traditional life, so long as she does so with certain economic and political opportunities firmly in place.

This comment demonstrates the role of policy in ensuring capabilities, but respecting individuals as “choosers” in deciding which capabilities they wish to partake in (Nussbaum 2000:60). This mediates between the individual basis of liberal rights, and respect for the importance of relationships and the accompanying norms that groups uphold. Importantly, Nussbaum’s (2000:59) approach to diversity states further that fostering pluralistic societies must allow for “different conceptions of good”, according to personal and group identity. This, Nussbaum’s approach, although liberal, addresses feminist critique that such individualistic stances do not sufficiently allow for any “multiplicity of identity” (Oswin 2001:360).

Nussbaum recognises that a variety of affiliative relationships is central to treating each person as an end. For instance, Nussbaum’s (2000:260) fieldwork demonstrates that women’s groups situated outside the household may function as women’s “primary affective relationship”. Crucially for my argument, the kinds of relationships to be included in the category of affiliative capabilities are left open to cultural interpretation by Nussbaum (2000:79), although she does suggest themes of “concern…compassion…and friendship”. As such, when conceptualising the household, as an institution shaped by the state and located within a dwelling, the capabilities approach emphasizes the importance of social networks other than household ones as potential sources of practical and emotional support.
On top of this, while Nussbaum’s example is gender based, it is important to remember that Nussbaum (2000:34) also includes “culture, nation, religion, race and class” among her considerations. This allows for affiliative relationships to be assessed according to individual identity. Thus, “choosers” may have different conceptions of what a valued affiliative relationship is, as mediated by the whole range of differences mentioned above. Hence, just as Nussbaum argues that the women’s perception of a valuable affiliative relationship was mediated by their gender, the framework allows me to make a parallel argument for understanding culturally mediated affiliative capabilities, or, as I will refer to them henceforth for convenience’s sake, social relations.

The New Zealand Context

Having discussed the rights as relationship paradigm from the standpoint of a feminist ethics-based development framework, this section introduces issues specific to New Zealand. Beginning at the broadest level, I reiterate the centrality of a right to housing within my approach, by explaining the right to housing within New Zealand policy. Reflecting upon the theoretical centrality of the right to housing, I then consider some feminist approaches to ethnic minority housing, with a view to introducing the cultural context of New Zealand’s state housing policy thereafter.

The Right to Housing in Policy

The idea that housing provides a physical foundation for all other rights, and the due importance of the state’s role in protecting the right to this foundation, were discussed above. I also mentioned that transnational, non-governmental organisations (NGO’s), often coerced by economically focused human development goals, do not adequately protect the rights of citizens (Nussbaum 2000:105), including the right to housing. This clearly demonstrates the importance of understanding the right to housing with New Zealand’s specific national policy context. Nevertheless, there is no New Zealand...
legislation that upholds the right to housing. In fact, even housing rights are only encompassed within intersecting legislations, such as those governing building regulations, health standards, tenancy and resource management (Human Rights Commission (HRC) 2004). In this case, New Zealand’s 1978 ratification of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), becomes particularly significant.

ICESCR is the most important UN source that asserts the right to housing. According to ICESCR, elements of adequate housing that should be acknowledged at all times are: security of tenure, availability of services (i.e. amenities), affordability, habitability, accessibility (especially for minority social groups), location (in relation to employment and schools), and cultural adequacy (such as “traditional housing patterns”) (HRC 2004). Within the ICESCR paradigm, the right to housing is most forthrightly expressed through the right to an adequate standard of living. This is bound with what the UN deems “fundamental freedoms”, such as freedom to avoid hunger and disease. Understandably this interlinks with several other UN covenants on civil and political rights, as well as those on the prevention of discrimination towards women and refugees, and on the grounds of race (HCR 2004). Although they don’t elevate the importance of the right to housing in the way King does, the ICESCR housing provisions are significant for considering refugee housing from a rights-based paradigm, since like King (2003:669), they seek to ensure substantial leeway for considerations in policy for cultural diversity, as well as maintaining a focus on housing as “of central importance for the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights” (HRC 2004).

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3 Produced by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights (UNCECSR).
In line with ICESCR state party obligations, in April 2004, the Housing New Zealand Corporation (HNZC) produced *Building the Future: Towards a New Zealand Housing Strategy*, a discussion document for the planned New Zealand Housing Strategy. The proposal for the Housing Strategy outlined in the document goes some way to addressing diversity and choice (HNZC April 2004:19). What is important here is that in spite of operational policy provisions, that address the housing rights of disadvantaged groups in particular (such as Maori and the elderly), the omission of a specific right to housing from domestic legislation has drawn critique from a range of NGO’s\(^4\) (Human Rights Foundation *et al* 2003:3) as well as the Human Rights Commission (HRC 2004).

These NGO groups argue for the inclusion of the right to housing in New Zealand domestic legislation, in particular proposing that this be incorporated into New Zealand’s National Human Rights Plan of Action (HRF *et al* 2003:26, HRC 2004). Focusing on links between poverty, housing affordability and overcrowding, as well as special interest groups such as ethnic minorities, the elderly and single parent households, submissions made by these groups support King’s assertion that the inclusion of the right to housing within domestic legislation is necessary for the decommodification of housing. As argued by the HRF *et al* (2003:11), such an inclusion would “create more moral and legal pressure to ensure all people are adequately housed... this would provide legislative and constitutional security, transcending the electoral and financial cycles which limit the effectiveness of housing policy decision-making.”

\(^4\) These NGO’s consist of the Human Rights Foundation, Just Housing Trust, Cooperative Housing Association of Aotearoa New Zealand, Pax Christi Trust, Child Poverty Action Group, Tenants Protection Agency, Auckland District Council of Social Services, and the North Hokianga Housing Trust.
I argue that when it comes to understanding refugee housing issues in New Zealand, the centrality of the right to housing is especially magnified. This is because of the inherently political basis of refugee identity (Sajed 2005:19), which I demonstrated earlier when pointing out the difficulty of reconciling King’s argument for state protection of the right to housing, with the loss of citizenship that accompanies forced migration. Acknowledging the indivisibility of housing rights from other human rights, is crucial for an understanding of refugee housing rights in resettlement, given that exile, or statelessness, can be understood as the most extreme form of homelessness. King’s elevation of the right to housing draws attention to the absolute necessity of fulfilling refugee rights from a foundation of housing. Therefore, a resolution to refugee problems in resettlement can be seen as restoring the material preconditions, beyond residency, of their right to “a place to be”. This includes within it the notion that such a place must be suitable for enacting rights in culturally mediated ways, signalling the importance of specific national context and the constructions of ethnicity and political representation of minority groups that fall within it, which I now discuss.

**Ethnic Minority Housing and Homes**

As I have pointed out, the family is a primary locale for affiliative relationships (Nussbaum 2000:246). Further, it is embedded in housing, and therefore doubly vital to the sustenance of broader rights. However, the concept of home is frequently described as dualistic and contradictory in women-centred approaches to housing (Nussbaum 2000:243, Giles 1999:85, Brookes 1997:256, Rapoport 1995:31, hooks 1990:42). For many women, the house represents the oppressions of confinement, marginality, isolation, drudgery and violence, while for others, it represents “escape and freedom” (Giles 1999:85), it encapsulates some “important moral virtues”, such as care and
reciprocity (Nussbaum 2000:243), and acts as a marker of social status (Brookes 1997:256).

In response to this duality, Nussbaum expresses scepticism about the ability of facilitating any capabilities from the basis of the family. As a result, Nussbaum (2003:56) prioritises individual capabilities, expressed as the “principle of each person as end”. According to Nussbaum (2000:243), a focus on individual capabilities supersedes the root cause of much of women’s suffering, which occurs when women are treated merely as embodiments of the roles they perform for the household, rather than as political agents in their own right. What this implies for policy is a need to evaluate the capabilities of each individual, rather than those of institutions, such as the family. In fact Nussbaum (2000:251) goes so far as to claim that:

The family as such has no moral standing within the core of the political conception. It is persons who have moral standing. We are interested in the family as a locus of persons’ development, association, expression, education, and so forth. But we insist that it has no force qua organic unit.

This does not negate the role of the state in upholding rights to housing as a means to supporting families as central affiliative institutions. However, it does present an important challenge to what Oswin (2001:351) calls the “bifurcated version of society”, because it encourages investigations of the public lives of women, rather than allowing their interests to be subsumed within the patriarchal family.

Nonetheless, the accounts of migrant groups have signalled the role of houses in supporting ethnic minority women as political agents, with their houses becoming
“major institutions of resistance” (Lozanovska 1994:199). As Wenona Giles (1999:85) has noted, the house in these cases may operate as “a locus of resistance and struggle…the ‘location’ from which many immigrant women begin to describe, defend, or justify themselves and their acts”. Susan Thompson (1994:37) argues that migrant women’s readings of their houses challenge previous feminist discourse on the suburban dwelling as monolithically oppressive towards women, and how houses in fact become politically significant to migrant women in resisting assimilation:

Within the wider context of an alien Anglo culture, the home has become a place where difference can be displayed and acted out…the domestic sphere…becomes a vehicle for claiming identity and reinforcing difference and separation.

Thompson (1994:38) theorises that for migrant women in Australia, displays of culturally valued objects are indicative of how “the physicality of the house is central to… [womens’] appropriation of power”. The role of houses is crucial in this process because the privacy they provide allows a safe space for the “expression of difference”, in a context of “a culture that is not always accepting, in spite of the multi-cultural rhetoric” (Thompson 1994:38).

Drawing upon the history of black diaspora in North America, hooks (1990:42) also argues for the importance of what she calls “homeplaces”, as sites of potential resistance to racism and social disempowerment for ethnic minority communities. hooks (1990:42) establishes her argument for homeplaces in the context of the United States, where she says homeplaces historically involved “the construction of a safe place where black people could affirm one another”. In fact, hooks (1990:42) uses disparate cultural
case studies to illustrate the universal value of homeplaces as safe-havens for black
cultural expression and solidarity. She argues that the importance of these sites of ethnic
reproduction remains strong, even though they remain tied to the maintenance of
cultural identities frequently thought disempowering to women. The crux of hooks’
(1990:42) argument is that black liberation, solidarity and empowerment are crucially
supported by the safety and comfort of the private realm.

Black women’s domestic labour is therefore re-valued by hooks as primary in the
affirmation of blackness and black political consciousness, challenging the dominant
understanding of black women’s role in domestic spaces, and concomitantly in critical
political consciousness. hooks’ (1990:46) argues that homeplaces can be realised
“despite the contradictions of poverty and sexism”. Most significantly for my
discussion, hooks’ details the ways in which housing facilitates culturally mediated
social relations, and this mediation is of special consequence for the political
mobilisation of ethnic minority groups in which women play a central role. It is here
that the possibility of the absence and loss of homeplace arises, and the importance of
homeplaces in theorising refugeeeness becomes apparent. Indeed, hooks’ concept of
homeplaces acts as a springboard for exploring New Zealand housing policy in relation
to a small refugee population. This is particularly true in the case of my focus on
Ethiopian women, since it is recognised that within smaller ethnic minority refugee
groups they may be doubly marginalised, bearing isolation in addition to a
“disproportionate” burden of the difficulties experiences by larger refugee groups
(Shadbolt 1996:34).
In considering the application of homeplaces to refugee housing in resettlement, and reflecting upon the above discussion of feminist approaches to migration and development, I argue that women-centred paradigms dismiss the ways in which citizenship and the nation state impact in material ways upon the construction of identity and the private realm. Unlike King, hooks’ argues that black women are able to construct a “place to be” in spite of a state that restricts their ability to do so, by marginalization, racism and impoverishment. To me, ignoring the shaping of ethnicity, the family and neighbourhoods by the state, leads to a disregard of the impact of the public realm upon the private. For instance, hooks’ descriptions of homeplaces rely on houses as gathering spaces for co-ethnic populations is in no way jeopardised by the outside world. This appears to overlook one half of the contradictory duality of houses mentioned earlier, that is, houses as spaces of isolation and confinement for women. Moreover, power relations between states, as well as between people and institutions of the state, affect the ability to make homeplace, as is abundantly apparent in the case of refugees. Aside from the essential statelessness that is co-requisite to refugee identity, state policy towards refugees has substantial material as well as ideological impact. Rudolphus Teeuwen (2003:4) has linked the “negative residency status” of refugeeeness to the idea that resettlement imposes upon refugees “the task of self-definition.”

Homeplaces are valued as sites of resistance to the racism active outside houses, in the public realm, yet access for group members to co-ethnic households relies in hooks’ account upon an unproblematic geographic proximity, in fact walking distance, and existing social relationships. While universalizing the black creation of homeplace, hooks’ clearly fails in this instance to account for migration within her thesis, particularly forced migration, wherein social relations are so acutely disrupted, and
households may experience little control of material housing outcomes. Further, I argue that hooks’ problematically universalizes black diasporic identity without sufficient contextualisation, which does not account for how nations construct black identity differently. In order to consider these tensions, I turn to a contextualisation of the homeplaces theory of houses as spaces for minority resistance to assimilation and fostering of political mobility within New Zealand’s cultural context of housing policy and considerations of ethnic minority representation, from which I briefly introduce the significance of the Ethiopian refugee population and the value of the emerging concept of refugeeness.

**Representation**

Representation is a contested area for many groups within New Zealand, especially for Maori and those with identification to multiple ethnic groups. Ute Walker (2001:4) argues that government policy is bicultural, as it emphasizes that “only two New Zealand ‘ethnic’ groups, Maori and pakeha, are particular to New Zealand”, despite policy’s influence on an increasingly multicultural society. But rather than biculturalism providing Maori with their indigenous rights, Ann Curthoys (2000:33) draws attention to the ways in which Maori, as well as immigrant ethnic minority groups, have nevertheless experienced racism and been “defined outside the nation”. In a similar vein, Nira Yuval-Davis (1994:411) argues for a historicized understanding of ideological boundaries in personal experience and political struggles between ethnic groups, arguing that these boundaries fulfil seminal as well as symbolic socio-political roles (1994:409). Yuval-Davis (1994:411) goes on to emphasise the processes of the state as complicit to hegemonic culture due to a “complementarity of social communication” in facilitating the construction of minority ethnicities as “deviant in some way or another”.
Vince Marotta (2000:184) further asserts that biculturalism falls into the multiculturalist trap of subjugating ethnic minorities, because it essentializes Maori and pakeha identity, so that they are seen as homogenous, drawing attention away from structural inequalities, such as class and gender. From an emphasis on historical processes of colonisation and early ethnic relations, Marotta makes an important theoretical shift towards an emphasis on boundaries between social groups, as key to reconciling the “other” within national debates on ethnicity. For Marotta (2000:178), the blurring of cultural boundaries may essentialize and subjugate ethnic minorities, while at the same time, maintenance of these boundaries represents a two-fold process of repression and construction of identity.

Marotta (2000:186-187) demonstrates the problematic aspects of biculturalism and multiculturalism in addressing both refugee and ethnic minority needs in social policy:

The hybrid identity constructed by the discourse of biculturalism and multiculturalism may only be possible when the other is assimilated within the self’s frame of reference. An example of this is when institutions try to become bicultural or multicultural. In New Zealand the incorporation of Maori values and customs within existing institutions does raise some interesting questions about what happens to ‘Maori culture’ once it is appropriated into the mainstream Western institutions. Some have argued that bicultural institutions [come] at the cost of the colonisation of the Maori life-world…If we accept this interpretation, then a biculturalism which tries to blur the boundaries between self and other, and this could also be said about multiculturalism, could potentially diminish those very same identities which it is trying to foster.
**Ethiopians**

Given the above context of housing policy, the ability of New Zealand to facilitate the establishment of homeplaces by refugees is questionable. Boundary formation is particularly pertinent in the case of Ethiopian refugees. Echoing Oswin’s (2001:258) assertion that rights as relationship must replace property as a central metaphor of rights framework, Ethiopian educational psychologist Elias Cheboud (2002:9-10) also comments on the problematic individual-collective dichotomy in Western thought, in relation to housing:

*Amongst Ethiopians, self-identity cannot be isolated from culture, religion, tribe, family, and community...we experience difficulty in relating to Western concepts of individualism and/or collectivism because, from Ethiopians, the Western notion of identity symbolizes the political, social, and economic hierarchy, or a systematically conditional membership...because some may not fit into the criteria of membership and may fail to meet the conditions attached to collective identity...one may resent or not be able to identify as a functioning or contributing member of the neighbourhood...often this leads to individual or family loneliness structurally forcing them to remain locked in, in isolated living quarters. As a result, either individuals or families have no possibility of knowing their community members or neighbours, of freely and instinctively participating (significant to Ethiopians in order to establish and maintain the safety and security of the neighbourhood), to rear children, and to help the elderly.*

This illustrates the fallacy of conceiving homeplace in isolation from the wider neighbourhood, and suggests the importance of culturally appropriate neighbourhood-
based social relations in refugee resettlement. One of Cheboud’s (2002:129) participants remarked that before resettlement, Ethiopians generally have little knowledge of western culture, partly due to the unique position of Ethiopia compared to other African states in relation to colonisation. This means that Ethiopians find “integration” particularly difficult, and in the end, the participant suggests; “we prefer to be who we are.” Certainly, culture may be understood theoretically as “spatially constituted…distinguished by boundaries that show what one is and what one is not” (Pulvirenti 1997:33).

According to Colson (2003:6), co-ethnic proximity is significant given that displacement and resettlement signal the loss of “familiar social cues” and are “invariably difficult and painful, engendering feelings of powerlessness and alienation…whole communities suffer acute degrees of disintegration as community structures, social networks and even kin groups may be dispersed to different resettlement sites. The affective ties between individuals and communities and their material environments are destroyed by uprooting and resettlement”. Stea (1995:183) is one of the few geographers who deals directly with exile and takes this up in his article on identity in relation to home, and confirms that the unified house/home is in reality a minority conception, reliant on the “socio-political economy of the country in question”. Most people, he argues, have no choice in experiencing a distinction between the two, and thus cannot maintain what he calls a house-home identity, that is, living in the place one regards as home. John Sorenson (1992:205) reinforces the relevance of this critique when he notes that “we must…question the boundaries of each of these [diasporan] communities and must seek to understand their operations in relation to various institutions in countries of asylum”. This draws attention to the relevance of
relationships between state institutions and ethnic and refugee populations in creating, maintaining and challenging boundaries, unity and representation.

**Refugeeness**

In addition to analysing housing from gender and ethnic perspectives, I suggest that refugeeness plays an equally important part. Refugeeness is an experiential term that recognises the multiple subjectivities of refugees and is therefore not defined solely in relations to institutions. Alongside material outcomes stemming from the refugee identity as a legal construct, social relationships and cultural norms are also keenly affected by exile. The multiplicity of identity that Nussbaum argues should be taken into account in research is sustained by an understanding of refugeeness. Thus, I find the concept useful for constructing an understanding of not only culturally appropriate capabilities, but experientially appropriate capabilities also. At the same time, it allows me to maintain a focus on gender as a primary element in Nussbaum’s approach and within housing analysis.

The concept of “refugeeness” provides a means to understanding the experiential aspects of refugee identity. The concept of refugeeness arises from critiques of the term “refugee” and discourse surrounding it. In a similar way as Marotta (2000:186) argued of biculturalism, this assimilation of the refugee into the “self”s frame of reference” can be seen as a denial of the lived experiences of refugeeness. Sajed (2005:15) argues that objectifying discourse about refugees spills over into material outcomes, as the needs of refugees’ are conceptualised monolithically as basic provisions of food, water and shelter. According to Rajaram (2002:247), refugees’ experiences become a site for Western expertise and “ways of knowing” and consequently, refugees are less able to present their narratives in ways that are institutionally and politically significant. In a
way, this depoliticization, can be seen as a prerequisite function of the refugee identity for resettlement into a foreign nation-state. What is most important to the resettlement issues discussed in my research is a realisation that the conceptually unified term “refugee” is in fact “a legal construct with social implications indicating a historical reality outside of one’s normal identity” (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:209).

Refugeeness steps away from “refugee” discourses by calling attention to the dialectic relationship between the nation-state and exile, thereby forefronting the inevitably political basis of refugee identity (Sajed 2005:19). This highlights the importance of how constructions of refugee identity affect material outcomes. At the same time, it pushes for a decoding of the ways in which material conditions are interlinked with possibilities for political and cultural mobilisation. Therefore, countries of resettlement should be aware that “refugee” is an imposed construct that is foreign to refugees themselves. Service provision in resettlement needs to take account of the complexities of experience and identity within refugee populations, and subsequently the variable needs of refugees in resettlement.

Refugeeness is a useful addition at this point because it takes as its epicentre the common recognition that gender relations are the area of refugee identity that commonly encounters the most change during flight, asylum and resettlement (Sorenson 1992: 225). The conflicts inherent in living with an externally constructed and imposed political identity are theorized to have particularly gendered outcomes, so that gender becomes a “major variable” in refugeeness (Lacroix 2004:148). Indeed, the term “forced migration” indicates effectively the ways in which the experience and identity of being a refugee is imposed upon people by external forces. Gender is key because
“refugeeness often takes away the assumed permanence of the social relationships between men and women” (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:205). Accordingly, this approach counts among the growing recognition that studies of Ethiopian refugees must be grounded by a gender-sensitive research agenda (Mphahlele 1994:124, Moran 1996:120).

Refugeeness is further useful because as the capabilities approach requires, it allows me to fill out the impacts of the process of being a refugee upon refugee identity in resettlement. This is linked with another important theme in refugeeness, which entails recognising that identity formation for the forcibly displaced is an ongoing, processual experience, rather than an instant outcome of flight (Al-Sharmani 2003:4). In a move away from the passivity associated with “the refugee”, Al-Sharmani (2003:4) argues that refugee studies should entail taking up an “action-oriented view” of identity. Moreover, the idea of refugeeness links the formation of refugee subjectivity not only to political and legal institutions and processes, but also to the social aspects of “family, community, and the refugee claimant process” (Lacroix 2004:163).

**Current Research on Black African Housing in Auckland**

Having contextualised my framework for refugee housing evaluation in the New Zealand context, I now introduce a key resource in studies of black housing in New Zealand. There is currently a dearth of research concerning refugee housing (HNZC April 2004:77), with most research on refugee resettlement dealing with housing only as a minor aspect of welfare provision (for instance see NZIS June 2004 and Shadbolt 1996). In contrast, the community studies research of Love Chile deals more comprehensively with the issue of housing. Chile (2002:355) argues that black African
refugees in New Zealand suffer social exclusion to the extent that they are deemed to constitute an “imported underclass”. Informed by the work of Amartya Sen, whose capabilities approach, although stemming from economic development, is closely aligned to Nussbaum’s (Nussbaum 2000:11), Chile (2002:359) argues that:

In a free and democratic society, each citizen, resident and member of the society is guaranteed a basic capacity to enable them to attain basic standards of living and participation in social, cultural, political and economic functions of that society. Where the individual…becomes disadvantaged to the point where they are unable to engage with and within the community, that individual…suffers social exclusion. Social exclusion creates an underclass.

Chile (2002:360) argues that black African refugees constitute an underclass for two main reasons. The first basis of exclusion is said to be the poor success rate of English language programmes, which leads to an inability to vote in parliamentary elections in an informed manner. Despite the validity of this argument, Chile moves quickly on to examine socio-economic issues in the Auckland region, which become the focus of his argument. The relevance of housing within Chile’s work is that it is situated as a primary obstacle to fulfilling black African refugees’ capabilities, or their ability to participate fully in all aspects of society. Housing in Chile’s research is solidly grounded in socio-economic concerns, which is indicated by his application of a typical ghettoization critique of what he identifies as black African refugee clusters in the Auckland region.
Conclusion

The framework for evaluating refugee housing constructed in this chapter is centered around the universal right to housing, as proposed by King. The approach negotiates the liberal rights stance by means of the decommodification of housing, and thus, state housing is infused with potential for rights fulfilment. Drawing on Nussbaum’s development-based paradigm as a guide for potential social indicators, the centrality of social relationships to housing emerges. This is further informed by hooks’ homeplaces theory, which signposts the post-ghettoization interconnections between ethnicity and location, and raises the issue of women’s roles in political mobilisation and cultural reproduction in the private realm. Yet at this point, the question of forced migration remains, as well as ethnic minority women’s public lives. Hence, the salience of refugeeness enters the framework as a means to investigating forced migration and resettlement issues, which focus on gender, and the construction of refugee identity as a phenomenon exclusive to public issues of citizenship and representation. Finally, I called attention to the community studies research of Chile, which is currently the most significant academic literature inclusive of black African refugee housing issues. The overtones of ghettoization arguments and the problematization of ethnic clustering in Chile’s work sets me up to begin an evaluation of state housing which implements the above framework, with the purpose of prioritising housing within resettlement concerns, as a philosophically informed reply to forced migration.
In the last chapter, I proposed a framework for the evaluation of ethnic minority housing. The framework draws on the work of King to assert housing as a universal right, while recognising that state policies, including the decommodification of housing, necessarily operate within capitalist social relations. At the same time, I stress the benefits of the co-presence of ethnicity and location in the development and allocation of social housing. Unlike Chile, I emphasize both the contentious political aspects of housing policy, as well as affirming housing as a right central to all others, rather than conceiving its lack as a problem.

Prior to discussing contemporary Ethiopian refugee issues in the coming chapters, this chapter describes the cultural values expressed within historical state housing policy. This historical and localised perspective is crucial as it provides the backdrop for the contemporary state housing policy into which refugees are accommodated. It also links themes of migrant ethnic minority representation, identity and homeplace formation in the lived realities of state housing in the Auckland region. By applying my framework to the state housing experiences of two migrant ethnic minority groups, Maori and Samoans, this chapter serves to contextualise migrant ethnic minority housing issues in New Zealand. Specifically, in this chapter I question the extent to which housing policy has supported or negated culturally appropriate state housing provision, social relations and the formation of homeplaces of these two ethnic minority groups. In order to formulate my analysis of houses as physical structures, I take up the three key themes of access, location and design.
Maori and State Housing

In this section, my framework for housing analysis is drawn upon to analyse the exclusion of Maori from state houses, and I discuss the outcomes of this exclusion for their broader capabilities. The section also contextualises Maori exclusion from state houses within the ideological construction of Maori as undeserving of state housing access. I argue that subsequent to Maori gaining access to state housing, policy neglected to fully offer Maori choice in location, and consequently detrimentally affected Maori co-ethnic social relations. I discuss state houses as reflections of Pakeha, nuclear family discourse, and discuss the intermediate situation of state houses within public and private spaces. I argue that the expression of Pakeha ideology in assimilatory access practices and in state house planning was detrimental to Maori social relations. I also address the geographic dispersal and later clustering of Maori in relation to assimilation, marginalisation and identity.

The Worker’s Dwelling’s Act and Maori Rural Habitation

New Zealand’s first social housing initiative was instigated by the 1905 Worker’s Dwellings Act, and closely reflected Pakeha social values of home-ownership and individualism. As housing theorist John Doling (1997:183) has pointed out, this type of social housing provision carries with it particular intentions of housing “the deserving poor- skilled manual workers and clerks- and [is] rarely for the ‘really indigent’”. According to Doling (1997:184), such schemes accordingly promote the rights of tenants who are “unproblematic both economically and socially”. The New Zealand government showed regard for this perspective and accordingly, the Worker’s scheme targeted an idealized Pakeha, working-class, nuclear household within urban centres. The racially prejudiced social context is exampled by the belief that Maori would
“lower the tone” of state house areas (Schrader 2004:28). Nussbaum’s approach provides a basis for critiquing the exclusion of Maori from early Workers’ dwellings. For instance, one of the most basic premises of the capabilities approach is that of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, ethnicity, caste or religion (Nussbaum 2000:86).

Maori found themselves labelled as one of the groups “undeserving” of access to state houses, and were consequently denied access to tenure of these dwellings until the late 1940’s. The government did offer Maori more basic housing assistance and in addition to the issue of discrimination, this raises the issue of location. For instance, assistance for Maori housing was borrowed from funds intended for Maori rural land development, and consequently, housing was located rurally (Schrader 2004:28-29).

The importance of location for analysing the affects of housing policy upon ethnic minority groups is provided for in Nussbaum’s (2000:80) conception of control over one’s environment, which for the purposes of this discussion can be thought of as the right to housing. This entails each individual sharing equal property rights with other citizens, including land and other material possessions. But more than this, it provides that these rights must be able to be used “not just formally but in terms of real opportunity” (Nussbaum 2000:80). This concept of “real opportunity” is pivotal given that rural Maori were marginalised from the opportunities offered by urban dwelling, such as healthcare, employment and education (Brookes 1997:246). The right of Maori to a certain quality of housing is a particularly resonant example that location is a “material precondition” for housing to be operative as a central capability (Nussbaum 2000:53).

Without assuming that urban housing is more “desirable” to all ethnic groups, and allowing for “different conceptions of good” (Nussbaum 2000:59) as mediated by
ethnicity, the lack of state support for the development of rural capabilities makes it clear that Maori were not respected as “choosers” (Nussbaum 2000:60). As Nussbaum (2000:41) reminds us, the pursuit of “traditional” ways of life is in itself unproblematic, as long as it is taken up with “certain economic and political opportunities firmly in place”. Clearly, the state’s support of Maori rural habitation and exclusion from urban social housing cannot be read as culturally appropriate housing policy, or as mere exclusion from the social housing scheme.

The impetus for exclusion was a continuation of New Zealand’s colonialisit heritage, and the consequences of the lack of choice offered to Maori in relation to housing location, was the undermining of broader Maori capabilities. Certainly, as Barbara Brookes (1997:243-244) points out, Maori exclusion from urban living was a pivotal part of Pakeha ideals of nationhood:

There was an assumption of a unified New Zealand identity as, in Lawrence Jones’s words, ‘a people who [had] succeeded in a commercial version of the Pastoral Dream, [had] built on it’s foundations a capitalist, welfare-state version of the Just City, and who [were] in the process of putting on a Decramastic roof and building a two-car garage to convert it into the Affluent Suburb’. On the other hand, the Maori disrupted this Dream, were excluded from the Just City, and denied entry to the Affluent Suburb. Pakeha identities were dependent upon this exclusion; the images of New Zealand promoted to tourists shows Maori women in flax skirts, cooking and washing in hot pools. The ‘quaint and simple’ Maori, along with the kiwi, the fern and the tiki, marked New Zealand as unique. They provided the ‘natural’ backdrop against which the affluent suburbs existed. The modernity and sophistication of New
Zealand’s towns could only be appreciated against the simplicity of the rural hinterland.

An evaluation of this policy must conclude that ethnically based marginalisation, and the pursuit of full human flourishing, is the crucial matter at stake. Therefore, a fuller understanding of housing policy’s role in implementing the universal right to housing is demonstrated, with choice of location as a central foundation.

The Role of Housing Policy in Upholding Maori Social Relations

According to Brookes (1997:244), New Zealand’s long held “myth of egalitarianism” began unravelling with the “extraordinary rate” of post-World War Two Maori rural to urban migration. Housing pressures were induced by Maori urbanization (Schrader 2004:19), and accompanying this was discrimination against Maori in the housing market (Schrader 2004:19, Brookes 1997:246). After extensive lobbying from Maori and Pacific Islanders, and in response to the poor conditions endured by these groups, the Auckland City Council and the Departments of Maori Affairs and Housing finally allowed them access to state housing (Brookes 1997:246). Guided by the recommendations of the controversial 1960 Hunn Report, Maori households were “pepper-potted” within state housing stock, a interventionist method of geographic dispersal of Maori throughout Pakeha neighbourhoods (Schrader 2004:29, Brookes 1997:246).

Significantly, Brookes (1997:244) comments that it was “the boundaries” between Maori and Pakeha that were challenged by Maori urbanisation. Vince Marotta’s (2000:178) work on biculturalism, which I discussed in the previous chapter, warned that such a “blurring of cultural boundaries” often foreshadows the subjugation of the ethnic minority in question. Indeed, the Hunn report suggested that urban state houses
“might be an acceptable qualification for turangawaewae” (Brookes 1997:246), clearly indicating the assimilatory goals of the policy. This parallels hooks’ (1990:47) comments on the ways in which ethnic minority households lose their critical political potential and come to mirror the “politically neutral space” of white domesticity.

Thus the issue raised here is that of culturally appropriate housing provision, as a material precondition, which must be exercised “in terms of real opportunity” (Nussbaum 2000:80), in order to support, among others, co-ethnic social relations.

I argue that the provision of dispersed state houses for Maori indicated the state’s facilitation of Maori rights in what was conceived of as the private sphere, but covertly signalled a failure on the part of the state to fulfil Maori affiliative rights in the public sphere of the neighbourhood, by negating any basis for Maori community formation.

While Nussbaum’s key illustration of affiliative capabilities as mediated by identity is gender based, this example demonstrates its application to ethnicity. Nussbaum (2000:260) showed that women’s “primary affective relationships” might very well be situated outside the household. The case Nussbaum makes for women’s affiliative concerns revolves around the problematic shaping of the institution of family, through the laws of the state. In the same way that women’s capabilities were sold out to ideals of the family in Nussbaum’s example, I argue that subsuming Maori within suburbs created for an idealised Pakeha system of affiliation, did not leave room for allowing Maori the choice of maintaining indigenous systems of affiliation, such as communality and extended family. It has been forwarded that “policies aimed at sustaining the Pakeha family have undermined Maori Whanau. This includes…state housing programmes in the twentieth [century]” (Cheyne and Belgrave 2000:24). An example in

5 “A place to stand, used to indicate identity with ancestral lands” (Brookes 1997:246).
the case of dispersal is Maori extended family contact, which is characterised by
“regular visits, assisting parents with difficult children or caring for the children of sick
relatives” (Jahnke 2002:509).

Nussbaum (2000:259) assesses not only to the social aspects of housing, but the
physical structures too. She critiques the concept of a bounded, private household,
contending that many state policies fail to recognise the “porous” nature of dwellings,
which see boundaries between the private and public continuously collapsed by
movements of people. According to Nussbaum (2000:252), the crux of the problem is
that the nuclear ideal is rooted in an imagined public/private dichotomy. Nussbaum puts
this incongruity down to the failure of the state to recognise the extent to which the
private sphere of the family is influenced by public matters, such as laws governing
marriage, education and employment (Nussbaum 2000:262). The exclusion of Maori
from state housing is a clear example of the problematic white, middle-class nuclear
ideal that Nussbaum (2000:259) draws attention to.

Schrader (2004:13) suggests contradiction was inherent in the state’s support of the
nuclear family as the “foundation of the nation, a foundation that required the
buttressing of the state to remain grounded and true”. The government embraced the
notion of the nuclear Pakeha household (Schrader 2004:6), and this was lucidly
expressed in state house design and planning. This is a clear example of what Nussbaum
(2000:252) describes as the state’s role in “denominating certain groupings of
individuals as families”. Nussbaum (2000:259) further explains this type of
contradictory rhetoric, pointing out that top-down definitions of family frequently fail to
recognise the fallacy of the nuclear family ideal. A prime example of this is that not
only Maori, but also single and elderly Pakeha, were excluded from state housing (Schrader 2004:19, Davidson 1999:457), emphasizing the detrimental extent to which nuclear family ideals were upheld.

This was certainly the case in early state housing policy, which ironically emphasized the role of state houses in offering privacy to families (Schrader 2004:7), signalling the rhetorical demarcation of state houses as firmly within the private realm. And yet at the same time, ideals of “supportive” suburban neighbouring permeated state house planning (Schrader 2004:10), showing the importance of the wider society in the maintenance of the private ideal. This demonstrates that indeed, houses do not merely contain households, even nuclear ones, but mediate a “constant ebb and flow of people” through them (Nussbaum 2000:259). Another example of the impact of the neighbourhood upon the supposedly private state house, is the instruction given to Maori from the Department of Maori Affairs magazine in order to “promote closer integration” and “project a good image” (Brookes 1997:249). Advice included how to correctly hang up washing (Brookes 1997:249), and in Maori Affairs Te Ao Hou booklets about how to best deal with neighbours, care for the semi-public surroundings of houses, and be inconspicuous by avoiding “rowdy parties” (Brookes 1997:259). This negates the bounded privacy rhetorically aligned with state houses, and highlights the contradictions of the nuclear family state house ideal, showing links to wider society and the importance of outsiders’ opinions to the well being of those living in state houses. For my purposes, Nussbaum’s analysis points out the inherent contradiction of the state house, which at once embodies privacy and political neutrality, and yet is moulded by hegemonic, Pakeha ideals upheld by the state through housing policy.
In terms of capabilities then, the assimilatory state housing policy failed to make room for “different conceptions of good” and the material provisions, in this case, choice in housing location that would allow for boundary creation in Marotta’s (2000:178) sense of the term. This would require policy makers to recognise that equality between groups within society does not necessarily equate with an equality of the resources provided (Nussbaum 2000:86). Bolstering this, is the comment from Brookes (1997:249) that Maori lobbyists “wanted equal access to the housing…that Pakeha enjoyed, but not at the cost of losing their distinctiveness, their Maoritanga”, and demonstrated “resistance to assimilation into the undifferentiated suburban space of the Pakeha world” (Brookes 1997:251). What I am positing is that the assimilation of dispersed urban Maori was possible because it relied on an ideal of neighbouring and neighbourhoods that was hegemonically Pakeha, as a branch of Pakeha privilege in the public realm.

The research into Auckland neighbouring by Park (1991:19) suggests that similar exclusion of “marginal people” from neighbouring practices, and sometimes self-exclusion on the part of the marginal other, remains evident contemporarily. For instance, Park (1991:19) notes that:

Not all households…were perceived as neighbours…these were not bad neighbours, but non-existent neighbours. Usually, they were people who differed in some way from most of the rest of the neighbourhood…the Maori household in a Pakeha neighbourhood, or the Samoan household in a Maori neighbourhood, or the ‘solo mum’ in a street of two-parent families.
In terms of capabilities then, I argue that housing policy should be committed to non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate housing. Such housing must be supported via factors of choice, location and access, and must measure these provisions against broader rights, as determined by citizens. In particular, measuring social relations should be a priority, and in order to achieve this, recognition must be given that social relationships are shaped by identity, including culture and ethnicity, gender and class.

**Maori Marginalisation, Clustering and Urban Identity Formation**

By the 1960’s, high demand on housing and the retreat of the welfare state, led to policies that allowed much lower standards of housing construction and planning than had previously been upheld. The physical results of this were particularly harsh in places such as South Auckland, where “uniformity of design, the dominance of poor households, and a lack of services and amenities” were evident (Schrader 2004:21). In addition, means testing started in 1938, which considered the size and location of the dwelling and household incomes (Davidson 1999:458). This began a trend that would gather momentum over time, whereby state houses in inner city locations, close to schools and employment opportunities, became more expensive. Rather than avoiding the “stigma of charity”, stigma was focused upon poorer state house tenants and in turn redistributed to areas with fewer social resources. This point recalls King’s (2003:670) sentiment that when housing is not recognised as a central tenant of rights, the institutionalisation of the social exclusion it seeks to avoid is a common outcome.

One result was the geographic concentration of urban Maori in areas such as South Auckland (Schrader 2004:29). Another outcome of policy change for Maori in South Auckland was the shortfall of services and amenities. The previous enthusiasm of planners towards creating entirely new suburbs in outlying areas of Auckland was only
half completed; houses had been built, but before the planned community services, shops and other amenities were installed, the direction of housing policy had turned away from such provisions. This unfulfilled planning left tenants in South Auckland increasingly marginalized. Crucially for my analysis, Maori in the South Auckland suburbs of Mangere and Otara responded to a continual lack of amenities by building urban marae, despite the predominance of poor households in these suburbs.

These taurahere marae6 “remain central to the community” and have since been recognized as crucial in establishing urban Maori identity (Schrader 2004:12). For instance, the Auckland City Council (2005:1.0) has enacted policy that supports these marae as providing “a sense of cultural continuity and identity for Maori”. This is a good example of how policy now recognises the importance of material preconditions for the situatedness of co-ethnic social relations. For instance, according to the Auckland City Council (2005:4.0), taurahere marae are now essential for ensuring Maori well being, via support for traditional and contemporary aspects of capabilities as diverse as kinship, religion, education, housing and health. The success of marae in facilitating Maori social relations points to a positive outcome of ethnic clustering. It also effectively demonstrates the ways in which social relations are culturally mediated. Together, these points suggest that clustering allowed Maori urban society to flourish in a way that would have been less successful, had they been denied a public space for cultural expression.

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6 “Taurahere marae are those marae where the associated group does not have tangata whenua status in a particular area. Taurahere marae have developed to bring together members of iwi who reside outside their tribal territory, urban Maori and the wider community who share a common purpose or collective aspirations” (Auckland City Council 2005:4.0).
Although it fostered social relations, this clustering of Maori in South Auckland cannot be considered in a wholly positive light, because it was the outcome of economic marginalisation, rather than an expression of choice. It also highlights the complex interaction between ethnic minority housing concerns and gender. The double bind of ethnic minority women’s position is exampled in the subordinated role of Maori women on some marae (Brookes 1997:242, Ralston 1993:26). Clustering in this instance can be seen positively as an unplanned outcome that addressed issues of cultural maintenance, without challenging women’s subordination within marae. The intricacies involved in ethnic minority and women’s rights, means that the case for housing policy to carefully evaluate ethnic minority women’s needs, is clearly manifest.

The case of Maori in state housing policy shows how policy contained a complex recognition of, on one hand, an ideal that the nuclear family was completely privatised, and on the other, Pakeha notions of neighbouring and community. The first premise is critiqued from Nussbaum’s assertions of the fallacy of the private nuclear household. The second premise is critiqued from the point of view that assimilatory policies undermined Maori social relations, by trying to impose Pakeha ideals of neighbouring. From a policy perspective, the suppression of women’s interests within the nuclear family can be likened to the suppression of Maori interests within suburbs and neighbourhoods. The outcomes of marginalisation in this instance were clustering, and community-based creation of culturally appropriate public spaces, that facilitated urban Maori identity formation and maintenance.

hooks (1990:46) recognises that “an effective means of white subjugation of black people globally has been the perpetual construction of economic and social structures
that deprive many folks of the means to make homeplace”. In recontextualising hooks’ statement within New Zealand, it appears that housing policy, reflected in Eurocentric house design and early assimilationist allocation, had functioned to deny Maori an important aspect of their culture, that is, the communal function of the marae. Further, it had not enabled Maori to establish an identity which might support these practices, given first, their dispersal and second, their marginalization. Given the mismatch between Maori and the Eurocentric designs of the state houses many dwelt in, marae can be seen as physically affirming the culture of Maori, regardless of oppressions enforced from hegemonic ideals.

In addition, marae function in parallel to the political aspect of homeplaces, by drawing households together for communal socialization. This concept is supported by Huia Jahnke (2002:503) who counts “home-place” as central to the maintenance of Maori women’s identity. According to Jahnke (2002:509-510), key aspects of homeplace include “physical attachment to land…that is…among close kin”, “being close to and surrounded by whanau”, and “the significance of the marae as…a key symbol for collective identity”. Interestingly, Jahnke (2002:511) concludes by paralleling the outlook of Maori in regards to homeplaces to that of “the black tradition which says ‘I am because we are; and since we are therefore I am’”.

However, as Nussbaum (2000:41) points out, any group’s commitment to fostering traditional social aspects should be accompanied by political opportunity. On top of this, she argues the importance of enabling critique, contestation and change from individuals external and internal to social groups (Nussbaum 2000:48). Yet in the case of marae, gendered political issues of representation and voice remain contested to this
day (Ralston 1993:26). So while marae may have brought about cultural flourishing and an amount of political voice for Maori men, the empowerment of Maori women remains unclear. Thus we must question marae as traditional ethnic spaces in which patriarchal structures may continue, without the fulfilment of Maori women’s political capabilities, or insufficient space for Maori women to critique, contest and bring about change within Maori culture. To further investigate this tension between gender equality and the maintenance of culture, from the perspective of the capabilities framework, I now turn to the case of the Samoan migrant population in Auckland.

**Samoan Social Relations and State House Design**

In the previous section I analysed the exclusion and inclusion of Maori into state houses against my model for housing evaluation. The major hurdles towards Maori developing and sustaining culturally appropriate social relations at the household and neighbourhood level was identified as discrimination, assimilation and marginalisation. I suggested some themes of particular significance to contextualising ethnic minority rights to housing: rhetoric of the deserving versus undeserving poor, Pakeha ideals of kinship and affiliation at the neighbourhood level, and the problematic conception of state houses as private spaces. I argue that many of these ideas remain relevant today, and in the coming chapters these issues and themes will be central for contextualising refugee issues in housing.

This section looks at the case of the Samoan migrant population in the Auckland region, drawing on the work of Cluny Macpherson. While my discussion of Maori focused on social relationships at the neighbourhood level and amongst Maori, in this section I investigate social relationships within the design of state houses, and reflect upon how these have interacted with broader capabilities amongst the Samoan community. I argue
that Macpherson’s findings are an example of how ethnic capabilities can come to be subsumed, not only at the neighbourhood level, but also in terms of the internal design of state houses.

The first section demonstrates the inability of state houses to accommodate extended family structures. In the second section, the importance of Samoan solutions to mismatch that are based in the “private” realm, are demonstrated in the ways they improve broader capabilities, such as economic and political functioning. This section emphasizes the importance of policy that is reflexive to the cultural interpretation of affiliative needs.

**Samoan Extended Families and State House Design Mismatch**

Macpherson’s (1997:153) work traces the history of Samoan migration and resettlement to Auckland, with particular emphasis on the migration of the 1960’s to mid-1980’s. This wave of Samoan immigration corresponded with housing policy that had become largely residual and guided by “increasingly ad hoc” welfare policies that left substantial gaps in service provision (Cheyne *et al.* 2000:40). Along with Maori, Samoan households were commonly marginalized in neighbourhoods characterized by poverty and high levels of crime (Davidson 1999:458). By this time, state houses had mostly Maori and Polynesian tenants but despite this, state house design still focused on provisions for the nuclear, Pakeha household ideal and resulted in state houses that were “variations on the same theme” (Macpherson 1997:155). Doling (1997:96) argues that the stigmatisation associated with the privatisation of housing, leads to groups that the market is unable to accommodate being “distinguished by the difficulties…in the ‘normal’ housing market” (Doling 1997:85). The monolithic design of state funded houses may be thought of as a physical attribute to this sentiment.
Macpherson (1997:156) outlines the ways in which Samoan migrants experienced a distinct mismatch between their way of life and the design of state houses and state funded houses. A problem facing Samoan households, which were commonly composed of extended family members, was overcrowding and its associated problems, both practical and cultural. For instance, failing water and cooking facilities, and the spread of infectious diseases, were coupled with cultural problems such as the allocation of space between family members and during different occasions. Gender issues also arose in relation to the need to segregate young unmarried men from the rest of the group (Macpherson 1997:164). In addition to this, the interaction between immigration policies of the day and housing, placed additional strain on those wishing to sponsor immigrants from Samoa to New Zealand. Immigration applications would only be approved if the available accommodation had been inspected and deemed “appropriate” (Macpherson 1997:157).

Macpherson records that despite a design emphasis on the living rooms in state houses, they proved too small and were already in heavy use due to overcrowding and to different use of space (such as sitting on the floor rather than in chairs), (Macpherson 1997:159). As the Samoan population was comprised of considerable numbers of young, working people, many were able to save for rental accommodation or to mortgage properties (Macpherson 1997:158). However, as Macpherson notes, a limited amount of disposable income, given the dynamics of extended family commitments, in conjunction with a predomination of Pakeha in areas where larger houses were

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7 As Macpherson (1997:155) has suggested, many Samoan households benefited reasonably from the various housing assistance options provided by government during this time, such as mortgage schemes, construction and purchasing (Murphy and Kearns 1994:627). However, state houses available for rent as well as those constructed under state funding for purchase abided by existing norms of house design (Macpherson 1997:155).
available, meant that many Samoan households were dissuaded from shifting (Macpherson 1997:160). Indeed, as Julie Park (1991:18) notes contemporarily:

> Neighbouring is a resource which contributes to the social identity of the household and its members…the choice of neighbourhood and the use of neighbourhood networks can be a mechanism for the conversion of financial capital into social, cultural and even educational capital.

This example suggests the positive association for new migrants with suburbs where clusters of co-ethnic populations dwell.

**Samoan Solutions to Mismatch and Social Relations**

In some ways paralleling the function of marae for Māori, Samoan churches had been established from 1965 in the context of clustered Samoan communities (Macpherson 1997:158). However, unlike marae, Samoan church facilities used formal booking systems, were often in high demand and were not always suitable for smaller group activities, such as “family-to-family” meetings (Macpherson 1997:159). As such, these spaces did not provide for Samoan affiliative capabilities in the same ways as urban marae. The innovative solution Samoan’s initiated was the building of detached garages on their properties, which came to have a variety of uses, as sites for various, often traditional, cultural activities, such as meetings, ceremonies, and religious services. As Macpherson (1997:171) comments:

> These simple, inexpensive, and versatile buildings have played a significant role in supporting the continuity of elements of Samoan social organization and the reproduction of Samoan
culture and tradition…The humble garage has long since ceased to be a garage; it has become anything and anywhere that Samoan life demands and the imagination can reach.

In addition to improving social relations, the Samoan solution to mismatch with state house design relates to enhanced economic capabilities. As Macpherson (1997:168) points out, garages play a role in family, church and community fund raising efforts, facilitating gatherings for games of bingo that avoid the scrutiny of license inspectors, to whom game organisers would otherwise be accountable to in the public sphere.

The ability of Samoan households to access ownership of houses suggests positive outcomes of policy for the security of tenure for minority groups, and the implications this has for cultural maintenance. For Wikstrom (1995:272-273), security and autonomy are seen as primary appeals of home. In addition, findings have shown how immigrants place emphasis of the importance of ownership in terms of the cultural appropriation of space, so that an owned house is a place “to be proud of as well as private space to be different in” (Watson and McGillivray 1994:209).

Garages also contribute to alleviating “intercongregational political tensions” which arise within Christian congregations, by providing a temporary space for recalcitrant groups to worship in (Macpherson 1997:167). While this “out” to the hegemony of churches cannot be seen as facilitating political rights in the sense of governmental representation, along with their role in supporting Samoan culture, they are certainly significant within the Samoan cultural context, and therefore have significance for the ability of Samoan groups to mobilize, or as Macpherson (1887:167) says “organize their affairs”.
Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the different affiliative needs of two migrant ethnic minority groups, in relation to three key areas of state housing: access, location and design. I have argued that historically, suburbs with a predominance of state houses have been burdened with hegemonic planning and design ideals. Embedded in these ideals were assimilatory practices based on the Pakeha, nuclear family as the only household model “deserving” of state house tenantship. As a consequence, Maori and Samoan households, particularly in relation to their social relations, experienced mismatch. For instance, my discussion of Maori highlighted how differential access to state houses enforced dispersal, which problematised the culturally mediated social relations of Maori at the neighbourhood level. At the same time, the impact of the state’s role in denominate particular family groupings, was evident in the case of Samoan extended families. Thus, I argue that the power of hegemonic ideals that were embodied in state housing, can be seen in Nussbaum’s terms, as material preconditions for a Pakeha, nuclear ideal of family, neighbourhood and community. The extent to which the state ideology shaped both public and private spaces surrounding state houses, highlights the importance of the inroads that Maori and Samoans made within public space, via marae and churches, which were crucial for the maintenance of tradition as well for identity formation. They also served to facilitate the functioning of culturally mediated capabilities, such as education and religion. At the same time, the different requirements that ethnic minority households had for the private spaces of state houses remains only partially resolved.

On the basis on these findings, I argue that housing policy must recognise the role of culture in influencing different affiliative needs. The material preconditions for diverse
capabilities, and the allowance for individuals to choose them, should be the goal of policy. Overall, this argument envisions the role of state house access, planning and design as allowing for maximum capabilities, through choice, rather than specific pre-determined functioning. Housing policy should thereby move beyond culturally appropriate housing design, and acknowledge the role of the state in supporting the capabilities of ethnic minorities through housing. In addition to illustrating themes presented in the first chapter, this chapter raised issues of ethnic minority clustering, rhetoric surrounding state houses and their tenants, and the question of gender within ethnic minority households. These areas will be a major focus in my discussion of Ethiopians refugees, to which I now turn.
Refugee Policy and the Demography of the Ethiopian Population in New Zealand: The Makings of Successful Resettlement?

In preparation for a discussion of Ethiopian refugees and state housing, this chapter analyses the ways in which the demography of the Ethiopian population in New Zealand is shaped by global and local refugee policies. This chapter argues that New Zealand’s refugee policy operates from a capitalist rationale that is problematic to the Ethiopian population in resettlement. I argue that the ability of refugees to create homeplace in countries of resettlement is negated by policy, beginning in this chapter with the macro level of norms governing the processing of refugee resettlement applications. This follows Lacroix’s (2004:153) assertion that studying the material outcomes of refugee policy from the macro to the micro level, reveals the “cycle of marginalisation” of the refugee subject. Thus, my approach addresses from the outset Chile’s (2002:359) observation of refugee marginalization in New Zealand. My argument is supported by information sourced from specially tabulated Census New Zealand statistics and ethnographic literature focusing on the Ethiopian and African diasporas.

I begin by pointing out some difficulties in tracking the Ethiopian refugee population through the Census data. I then briefly discuss some aspects of Ethiopian refugeeess that shape the flight from Ethiopia to countries of asylum in gendered ways, pointing out how control over one’s environment and affiliative capabilities are twin losses of forced displacement. While the cultural and experiential factors that shape gender relations will be expanded upon in later chapters, for now they serve as a basic
illustration of how Ethiopian refugeeeness collides with gender biased immigration policies.

In the subsequent section, I discuss the ideological structures of global and local immigration policy in order to show the gendered impacts these have on the resettling population. My argument about policy has two parts and draws upon the framework set out in the previous chapter. First, I argue that UNHCR policy upholds successful refugee resettlement as an economically grounded concept. Through the unbalanced sex ratios of the Ethiopian population, I demonstrate that in New Zealand, UNHCR refugee identification and resettlement recommendation exacerbate gendered problems. I then explore the influence of UNHCR policy upon national refugee policies, locating them within prevailing economic imperatives and rhetoric of “neo-humanism”.

Second, I discuss the implementation of New Zealand’s immigration policy for refugees with particular reference to women refugees and how gendered rhetoric about refugees, along with narrowly defined concepts of successful resettlement, is detrimental to women’s resettlement prospects. Lastly, I explore and challenge concepts of desirable versus undesirable migrants, dependency, and successful resettlement. I argue for a re-evaluation of successful resettlement, on the basis that the current economically motivated and highly gendered construct of “success” for resettled refugees is detrimental to the capabilities of resettled communities as a whole.

**Difficulties in Researching Ethiopian Refugees in New Zealand**

The small size of the Ethiopian refugee population in New Zealand is problematic for quantitative analysis due to the protection of privacy ensured in Census statistics. This

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8 This term is used by Oswin (2001:354).
has two outcomes for my analysis. The statistical information for any small group can only be provided by the Census with the data rounded to a base number of three, which inevitably allows for a small margin of error in some of the data used in this thesis. In addition, because refugees are not identifiable or “tracked” in any way by Census statistics, the data used here incorporates all Ethiopians, not just refugees. Comparisons between the refugee and non-refugee Ethiopians are therefore difficult to track.

However, the vast majority of the population are recognisable as refugees, if not institutionally speaking, then certainly socially. For instance, Sponsored refugees, who make up a large portion of the Ethiopian population in New Zealand, are not recognised as refugees in immigration or social welfare policy, although they come from similar circumstances as those with recommended by the UNHCR for resettlement (NZIS June 2004:76). Because my research focuses on experiential aspects of refugee identity and uses these as a basis from which to analyse institutional formations of refugee identity, I include Sponsored refugees within discussion of refugees in general.

Moreover, there have been only eight non-refugee Ethiopian immigrations from 1997 to 2004. These non-refugee Ethiopians have come under the Skilled/Business stream’s 1995 General Skills category, meaning that they have fulfilled the requirements of the category’s points-based system, which favours public sector assets and therefore focuses on younger immigrants with English language ability, formal qualifications and economic assets. As Shadbolt (1996:14) has commented, the majority of Ethiopians in this group arrive in New Zealand on scholarships and training grants and later apply for permanent residence status. Women’s lower educational status in Ethiopia (Moussa 1993:23) means that the General Skills group is most likely to be dominated by men.
Business/Skilled immigrants require documented and locally applicable employment training experience, which given the Ethiopian development context, indicates an orientation towards male skills. While it is impossible to investigate this group further due to privacy provisions, it is worth noting that this minority of the New Zealand Ethiopian population that has some prerequisite socio-economic advantage over other refugees is most likely a male-dominated group.

**Ethiopian Refugeeness: From Ethiopia to Countries of Asylum**

This section discusses how gender plays an important role in shaping “push” factors in Ethiopian forced displacement, in relation to culture and refugeeness. To begin with, Phil Marfleet (1998:71) suggests that established ideas of “push” and “pull” factors are still useful in deciphering refugee migration patterns. As Marfleet (1998:71) explains:

> When this approach takes account of political and social as well as economic factors it has an explanatory value: refugees are those among whom the ‘push’ factor is absolutely decisive. The refugee is a woman or man with the narrowest range of choice, usually because specific local conditions have made for exclusion.

While it is not the objective of this thesis to discuss the complex causes of displacement from Ethiopia, John Sorenson (1992:201-202) begins his more in-depth analysis with themes of “convulsive warfare and devastating famine”, coupled with political violence, cultural repression, poverty and ethnic tensions. The magnitude of “push” factors in Ethiopia’s recent history certainly holds Marfleet’s comment to be true. Each instance reinforces that (the lack of) choice is central to refugeeness, which, as I argued earlier, must be given priority when the restoration of refugee rights is attempted in resettlement.
To return to refugeeness, and its central theme of gender, I argue that the “push” factors operate in particularly gendered ways, and Marfleet’s approach is ideal for a brief demonstration of this. For instance, the economic difficulties of refugee camp life in countries of asylum increase the number of men abandoning their families (Moussa 1993:190). However, as I discussed in the literature review, economic explanations often do not allow the full spectrum of gender issues to surface (Nussbaum 2000:61). The value of Marfleet’s approach is evident here, because it moves beyond economically based measurements. Indeed, when political aspects are taken into account for instance, we find that because women in Ethiopia are often persecuted for their male relatives’ political activity, they sometimes encourage men to flee Ethiopia by themselves (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:214). Adding social considerations into the picture, more factors that contribute to the separation of families surface, such as the dangers inherent in border crossings (Moussa 1993:170). Deterrents for single women refugees also arise, as Beyani (1995:29) recounts, they are often “subject to sexual demands in return for refugee status”. The demographic outcome of these factors, among others, is a high instance of woman headed households in asylum (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:215).

As Oliver-Smith (1991:2) has commented on forced migration and asylum:

"Whole communities suffer acute degrees of disintegration as community structures, social networks and even kin groups may be dispersed...the affective ties between individuals and communities and their material environments are destroyed."
The loss of traditional kin and community based support for women refugees as a result of flight and resettlement is also noted by Olsson (2002:18). The mixture of economic, political and social upheavals common to Ethiopian refugeeness, as I outlined above, result in the breakdown of the family, as a key affiliative institution. Therefore I argue that from the very beginning of the process of displacement, the loss of “a place to be” is inevitably accompanied by the loss of pre-existing affiliative capabilities.

As I have shown, the “push” factors in Ethiopian displacement result in disruptions of affiliative capabilities that are particularly gendered. I now turn to an analysis of “pull” factors, and argue that they exacerbate the gendered outcomes of the initial stages of displacement, as demonstrated in the sex ratios and age sex compositions of the Ethiopian population in New Zealand. The “pull” factors considered are the UNHCR identification criteria for refugee status and resettlement recommendation, and the NZIS refugee selection criteria.

**Gender and Economic Imperatives in UNHCR Policy**

Over the two Census years examined here, 1996 and 2001, the Ethiopian population showed a continuously higher number of men than women. Although higher percentages of African refugees in countries of asylum are women and children (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:215, Chile 2002:357, Danso 2002:119), it is widely recognised that the African diaspora in resettlement consistently contains a greater portion of men (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:215, Mphahlele 1994:124, Thomson 1999:48, Danso 2002:116). In this sense then, the New Zealand Ethiopian population shows similar sex ratios to the rest of the African diaspora. The resettlement of more African refugee men than women can in part be traced to the policies than govern refugee flows globally, as this section demonstrates.
Aside from granting official refugee status to individuals, the UNHCR recommends an estimated one percent of the world’s refugees for resettlement (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:11, Shadbolt 1996:7). The UNHCR suggests resettlement when repatriation to the country of origin or integration into the country of asylum jeopardises the safety or freedom of a refugee, or where the refugee is identified as “vulnerable” (Shadbolt 1996:8). Refugees identified as vulnerable by the UNHCR fall under five categories: those who are victims of torture or violence, the mentally or physically disabled, those with medical needs that cannot be met in the country of asylum, “long stayers” in refugee camps and Women at Risk (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:11, Shadbolt 1996:8, Altinkaya and Omundsen 1999:31).

I will discuss the Women at Risk category in a moment, but even in the supposedly gender neutral categories, there remains bias in the implementation which begins to explain the imbalanced sex ratios seen in the African diaspora globally. As Matlou (1999:136) points out, the male domination of practices surrounding policy implementation, disadvantage African women refugees. In the context of refugee camps for example, discrimination, improper refugee claims processing, and sexual harassment and abuse can affect women’s success when dealing with immigration and UNHCR staff (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:12, McSpadden and Moussa 1993:214). Audrey Macklin (1999:293) points out that violence against women is often so “endemic” within refugee populations that it is vastly under-reported and “local authorities turn a blind eye”. The result for women seeking refugee status on gendered grounds is to carry the “burden of proof” when any “objective basis” can be near impossible to establish (Macklin 1999:287). A participant of Helene Moussa’s (1993:182) reinforces this
perspective when she describes that how “if you were smart enough to leave before you were jailed or tortured, you are not considered a refugee”.

In addition to this, the UNHCR has acknowledged serious bias in its resettlement recommendation criteria (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:12). UNHCR policy that delineates resettlement recommendation takes up the concept of “successful resettlement”. Because UNHCR policy is underlined by an inherently capitalist rationale, it gives insufficient recognition to women as potential “successful resettlers” and posits single mothers in particular as burdens or “poor risks” to the countries of resettlement (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:12, Moussa 1993:26). This is where the “push” factors, so often leading to family breakdowns, are sorely exacerbated by the “pull” factors of UNHCR policy that favour men as successful resettlers. According to Oswin (2001:354), we can attribute the bias in refugee policy to:

The current global popularity of austere neo-liberal economic policies…which stress fiscal responsibility and justify xenophobic refugee policies…this climate maintains a dangerous ‘neo-humanism’ within the international refugee regime; that is human development qualified by the economic viability of it’s subjects’ pursuits.

Overarchingly, says Oswin (2001:352) this is sustained by the imagined binary of “refugee-producing” and “refugee-receiving” nations, which for the developed nations, Oswin argues, conveniently masks the involvement of the receiving nations in creating forced displacement. Ironically, according to Oswin (2001:352), an overly narrow focus on the private experiences of refugee women can only bolster this fallacy, by means of sustaining the idea that refugee women must be saved from “victimization within
barbaric cultures”, while ignoring “the reality that every country discriminates against women”. Moreover, it is not just gender bias that arises from these economically driven and exclusionary “rules of modern migration” (Marfleet 1998:77). As Marfleet (1998:77) points out, “‘desirable’ migrants with skills, education and capital are let in; ‘undesirables’, illiterates, poor people from different cultures, religions and ‘races; are filtered out”. Danso (2002:117) also argues in the Canadian case that African refugees’ chances for resettlement are hampered by racial discrimination and “stereotypical attitudes”. As Emmanuel Ornguze (1999:94) has argued in the U.S. situation, policy that emphasizes “quick employment in an easily obtainable job” is particularly disadvantageous to all Ethiopian refugees, over other refugee groups.

Literature from New Zealand and abroad has noted that UNHCR and national refugee policies are linked by similar themes of inherent gender bias, economic imperatives and rhetoric about successful resettlement, which I now discuss as the next step in tracing the Ethiopian diaspora to New Zealand.

**Gender in NZIS Refugee Selection Policy**

After refugees are identified by the UNHCR, national governments with Quota schemes such as New Zealand\(^9\) screen applications for resettlement. Although the final decision for granting refuge in New Zealand rests with the NZIS, it acknowledges UNHCR humanitarian-based criteria when selecting refugees for resettlement. The Ethiopian population in New Zealand already experiences an imbalanced sex ratio favouring men. I argue that along with the refugee policy of other receiving nations, New Zealand’s refugee policy exacerbates the gendered constraints already stemming from cultural,

\(^9\) New Zealand’s Quota was established in 1987 and accepts an average of 750 refugees per year (Chile 2002:357).
experiential and UNHCR policy bases. This is demonstrated in the anomalous age sex compositions of the New Zealand Ethiopian population. For instance, a marked dearth of women is notable in the over forty age groups. In particular, the Auckland region saw a marked rise in the number of men per women in these age groups, from 1.5 in 1996 to 3 in 2001. Concomitantly, the Auckland region’s sex ratio of 0.5 in the 25-29 age group in both 1996 and 2001 appears to be evidence that identification and selection criteria favour women in their twenties or thirties, as opposed to older women. I now analyse two areas that explain these anomalous age sex compositions, the first is the concept of “successful” resettlement, and the second is the Women at Risk category.

**Linking UNHCR Policy to that of Receiving Nations: Gender and “Successful” Resettlement**

According to Tremewan and Brasell (1994:33), UNHCR policy is of particular significance because it is often mimicked at the national level. In New Zealand and abroad, the argument is commonly made that refugee programmes in receiving countries too closely mirror immigration programmes (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:210, Tremewan and Brasell 1994:12, Danso 2002:118). This reinforces the economic imperatives behind refugee resettlement and allows discriminatory attitudes to detrimentally affect the resettlement opportunities of Africans and refugee women. In fact Bill Smith (1998:106) has gone so far as to say that:

> Refugee matters are still treated as immigration matters and thus left in the hands of an immigration service that sometimes seems to perceive itself as exempt from even New Zealand’s basic human right’s rules.
Shadbolt (1996:9) comments that in NZIS policy “the usual practice...is to select people who can be expected to adapt readily to the New Zealand way of life”. This preoccupation with “integration potential” is recognised as detrimental to resettlement programmes since “the integrity of resettlement is defined by its responsiveness to the profile of the refugees concerned” (UNHCR 2001:138). I argue that the humanitarian potential of New Zealand’s refugee resettlement programme is therefore undermined by the xenophobic, gender biased and economically influenced implementation of policy, as demonstrated in the refugee resettlement policies abroad (Danso 2002:117, Marfleet 1998:77). Louise Humpage (1998:24) indicates that certainly:

Traditionally, New Zealand’s immigration policy has been based on meeting labour supply demands but since 1991 the aim has shifted to one of sustained economic growth. Consequently, the government is reluctant to accept the full quota of refugees because they are often a non-English-speaking, unskilled group who are less likely to offer New Zealand economic ‘returns’ than other immigrants; rather, they often represent considerable ‘investment’.

It is my proposal that the implementation of New Zealand’s refugee selection criteria leads to a particular difficulty for older Ethiopian women and those with dependents accessing the right to resettlement compared to men, and instead favours younger women. The implications of this for gender imbalance in the resettling population become clear when social and cultural factors in the country of origin are taken into account. Women’s lower educational and employment levels in Ethiopia (Moussa 1993:23) show how an economic rationale can easily become detrimental to women’s resettlement opportunities. Indeed this has been argued in overseas literature. For
instance, it is noted in Canadian and U.S. ethnographies concerning Ethiopians that
women are denied primary applicant resettlement opportunities because criteria measure
“male skills” and focus on “immediate employability” (McSpadden and Moussa
(1993:210), and that older women have less chance of resettlement selection than
younger women (Moussa 1993:182). The result, according to McSpadden and Moussa
(1993:210), is that women are forced to become dependent upon men for resettlement
opportunities.

New Zealand sources concur that the implication of this economic emphasis is that
refugees with more education, English language ability, specific employment
experience and skills, as well as those without dependents are favoured (Tremewan and
Brasell 1994:11). In addition, the size and age of a primary applicant’s family and their
health status may be considered (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:12). Shadbolt (1996:34)
notes that in New Zealand, single women, particularly those with dependents are
discriminated against due to concerns that they take longer than men to become
“economically self-sufficient and to adjust to their new environment”. According to
Tremewan and Brasell (1994:12) this stems from concerns that women will be
dependent on the state, and are therefore considered “poor risks”. As in the rest of the
Ethiopian diaspora, the implementation of New Zealand’s refugee selection criteria, in
combination with UNHCR policy and the economic rational behind “successful”
resettlement, explains the imbalanced sex ratio of the New Zealand Ethiopian
population, as well as the anomalous sex age compositions, which see a dearth of older
women in particular.
The Women at Risk Category

The Women at Risk category was established to facilitate greater numbers of women into resettlement, particularly single women and women heads of households (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:12). As Oswin (2001:350) warns us:

Feminist efforts have resulted in an unprecedented sensitivity to the concerns of refugee women within international legal forums. Yet, as many feminists have pointed out, it would be profoundly misguided to view these accomplishments as unproblematic or overly significant.

Oswin’s point applies when examining the case of Ethiopian refugee women within the Women at Risk category. Certainly, the category’s importance for refugee women should not be underestimated, for example, in New Zealand between 1997 and 2004, Women at Risk was one of the three largest components of the Quota category, when the approved applications of refugee women of all nationalities are considered (NZIS August 2004:A). On the other hand, the category had minimal impact for the Ethiopian population, with a total of just seven Ethiopian applicants in the same time period. This is of particular concern considering UNHCR estimates that Africa contains the highest numbers of Women at Risk (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:12). For this reason, I include the category in what Doreen Indra (1999:20) has termed those “comfortable, highly containable, increasingly status quo ways that bureaucracies have found to ‘add women’ to otherwise unchanged policies”.

But if strategies to “add women” such as the Women at Risk category are advantageous for the majority of women, how are they problematic? I believe a context specific analysis, incorporating social and political considerations, shows that in regards to the
resettlement selection prospects of Ethiopian women, the category may indeed create more problems than it solves. I argue that the poor response by the NZIS to the Women at Risk category for Ethiopian women is contextualised by rhetoric that essentializes women from the Horn of Africa as particularly burdensome to New Zealand. This relates back to the discussions of Oswin’s ideas that I mentioned in the first chapter. For instance, I argue that the Women at Risk category, by focusing on the persecution and discrimination women face in the private realm, such as sexual assault and harassment, sustain the idea that refugee women must be saved from “victimization within barbaric cultures”, while ignoring “the reality that every country discriminates against women” (Oswin 2001:352), as indeed, New Zealand appears to be doing, as evidenced in markedly unbalanced Ethiopian sex ratios.

As Oswin (2001:351) explains, despite the value of gender sensitive policy in some cases, it also runs the risk of creating a stereotype that “women ‘own’ the ‘gendered’ category of oppression”. As Moussa (1993:23) notes “the double bind for women refugees is that the word ‘refugee’, in effect, signifies powerlessness and subjection while ostensibly conveying protection”. Indeed, this stereotype operates negatively in two ways, as is evident examples from Ethiopian refugee experience. The first outcome, according to Oswin (2001:351) is that the problems women face in the public realm are ignored. I already mentioned that Ethiopian women face harassment from immigration officials in countries of asylum, and as one of Moussa’s (1993:182) participants explains, immigration officers; “can’t believe that an African women can be politically active and persecuted for her activity”.

Ignoring women’s public lives is closely tied up with another important outcome of focusing on women’s oppression in the private realm, as both outcomes revolve around a rhetorical construction of African women as “classic, passive, pitiable victims…within barbaric cultures” (Oswin 2001:352). As Oswin (2001:351) explains of the second outcome:

[Refugee] women’s claims are most likely to succeed when they present themselves as victims of dysfunctional, exceptionally patriarchal cultures and states. Hence the successful applicant must be cast as a cultural other…as ‘Third World supplicants’ or ‘Exotic Other Females’.

Pickering (2001:177) points out that when refugees fail to conform to this model, national resettlement responses “return to more conventional devalued representations of refugees and asylum seekers- ungrateful, aggressive, demanding, draining and different”. Indra (1999:8) has also warned against what she calls this “conceptual trap”. I argue that these stereotypes amplify the impact of negative images that already circulate about African refugees, and ironically reinforce Ethiopian women’s dependence on men for resettlement prospects. Indeed, this may be heightened in the Horn of Africa context, as resettlement policies that are inclusive of gender concerns fail to operate in culturally appropriate ways. For instance, the difficulty faced by single women and women headed households in gaining resettlement recommendation reinforces refugee women’s dependence on men for safety, a factor already present in refugee life in asylum. As a participant of McSpadden and Moussa (1993:213) has commented, due to the harassment of Orthodox Ethiopian women in Muslim neighbouring countries of asylum, women “have to belong to a man to be safe”.
I argue that the Women at Risk category is failing Ethiopian women refugees due to the ways in which it is tied up with essentializing and stereotypical images about African women. Indeed, the first Women at Risk refugees in New Zealand were thought by service providers to be demonstrating a typical “refugee mentality” by lying and manipulating the immigration system, because they were “discovered to have spouses and other relatives” (Humpage 1998:121). The successful implementation of the Women at Risk category is crucial for Ethiopian women refugees in countries of asylum. However, I argue that the evidence points to a reluctance on the part of the NZIS to resettle Ethiopian women refugees, and more broadly, indicates New Zealand’s culpability of constructing resettlement within discourses of charity (Pickering 2001:177), rather than as a humanitarian obligation to restore refugees’ right to a place to be. Given the detrimental affects of the current conception of “successful” resettlement and the rhetoric that surrounds the resettlement of African women refugees in particular, the next section shows the fallacies inherent in an economically driven conception of “successful” resettlement, and argues for a re-evaluation of it’s definition.

**Rethinking “Successful” Resettlement**

This section argues for a re-evaluation of successful resettlement, on the basis that the current economically motivated and highly gendered construct of “success” in the selection process, is detrimental to the capabilities of resettled communities as a whole. As a consequence of its economic emphasis, New Zealand policy disregards the vital importance of refugee women to the resettlement prospects of men and children. The necessity of rethinking resettlement terminology is signalled by the case of the Ethiopian diaspora. Ethiopian refugees, particularly women, and especially those who are single mothers, appear to be the social groups that are the most atypical to the
economic model of successful resettlement. My argument for the re-evaluation of successful resettlement rests on the subsequent gender imbalance in the resettling Ethiopian diaspora.

Impetus to investigate the meaning of “success” in resettlement terminology is heightened due to its uncritical use in refugee studies. For example, Maya Bhave’s (2001) study of Ethiopian women in Chicago, aptly entitled Making It, purports to include a broad definition of social capital, but in fact focuses on economic participation as the central element underpinning integration and success in resettlement. And upward mobility is openly equated with successful resettlement is certainly valued as a stepping-stone to “acculturation...integration...[and] assimilation”, as in Elias Cheboud’s (2002:16) heuristic study of Ethiopian refugees resettling in British Colombia.

I suggest that a useful stance for New Zealand policy would be akin to recognition of refugeeness. Policy should reinterpret “successful” resettlement, to value cultural and social well being, rather than just economic aspects of resettling populations. This entails de-emphasizing the current focus on the public sphere (via measures of formal economic participation), and refocusing on the informal, private and affiliative roles that women play in resettling populations, in other words, it moves towards Oswin’s theme of rights as relationship. In a sense then, I am following what Oswin (2001:351) points out to be an established, and flawed, feminist strategy for the inclusion of women’s interests within immigration policy, by attempting to shift the focus from the public to the private realm. However, I argue that this approach facilitates a greater recognition of multiplicity of refugee women’s identity, since refugee identity is exclusively
constructed and maintained in the public sphere. In addition, because my approach revolves around housing and affiliative capabilities, it allows for an examination of women’s public lives and of the ways in which houses, which are widely conceived as private, are so heavily influenced by the public realm, in the forms of policy and community.

hooks (1990:42) asserts the ability of black people, particularly women, to create homeplace, despite the constraints of racist economic and social conditions. In this way, my analysis diverges from hooks’ because it tempers an understanding of private spaces with an acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of the public realm, and its impact upon seemingly private matters in the form of policy. Hence, I challenge hooks’ (1990:7) claim of the universality of black people’s ability to make homeplace. The acculturation of hooks’ black North American populace lies in stark contrast to the experience of refugees, particularly those who are newly arrived, although resettlement is an ongoing, and possibly limitless process. In the refugee case, the potential for making homeplace may be of heightened importance, and yet be an even more tenuous a creation. When considering homeplaces as sites for political resistance and mobilization, the small size of the Ethiopian refugee population intensifies the precarious, yet vital potential of homeplaces, and magnifies the role of women in the resettling population.

Ironically considering the gender problems in its policies, the importance of the role of refugee women in resettlement has been recognised by the UNHCR (quoted in Tremewan and Brasell 1994:13):

Because of the central role played by refugee women in their families, it is essential for the international community to take all
the necessary measures to help them recover their self-esteem and status in the family and in the social group… [a refugee woman] determines to a large extent, the ability of the family to adjust to…resettlement in a third country.

Indeed, if women refugees are not to be valued for their own worth, recognition of their potential as facilitators of successful familial resettlement is a good first step. Although Dunn (1998:510) does not consider gender issues extensively, he does advise that instead of the current selection and resettlement criteria, “the ability to cultivate a dynamic sense of cultural identity is the appropriate indicator of successful settlement”. Taking homeplaces as a social precondition for the expression of difference, and tempering this with housing as a material precondition to the creation of homeplace, the centrality of the right to adequate housing in supporting successful resettlement is clear.

**Conclusion**

In sum, this chapter has shown that immigration policy regarding refugees falls into the same traps that Nussbaum (2000:61) critiques in other economically based development measures. I have shown how immigration policy fails to account for gender in ways that are culturally appropriate, and, by basing the definition of success on finance; it fails to acknowledge the impact of societal power structures upon the “private” sphere, as exampled by sex ratios. Recalling Nussbaum’s (2000:65) solution to these dilemmas, I too have suggested a measure that is more individualistic, and yet also takes account the multiple capabilities that are required for well being. Resettlement to a third country is generally viewed as the poorest solution to displacement, and is ranked below repatriation and asylum, which is usually in a neighbouring country. Nonetheless, the potential for refugees to reconcile their displacement, a concept I posit is socially, politically and materially akin to homeplaces, is atrophied when the role of women is
underestimated. In this way, I suggest, refugee policy should be aligned with the liberal rights basis of international refugee legal and humanitarian frameworks, and move away from the economic concepts inherent in New Zealand’s policy.
State Housing Policy: Access and Design

The previous chapter demonstrated the gendered impacts of global and local refugee migration policy upon the Ethiopian population resettling in New Zealand. It argued for a reframing of “successful” resettlement, on the grounds that the current narrow interpretation of this undoubtedly multifaceted concept aggravates imbalanced sex ratios and hinders the well-being of the resettling population by ignoring the vital role played by refugee women in resettlement. I suggested instead that recognition of a variety of capabilities, informed particularly by refugeeess, is required for a full understanding of refugee well being and a humanistic redefinition of successful resettlement. The last chapter also considered Lacroix’s (2004:153) proposition of a “cycle of marginalisation”, from the macro-level of global refugee policy, and discussed the outcomes upon the gender of the local resettling Ethiopian population.

In this chapter I turn my focus towards the micro-level process of resettlement and housing of the Ethiopian population in Auckland, continuing to trace structures that marginalise the refugee subject. I begin by explaining how residence status determines Ethiopian refugees’ housing rights post-migration, specifically, access to state housing. I contend that varied access rights to state housing are based on perceived differences between refugees, rather than any marked difference in experiential backgrounds, thus revealing a lack of recognition in policy for refugeeness. This is shown to be a cause of contentions within refugee communities. I argue that imposed status types and different corresponding levels of access to state housing, impact negatively on the ability of Ethiopians to establish and maintain social relations within their co-ethnic groups and with other state house stakeholders. I discuss the rhetorical construction of Ethiopian
identity particular to New Zealand, especially in relation to blackness and the exclusion of Ethiopian refugees from state house ideals.

In the second section I consider how housing policy, conjoined with state house design, shapes Ethiopian household structures and domesticity. Set against an understanding of Ethiopian personal income levels, employment and age sex ratios, this sections uncovers the tensions inherent in sponsorship practices and policy initiatives that increasingly blur the boundaries between refugee and migrant immigration. The interaction between immigration policy and state house occupancy levels, overcrowding and design is examined, and I explore issues such as class and the creation of homeplaces.

**Ethiopian Residence Status and Entitlement to Social Services**

This section describes the relation between residence status categories and entitlements to social service provision in resettlement. Residence status types are crucial because they determine the level of formal resettlement support that individual refugees receive. In New Zealand, residence status categories are encompassed under three streams: Skilled/Business, International/Humanitarian, and Family Sponsored (see Table One). The Ethiopian population in New Zealand is comprised of two main groups, those who arrive under the International/Humanitarian stream, and those who arrive through the Family Sponsored categories. All International/Humanitarian refugees, with the exception of Status refugees, are mandated by the UNHCR as refugees before they arrive in New Zealand as part of the annual refugee quota intake, and are hereafter referred to as Quota refugees. Status refugees, who also fall under the International/Humanitarian stream, are successful asylum seekers who gain UNHCR recognition as refugees post-migration. In contrast, Family Sponsored refugees are
never officially recognised as refugees, and gain migrant residency status on the
grounds of kinship to refugees already resettled in New Zealand.

**Quota Refugees**

As shown in Table Two\textsuperscript{10}, the residence category that has facilitated the largest amount
of Ethiopians into New Zealand is the Quota category. Upon arrival, the Mangere Refugees Resettlement Centre (MRRC)\textsuperscript{11} in South Auckland houses all Quota refugees. The MRRC, run by the non-governmental organisation the Refugee and Migrant Service (RMS), provides a six-week resettlement programme, including basic provisions and health screening. Adults are introduced to New Zealand culture and language via English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, while day care and an introduction to New Zealand schooling are provided for children. Perhaps most importantly, the RMS and the HNZC case worker assist refugees with securing housing after their six-week stay at the MRRC ends. In addition, Quota refugees are provided with special Reestablishment Grants of up to $1200 per couple for household effects, appliances, power and telephone connection, ESOL classes and translation costs for work-related documents (NZIS June 2004:256). They may also access loans of up to $800 for accommodation bonds and rents in advance (Shadbolt 1996:11). As residents, all Quota refugees are eligible on arrival for the regular Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) Emergency Unemployment Benefit. They may also apply for Unemployment and Domestic Purposes benefits, disability allowances and accommodation supplements (NZIS June 2004:256). Quota refugees are also entitled to a further six months ongoing

\textsuperscript{10} Due to the limited availability of statistics disaggregated by residence status type, Table Two shows the residence status types for Ethiopian refugees from the years 1997 to 2004, rather than the time frame that corresponds with the Census information drawn on for other demographic profiles of 1996 to 2001. As such, the residence status statistics are taken as an indication of immigration patterns over a similar timeframe, rather than corresponding directly to the Census sample referred to elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{11} The MRRC is co-ordinated by the Refugee and Migrant Service (RMS), a non-governmental charitable organisation, in co-operation with governmental and non-governmental agencies, comprised of the NZIS, the Auckland University of Technology’s School of Refugee Education, the Auckland District Health Board’s Health Clinic, and the Auckland Refugees as Survivors (RAS) Centre.
support from RMS and other volunteer-run organisations (NZIS June 2004:128). This resettlement strategy has been described as a “front-loaded model”, which is intended to offer short-term assistance, in anticipation that integration, particularly employment, will quickly ensue (Humpage 1998:25).

The Refugee Status Category

In contrast, successful asylum seekers, who are awarded Refugee Status post-migration under the International/Humanitarian stream, are not incorporated into New Zealand’s formal refugee resettlement programme, and as such, receive the least formal resettlement support of any group. Because Auckland is New Zealand’s largest urban centre, it is the primary entry point to the country and the first destination for asylum seekers. Upon arrival asylum seekers are detained at the MRRC, but without the provisions that Quota refugees are entitled to. Once asylum seekers gain Status they must provide their own accommodation, health and legal requirements independently. In response to this, the Auckland Refugee Council Inc (ARCI), a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation (NGO)\(^\text{12}\) offers accommodation to a limited number\(^\text{13}\) of paying Status refugees at the Auckland Refugee Centre (ARC). 93 per cent of Status refugees reside in the Auckland region subsequent to obtaining residency. This is an outcome of Auckland being the primary point of entry into New Zealand, the detention of asylum seekers at the MRRC, and the only formal subsequent support being located in Auckland, (NZIS June 2004:381).

\(^{12}\) ARCI are partly funded by Child, Youth and Family (CYF), and the Department of Internal Affairs’ Community Organisation Grants Scheme (COGS) and the Community Housing function of the NZIS.

\(^{13}\) The Auckland Refugee Centre has 25 beds available at any one time. Asylum seekers pay $100 per week for accommodation and basic services, and may stay for up to three months.
The Status category is further significant because the overwhelming majority are older men (NZIS June 2004:86). In addition to gender bias in selection criteria for mandated groups, the Status category contributes to the consistently high numbers of men in the over-30 age groups of the Auckland Ethiopian population. Ethiopian asylum seekers have an application approval rate of 60% (NZIS August 2004:B) and this is approximately twice the median for all nationalities. This indicates the severe circumstances that Ethiopian asylum seekers flee from, and means that this group of almost exclusively older, male Status refugees account for 13 per cent of the total Ethiopian population who have arrived from 1997 to the present. This concentration of male Status refugees within the Auckland region with very little formal resettlement support, suggests that their resettlement requirements may go unfulfilled, and they may rely more heavily upon co-ethnic communities for informal support as a consequence.

**The Family Sponsored Stream**

After the International/Humanitarian stream, the Family Sponsored stream has been the second greatest facilitator of Ethiopian immigration (see Table Two). This appears to reflect Humpage’s (1998:24) assertion that the government “prefers refugees to apply for permanent residency under general criteria because ‘migrants’ are not covered by the government’s obligation to meet minimum standards for refugee resettlement”, including adequate housing. Certainly, the majority of this “neglected group” receive no formal resettlement support whatsoever (Johns and Ainsworth 2001:11). Although the

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14 Although further statistics are not available, the total impact of this category upon the sex ratios of the Ethiopian population is likely to in fact be much higher. This is because the years from 1997 onwards represented declining Ethiopian immigration in all categories. Indeed, in 2001, the sex ratio for the over forty age group showed twice as many men as previously, with the ratio rising from 1.5 to 3. In comparison, the rest of New Zealand (excluding the Auckland region) showed a slight decrease in the number of men per women in the older age groups.

15 One exception to these rules is the Refugee and Migrant Service’s (RMS) informal arrangement to include approximately 250 Family Sponsored refugees in its annual intake of 750 Quota refugees (RFRT April 2002:3). This means that although Family Sponsored refugees are not officially recognised as refugees and must therefore rely on non-refugee categories to secure immigration rights to New Zealand,
RMS does try to link them with community services (NZIS June 2004:128), this group remains notoriously difficult to contact and assist long term (Johns and Ainsworth 2001:11). Instead of formal social services, all those who arrive in New Zealand under the Family Sponsored stream must have a sponsor who is legally required to provide pre-resettlement costs. These include application fees, airfares, and the costs associated with medical screenings and legal documentation. In addition, sponsors must provide post-resettlement support in the form of accommodation and financial support for 24 months.

**The Use of the Term “Refugee”**

Here it is important to note that I employ the term “refugee” as reflective of a migratory experience, rather than as an official status. I do so in order to acknowledge the previous traumatic experiences in the lives of the Family Sponsored group, who as I mentioned before, are not officially recognised as refugees, despite frequently having “refugee-like” backgrounds (NZIS June 2004:44). As well as acknowledging Sponsored migrants refugeeness, this stance is important when considering the material outcomes of policy. This is due to the ways in which previous experiences, including the process of migration, result in vastly different resettlement needs for refugees, compared with the resettlement needs of general migrants (Humpage 1998:24). This distinction certainly highlights the problem of the uneven distribution of formal resettlement services amongst refugees with different status types. While my focus is on state housing, it should be noted here that it is not my intention to criticise the housing-related and other services offered by NGO groups. This is important to note since the underfunding and consequent shortfall of NGO service provision have in the past been offered as a

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a portion of them whose sponsors arrived as Quota refugees receive the same initial six-week resettlement programme as Quota refugees.
scapegoat for the failure of NZIS to accept the full annual refugee quota (Humpage 1998:24).

The generic application of refugee identity upon the various categories of non-Business/Skilled stream residents (see Table Two) that I use falls in line with recent government literature. For instance, the recent NZIS (June 2004:44) publication *Refugee Voices: A Journey Towards Resettlement*, also refers to Family Sponsored migrants as refugees, in specific acknowledgement of the “refugee-like” situations they experience. In contrast to my application of the term, it is evident that the generalised labelling of all non-Business/Skilled migrants as refugees in government research, evades a critical examination of the wider material and social implications of residency status, particularly regarding the lack of formal social services available to Status refugees and Sponsored migrants.

**Residence Statuses and Access to State Housing**

Having outlined the uneven distribution of rights to formal resettlement support, I now consider the marginalisation of certain refugees’ state housing access rights, in relation to their residence status type. This section discusses how state house access, as an aspect of the process of marginalisation, plays out in resettlement, within refugee groups, and between refugee groups and other state house stakeholders.

**Tensions Among Refugees**

The relevance of refugeeessness to even those Ethiopian refugees without UNHCR mandation, is evident upon examination of the top-down imposition of refugee identity at international and local levels. As Lacroix (2004:156) points out, one result of this process is that “stratification is made between different classes of refugees”, and in countries of resettlement, and this becomes foundational to refugees’ subjectivity. In
line with Lacroix’s observation, the social outcomes of differential service provision according to residence status type are demonstrated succinctly in the New Zealand case. For instance, the initial detention of Status refugees at the MRRC has been said to cause “resentment and tension” between Status and Quota refugees, because housing the two groups together highlights the very different levels of service provision offered to them (NZIS June 2004:106).

These tensions follow refugee groups throughout the resettlement process. For example, the periodic resettlement of sizeable intakes of Quota refugees throughout the year contributes to pressure on state housing stock and becomes a focus point for waiting list disputes. According to service providers, because Quota intakes place high demand on state housing stock, their accommodation comes at the expense of other refugees who remain on the waiting list (NZIS June 2004:123). Certainly, the extent of the impact of Quota refugees is shown, in that private rentals must sometimes be used to substitute the state house stock (NZIS June 2004:115), although the depleted condition of state housing stock should be kept in mind.16

The implications of refugee stratification in relation to housing access are evident in recent community consultation, which reveals that refugee and migrant groups are

16 Throughout the 1960’s the welfare state declined and by the late 1960’s was delivering services well below the public’s expectations (Cheyne et al 2000:39). In 1974, the Housing Corporation of New Zealand (HCNZ) was established to fulfil the state’s role in social housing, which had become largely residual and guided by “increasingly ad hoc” welfare policies that left substantial gaps in service provision (Cheyne et al 2000:40). 1984 marked the growth of the market economy and corresponding retrenchment of the welfare state, as the Labour government embraced the “free market” and rhetoric of promoting choice for individuals (Davidson 1991:454). Labour’s re-election in 1987 continued this process of retrenchment and setting up State Owned Enterprises, which for housing was characterised by a “hands-off” approach from the responsible Ministers (Murphy and Kearns 1994:626). The result of this new approach was the increasing residualisation of social housing (Murphy 1999:218).
keenly aware of differential treatment from HNZC, particularly in relation to waiting lists:

Some people don’t wait long [for state houses]- others do and don’t get a chance (HNZC June 2004:A:1).

Community consultation also demonstrates Moran’s (1996:110) observation that rifts develop easily between refugee “newcomers” and more established refugees:

No clear criteria for people to estimate waiting time- seems endless- even unhealthy living situations not enough- discrimination? Recent arrivals getting houses whereas people been here for long time haven’t (HNZC June 2004:B:1).

Unless the unequal housing rights available to refugees, as expressed in differential access to state housing are addressed, resettlement will continue to entrap refugee identity within a process of marginalisation. New Zealand’s resettlement services have been rated the lowest in comparison to ten other countries with refugee quotas (Humpage 1998:25), and this is indicated further in the area of housing, as a HNZC refugee co-ordinator has only recently been appointed. In combination with the housing pressures evident in the Auckland region, the exclusion of certain refugee groups from housing rights, risks alienating refugee groups from other stakeholders, which is also likely to exacerbate negative stereotypes about refugee prioritisation. Perhaps more problematic is the jeopardization of harmonious social relationships between refugee groups of different ethnicities, and amongst co-ethnic groups.
Refugee Identity and the Lack of Community Education

While different housing rights have a segregational effect within refugee communities, a lack of host community education means that perceptions of refugee identity remain largely monolithic within New Zealand society. As discussed in the previous chapter, rhetoric about refugees is moulded by capitalist policy, which situates most refugees as burdens (Tremewan and Brasell 1994:12, Moussa 1993:26), and “abusers of the welfare system” (Danso 2002:50). The social housing discourse of “deserving” versus “undeserving” groups has also been apparent in Britain, where demonised groups have been the focus of initial public sympathy changing into the attribution of blame (Jacobs, Kemeny and Manzi 2003:438).

Accompanying such discourse, Louise Humpage (1998:119) discusses a supposed “refugee mentality”, which situates refugees as being dependent, dishonest and expectant of “handouts”. According to Humpage (1998:120), the dissemination of such stereotypes can be attributed to “distorted” media representations of refugees, since these are the primary source of information about refugees for the New Zealand public. Significantly, it is recognised that social housing policy is “particularly susceptible to the influence of a moral agenda perpetuated by politicians and the mass media” (Jacobs et al 2003:439). In addition to this, as the above discussion suggests, a lack of community education about the different rights refugees are granted, may also be foundational in the maintenance of stereotypes.

In the area of housing, negative rhetoric manifests as a widespread misconception among individual and community group stakeholders, that all refugees are prioritised
within the HNZC Social Allocation System (SAS). Indeed, the HNCZ (April 2004:77) has recently recognised that “perceptions that new migrants have priority access to social housing can lead to tensions within state housing communities”. The detrimental impacts of such misunderstandings are revealed through refugees’ awareness of neighbourhood attitudes:

Education of communities- tension when NZ families on waiting list for a house and ‘foreigners’ get a home (HNZC June 2004:C:4).

The need for community education is clearly evident. For instance, in specific reference to Auckland, Justine Skilling (2001:44) argues that refugee resettlement programmes address the adaptation of Ethiopian refugees to life in New Zealand, but there is no corresponding:

Preparation of host communities to receive and accept them. This possibly stems from the early days of refugee resettlement in New Zealand, where refugees were almost ‘smuggled into the community’ in order to avoid antagonising the large numbers of people ‘not in favour of refugees’.

Moreover, community groups also demonstrate the proliferation of misinformation based on homogenised understandings of refugees and the services available to them. A submission to the HNZC Housing Strategy (July 2004:34) made by the NGO’s: the Human Rights Foundation17, and the Just Housing Trust18, demonstrates this stereotyping in it’s presumption that:

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17 The Human Rights Foundation is an NGO distinct from the Human Rights Commission.
18 The Just Housing Trust is a not-for profit housing provision NGO funded by the Tindall Foundation.
New Zealand’s relatively small number of refugees is well cared for as far as their right to adequate housing is concerned…they jump to the head of the waiting lists for State rental houses. This is a cause of growing resentment among other New Zealanders on the state rental house waiting lists.

The HNZC allocation system prioritises those households in the most need; nonetheless, it remains a key area in which popular understandings of refugee identity, lead to misconceptions about refugee entitlements to social services. There remains a clear need for wider education in relation to refugee resettlement, directed at both individuals and NGO groups (Johns and Ainsworth 2001:10). I argue that neglecting the crucial area of education within state housing practice, does nothing to alleviate tensions amongst refugee groups, or misunderstandings with other stakeholders. In addition, the absence of education reinforces an assimilatory stance, whereby host neighbourhoods are not expected to change in order to accommodate refugee’s households, but instead, refugees are required to maintain a low profile in order to avoid antagonising other stakeholders, despite the enormous differences in access to state housing between various refugee groups.

**Neighbouring and Ethiopian Ethnicity in New Zealand**

This section addresses a lack of theorization about blackness in New Zealand, and demonstrates how the high profile of black African “difference” demarcates Ethiopians as the antithesis of bicultural state house ideals. It then shows how Ethiopian ethnicity is accordingly conceived of in ways detrimental to social and material housing outcomes, particularly neighbouring and use of space practices.
Theorizing Blackness in New Zealand

The high profile of Ethiopians within the “visual registry”\(^{19}\) of state housing districts, means that supposed refugee prioritisation within the HNZC allocation system, may arise more readily in relation to this group. This raises the question of how blackness is constructed in New Zealand. As mentioned in the literature review, bell hooks’ homeplaces appears to assume that members of the African diaspora universally identify with (a universalised construction of) blackness. Yet this is negated by the Ethiopian experience of identity, since not all Ethiopians identify as black or African, and may give preference to a specific ethnicity rather than the overarching Ethiopian nationality (Sorenson 1993:27). The reasons for non-identification with blackness are historically constructed in the homeland, as well as by experiences of racism in countries of resettlement, where blackness may be regarded as “undesirable” (Sorenson 1992:227). I argue further that blackness is constructed in a manner specific to the social and political histories of various nations, as indicated in New Zealand by the virtual absence of research into blackness. This is one area that certainly deserves future academic investigation.

Despite the lack of literature about black African identities in New Zealand, these identities are undoubtedly pertinent when considering neighbouring, since they are a widely used form of “other-identification” applied by other New Zealand ethnic groups to Ethiopians. In theorizing African identity in New Zealand, Ghassan Hage’s (1998:58) term “Third World Looking” proves useful. Hage (1998:58-59) argues that Australia’s hegemonic Northern European heritage influences the construction of:

\(^{19}\) This term is used by Cheboud (2002:79) in relation to ethnic difference.
‘Third World-looking people’ – the term which sums up best the way the dominant Whites classify those ‘ethnic’ with very low national capital and who are invariably constructed as a ‘problem’ of some sort within all White-dominated societies.

Although Hage applies the term to Australia, I argue for its useful application in New Zealand, signalled by the shared heritage mentioned above, as well as the shared context of being a white-dominated society without an established African diaspora. Further supporting the relevance of Hage’s terminology, is the established tendency that “racial discrimination in New Zealand almost always assumes a social or social-economic character” (Brookes 1997:254). Since many Africans arrive in New Zealand on a humanitarian basis, this fits with the construction of refugees as poor, and therefore problematic burdens upon the nation state.

I suggest that for black Africans in New Zealand, being Third World Looking is further tied up with particular conceptions of “traditional” cultures, a construction frequently attached to refugee populations (Lacroix 2004:148). Pickering’s (2001:181) idea of a “theme of diseased deviancy” attached to refugees is also of note, as is evident in the comments of an Ethiopian refugee describing New Zealand as “a closed society, Kiwi’s knowledge about Africans is less. I met some people running away from us (dark-skinned). Some people think of us as if we are not healthy people” (NZIS June 2004:300). Further, Skilling’s (2001:32) study provides evidence for the effects of the September 11th terrorist attacks on perceptions of black Africans as far away as Auckland. She reports that the attacks corresponded with Ethiopian teenagers’ first experiences of verbal abuse from strangers in their neighbourhoods. As one participant
explained; “I don’t really feel comfortable because they think I’m Muslim or something”.

One of the social consequences of such perceptions in countries of resettlement, is certainly to reinforce particular power dynamics between those who perceive themselves as taxpayer “donors”, and those perceived to be the recipients. This secondary citizenship status ascribed to refugees continues the process of marginalisation associated with refugee identity (Lacroix 2004:153). This is demonstrated in the area of housing, in an example from McSpadden and Moussa (1993:210) who comment that; “ordinary citizens…in Canada reinforced feelings that as refugees they had no right to ask for better, or even clean, living accommodation”. The rhetorical construction of Ethiopian refugees as burdens aligns closely with previous ideas formulated in relation to state housing, which labelled Maori as “undeserving” of state housing, as well as Chile’s (2002:355) assertion of a black underclass.

It is clear that certain rhetoric about the prerequisites for ethnic minorities “deserving” assistance, and thus fulfilling their housing rights, remain in circulation. For instance, a recent newspaper article about the NGO housing assistance offered to a Fijian family of seven begins with the qualification that the parents are nonetheless:

Model citizens. They work hard, help the less fortunate and teach their children to respect the community. But being good citizens does not guarantee the cornerstone of a secure, happy family- a descent home…They worked hard, saved what money they could and prayed for a new home (Hembry 2004:A20).
This clearly shows how the contradictory rhetoric embodied in the state house ideal, which I discussed in chapter two, also applies contemporarily in relation to other ethnic minority groups. This once again highlights the fallacy of the demarcation of state houses as private spaces, and demonstrates how in fact, they are situated within hegemonic ideals of neighbouring and ethnicity.

**Social and Material Housing Issues**

Rhetoric about Ethiopian refugees that currently circulates is influential in social and material experiences of housing. For instance, recent research suggests the detrimental material impact of rhetoric, since refugees from the Horn of Africa report the most discrimination in access to the private housing market (NZIS June 2004:122). When considering social experiences, such as neighbouring, themes of ethnic minority “visibility” begin to surface. As noted by Hanhorster (2001:333) ethnic minority appropriation of space, and mere visibility, is frequently regarded as a threat by the dominant ethnicity. Indeed, issues such as noise, discrimination and simply not feeling at “home” are cited as rising from cultural differences (Ozuekren and Kempen 2002:373). Al-Sharmani (2003:4) comments that Somalian refugees are “not desired to be ‘visible’” in urban host societies, a comment which appears to be equally applicable to Ethiopian refugees, and thus differential use of space is raised as a third area for consideration, situated as both a social and material housing experience. Supporting this are the comments from a participant in Cheboud’s (2002:136) study, explaining that:

> You have to abide by the rules…side by side, but sometimes the culture does not allow you. Sometimes you invite people, the neighbours don’t like. Sometimes, you let the kids play outside, the neighbours don’t like…very strange. So it’s very hard.
The importance of neighbouring practices is heightened because the population is marginalised within wider society. Discrimination from neighbours is recognised as a serious problem by Ozuekren and Kempen (2002:375), who argue that it “may be as damaging as institutional discrimination”. In fact Danso (2002:359) shows that for Ethiopian women in resettlement, the unfriendliness of neighbours is sometimes enough reason to experience dissatisfaction with housing. This goes without raising the issues of violence, which can occur due to resettlement in proximity to overtly racist neighbours (HNZC June 2004:C:4).

The social and material outcomes raised here show once again the need for community education in order for refugees’ right to adequate housing to be upheld in resettlement. It also demonstrates the importance of attention being given to the placement of refugee households within state house areas, given the current climate of housing pressures and stakeholder disputes. Such placement should be sensitive to community perceptions of refugees and how these shape the ability of refugee households to access New Zealand houses and to uphold their housing rights in culturally appropriate ways. Without such consideration, resettlement extends the denigration of refugee rights inherent to their identity.

**Family Reunification and State House Design**

Having surveyed state house access issues, this section examines some social dynamics internal to state houses. It continues to trace the marginalisation of Ethiopian refugees, this time focusing on state house design as a material outcome of policy. House design is analysed on the basis of its interaction with immigration policy outcomes, such as sex ratios and the subsequent gendered social relations within households. In particular, the
significance of overcrowding and the formation of homeplaces, as sites of mobilisation, the reproduction of ethnicity and resistance to racism are considered.

**Gender in the Family Sponsored Stream**

As I discussed in the previous chapter, gender biased policy and practice result in uneven sex ratios, and a predominance of men is a worldwide feature of the African diaspora (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:215, Mphahlele 1994:124, Thomson 1999:48, Danso 2002:116). This is also the case in New Zealand, where, as seen abroad, imbalanced sex ratios equate to an unavailability of marriage candidates for male resettlers. Common social responses to this are that men either travel back to the Ethiopia in order to marry and resettle the woman as a wife (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:215), or use social contacts internationally to facilitate arranged marriages (Meshesha 1994:159). The same response is evident in the Ethiopian diaspora in New Zealand. This is indicated by the 1995 Family Marriage category, which has been the most significant source of Ethiopian sponsored migration (see Table Two). Supporting this, Auckland’s 30-39 year age group balanced out considerably between Census years, from 9 in 1996 to 1.3 in 2001. When compared to other age groups ratios, this shift indicates more than the aging of the cohort, and supports the idea that many women in this age group were sponsored into New Zealand.

The motivation to sponsor women is linked not only to kin reunification, but also to the restoration of neighbouring practices and a sense of security. These are culturally significant aspects of social relations in Ethiopia, where it is men’s responsibility to ensure the safety of close and extended family members, friends and neighbours (Shadbolt 1996:113). This motivation is linked to the knowledge of the continuing hardships of those left behind and the associated feelings of guilt (Mphahlele 1994:122,
Ornguze 1999:78), to the extent that the obligation to ensure others’ safety can lead to resettled refugees suffering serious poverty (Shadbolt 1996:114).

The Financial Context of Sponsorship

Throughout New Zealand, the Ethiopian population features a predominance of low personal incomes of $10,000 per annum or less.\(^{20}\) The figures show the majority receive benefits from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), or work in low paid jobs. Several factors contribute to the continual low rates of employment in both census years. The high levels of trauma and mental illness evident in their community affect individuals’ ability to engage in paid employment (Ornguze 1999:78). Problems such as discrimination by employers and the lack of English language ability are magnified for refugees, who frequently lack formal qualifications, work experience (NZIS June 2004:226) and literacy skills. Contributing to this is New Zealand’s lack of recognition of foreign qualifications (Trlin, North, Pernice and Henderson 1998:274). Only recently has a funding initiative for the NZQA been taken to more thoroughly address this\(^{21}\).

There is a strong likelihood of poverty being exacerbated in Auckland by high rates of family sponsorship, which involve sponsors providing 24 months of accommodation and living costs, since these collide with the very low average incomes. In addition Status refugees, who tend to be single males, are often housed with non-kin households, in accordance with cultural norms (Ornguze1997:86). Given the unavailability of affordable large houses in the Auckland region, a frequent result is overcrowding.

\(^{20}\) In both Census years the Auckland region shows slightly fewer people in this bottom income bracket, and with a consistent 25 per cent indicating an income between $10,001 and $20,000. Overall, these figures must be interpreted cautiously however, because a substantial portion of people did not respond to this question.

\(^{21}\) The Immigrant Settlement Strategy of November 2003 “provides funding for the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to cover the costs of assessing overseas qualifications for refugees, a service the NZQA has provided since 1990. This service is currently cross-subsidised from other income, as other migrants pay on a cost-recovery basis. The standard assessment fee is $450. It will assist around 150 refugees per year” (NZIS October 2004).
State Housing and Overcrowding

While the small size of New Zealand houses is the most frequent complaint from refugees about housing (NZIS June 2004:122), state houses are nonetheless the only affordable housing option for many. Indeed, in line with low personal earnings, the majority of Ethiopians in the Auckland region are state house tenants. The design of state houses is an area of serious mismatch with many migrant households, and this situation has been addressed by building additional rooms onto existing houses and developing culturally appropriate design guides for Pacific Island and Maori state house tenants, who represent about half of all state house tenants. However, the ability of refugee households to access these modified houses is very limited, given the high demand for such houses and emphasis within HNZC on low turnover rates.

Refugee groups in general have larger households than other groups in New Zealand (NZIS June 2004:116). But refugee households containing Family Sponsored members experience higher instances of overcrowding. Notably, 45 per cent of Family Sponsored households contain between five and seven people (NZIS June 2004:117), with some standard three-bedroom state houses containing up to twelve people (NZIS June 2004:114). What information there is on Horn of African refugees and housing is not gender disaggregated, but studies from abroad show that disaggregated research would be a useful undertaking. For instance,Danso’s (2002:357) study revealed that women are far less satisfied with their housing than men. In line with the gendered patterns of sponsorship outlined here, Danso (2002:361) notes that women more frequently live in overcrowded conditions, and tend to live in “poorer accommodation”

22 NZIS (June 2004:117) research shows that the average number of people per bedroom is between 1.72 for refugees who have resettled in the last six months. This drops slightly to 1.67 for refugees resident for around five years. These figures are much higher than for Pakeha (0.84), Maori (1.09), Asians (1.10), or Pacific Islanders (1.33).
than their male counterparts, and therefore had more “housing stressors” to negotiate. For instance, inadequate washing facilities become a burden carried by women in overcrowded houses, due to the gendered division of labour (Danso 2002:357).

**Overcrowding and the Gendered Use of Space**

The design and use of space within state houses is problematic for some Ethiopian refugees who experience a drop in class status (Ornguze 1997:113). Discussing the domestic and caring duties of Ethiopian women, Gow (2002:112) has remarked how:

Such family dynamics usually depend upon a demarcation between the ‘inside’ domain of mothers (and aunties, grandmothers, sisters and female cousins), where the children dwell, and the place of the father (and male family members), which is separate and ‘outside’ that sphere- a demarcation problematized by the upheaval of forced migration...Given that female-male relations are already problematic following forced migration from Ethiopia, factors in Melbourne such as unemployment, the loss of kinship networks, access to single-parent welfare payments and partially state-funded child-care, introduce new dynamics which further problematise matters. For example, unemployed men spend large periods of time sitting alone at home watching television.

Also akin to the case of Samoans in MacPherson’s study, Ornguze has commented on the dual purposes that Ethiopian’s living rooms are put to due to overcrowding. Ornguze’s (1999:14) account of a typical Ethiopian refugee house in New York describes how, in addition to displaying several large pieces of furniture, including sofas, a dining table and chairs and an entertainment centre, “mattresses which were
used for sleeping during the night...were leaned against the wall during the day to provide room for day-time activities”.

Conflicts also arose for MacPherson’s (1997:159) migrants when different demands were placed on the living room space. For Ethiopian refugees too, the dual function of living room as a space for entertainment and sleeping may negate its value in both instances. Further problematic to living spaces as sites fulfilling women’s housing needs is the tendency for living rooms to become male-dominated during important communal gatherings. As Gow (2002:50) explains, gatherings for birth, death and marriage ceremonies see the house divided between the “male-occupied loungeroom as centre stage” and the women’s occupation of bedrooms and the kitchen. These ceremonies also have flow-on effects to the use of public space surrounding the house (Gow 2002:48).

**Beyond Overcrowding**

The need for increasing the current stock of state houses able to accommodate extended families is evident. However, the significance of the gendered impacts of overcrowding must be mitigated with an understanding of the importance of restoring refugees’ co-ethnic social relationships within neighbourhoods that are sometimes hostile. I suggest that houses deemed to be overcrowded by official measures, can instead been seen as reflecting “different conceptions of good” (Nussbaum 2000:59). Refugees in recent research pointed out that what was considered unacceptable by the HNZC (June 2004:C:3) was often culturally acceptable in terms of the number of people per bedroom. While the tenants may prefer a larger house to accommodate their extended household, they may choose the overcrowding and financial hardships inflicted by sponsorship regulations, rather than forgo family reunification and the restoration of at
least some normal social relations. This type of “voluntary overcrowding” has certainly been noted in the case of migrant populations in Australia (Pulvirenti 1997:36).

In any case, Ethiopian household sizes conform to similar patterns in the country of origin as they do in resettlement, although in Ethiopia, housing design is more accommodating. This suggests that even without sponsorship, Ethiopian household patterns would tend towards these large groupings. Cheboud (2002:11) explains that “sharing not only the living quarters but also by eating together on one plate, sleeping on one bed, and networking” are expressions of Ethiopians’ communal identity. One participant of Ornguze’s (1997:86) remarked that the family’s house in Ethiopia had been shared with another family as well as extended family members:

We had a good and sentimental life. For instance… I lived in a bigger house than where I live now… [in sharing a house with others] I had the support and security of relatives and good friends. Life was mutually comfortable, cozy and joyful.

Ornguze (1997:113-114) also states that a typical Ethiopian household is made up of about two to four adults, married or unmarried, living together.

The case for voluntary overcrowding in Auckland is supported by the recent finding that Quota refugees have expressed the most dissatisfaction with their housing, despite the additional formal support they receive, when compared to refugee groups who receive much less or no formal resettlement support (NZIS June 2004:113). In the context of problematic social relations in state house neighbourhoods, the higher housing satisfaction of Sponsored refugees indicates that they are better serviced by informal housing provisions made by their sponsors, despite the link to overcrowding. I argue
that Sponsored refugees report more satisfaction with their housing because larger household sizes better facilitate co-ethnic social relations, and are a substitute for the external neighbouring practices that are constrained by negative rhetoric about refugees.

In support of this, I suggest that refugees housed by relatives may be offered some buffering from the complications of interacting with government agencies alone. In a similar way, Elizabeth Colson (2003:8) has suggested that spontaneous migrants in the Pacific “adjusted more easily because they met problems one by one and were able to solve them sequentially”. In contrast, as Colson (2003:8) notes, “refugees who arrive en masse and are placed in camps, encountered a multitude of problems simultaneously…the officially settled had to take into consideration their relationship with administrative structures set up to cope with resettlement”.

**The Importance of Co-Ethnic Social Relations**

Most certainly, the higher housing satisfaction of Sponsored refugees, who in the Ethiopian case are largely women, relates to the co-ethnic social relations facilitated by proximity to extended kin and friends. This is shown in studies from abroad, such as Moussa’s (1993:220), which describes the shock of Ethiopian refugee women’s first encounters with neighbourhoods based on self-contained nuclear families, particularly evident for Ethiopians in the unfriendliness signified by closed doors. This lack of community has also been indicated by Ethiopians in Auckland, who remarked on the absence of children playing outdoors, and that neighbours; “shut themselves in. Just by themselves. They don’t socialise that much with neighbours”(Skilling 2001:32).
As distinct from ties to the ethnic community, neighbouring is central to women’s socialisation, and forms a union with the importance of mother figures to displaced Ethiopian women (Moussa 1993:172). For women in Ethiopian culture, neighbouring revolves around gathering at a neighbour’s, and talking in a group while undertaking small domestic tasks and sharing food and particularly coffee (Moussa 1993:100). Neighbouring facilitates support through shared childcare, preparation for marriages and funerals, the offering of advice about health, family disputes or violence, as well as providing life long friendship (Moussa 1993:220-221). A sense of community and strong co-ethnic social relationships are also associated with mental health and happiness (Ager, Malcolm, Sadollah and O’May 2002:79, Skilling 2001:32, Shadbolt 1996:33).

The house itself functions as a social space key to community relations, particularly for women, because it is generally not culturally acceptable for women to meet in public places (Moussa 1993:220). Ethiopian women also play an important role in the many Ethiopian ethnicities, yet the array of ethnic, regional, class, and religious identities of Ethiopia make this discussion far more complex than can be conveyed here. One important difference is the degree of women’s involvement in organization and representation by ethnic political movements\textsuperscript{23}. Ethnographers (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:211, McSpadden 1999:248) have described how, despite these differences, Ethiopian women’s identity is rooted in the familial bonds of house and community, and the “prescribed gender role as a mother and home-maker”.

\textsuperscript{23} For example, Moussa (1993:157) explains how the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) have historically had strong involvement in this area, and at the time of Moussa’s writing, 40% of it’s People’s Council were women.
Nira Yuval-Davis (1994:413) argues that although the domestic functions of “womanhood” are often portrayed as generic in feminist and ethnic discourses, they are in fact central to the “reproduction of ethnicity”. According to McSpadden (1999:245), in resettlement:

Community is deeply compromised and must be redeveloped. A loss of power and control is intertwined with this loss of community and social support… [rebuilding community] is nevertheless an intentional process, available to individual reflection, that restructures power differences. Central to these objectives is… the urgent need of refugees to develop or gain a sense of belonging, a sense of ‘home’.

Undoubtedly, houses offer an unparalleled site for the reproduction of home, strongly reliant on ethnic and gender constructions, and are a key site to women’s “appropriation of power” (Thompson 1994:38). The importance of the Sponsored stream lies not only in the opportunity it offers for women’s resettlement, in the face of gender biased resettlement policies, but it is also crucial to facilitating the vital role played by refugee women within resettled communities. I argue that in turn, this facilitates the use of domestic space as a site for the expression of difference and resistance to marginalisation in the public realm, as hooks (1990:42) has explained. It is particularly important here to recall hooks’ (1990:46) argument, as outlined in my literature review, that the creation of such homeplaces may well be conceived in the face of “poverty and sexism”.

Although to this I would add that what may be perceived as sexist in wider New Zealand society, must be tempered with an acceptance that Ethiopian women may chose
domestic roles. This does not diminish the obligation of the state to ensure that all women do so with a range of other opportunities firmly in place (as in Nussbaum 2000:41). This is important to consider given that Sponsored refugees are, by definition, dependent upon their sponsors for at least 24 months, which certainly has the potential to reproduce women’s dependence upon men, a recognised propensity of government institutions (Jacobs et al 2003:436).

The Socio-Political Context of Homeplaces

Despite the evidence for the decisive role of women in establishing homeplaces, recent immigration policy initiatives are considered by some to have worsened the outcomes of sponsoring, and therefore, women’s opportunities for resettlement. In particular, service providers have been vocal in their critique of the abolishment of the Humanitarian categories.24 They maintain that the Humanitarian categories were more useful because they allowed refugees to begin sponsoring family members for resettlement more quickly, and did not enforce the two years of accommodation provision and financial support (NZIS June 2004:156). This point is of clear significance to issues of women’s enforced dependence upon male sponsors. More generally, the loss of the 1995 Humanitarian category in particular will substantially affect the Ethiopian population in the coming years, as it has been a significant category for Ethiopian refugee migration. Further, the new categories limit the number of applications accepted to 300 annually, and the selection is a lottery-based process. One service provider explained that the abolishment was causing “desperation…and great hardship” (NZIS 2004:156), and that ‘the first three years [after resettlement] are the

24 The Humanitarian categories were abolished in October 2001. The Humanitarian categories accounted for the processing of 107 Ethiopian applications up to 2004, making them the second most numerous categories for application processing. As such, one ramification of the closure of these categories may be a decline in the number of approved Ethiopian residence applications.
time of highest need, not the least need, but policy rode right over top of that” (NZIS 2004:155). Ethiopian refugees interviewed in the NZIS (2004:153) research expressed exasperation with the immigration rules and “too much bureaucracy”.

Certainly, this recent policy change is an example of what Marie Lacroix (2004:149) refers to as the “harmonization” of immigration and refugee policies, within global policy approaches to refugee flows that are increasingly prohibitive. Although replacement categories (2002 and 2003 Refugee Family Sponsored) have been offered in lieu of the Humanitarian categories, I argue that it moves Sponsored refugees further away from UNHCR rights-based concerns for refugee well-being. Indeed, the issues raised by the Sponsored categories lend further weight to the notion that government policy tends to “ignore refugees once they have arrived in New Zealand”, and fails to uphold the right to adequate housing assured them under the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees (Humpage 1998:25).

My argument here falls in direct opposition to that of Love Chile (2002:365), who argues that:

The role of refugees must…be articulated more in the context of their productive capacity…By defining the refugees in the context of their productive capacity society makes the transition from labelling to accepting refugees in the same way that it accepts migrants.

Indeed, recent refugee policy change reveals the increasingly economic rationale behind policy, but this is clearly to the detriment of the restoration of refugees’ close social relations, which are often already severely fragmented. This reflects the neo-liberal
trend of the state trying to increase family and community responsibility for welfare (McPherson 2004:168, Cheyne et al. 2000:227), despite findings that indicate; “assumptions that there is a community out there to care have been shown to be erroneous” (McPherson 2004:168). At the same time, the monolithic labelling of these migrants as refugees in government literature maintains the humanitarian image of the state internationally and in the local public perception.

By shifting one of the most important categories for family reunification from the International/Humanitarian stream to the Family Sponsored stream, refugee families are impoverished, financially and emotionally. In this move of “harmonization”, a large portion of refugee communities are drawn into the position of general migrants, in that they are offered minimal social service support, despite the financial difficulty of their co-ethnic population supporting them and the probability of increased marginalisation. From the standpoint proposing the centrality of housing to the fulfilment of broader rights, the impact of such change in immigration policy can only be detrimental to mobilisation via the creation of homeplaces, and ultimately, the restoration of refugees’ right to a place to be.

Conclusion

Beginning with a focus on access to state housing, it is evident that refugees’ right to housing in resettlement is curtailed by immigration statuses that impose foreign stratifications between refugees. This lack of recognition of refugeeeness is buffered by the increasing harmonization of refugee and migrant policies, and causes tensions among co-ethnic refugee groups. At the same time, misinformation about and a lack of state housing stock lead to problematic perceptions from non-refugee stakeholders,
which are evidently already harbouring stereotypes about refugees, thus indicating the
further construction of refugees in the assumedly private spaces of houses.

My discussion of the design of state houses showed how the ethnic minority issue of
overcrowding, already apparent in Auckland, also proves pertinent for Ethiopians.
Overcrowding, in conjunction with socio-economic factors such as high male
unemployment, contributes to the disruption of gender roles, particularly the house as a
woman-centred domain. According to the homeplaces concept, such jeopardization of
women’s social space would prove detrimental to the overall well being of the
Ethiopian community. However, as revealed in the above discussion, the Sponsored
group, which is dominated by women, reports the most satisfaction with housing.
Questions of women’s dependence on men are raised here, but somewhat ironically, the
idea that the co-ethnic social relationships facilitated by sponsoring, even when the
outcome is deemed to be overcrowding, may weigh heavier than the isolation faced by
agency-resettled refugees. Certainly, it is the size of state houses that continue to
embody the outdated nuclear ideal, which prove problematic to successful resettlement
here, as opposed to the preference for more communal household arrangements. The
centrality of co-ethnic relations, indicated in Sponsored refugees housing satisfaction, is
parallel to women’s creation of homeplaces. Reading state houses as sites that
potentially facilitate Ethiopian women’s creation of homeplaces, shows the value of the
right to appropriate housing for the resettlement of the Ethiopian population as a whole.
The danger inherent in harmonization initiatives within immigration policy are therefore
highlighted as detrimental to the realization of this potential, since the continued
valuation of refugees in largely economic terms will continue the marginalisation of
women refugees.
Ethnicity and Location: Beyond Assimilation

In the last chapter I demonstrated how a lack of consideration for refugee status in immigration policy, manifested in the allocation of residence status, problematizes the Ethiopian population’s access to state housing. In analysing the construction of Ethiopian identity in New Zealand, the detrimental affects of housing access disparities on social relationships became evident. I then discussed how the harmonization of refugee and migrant policies places further stress upon already fragmented household structures. When these outcomes were analysed within the context of state house design, particular gendered outcomes emerged, as part of the continued economic and social marginalisation of refugees. Specifically, themes of overcrowding, neighbouring, and the use of space emerged as central aspects of Ethiopian refugee housing experiences in resettlement.

In this chapter I argue that the housing pressures of the Auckland region, in combination with a resettlement programme that leads to the geographic dispersal of the Ethiopian population, means that despite preferences for geographic clustering, Ethiopians in Auckland are highly dispersed. I begin this section by pointing out the role of ghettoization theory in framing refugee housing rights in the work of Love Chile. I argue that concepts of community must be defined with care, in order to avoid discourses of assimilation, and to ensure the political representation of refugees is located at the fore of housing policy. This argument is framed in the context of national and local dispersal of Ethiopian refugees, which I challenge by instead considering the positive outcomes of clustering.
The Contradictions of Ethiopian Diasporic Identity and Ghettoization Theory

I begin this section by pointing out the role of ghettoization theory in framing refugee housing rights in the work of Love Chile. I then critique Chile’s use of the concept of community in regard to refugee spatial distribution and “integration”, and question the dependency theory that accompanies it.

Black African Housing Rights and Ghettoization

As explained in my literature review, Love Chile (2002:355) argues that black African refugees in New Zealand suffer social exclusion to the extent that they are deemed to constitute an “imported underclass”. As I pointed out, the article focuses on socio-economic issues, yet from the philosophically informed housing-based perspective I assert, Chile’s (2002:359) claim that black African’s are excluded from property rights, as part of their wider socio-economic exclusion, is unsatisfactory. As King’s (2003:667) housing theory makes clear, the implementation of property rights in capitalist society necessarily results in the unequal distribution of material resources, or in other words, individual property rights consist only of the right to partake in the markets that govern the distribution of property.

Without proper recognition of the distinction between property rights and housing rights, Chile (2002:362) goes on to argue that exclusion from property rights leads to clustering in poverty stricken, state house dominated suburbs. The phenomenon of clustering is said by Chile (2002:362) to be exacerbated by low employment levels and debt, and interestingly, the formative role of the sponsoring process and access to HNZC housing in creating geographic clustering is also acknowledged. When an ethnic minority is geographically concentrated, debates turn quickly to problems of ghettoization, with the rationale that “increasing spatial segregation will lead to
increasing separation of different social and ethnic classes and population categories: in turn, that will produce ghetto-like developments” (Fortuijn, Musterd and Ostendorf 1998:368). Chile’s argument follows the established rationale of ghettoization theory, which informs the problematisation of ethnicity, rather than poverty or discrimination, in many housing policies abroad (Rudiger and Spencer 2003:32), and as I suggest, in New Zealand. Chile’s argument also aligns with the discursive trends of governments that fail to accept responsibility for poverty, and instead problematising individuals and communities, particularly in relation to behaviour that is deemed antisocial, an area which social housing is particularly susceptible (Jacobs et al 2003:439).

Black African clustering is framed in Chile’s work as representative of a lack of property rights, and a lack of choice in housing. Thus, the clustering of black African refugees is problematized from the outset, as a result of unfulfilled rights. I argue that this is closely connected to Chile’s interpretation of successful resettlement and his loose definition of “community”. Chile’s overall emphasis and his framing of successful resettlement is decidedly socio-economic, and within this, although attention is given to issues of political representation (Chile 2002:359), this focus is undermined by the awkward use of the term “community”. Dunn (1998:504) argues that policies based on spatial assimilation fail to challenge state violence, and it is clear that in this case, the question of black African community mobilisation and political representation remains unresolved when the definition of community is applied without specification.
Community, Political Representation and the Construction of Social Housing Problems

Who and what constitutes community for Back African refugees is never defined, but alluded to inconsistently throughout Chile’s work. For example, Chile (2002:362) argues that state housing suburbs containing ethnic clusters provide “some form of community” for newcomers, although they are generally disadvantaged. On the other hand, Chile (2002:362) goes on to state that as a result of getting “stuck” in these suburbs, and because of discrimination, black African refugees are “excluded from the economic, social, and cultural life of the community”.

An imagined and presumably Pakeha “community” surfaces here, as the bearer of not only socio-economic, but cultural resources. Indeed, Richard Tomlins (2000:165) notes that a feature of many housing policies includes the concept of integrating minorities into a presumed “mainstream society”. However, integration models are cause for caution, since they “are often simply a weaker form of assimilation…in which…the final goal is complete absorption into the dominant culture” (Castles 1995:298). Certainly, Chile’s model aligns with the current “front-loaded model” of integration, described earlier, in which an economic focus supports speedy integration (Humpage 1998:25). Without denying the hegemony of Pakeha culture, Chile’s argument clearly supports the unreserved social and spatial integration of black African refugees into non-refugee suburbs, in order for them to access resources and alleviate marginalisation.

Approaches to ethnic concentration that assume the ghettoization outcome, such as Chile’s, are critiqued by Kevin Dunn (1998:504), for upholding assimilationist and racist ideologies. According to Dunn (1998:503-504), these posit concentration as either
“theorized as a spatial outcome of oppressions, and as a part of the reproduction of oppression”, or “alternatively, it is seen as a manifestation of the recalcitrance of an ethnic group to participate in some presumed ‘mainstream’”. The location of the “presumed mainstream” community in Chile’s argument seems to appear only outside state house suburbs, reinforcing the supposed social deviance of the poor.

Further, the social deviance of refugees themselves, as a distinct group facing poverty, is reinforced in Chile’s argument, which raises the issue of dependency. According to Chile (2002:364-365), refugees in New Zealand often have an “inherent dependency on relief [because] the refugee camps, where the emphasis is on relief, are not a place to generate independence…There is therefore the urgent need to create capacity within the refugee communities for community development and social change”. While it is clear that refugee resettlement requires more immediate and long-term governmental support, I argue that refugee dependency is more apparent rhetorically than it is in the lived experiences of refugees. There is doubt as to the extent of dependency that can be developed in the context of refugee camps. For example, nearly 15 per cent of refugees in New Zealand report that no basic services (such as health care and food rations) were available to them in the refugee camps they came from (NZIS June 2004:77). In Shadbolt’s (1996:81) study of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees in New Zealand, one participant also described that there had been little water, medical care, and sanitation and sometimes no food. In any case, around 60 per cent of African refugees are estimated to reside outside of refugee camps and therefore do not receive any aid, but rather, rely on finding employment or hospitality from co-ethnics in countries of asylum (Shadbolt 1996:81).
The rhetorical construction of social housing problems, such as the “urban underclass” and “dependency culture” are in fact not reserved for refugees, and have featured in neoliberal social policy since the late 1980’s (Jacobs et al 2003:436). Thus, the attachment of these well-established social housing “problems” to refugees, fits in with other rhetoric about refugees themselves as exploiting the nations social welfare system. This recalls my earlier discussion about the public perception of refugees as Third World Looking, and discourse about whether refugees are “deserving” of state housing. In particular, refugee women may carry a rhetorical double burden, as it is noted, “the problem of the ‘lone mother’ has more recently been widened to encompass refugees and asylum seekers as culpable groups who are subverting allocation waiting lists” (Jacobs et al 2003:430-431). This certainly appears to be the case, as expressed by individual and group state housing stakeholders, as noted in the previous chapter.

Thus, I argue that the result of Chile’s approach is that spatial dispersal is valued as a euphemism for the upward mobility and deproblematization of refugees, and fails to uphold the “multiple realizability” (Nussbaum 2000:77) of social relations. This approach recalls Oswin’s (2001:354) comment on the rise of development “qualified by…economic viability”, and undoubtedly risks problematizing ethnicity and refugee identity, rather than poverty. For instance, Phillips (1998:1709) points out that the ability of minority groups to achieve upward mobility and to relocate away from deprived areas, does not necessarily equate with the dispersal of the group in question. In addition, such approaches have been critiqued for underestimating the resources offered by unassimilated ethnic minority populations (Dunn 1998:504).

**Black Africans and Ethiopian Diasporic Identity**
Having raised the issue of community as a factor in political representation, the treatment of black African identity in Chile’s work, in comparison to some particular features of Ethiopian identity in New Zealand, needs to be discussed.

**Ethiopian Ethnicity**

First, Chile’s study incorporates all refugees in New Zealand that he identifies as black African refugees.¹ For the purposes of my analysis on Ethiopian refugees specifically, Chile’s work is therefore flawed from the beginning. This is because many Ethiopians do not consider themselves African or black, often preferring to identify solely as Ethiopian, or as primarily a member of their ethnic group, and secondarily as Ethiopian (Sorenson 1993:27)². This tendency appears to be carried on in resettlement, as Skilling (2001:41) notes that in Auckland there is no evidence to suggest the formation of an “African identity” within her Ethiopian participants.

Critiques of approaches such as Chile’s have been made in the New Zealand context as well as in relation to refugees. For instance, the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils Vice President, Ute Walker (2001:13), critiques this as being “other-identification”, and sees such external constructions of ethnicity as detrimental to addressing ethnic minority needs. In addition, John Sorenson (1992:205) has specifically cautioned against the extent to which Ethiopians in the diaspora are pressured by host countries to take up reductive identification categories such as “African” or “Black”, rather than their own conceptions of ethnic categories. And as I

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¹ Once combined, the various refugee and asylum residence categories considered by Chile (2002:358) include refugees from Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, and the Sudan.

² The primary identification with an ethnic rather than national identity stems from the complexities of Ethiopian multiethnicity, and the role of the dominant Amhara-Tigray socio-political alliance. Adherence to a non-African, non-Black Ethiopian identity stems in part from the traditions of Ethiopian Orthodox beliefs (Sorenson 1992:206).
demonstrated in my discussion of the Women at Risk residency category (see chapter three) the homogenisation of African groups can disguise significant inequalities between refugees of different nationalities, a significant point given that social services in resettlement are dependent upon such categories. Hence, it is easy to see how Chile’s approach subsumes Ethiopian ethnicity beneath the black African identity. But how is this problematic, given that he claims that all black African refugees experience the same social exclusion?

**Ethiopian State House Occupancy Rates and Clustering**

In line with Chile’s (2002:362) findings, Census statistics certainly reveal that a high number of Ethiopians reside in state houses. In fact, Ethiopians in Auckland constitute a worthwhile case study because of their unusually high occupancy rates in state houses. According to the latest Census, 69 per cent of Ethiopians in the Auckland region are state house tenants, compared to just 25 per cent of Ethiopians in the rest of the country. According to the HNZC (April 2004:78), post-2001 the average occupancy rate of state houses for the entire refugee population was 55%. In contrast, the NZIS (June 2004:118) have estimated this figure to stand currently at around 33% of the refugee population.

Despite these discrepancies, both sources indicate that Ethiopians in Auckland have an unusually high state house occupancy rate. Given the importance of 2001 in housing policy, it is reasonable to anticipate that the current occupancy rate is higher still. The high state house occupancy can be attributed to low incomes, as well as pressures on the Auckland housing market which have seen a notable increase in house prices. Research

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3 2001 was a crucial year for social housing policy in New Zealand, when various housing services were consolidated as the Housing New Zealand Corporation. The major consequences for low-income groups were the introduction of Income-Related Rents (IRR), which equated to the increased affordability of state houses.
also shows that many refugees prefer state houses for the security of tenure, compared to renting from private landlords (HNZC June 2004:C:2), and because refugees from the Horn of Africa report the most discrimination in the private housing market (NZIS June 2004:122), there is likely further impetus to seek out state housing.

However, my findings contradict Chile’s (2002:362) claim that many black African refugees cluster near co-ethnics. In fact, in the case of Ethiopians, Shadbolt (1996:108) noted as early as 1996 that the increasing cost of rental accommodation was leading to a:

Slow drift towards the outer suburbs [and that]…there is concern expressed as to whether this change will be counter-productive with slightly lower rents being offset by increased transport costs and greater social isolation particularly for the women concerned.

Indeed, a prime example of the methodological problems that result from the homogenisation of black African refugees is that Chile fails to recognise that Ethiopians are in fact highly dispersed in the Auckland region. The trend of geographic dispersal amongst Ethiopians in Auckland has also increased markedly between the 1996 and 2001 Census (see Table Three). Therefore, while I concur that Ethiopian refugees experience poverty and reliance on state housing as forerunners to a lack of housing choice, contrary to Chile’s argument, I have shown that Ethiopian refugees do not experience clustering, but rather, significant dispersal. While the higher than average occupation of state houses by Ethiopian’s in Auckland suggests that this group has fewer housing options than other refugee groups, a lack of housing choice can be seen
to result in geographic dispersal from co-ethnics. Before discussing the geographic dispersal of Ethiopians in the Auckland region, I begin in the next section with an outline of nationwide geographic dispersal as a background to the Auckland situation.

**Nationwide Geographic Dispersal and Internal Migration**

Although not large numerically, recent NZIS (June 2004:64) research suggests that established Horn of Africa refugees, compared to the established refugee population as a whole, are currently spread out over the highest number of main centres in New Zealand. Similarly, although recently arrived Horn of Africa refugees also account for a small amount of the total refugee intake, they too appear to be highly dispersed compared to other, more numerous recently arrived ethnic groups. One example of the extent to which the Ethiopian population is dispersed, is that only 64 per cent of them reside in the Auckland region, compared to an average 69 per cent residence in the Auckland region across all refugee ethnicities (NZIS June 2004:381). Moreover, Ethiopian residences in Auckland remain lower than the average, despite the impact of Ethiopian Status refugees, who account for 24 per cent of the Ethiopian population and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, 93 per cent of who reside in Auckland after gaining refugee Status (NZIS June 2004:381).

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4 According to the NZIS (June 2004:58) research, those participants counted as established refugees were those who had been resident for between four and six years at the time the research was conducted.

5 The NZIS (June 2004:57) research equated those who had arrived two years prior to the time the research was conducted as recently arrived.

6 The financial year of 2000-2001 marks a major shift in immigration patterns for Ethiopians migrating to New Zealand. It shows the last year in which Ethiopia applications were registered under the Quota category. This move away from approving Ethiopian applications reflects New Zealand immigration’s focus has shifted towards Afghani and Burmese refugee populations (NZIS in RMS 2001). Despite this, Ethiopians have been represented in the subsequent annual intakes, due to the sometimes slow processing speed for applications, as well as continued application under the Refugee Other and Refugee Protection categories which also come under the International/Humanitarian umbrella.
While uncovering all the factors related to the dispersal of Ethiopian refugees nationally is beyond the scope of this thesis, several similarities with research findings from abroad emerge. Studying the Ethiopian diaspora in Los Angeles, Kathryn Moran discovered that the under-funding of agencies working with refugees in resettlement as one of the causal factors in dispersal. Moran’s (1996:130) explanation points towards the social outcomes of the lack of choice offered to refugees, because due to the lack of resources, agencies are compelled to resettle refugees:

> Where the agency itself has resources to assist the refugee; this may not turn out to be the place where the refugee has relatives or friends, nor the place where the refugee population believes opportunities exist for education or job advancement.

According to Moran (1996:30) initial dispersal by resettlement agencies results in secondary internal migration. In line with this, the NZIS (June 2004:64) has noted that there is migration to the Auckland region by refugees initially resettled in other areas of the country, despite housing pressures, higher living costs and lower employment opportunities in Auckland. Indeed, the Auckland region has shown a consistently high number of Ethiopian Census respondents who indicate internal migration, suggesting a drive to relocate to Auckland in spite of the likelihood of increased financial hardship and poorer housing access. In the last two Censuses, an average of 16 per cent of the Auckland region’s Ethiopian population indicate internal migration during the past five years, compared to only around 10 per cent in the rest of the country.

However it should be noted that this internal migration is mitigated with contradictory pressures exerted on refugee housing decisions. For instance, refugees often feel obliged
to stay in the first house that is found for them (NZIS June 2004:123). This appears to be reinforced at the policy level by a current emphasis within HNZC for low turnover rates which are thought to “[contribute] to stable families and communities” (HNZC August 2002:5). Moreover, the expense of relocating is a particular burden to poor households. These pressures for refugees to remain in the first house they access highlight the significance of initial placements by resettlement agencies.

Without considering refugees’ perceptions of educational institutions throughout the country, the two other motivations for internal migration cited by Moran (1996:130) are closely interconnected. Finding employment and reunions with family and friends are closely related because throughout New Zealand, social networks of family and friends are the most frequent way that refugees find employment (NZIS June 2004:241). Migrant experiences of concentration in Europe have also proven to be valuable to employment assistance, as well as facilitating interactions with public agencies (Rudiger and Spencer 2003:33). Indeed, it seems to be the case that social networks win out over other motivations for internal migration, as the most commonly stated reason for refugees shifting is “to be closer to community members” or friends and family (NZIS June 2004:121).

Explaining Geographic Dispersal and Proximity in the Auckland Region

Mirroring their dispersal nationally, Ethiopians in Auckland occupy an increasingly broad range of suburbs. Increased suburban dispersal since 1996 reflects the steep increase in house prices of this period, which led to “persistent problems of access and
affordability” for state house tenants (HNZC August 2002:6). The marked pressures on
state housing stock brought about by the arrival of groups of Quota refugees was
mentioned in the previous chapter as a source of tension and disputes between refugees
and other stakeholders. Emmanuel Ornguze (1997:81) also states that the arrival of
“throngs” of refugees in New York exerts pressure on what affordable housing is
available. Moreover, Ornguze points out that this is a primary factor in the geographic
dispersal of the city’s Ethiopian population.

The pull factors of social networks evident in the patterns of Ethiopian internal
migration are further supported by relocations over time at the regional level. For
instance, Ornguze’s (1997:113-114) study of long term housing patterns made it clear
that:

All [Ethiopian] refugees preferred to live close to each other
in a predominantly Ethiopian neighbourhood if they could
afford to do so. Half of my respondents were actually living
on the same block or one or two blocks away from each
other…this propinquity of living arrangement showed a
remarkable change because, at the time of initial arrival,
refugees were spread out wherever apartments were found for
them.7

While literature cites that members of the Ethiopian diaspora desire clustering in
resettlement (Ornguze 1997:113, Moran 1996:138), as I have discussed, housing

7 Ornguze is one of the few researchers who note any amount of clustering in the Ethiopian diaspora in
resettlement. Such cases involve a much more established Ethiopian diaspora, such as in North America.
For instance, Ornguze’s Ethiopians began resettling as early as 1985, and in comparison, New Zealand’s
Quota category was not established until 1987, with the first Ethiopians arriving in 1993-1994, with the
exception of a very small number accepted as asylum seekers in 1991/1992.
pressures and the limitations of service providers induce dispersal. The underfunding of service providers may further constrain their ability to recognise culturally constructed understandings of kinship, and to settle refugees in ways appropriate to these constructions. It is noted that the primary geographic dispersal of the Ethiopian population in cities abroad, enforced conformity to the nuclear family ideal (Fenster 1996:409). Dispersal was caused in part by the resettlement agencies lack of knowledge of Ethiopian kinship systems, wherein even “distant” kin in Western terms are considered very close (Moran 1996:149). Further supporting local evidence that social networks are sources of primary motivations for Ethiopians relocation, Moran’s (1996:138) study that found that for Ethiopians in Los Angeles:

If distant family members live in the same city, single individuals may get in touch and eventually move in with or near to them. Many undertake to move to areas where they have heard that there are a lot of Ethiopians.

At the same time, more intentional dispersal on the part of service providers must not be overlooked. For instance, following their MRRC stay, all refugees in the International/Humanitarian stream (excluding Status refugees) are aided by an “organised resettlement policy” of the RMS and HNZC (NZIS June 2004:63). Despite this additional provision of formal support for International/Humanitarian refugees, Quota refugees in particular have expressed the most dissatisfaction with their housing, compared to refugee groups who receive less of the formal resettlement support (NZIS June 2004:113). I argue that this dissatisfaction is a result of the resettlement of Quota refugees in undesirable locations, specifically, suburbs that are far from other
Ethiopians. The higher satisfaction of Family Sponsored refugees in relation to housing, indicates that they are better serviced by informal housing provisions made by their sponsors, despite the link to overcrowding. This is explained by the factors discussed earlier, such as the facilitation of co-ethnic social relations and help in dealing with government agencies.

Service providers may be reluctant to resettle several co-ethnic households in close proximity to one another, signifying their awareness of the possibility of negative neighbourhood reactions to this. Comments from community consultation support my earlier comments, stressing the need for community education, as stakeholders suggest that service providers; “should talk to the communities, explain where [refugees] come from…people say why do we have all these foreigners here (HNZC June 2004:5).

While more than 50 per cent of state houses are now inhabited by Maori and Pacific Islanders, as I argued in the previous chapter, discourse about deserving tenants, once associated with the Pakeha majority, remains. The inclusion of Maori into state house ideals may signal the formation of a popular bicultural rhetoric, yet this is nonetheless exclusionary, as described in a newspaper article entitled “Racial melting pot an ‘explosive’ brew”:

Twenty years ago it was a typical neighbourhood of Pakeha and Maori. Now the state housing estate around McGehean Close, Owairaka, is part of the new Auckland - a melting pot of Somali and Ethiopian refugees, Chinese, Indians, Tongans and Samoans. This is where Tongan Elikena Inia was stabbed to death…(Gower and Cumming 2002:1).
As also discussed in the previous chapter, the high visibility of Ethiopians, combined with differential use of space, may further persuade service providers of the benefits of dispersal. In particular, Ethiopians’ use of the private and public space may be an area of contention. Indeed, as Greg Gow (2002:50) notes in Australia, Ethiopians’ use of space may well be considered a “nuisance” by neighbours. Clustering has also been suggested as a way to avoid inter-ethnic conflicts (Priemas 2000:227).

Further, there is evidence that the dispersal of Ethiopians may be associated with underlying rationales based in assimilationist models of ethnic resettlement, as I suggested in relation to Chile’s research. Indeed, Jacobs et al (2003:441) describe the social rental sector as a space for social control. This has been found to be the case in the United States, where Moran (1996:150) states that:

> The [secondary] migration [of refugees] caused much consternation among sponsors, social-service providers, and concerned policy-makers… [And] that feeling was based on the expectation that dispersal would speed their absorption into U.S. society and that this was desirable (Moran 1996:150).

The case for purposeful dispersal of ethnic minorities in Auckland is substantiated by a study of Maori state housing tenants. According to researchers:

> Participants felt that their choice of state housing stock was being prescribed by HNZ workers. A number of them felt that they had been allocated particular HNZ homes because of their race, socio-economic status or other characteristics. They said they had limited choice amongst HNZ housing stock and particularly in respect of the areas in which they were offered accommodation (Waldegrave, Love and Stuart 2000:13-14).
The multiplicity of factors that induce Ethiopian geographic dispersal are indicative of marginalizing processes far beyond the simple equation of poverty, as suggested by Chile. On these grounds, the discussions that follow re-evaluate ethnic clustering and consider the possibilities for dispersal as detrimental to the fulfilment of Ethiopian refugees’ social relations and broader capabilities. The case for my examination of the positive connotations of clustering is flagged by Moran (1996:150) who states that “aside from dispersing kin, short-sighted settlement policies may deprive refugees of the ability to form their preferred household organization, inter-household support networks, and formal or informal self-help groups”. Moreover, policies of dispersal can be seen as a continuation of refugees’ experience of forced migration (Tomlins 2000:163), and thus, a prolonging of their lack of the right to housing and ability to create homeplace.

**Reconsidering Ethiopian Refugee Clustering**

This section reconsiders Ethiopian refugee clustering, addressing Richard Tomlins’ (2000:165) call for the acknowledgment that forced dispersal fails to take account of the “positive attributes of clustering” as a “resource of community”, and may have implications further reaching than housing outcomes.

**Neighbouring, Security and Identity**

For both men and women in Ethiopian culture, neighbours play a very important part in every day life. I mentioned in the previous chapter the surprise that resettling Ethiopian refugees feel at the unfriendliness of neighbours. The Human Rights Commission (HRC 2004:13-14) makes a succinct assessment of refugee housing needs:

> In relation to housing, refugee consultation participants reported concerns about their sense of social and cultural isolation, the inability to build viable ethnic communities because of the
geographic distribution of people from the same or similar ethnic backgrounds...a lack of ‘culturally sensitive housing’, and concerns about actual or perceived violations of their personal security. This latter issue is of particular relevance to refugee families that do not have a resident adult male family member, or for those refugee family units without parents and for whom the care of children may rest with an adult sibling.

Security is frequently an area of utmost concern to refugee women, particularly those who have come from high-risk refugee camp situations. Danso (2002:358) has found that women feel unsafe due to their neighbourhood surroundings far more often than men. In particular, being situated next to “criminals” or racist gangs such as the National Front have been raised in recent research (HNZC June 2004:C:4). Apartment blocks in Auckland are recognised as areas of particular difficulty for single refugee mothers (HNZC June 2004:C:5), just as they are for non-refugee single mothers (Bradford 2005:1).

It is easy to see how dispersal robs Ethiopians of the expressions of neighbouring familiar to them, especially due to the difficulties many face with transport (NZIS June 2004:247), and the restrictions associated with spending long periods of time travelling across the city. As a further result of geographic distance, women have been found to reduce their social visits (Moussa 1993:225). As Cheboud (2002:28) remarks, visiting is an important social custom in Ethiopia, with neighbours usually visiting each other informally more than once every day, sometimes for hours at a time. Cheboud’s (2002:130) participants remarked that not knowing one’s neighbours, not greeting people on the street and lacking neighbourly support, contributed to their not feeling at home in their new houses. According to Cheboud (2002:9-10):
Amongst Ethiopians, self-identity cannot be isolated from culture, religion, tribe, family, and community…we experience difficulty in relating to Western concepts of individualism and/or collectivism because, for Ethiopians, the Western notion of identity symbolizes…a systematically conditional membership. Such an approach therefore limits the sense of community and neighbourhood possible, because some may not fit into the criteria of membership and may fail to meet the conditions attached to the collective identity…Often this leads to individual or family loneliness structurally forcing them to remain locked in, in isolated living quarters. As a result, either individuals or families have no possibility of knowing their community members or neighbours, of freely and instinctively participating (significant to Ethiopians in order to establish and maintain the safety and security of the neighbourhood) to rear children, and to help the elderly.

Moussa (1993:221) notes that while woman-centred networks, such as those central to hooks’ theory of homeplaces, have proven vital to black women, unlike those communities, “women refugees do not usually live in the same neighbourhood as newcomers”, making organization more difficult. Nonetheless, clustering has been described as central for ethnic minority women establishing feelings of being at home (Ozuekren and Van Kempen 2001:368). The felling of isolation experienced by refugees not in close proximity to others must be multiplied, since according to Shadbolt (1996:112), Ethiopian refugees in Auckland view themselves as one another’s’ extended family members.
Further, in the case of adolescent Ethiopians in Auckland, Skilling (2001:40) has remarked that “secure identities” have been developed through the sustained efforts of family and the Ethiopian community to maintain cultural values and national identity, (Skilling 29001:41). However, teenagers in Skilling’s (2001:42) study expressed a difficulty making friends and indeed, their whole families were often isolated “especially where close ties to the Ethiopian community have not been maintained”.

Indeed, the value of co-ethnic refugees being able to establish a geographically grounded community and to re-establish neighbouring as a practical and emotional cultural tool, is summed up succinctly by a participant of Meshesha (1994:164), who explains that “with all the money and success in the world we are not happy if we are not surrounded by our own people”.

**Womens’ Isolation and Domestic Violence**

The value of clustering for Ethiopian women refugees in Auckland is clear when the case of domestic violence is considered. Bhave’s recent study on the highly dispersed Ethiopian refugee population in Chicago, demonstrates the problems of isolation that women may face as a result of the relation between policy and culture. Women who gain resettlement independently may arrive without a vital link to their co-ethnic population and a geographically dispersed community would exacerbate isolation. In the case of Auckland, Shadbolt (1996:35) also notes the dangers of isolation for women refugees facing dispersal; in particular “women with dependent children are at definite risk of isolation and reduced settlement opportunities”.

The proximity of other co-ethnic households is particularly significant for Ethiopian women’s social relations due to gendered patterns of spatial use, in which women usually socialise in private spaces (Moussa 1993:220). As Sorenson (1992:226) has
commented, even public meeting places, such as Ethiopian restaurants, ethnic associations or community centres cannot serve to bridge the gaps in social relations left by resettlement, since these places are “mainly for men”, that women do not regularly visit on their own. Indeed, Danso (2002:263) observes that considering the housing market disadvantages faced by women headed households, the most salient solution is “an established ethnic community in the destination area”, as an imperative for the resettlement of refugees who have no relatives or friends upon arrival.

McSpadden and Moussa (1993:211) have cited in general the prevalence of domestic violence perpetrated by Ethiopian men in resettlement. This is attributed to the high stresses associated with racism and unemployment, which leads to the degradation of what is an essentially “public identity”. At the same time, women are often reticent to report violence when the perpetrator is the only person known to the woman (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:214). The impact of such isolation is worsened by the dearth of women elders, whose traditional role in mediating incidents of domestic violence means that they are sorely missed in resettlement (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:214). Women refugees of other ethnicities may well experience the same problem, as it has been noted that:

Although there are abuses in traditional communities, children and women usually have recourse to parents, extended family, community leaders, and, most important to their own networks…social protection depends on the ability to effectively engage, or even to create, latent social systems and networks…Thus, responding to the protection needs of refugee women and children requires facilitating community mobilization (Fagen 2003:79).
Refugee women certainly fall through the gaps in the latest HNZC proposals for improving housing for women and ethnic minorities. Without sufficient recognition of the multiplicity of identities, the proposal treats women’s issues and refugee issues (which fall under ethnic minority issues) distinctly. Thus, provision is made for improved emergency housing and women’s refuges (HNZC April 2004:65), in isolation from concerns for ethnic minority housing support and advocacy (HNZC April 2004:78). This is certainly in part due to the overall delay in developing social services targeted at refugees in all sectors, and leaves isolated refugee women with very few options when facing violence.

Moreover, as part of the Government’s Budget 2004, the Immigration Settlement Strategy was established and funding of $62 million proposed to last from 2004/2005 to 2007/2008. The additional funding offered by the Settlement Strategy certainly addresses a key problem of under-funding raised in the literature\(^8\), yet there is no provision specifically for funding housing. The package is instead targeting employment and ESOL concerns, which I argue, although crucial to refugee resettlement, are driven by a desire for refugees to become productive members of society, rather than focusing holistically on their well-being. In contrast, the geographical clustering of Ethiopian refugees would address areas such as domestic violence, by supporting women’s access to traditional support networks. This would be aided by refugee policies that acknowledge older women as successful resettlers.

\(^8\) The Immigration Settlement Strategy supports existing services such as the RMS, Career Services, ESOL in school and tertiary programmes, and the NZQA’s (New Zealand Qualifications Authority) assessment of foreign qualifications. It is also currently in the process of establishing a national network of migrant resource services centres, WINZ’s Auckland Metropolitan Migrant and Refugee Strategy to assist with employment, and a New Zealand settlement secretariat, to address service co-ordination and
Social Networks, Employment and Cultural Maintenance

According to Bhave (2001:21), access to extended family members and friends is particularly vital for women, because “acquiring cultural and social knowledge is dependent upon social and physical location” (Bhave 2001:77-78). The closed nature of the social networks that result from dispersal is another reason why isolation is implicated for Ethiopian women resettling in Auckland. Bhave (2001:103) explains that in the case of Chicago, women responded to the scattered locations of other women by forming “circles”, or small and exclusive informal social groups. For new arrivals, geographic dispersal was a primary obstacle to “breaking into” these social networks.

However, once accessed, Bhave (2001:80) cites how women’s social circles were highly supportive, and acted to overcome the difficulties in disseminating information and support within a dispersed population. Co-ethnic networks are also vital to wider resettlement outcomes for women, such as employment opportunities, mobility and socialising (Phillips 1998:1710). In contrast to other refugee groups, where women often find work more readily than men, Ethiopian women’s low employment rates, are in part an outcome of their irregular social relations due to dispersal.

Further impacting women’s low employment rates are the imbalanced sex ratios. Since domestic work is almost solely women’s responsibility in Ethiopian culture, more men than women in resettlement results in a larger burden of caring duties for women (Bhave 2001:80). Complicating this, women in Ethiopia rely heavily on co-operation with extended female kin for easing the burden of domestic labour (McSpadden and Moussa 1993:218), and on neighbours for exchanging child care duties (Cheboud information sharing. Although it is a valuable contribution to refugee concerns, it may also be read as a
Dispersal from other Ethiopians jeopardises these working relationships. Non-ethnic specific research in New Zealand has also revealed that the ability of extended family members to offer care giving and practical support, relies on contact between kin members, and geographic proximity (McPherson 2004:166). Considering the fragmented nature of refugee kinship networks, there is a heightened importance placed on the ability of Ethiopian women, as primary carers, to make an extensive range of extended and non-kin contacts, in order to replace missing family members. Thus the value of proximity to these contacts is crucial.

Researchers have also commented on the potential of clustering for improving access to ethnic specific amenities (Ozuekren and Van Kempen 2001:368, Priemas 2000:227). Ethnic specific “social, religious, educational and cultural” amenities also function as outlets for cultural expression, which may require support from different housing and settlement patterns (Fenster 1996:407). These findings are supported by the comments of a participant of Cheboud (2002:143) who described how:

There were a lot people who encouraged me who were happy to see that there was something about Ethiopia in a coffee shop or in a restaurant, that they can come in, meet a friend and make an appointment and have a coffee instead of going to other community, they come here.

According to Dunn (1998:518) difference can be better recognised through ethnic specific resources, such as interpreters, via the cost-effectiveness of having “a critical mass of people who require similar services”. The area of address of these services is

continuation of the problematic homogenisation of refugee and migrant identification and support.
frequently the realm of housing, through assistance with negotiating “the bureaucracy of service providers and the pitfalls of the property market”. This is a particularly important when landlords treated tenants of a minority ethnicity prejudicially (Dunn 1998:519), as has been reported by refugees from the Horn of Africa in New Zealand.

**Conclusion: Housing Policy, Choice and Homeplaces**

This chapter has made clear the resettlement issues exclusive to a small ethnic minority refugee community. The difficulty of establishing co-ethnic social networks in a large city such as Auckland, when hurdles such as language, transport and trauma confine the ability of refugees to explore the area and contact each other, is evident. The wide range of practical and social resources, that remains largely dormant in the community would best be tapped by a state housing policy committed to informing tenants in culturally relevant ways and offering them the widest possible amount of choice in location, in specific relation to co-ethnic households.

I argue that the element of choice arises as what should be the pre-eminent state housing policy initiative for Auckland, in order to enhance the successful resettlement capabilities of refugees, especially small ethnic groups and those in the earlier stages of resettlement. This would amount to an acknowledgement of refugees’ “desire and need for continuity” that is so often rejected by refugee experience (Colson 2003:3). The maximisation of choice would also recognize that while formal resettlement services are an imperative, refugee groups are themselves experts on their own needs, and should therefore be enabled to “express identity through residence”, and to inform housing policy (Tomlins 2000:163). Moreover, supporting ethnic institutions is argued to actually increase integration (Troper and Weinfeld 1999:16).
Of course, the backing such initiatives by other social policy agendas would be required to ensure avoidance of marginalisation (Tomlins 2000:166), which links to the idea that formal service provision is itself facilitated by clustering. The participation of stakeholders in state housing allocation processes is best facilitated in this model, since refugees often avoid interacting with formal institutions of the “host” community (Colson 2003:5). These points are in fact conceded by the NZIS’s Refugee Voices research, which states that co-ethnic groups are “closer to the immediate needs of their members” than the provisions of agencies (NZIS June 2004:139). Moreover, agencies and community groups in the control of minority ethnic groups are generally more inclusive than those that are majority-run (Tomlins 2000:168) thus, despite issues around multiple Ethiopian ethnicities, an Ethiopian community group would nonetheless undoubtedly be more inclusive towards Ethiopians of minority ethnicity than Pakeha institutions will ever be.

Further, the centrality of housing to broader rights suggests that supporting ethnic-specific policy for refugee resettlement would in turn permit refugee communities to address a whole spectrum of social problems facing them. The necessity of enabling refugee communities to establish functional co-ethnic relations is cited by service providers (NZIS June 2004:350), and is evident in hooks’ account of homeplaces, which emphasizes the political mobilisation and self-definition that houses can foster. Rapoport (1995:34) deftly sums up the interconnection between choice and homeplaces, by stating that; “if it isn’t chosen, it isn’t home”.
Concluding Remarks

The Pakeha cultural hegemony inherent in material state housing, along with aspects of its policy and practice, continues to be problematic to adequately addressing the housing needs of ethnic minority groups. As I have demonstrated, assimilatory ideals of managing non-Pakeha remain evident in the access, design and location of state housing, and tied up with this are broader social discourses, deeming certain groups undeserving. The continuance of such discourse highlights the need for New Zealand to include the right to housing within domestic legislation and to seek to promote the universal right to housing as a fundamental freedom, along with state housing as the best means of upholding this right.

From the outset, some remnants of New Zealand’s social housing history impact detrimentally on Auckland’s ability to adequately house the Ethiopian refugee community. The question of access continues to embody established tensions regarding the SAS and waiting lists, where negative perceptions about refugees surface, signalling the need for community education. This is of particular relevance to North African refugee groups, who are highly visible at the neighbourhood level, and may therefore experience discrimination from other stakeholders and assumptions of their priority access. A further concern is the affect of immigration policy on state housing access outcomes. As discussed in the third chapter, policy that manages refugee flows and awards refugee status, at both global and local levels, causes severely gender-biased outcomes for the population in resettlement. Applying refugeeness to my analysis revealed that Ethiopians with sometimes identical personal histories are highly
differentiated in terms of access to state housing, and social services more broadly. These roll-on effects of immigration policy have the potential to cause noteworthy tensions between Ethiopian households and individuals.

Continuing from the theme of access, my discussion of state house design continued to trace elements of Pakeha state ideology, as manifested in the interior and exterior of dwellings. Mismatch between design and the comfortable accommodation of extended families, signalled constraints on gender relations and broader activities for non-Pakeha households. The impact of policy on households occupying state houses, showed the disruption of the imagined public/private dichotomy, offering a clear link between housing and broader capabilities, particularly the maintenance of co-ethnic social relations. In turn, this demonstrated the importance of housing modification, along with cultural expression and the visibility of ethnic minority groups in the public realm. In the case of Ethiopian refugees, the opportunity for women to establish culturally appropriate social relations was negated in both public and private spaces, due to cultural norms restricting women’s appropriation of public space, and as an outcome of Ethiopian refugeeeness, which sees men more readily commandeering private spaces.

Further complicating this was the issue of overcrowding, a phenomenon evident in other ethnic minority households, but exemplified in the case of refugees. This was particularly so for Sponsored refugees, who tend to be women, raising the possibility of poorer housing outcomes for women, the exacerbation of poverty and dependence on men. On the other hand, the concept of voluntary overcrowding was earmarked by the greater satisfaction of Sponsored refugees with their housing, reinstating the importance of re-establishing fragmented social relations. In spite of this, it remains evident that
access to larger state houses is an important goal for addressing refugee housing needs. In addition, recent immigration policy changes appear to have placed increased financial constraints on the sponsoring process, particularly the loss of the Humanitarian category, as part of an apparent harmonization of refugee and migrant policies.

Maintaining a focus on social relations, I emphasized the importance of neighbouring in Ethiopian culture, particularly as a source of practical and emotional support for women. Considering the sometimes hostile social context of state housing, overcrowding may, in this instance, supplement the absence of co-ethnic neighbouring. This adds significance to the question of state house design, since the ability of women to affirm state houses as homeplace, requires spaces that nurture women’s social relations. Given the crucial role of women as cultural carriers and primary caregivers in resettlement, the fulfilment of this need would support households and the Ethiopian community as a whole. This point is certainly of relevance to other impoverished groups, given the increased policy focus upon reliance of family, who may frequently be absent or widely dispersed for these populations. Having remarked upon the importance of women’s role in creating homeplaces, it remains vital that women’s right to full participation in society is upheld, in order to ensure that these “traditional” roles are chosen from a range of options, particularly education, which has often not been available in the country of origin.

The themes of establishing and maintaining social relations, as raised above, elicit a questioning of location, within which I focused on proximity to co-ethnic households and challenged assumptions about the value of dispersal. This approach was contrasted to the work of community studies researcher Love Chile, which I argued upheld a
theoretical viewpoint of resettlement that assumes an economic underpinning, and within which Ethiopian identity is subsumed beneath that of a homogenous and inappropriate black African identity. The crux of my critique stemmed from analysis of Census statistics that demonstrated how Chile’s approach forgoes a critical analysis of the geographic dispersal of the Auckland Ethiopian population. In contrast to Chile’s claims, that Black African refugee groups cluster in districts with concentrations of co-ethnics, facilitating ghettoization and marginalisation, I pointed to the distinct and apparently increasing dispersal of Ethiopians both nationally and at the Auckland regional level. I also argued that Chile’s approach is bound to rhetoric about refugees as dependent, an idea gleaned from popular stereotypes of both refugees and other supposedly deviant groups within social housing.

My subsequent discussion suggested a range of possible causes of the dispersal of Ethiopian households, including a lack of choice in state housing locations, the underfunding of governmental and non-governmental groups that facilitate resettlement in it’s early stages, the high housing pressures in the Auckland region, and purposeful dispersal from agencies. A discussion of the positive outcomes offered by clustering included solutions that fall through the gaps in current policy provisions for refugees. The dearth of older women in the Ethiopian community, due to gendered immigration policy and the restrictive definition of successful resettlement, leaves women without the free emotional and practical support, such as child care, advice and recourse in cases of domestic violence. In the case of domestic violence, women’s refuges are culturally and experientially inappropriate, and facilitating co-ethnic social relations via proximity is the clearest solution. This is especially pertinent for women refugees from small
ethnic minority groups, who often have limited mobility or knowledge of the existing co-ethnic community resident in the Auckland region.

Aside from facilitating women’s otherwise constricted co-ethnic social circles, clustering also supports the establishment and maintenance of cultural identity, and helps members to uphold cultural traditions, and pass them on to the next generation. Moreover, clustering allows for ethnic minorities to build secure, viable communities with the conveniences of ethnic-specific amenities, churches or mosques, shops and community centres. Clustering may also prove crucial for improving the political organisation of minority groups, a concept that resonates with the idea of homeplaces. On the flip side, clustering offers government agencies and NGO’s an improved ability to focus their limited funding, via area based operational policies. Clustering also serves to ensure that Sponsored refugees are more easily linked with the formal support they are entitled to. But perhaps most importantly, clustering would help ease the sometimes overwhelming social isolation faced, particularly by single mothers, who struggle to access childcare, and by older refugees, who are sometimes too highly traumatised to easily acquire the minimal English language offered to them.

In sum, my analysis of the historical and cultural context of New Zealand state housing, along with the gender analysis of immigration policy and its affects on the Ethiopian population, make clear the necessity of drawing state housing policy and practice closer to a pluralistic ideal. Conceptualising housing as a freedom right, within an understanding of Ethiopian refugeeness and an evaluation of capabilities, has revealed the crucial nature of housing to aiding successful resettlement. On the basis on these findings, I argue that housing policy must recognise the role of culture in influencing
different affiliative needs. The material preconditions for diverse capabilities, and the allowance for individuals to choose them, should be the goal of policy. Overall, this argument envisions the role of state house access, planning and design as allowing for maximum capabilities, through choice, rather than specific pre-determined functioning. Housing policy should thereby move beyond culturally appropriate housing design, and acknowledge the role of the state in supporting the capabilities of ethnic minorities through housing.

**Modest Proposals**

**Immigration Policy**

The policy governing refugee selection and resettlement plays a major role in shaping the age-sex composition of the Ethiopian population in New Zealand, and the resulting dearth of women appears to be detrimental to the well being of individuals and the community. The quickest steps to addressing these issues include reinstating the Humanitarian category, which would alleviate sponsors of the high cost of sponsoring family members, thus facilitating reunification and easing isolation. Of course, the best way of balancing age-sex compositions is to lobby for change in UNHCR and NZIS policy and practice, an issue that has special resonance for women refugees, particularly those over the age of forty, who are notably scarce in the New Zealand Ethiopian population. Empowering refugee women in resettlement is therefore vital if their concerns are to be voiced in ethnic organisations and subsequently in policy consultation processes.

**Housing Policy**
In light of the findings presented here, New Zealand upholding the universal right to housing through domestic legislation is revealed as a primary step in improving the political subtext of social housing provision. Resolving the dilemma of refugee experience involves more than admitting refugees into the nation-state as residents, but involves securing their right to a place to be, the essential component of which is an inalienable right to culturally appropriate housing. Awareness of the universal right to housing, as well as the centrality of housing to upholding the broader rights of all social groups, should be promoted in government and NGO agencies, and disseminated to community groups and households. Central to upholding this right in practice, is the improvement of the state housing system, which should aim to facilitate a reasonable degree of choice for all its tenants. Housing provisions specifically for refugees should be included in any future Settlement Strategy type provisions, in recognition of the centrality of housing to ensuring the broader rights of refugees.

Housing policy should utilise research currently available, such as that of the HRC, which has clearly identified geographic dispersal as a problematic feature of current resettlement approaches. Evidently, the under funding of NGO resettlement services, and the exclusion of housing interests from current government-run refugee and migrant initiatives, need to be addressed by increased dialogue between NGO and government agencies. Improvement should also be made in the area of community education, particularly among state house stakeholder groups, as well as to refugees regarding the SAS and waiting list. The longstanding issue of state house design can only be addressed through long term planning aimed at decreasing the mismatch between extended households and the current stock. The mismatch signalled by overcrowding
might be addressed in the short term by providing Sponsored refugees with some level of housing assistance during their first two years in resettlement.

**Future Research**

Areas of interest for future research include a continuation of the theorization of blackness and representation in relation to New Zealand multiculturalism. In addition to this I suggest that qualitative and media analysis on perceptions of black African identity in relation to perceptions of poverty, refugeeness and being Third World Looking would be of particular significance, since the growing black communities in this country are frequently from refugee-like backgrounds. The relevance of further exploration of the links between aspects of state housing and the concept of homeplace are certainly indicated, particularly connections between location and ethnicity for minority groups. Overall, this thesis suggests the importance of continued theorization of refugee housing in New Zealand, as an important means to understanding the complexities of incorporating refugees into the country.
## Appendices

### Table One

**Description of NZIS Immigration Categories by which Ethiopians have Gained Residency 1997-2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREAM</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Sponsored</td>
<td>2002 Refugee Family Sponsored</td>
<td>• Refugee-like circumstances (serious physical and/or emotional harm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Those who do not qualify for any other category (excluding the non-refugee Family Quota)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003 Refugee Family Sponsored</td>
<td>• Named on their sponsors registrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Parents, grandparents, siblings, adult children, grandchildren, aunts/uncles, and nieces/nephews of NZ residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Randomly drawn from an annual Family Quota Pool lottery scheme (currently 300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1995 Family marriage</td>
<td>• Legally married to NZ resident or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1995 Family de facto partnerships</td>
<td>• In de facto/same sex relationship of 12 months or longer or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>• Partner (as above) of primary applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1995 Family parent</td>
<td>• Legal guardian/parent of NZ resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001 Family parent</td>
<td>• Grandparents considered if parents deceased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2002 Family quota parent</td>
<td>• Family “centre of gravity” is in NZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Sponsored Requirements for all sponsors:**

- Sponsors for all categories must be 17 years of age or older
- Must have a proven ability to accommodate and financially support for 24 months the person to be sponsored (not applicable to officially recognised refugees)
- Must have been resident in NZ for three years and spent 184 days per year in NZ (except for the Family Sponsored quota categories)
- Must not have sponsored previously
- Must not have applied for Refugee Status in NZ (i.e.: asylum seekers ineligible)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa Category</th>
<th>Eligibility Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995 Family child dependent</td>
<td>- Dependent children (16 and under) of primary applicant or primary applicant’s spouse/partner or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Family child dependent</td>
<td>- Adult children (17-24) with no parent living permanently in same country and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 Family child adult</td>
<td>- Single, without children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Financially reliant on adult sponsor (may not be parent) and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Health and character requirements(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 Family sibling</td>
<td>- Applicant’s sponsor is resident parent, brother or sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 Family sibling</td>
<td>- Applicant has no other parent or sibling living lawfully and permanently in the same country they are living lawfully and permanently in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 Family quota adult sibling</td>
<td>- Acceptable offer of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Health and character requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International/Humanitarian</td>
<td>- Those with are not UNHCR mandated refugees, but are asylum seekers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 Refugee Status</td>
<td>- Application for Refugee Status made at the NZ border, or upon the expiry of temporary permit in reference to the 1987 Immigration Act and 1951 UN Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 Humanitarian</td>
<td>- Abolished October 2001 (replaced by Refugee Family Sponsored categories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Serious humanitarian circumstances involving physical and/or emotional harm to applicant and/or NZ resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Usually with accompanying psychiatric report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 Humanitarian</td>
<td>- Close family relationships and “centre of gravity” criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- NZ residency shown to be the best solution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Health requirements usually exclude those applicants with active tuberculosis, infectious diseases, or major surgery requirements (does not apply to Humanitarian approved applicants or those who can prove that surgery is not available in country of origin), those who have been in hospital or residential care for psychiatric or intellectual disability for more than 90 days in the last two years, or have a physical disability requiring full time care. Character requirements apply to all applicants over 17 years of age and includes immigration, drug and violence convictions, prison sentences of five years or more (or sentences of over one year in the last ten years), deportations and criminal associations (NZIS October 2004).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministerial direction</td>
<td>• Discretion of the Immigration Minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Refugee Medical       | • The three main categories that compose the annual Quota (mandated) intake in reference to the 1951 UN Convention  
                        | • UNHCR mandated refugees and                                                                          |
|                       | • Special admission of those whose medical/disability needs cannot be met in country of asylum or      |
|                       | • Women at risk of violence/persecution in country of asylum or                                        |
|                       | • Others at risk of violence/persecution in country of asylum (frequently due to imminent deportation to country of origin) |
| Refugee Women at Risk | • UNHCR mandated refugees                                                                              |
|                       | • NZIS selection on grounds not included in the three main Quota categories (above)                    |
| Refugee Protection    |                                                                                                       |
| Refugee Other         | • UNHCR mandated refugees                                                                              |
| Refugee Quota         | • NZIS selection on grounds not included in the three main Quota categories (above)                    |
| Skilled/Business      | 1995 General Skills                                                                                  |
|                       | • General immigration “points” based system                                                            |
|                       | • Pass mark adjusted monthly (minimum 24)                                                              |
|                       | • 18-55 year olds assessed by age, experience, qualifications and assets                               |
|                       | • Effectively requires offer of employment suitable to qualifications                                  |

Sources: NZIS (October 2004), (January 2003), (March 2004).
## Table Two

### Ethiopian Residence Applications Accepted for Processing By Immigration Stream and Category 1997-2004

(All dates shown indicate the financial year starting 1\textsuperscript{st} July and ending 30\textsuperscript{th} June). Source: NZIS August 2004.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>00-01</th>
<th>01-02</th>
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References


Human Rights Foundation, Just Housing Trust, Cooperative Housing Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (CHAANZ), Pax Christi Trust, Child Poverty Action Group


