Looking for the Phoenix Within:

An exploration of empowerment of NESB immigrant women through participation in video production training

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ABSTRACT

This transdisciplinary study examines the role of a participatory video production workshop (PVPW) in empowering its immigrant women participants in Brisbane, Australia. Media studies scholars have argued that media literacy education (critical awareness) and hands-on media production (everyday creativity) can increase the confidence and self-efficacy of individuals, resulting in them being more ‘active citizens’. Age, language and gender are three clear potential barriers to individuals participating in the public sphere. Immigrants from culturally diverse, non-English speaking backgrounds—specifically adult immigrant women from these groups—are at a greater risk of being marginalised due to a lack of knowledge and skills that are necessary to live in today’s participatory culture. Thus, the central question this study is designed to answer is: Can a PVPW assist participants in overcoming the double stigma of gender and ethnicity they experience in their host society?

The PVPW, which this study is based on that is a qualitative participatory research method, mainly based on participatory video method. The PVPW was deliberately designed to deliver knowledge (media literacy) and skills (video production) in a short period of four training sessions. The PVPW was conducted with six participants from the targeted groups in June–July 2014, in four formal training sessions and four editing sessions. The participants were interviewed at two stages: the start of the PVPW, and four weeks after completing their video production.

Analysis of the data, which was gathered from interviews, video recorded sessions, a questionnaire and the researcher’s reflective diary, shows a strong affiliation between
the hands-on media literacy training and self-efficacy and confidence. Thus, this study argues that everyday creativity helps individuals be more active participants in the public sphere by shifting the sense of agency to those involved and giving them personal empowerment.

Keywords

Media literacy education, video production, empowerment, everyday creativity, agency, NESB, immigrant women, self-efficacy
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Narges Shokohi-Tehrani

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<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>Access</td>
<td>Access Community Services Limited</td>
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<td>C4D</td>
<td>Communication for development</td>
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<td>ECCQ</td>
<td>Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTML</td>
<td>Hypertext Text Markup Language</td>
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<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing System</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>information technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Master of Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDA</td>
<td>Multicultural Development Association</td>
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<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non-English speaking background</td>
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<td>PVPW</td>
<td>participatory video production workshop</td>
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<td>QUT</td>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
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<td>RCSC</td>
<td>Refuge Claimants Support Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLQ</td>
<td>State Library of Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education institutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>television</td>
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<tr>
<td>UQ</td>
<td>University of Queensland</td>
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<tr>
<td>UGC</td>
<td>user-generated content</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNPF</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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The following words are frequently used in this thesis, often without further clarification. They usually refer to actors or groups of actors involved in this study. The intention behind this simplification is to avoid disrupting the flow of the text.

**Adaptation:** the fit or adjustment of the individual—conformity, agreement, compliance, or yielding to external conditions and the environment (Cohen, 2012).

**Agency:** the capacity of individuals to act independently and make their own free choices.

**Attitude:** the emotional and value orientation toward self, others and the world.

**Choice:** a critical selection of behavioural outcomes; awareness of and decision about options in different situations.

**Citizen journalists:** or public citizens are those playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing, and disseminating news and information (Bowman & Willis, 2003).

**Confidence:** a common term that refers to the strength of belief but does not necessarily specify what the certainty is about (Bandura, 1977).

**Convergence culture:** the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between various media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want (Jenkins, 2006).

**Creativity:** ‘the process by which available cultural resources (including both “material” resources—content, and immaterial resources—genre conventions, shared knowledge) are recombined in novel ways, so that they are both recognizable because of their familiar elements, and create effective impact through the innovative process of this recombination’ (Burgess, 2007a, p. 206).

**Developing and developed countries:** the UN (1999) database acknowledges that ‘there is no established convention for the designation of “developed” and “developing” countries or areas’ and ‘assigning a country or areas to specific groupings is for statistical convenience and does not imply any assumption regarding political or other affiliation of countries or territories’. The UN (2010) acknowledges that ‘in common practice, Japan in Asia, Canada and the United States in northern America, Australia and New Zealand in Oceania, and Europe are considered “developed” regions or areas. In international trade statistics, the Southern African Customs Union is also treated as a developed region and Israel as a developed country; countries emerging from the former Yugoslavia are treated as developing countries; and countries of Eastern Europe and of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Europe are not included under either developed or developing regions’.
**Digital literacy**: the knowledge and ability to work with internet and social media. Digital literacy does not replace traditional forms of literacy; instead, it builds upon the skills that form the foundation of traditional forms of literacy (Jenkins et al., 2007).

**Domains**: the multiple areas of life in which a person may exercise agency (Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 4-8).

**Empowerment**: the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make effective choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes’ (Alsop et al., 2006, p.10). Empowerment means that people—both women and men—can take control over their lives: set their own agendas, gain skills (or have their own skills and knowledge recognised), increase self-confidence, solve problems and develop self-reliance. It is both a process and an outcome. Feeling self-confident, walking with dignity, feeling respected and living without fear is of value in itself (Narayan, 2005b).

**Empowerment on an individual level**: defined in this study as the sense of agency in an individual that enables them to take control over their lives, that is to set their own agendas, gain skills, increase self-confidence, solve problems and develop self-reliance.

**Everyday creativity**: the ways in which people make meaning from everyday life and transform it into the process. Everyday creativity is thinking about new ideas over the course of the day. In the modern communication era, it may define the way common people expressing themselves in an original way by creating various forms of information shared on social media.

**Host country (society)**: in this study describes Australian society; more generally, it is the society into which a newcomer is adapting.

**Identity**: a person’s subjective sense of him/herself as an individual. Identity is fluid, multiple, hybrid and, most importantly, constructed.

**Immigration**: the movement of people across a specified boundary for the purpose of establishing a new or semipermanent residence by force or voluntarily. Migration is defined broadly as a permanent or semipermanent change of residence. No restriction is placed on the distance of the move or the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration (Lee, 1966).

**Immigrant**: a person who is entering one country from another country to make a new home.

**Media literacy**: the ability to access, decode, evaluate, analyse and produce messages in a variety of forms, in both analogue and digital media formats (Aufderheide, 1993; Martens, 2010; Silverblatt et al., 2014).

**Media**: the technological means of distributing a message in various forms (Potter, 2004b, p. 43). Media can be analogue or digital, such as radio, TV, newspaper or different platforms on the internet.

**Media creator**: someone who creates a blog or Web page; posts original artwork, photography, stories or videos online; or remixes online content into their new creations.
New media: media forms defined in contrast to ‘old’ media, such as television, radio and print. It mainly refers to communication systems using digital technologies and the internet.

Public sphere: a central arena ‘made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state’ (Habermas, 1991, p. 176).

Participants: in this study, the women involved in the PVPW in Brisbane, Australia.

Participatory culture: a culture in which technology enables ordinary people, or those previously considered as audiences, to engage in public discourse as contributors or producers.

Participatory video: a form of participatory media in which a group or community create their own film.

Refugee: a person who has moved to a new country because of a situation in their former home (e.g., war).

Resources: one of the three indicators of empowerment, along with agency and achievement. Resources are ‘material, human or social resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice’ (Kabeer, 2001, p. 20).

Self-efficacy: Bandura (1997b) defined self-efficacy as people’s beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions.

Sense of agency: the sense of having control over your actions in the world.

Self-esteem: ‘an individual’s subjective evaluation of his or her worth as a person’ (Orth & Robins, 2014, p. 381).

Social bonds: the social connections between members in the same ethnic group.

Social bridges: the social connections between members of different ethnic groups.

Structure: the regular patterned arrangements that influence or limit the choices and opportunities available.

Vernacular creativity: everyday documentation of life and the public sharing of that documentation, such as sharing photos on Flickr or autobiographical blogging, which are forms of vernacular creativity remediated in digital contexts (Burgess interviewed by Jenkins, 2007).

Visual literacy: the ability to decode, interpret and create visual texts.

Women’s empowerment: a process by which ‘women gain greater control over the material and intellectual resources that will assist them to increase their self-reliance, enhance their assertion of independent rights, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women. This enables women to organise themselves to assert their autonomy to make decisions and choices, and ultimately
eliminate their own subordination in all the institutions and structures of society’.
(UNWOMEN, 2010).
I wish to dedicate this thesis to two incredible women who have had a significant and influential role in my life – my mum Vahideh and my daughter Moozhan. They have been my inspiration for completing this journey. My mum, with her extraordinary resilience and optimism to the future, despite all the difficulties she has encountered in her life, taught me to be who I am today. My daughter, with her beautiful and kind soul, has been with me throughout this journey and has assisted me in facilitating the workshop sessions and giving me the courage to take every step, always believing in me.

I must also acknowledge Professor Michael Meadows, who supervised my Master and Honours and the early stages of this thesis. He was the person who kindly encouraged me to follow my studies. My foremost sincere thanks are extended to my doctoral supervisors Dr Wendy Keys and Professor Trish Fitzsimons for their patience, guidance and support. I would particularly like to thank Dr Susanna Chamberlain, who come on board in the last stages of this thesis. Constantly boosting my enthusiasm, she has been my mentor, inspiration and vision for an academic world beyond the PhD.

I offer my special thanks to the six women who participated in this study and generously let me learn from them: Anna Mwanga, Lokonde Hwelwa, Mana Salsaly, Stella Mwanga, Tarlan Ghiasi and Zahra Movahed.

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Finally, my special personal thanks to my partner, Homayoun for his support, which helped me successfully complete this study.
Looking for the Phoenix Within

**PREAMBLE**

Changes occur constantly according to the vision, image, or myth, which possesses one. We do not grow absolutely, chronologically. We grow sometimes in one dimension, and not in another, unevenly. We grow partially. We are relative. We are mature in one realm, childish in another. The past, present, and future mingle and pull us backward, forward, or fix us in the present. We are made up of layers, cells, constellations. We never discard our childhood. We never escape it completely. We relive fragments of it through others. We live buried layers through others. We live through others’ projection of the unlived selves.

*The Diary of Anais Nin, 1944-1947 volume 4, (1972, p. 127)*

The first of July 2003 was a changing point in my life. I arrived that day in Australia from Iran on a dependent student visa, accompanying my husband, who had accepted an offer from the Environment School at Griffith University. To describe myself at that time, I can use a term I once heard from another immigrant woman: ‘luggage tag’. As the mother of a six-year-old child with almost no English speaking skills and no idea what to do next, I was indeed a luggage tag. After more than 15 years, when I speak about that period, I still burst into tears of sorrow and sadness. For almost six months after arriving in Brisbane, I was numb and ready to fly back home. The only thing stopping me was my uncertainty about the concept of home. Where was home? I had my small family here, and my daughter was adapting very quickly to the new environment. Although now a grown young woman, she admits that it was an unnatural period for her too. I still can feel the panic I felt all that time ago when the phone rang—I was alone, unsure who was calling and how I would communicate with them if they
were speaking English. I quickly went deep into depression and felt overwhelmingly lonely.

Luckily, I soon found respite from my lonely days far from the society outside whose language I did not understand. Back in Iran, I had had a weblog for a couple of years before emigrating to Australia. I started to write again on my weblog daily. The weblog was in my mother language, Farsi, which got the best review that year. It was such a critical opportunity for me to feel alive again. My weblog had been about my daily life and personal experiences; however, when I started it up again in Australia, I was able to write more freely about my ideas on feminism and women’s rights in Iran. Those long days of sitting in front of a second-hand desktop computer that was set up on our old-fashioned kitchen table inside a cold, empty, ugly Queenslander have passed, but they are still alive in my mind. I found new hobbies, as I felt the need to change my weblog appearance. I taught myself with online sources to work with HTML.¹ Using these new skills, I could quickly change my weblog colour and appearance from my kitchen. It was a big step from using a ready-made template for a weblog to a self-designed one. The creativity was an excellent experience; I was regaining my confidence again step-by-step and was feeling like I was not the useless person I thought I was after emigration. Each time I changed my weblog template and colours and created something new, I regained a part of my old self. At every step, when my confidence was restored, I learnt to see the ‘new immigrant me’ more clearly.

After a few months, online engagement was not enough to keep the depression and loneliness at bay. I needed to go out and be active to overcome my lack of self-esteem.

¹ HTML is the standard mark-up language for creating web pages. HTML stands for hyper-text mark-up language.
A friend helped me find the Refuge Claimants Support Centre (RCSC), an organisation that helps immigrants and refugees in different aspects of their new life. I was introduced to a mature man who was one of their volunteers. As my English skills were poor, he thought it would be a good idea for me to start reading books and having lengthy discussions. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to him—I learnt so much from him which contributed to my confidence in speaking English. The RCSC was on the north side of Brisbane, coordinated by a woman who had migrated from Germany a couple of years earlier. Later, when I had a chance to speak with her during some lovely lunchtimes, I found out she had arrived in Australia with no English speaking skills. She had found her way, studied social science and was engaged as a community worker helping people in the same situation. I started volunteering as an all-rounder in the same community a few months later. Working in that community centre was a starting point, as they gave me the confidence to begin looking for a job. I found some casual work a year after I began English classes. I passed my IELTS test in late 2005 but then was confronted with one of the hardest decisions of my life. I was in my 30s but had to decide my future direction all over again as if I was an 18 year-old girl.

I had studied and worked in media since I was 22 years old. I was born in an old and traditional city in the centre of Iran, Isfahan. Yet, despite the traditional atmosphere of the town, I grew up to be a rebel and my mum was my greatest support. Against a reality that trapped her in a traditional role as a housewife; she somehow kept her free spirit and bright mind. She always encouraged me to study and create an independent

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2 The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is a standardised English language test designed for foreign speakers who wish to study, work and live in an English-speaking environment. The IELTS language certificate is necessary for international academic and professional opportunities in many institutions and places in the English language world.
life as a woman. Her encouragement was behind many of my actions throughout my life. After graduating from high school, I pursued my undergraduate studies with a Bachelor of Art in History at Isfahan University. Iran experienced a significant political and social change in 1979 when I was a secondary school student. This revolution not only resulted in an overthrow of the Shah, it also terminated a thousand years of Persian monarchy in Iran, culminating in today’s Islamic Republic of Iran. It established a system of government based on religious authority. One year after the revolution, the Iran–Iraq war began, which did not end for eight years. My teenage life passed amidst a constant fear of bombs. The most significant adventure of my teenagehood was going by myself to attend the funerals of war martyrs—those who protected the borders of Iran and prevented the arrival of Iraqi forces. At the same time, there was a power struggle between different groups of revolutionaries, followed by a cultural revolution by a theocratic government, affecting all aspects of the cultural system. This ended in a frightening dictatorship. As a result of the revolution, many Iranian youths lost their lives in the eight- years Iran–Iraq war zone trying to protect Iranian soil. At the same time, many others were executed in the streets and imprisoned as traitors by the Iranian government. The survivors accepted they had to live under the oppression of a new government or escape the country to survive the revolution’s turmoil. I was lucky enough to stay alive but not old enough to have the chance to escape Iran. However, I managed to finish my high school studies, go to university and get my Bachelor of Arts degree in history. I was then admitted into a course on TV and radio production, so in my early 20s, I moved to Tehran to start my media course and an independent life. I simultaneously worked as a creator and casual writer in history for Radio Iran. After I finished my course, I worked as a permanent radio and TV producer in the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB). IRIB is a large organisation in Iran that includes
all radio and television broadcasting stations operated by the government since 1979 and is the only TV and radio broadcasting conducted inside Iran. My job changed depending on what program and channel I was working with, but during those years, I was responsible for budgeting, managing and directing as the head of the group producing the program. The group usually included an audio technician, presenter, researcher, sometimes writers and a personal assistant. I loved my job due to its creative nature, especially when it involved writing and directing programs; however, working in the media environment under government censorships and gender rules was difficult. In the patriarchal culture of Iran, a female professional who lives independently has many problems, especially under a religious system.³

My life changed when I fell in love with one of my colleagues, whom I married, and soon after gave birth to my daughter. She was precious and lovely but being a stay-at-home mum was not my ideal in life. I went back to work as soon as I could find a babysitter for her, but my activities at work were not the same as before. She was six years old when we decided to immigrate in pursuit of my husband’s higher education.

After many problems in my two first years living as an immigrant in Brisbane, I finally got my IELTS results. At that stage, I had two study options: to follow the path in which I had more than 10 years’ experience, or choose to start something new. Bitterness from my experience during the last years of working in Iranian media played a significant

³ The modernism Pahlavi’s dynasty started in the last century enabled women to gain some rights. For example, they could vote, go to school and universities, get different official positions, work outside the home and, most importantly, they had a choice whether to wear ‘hijab’ or not. However, these reforms did not extend outside the big cities and face huge opposition by the religious clerics who were supported by large numbers of the lower and middle classes. In the last forty years, the leaders of the 1979 revolution—mostly the opposing religious clerics from the last Shah of Iran—have systematically removed women’s rights, through legislation aligned with Islamic law. Yet, they were unsuccessful in voiding many women’s rights, such as the right to vote, study and work outside the home.
role in my decision—I decided to start anew. When I look back, I see an unsure and uncertain person who wanted to escape from society and find a quiet job, being a librarian or archivist sitting alone in a half-dark room of stacked books. My attempt to start a librarian course was unsuccessful due to the lack of experience or relevant qualification. As a plan B, I decided to study computer programing and promptly enrolled in a Master of Software Programming at university. Soon after I passed my first-year exams, I regained my confidence. I found it uncomfortable working alone in that half-dark room (office) and realised that I had neglected my experience. I left computer programming and started a Master of Journalism and Mass Communication. I was happy and so encouraged by the outcomes that I continued my studies in the program. At the end of the first year, I got a work placement in the ABC Brisbane newsroom. It should have been a great experience in a very familiar environment, but on the contrary, it scared me. I could not go back to where I had escaped from, as I found the media environment culture was the same as I had left behind in Iran. It was not what I wanted. At the end of the work placement, which was the end of the semester, I completed the course and got a Graduate Certificate in Journalism and Mass Communication. The year after that, I was back to the same emotional state as when I first arrived in Australia in 2003. Somehow, I felt I had betrayed myself. Unexpectedly, a miracle happened when I bought a small video camera. I just bought it to have at home, but it reawakened old ideas, including the desire to make documentary films.

Over the years, I started to teach myself many things that I had either avoided or forgotten, including working with a camera and editing, among many others. Working as a freelance video reporter for various Farsi language media outlets in Iran, such as WIN TV and BBC World Service, helped me get more engaged with video cameras. I
wanted to know more, so I made an appointment with Professor Michael Meadows, my supervisor in the last course, to talk about my thoughts and perceptions. He gave me ideas and persuaded me to come back to university. Immediately, he tailored a study path for me in collaboration with the Griffith University Film School. During that course, I felt relieved and secure, as I had finally found my place. The feeling was so strong that it encouraged me to think about other immigrant women. This helped me start my honours degree on a similar subject. The issues and problems living as an immigrant in a country with a different culture and language was my main concern. My honours dissertation started with this paragraph:

As an immigrant and a media professional myself, I know it as my duty to be a storyteller on behalf of other immigrant women. However, this research is more a self-discovery and is based on my own journey. I feel I have this mission to tell stories, as these are reflecting experiences of thousands of other migrant women and their everyday struggles with settlement in a new country.

The dissertation was followed with a short video titled Our Story, including video narratives of four women from different cultural backgrounds, all of whom had emigrated from non-English background speaking countries to Australia. The video was a collection of the women’s stories, and issues regarding their status as a migrant in Australia. That experience—which I now think of as an incomplete work—is what led me to look for ways to use my expertise and skills to help such women overcome the issues associated with immigration. During this search, I came across an article that used participatory video in a post-conflict society to assist Fijian women from different ethnicities to create ‘healthy and functioning social networks’ (Harris, 2008, p. 162). In
consultation with my supervisor at the time, I developed the idea of using a similar method with immigrant women. This study is the result of this journey.
This study is based on practice-led research involving a participatory video production workshop (PVPW) for immigrant women from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) in Brisbane, Australia. The PVPW was conducted in Brisbane, in the Journalism Lab at Griffith University, from 14 June to 5 July 2014 in four official training sessions, and continued in four unofficial editing sessions during July that year (see the Conducting the PVPW sessions). The six immigrant women from the targeted group who participated in the PVPW were from three different cultural backgrounds (see Table 2). The training sessions were held each Saturday from 9 am to 1 pm and included a brief media literacy training on the central concepts, along with practical and theoretical training on video production. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to verify their socio-demographic information and were approached for an interview two times for gathering data for research purpose, once in the first session of the PVPW and once during August that year, approximately four weeks after they completed production of their short videos. Each participant was interviewed separately in a semi-structured in-depth format. All the interviews and all the PVPW sessions were video recorded as research data and also used in the production of short video documentation, which is a component of this thesis. Also there were six videos produced by five of the PVPW participants, and a short story of the researcher—produced in line with participants’ videos—accompanying this video component.

**Video documentation**

The video documentation is a report video on the process of the PVPW, recorded for data collection and later arranged as video documentation for this study. The primary
idea was to create a video documentary; however, the lack of budget and professional cameraperson limited the video recording in the process. The videos were recorded by two and sometimes three fixed cameras on the tripods in the best possible angles, which mostly prevented emotions, personal reactions and dialogue being recorded. For this reason, the production is more in line with a ‘video documentation’ than a video documentary (see Chapter 5). The video is titled *Looking for the Phoenix Within*. In ancient myths, the Phoenix symbolises renewal and resurrection, and over time has represented many themes, such as the sun, time, the empire, metempsychosis, consecration and resurrection life (Van den Broek, 1972). The logic behind the name comes from the way an individual who immigrates to a new country has to reconstruct their identity to adopt the new culture—a process very similar to creating a new person from their ashes.

The video is a review of the process of the PVPW, including the participants’ interviews and footage from the training sessions. The video documentation ‘*Looking for the Phoenix Within*’ can be watched on this link: [https://youtu.be/-i6PJ0FfhJY](https://youtu.be/-i6PJ0FfhJY)

**Participants short videos and researcher’s digital story**

The *Looking for the Phoenix Within* is accompanied by seven short video stories. Six of these videos are the PVPW participant's production, and the seventh is a short digital story from the researcher. All the videos can be found on the [YouTube page](https://youtu.be/-i6PJ0FfhJY) created for

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4 A phoenix is a long-living bird that is episodically reborn from ashes after the self-burning of its predecessor. Such a bird is referred to in many other cultures: in Persian mythology, ‘Simorgh’; Turkish and Arabian mythology, ‘Anke’; Egyptians mythology, ‘Benu’; Indian and South Asian mythology, ‘Garuda’; Russian mythology, ‘Firebird’; Chinese mythology, ‘Feng-huang’; and Japanese mythology, ‘Ho-oh’ (Birkalan & Lenz, 20015).
this study under the name Participatory Video Production Workshop –PVPW (see Figure 1) via this link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiZjXvxKJ3MnQYi-vzXOLQ

Figure 1--Participatory Video Production Workshop’ YouTube page
1. A day with Aiden, Tarlan, 3.30mins

Tarlan created this short video based on a typical day of her family life. She tries to illustrate the struggle of motherhood with her son, who was 18 months old at that time. Although the video starts with a scene showing her sleep being interrupted by her son, as the camera follows Tarlan, her husband and their son throughout the day, the warmth of a loving family life comes to the fore. The video story ‘A day with Aiden’ can be watched at https://youtu.be/BjfyITbO3Ec

Figure 2-A closing shot from the ‘A day with Aiden’
2. A *traditional meal, Luko, 2.53mins*

The short video Luko produced for the PVPW is about making a common dish in East African culture. Her main concern is her culture; what she emphasises in her interview as ‘back home’. She chooses a safe zone for video production, with a roommate who explains and performs an African dish recipe. This video ‘A traditional meal’ can be found at [https://youtu.be/JJOkgHKjhXc](https://youtu.be/JJOkgHKjhXc)

*Figure 3- An opening shot from ‘A traditional meal’*
3. *Invisible women, Stella, 3.56mins*

Stella produced this video based on the story of a Christian organisation founded by her husband, Paul. The video centres on her concern for the lives of African women, in this case, widowed women, who are rejected in their society. Stella presents in this video, along with Paul. She also uses still pictures to illustrate the organisation’s activities.

This video story ‘*Invisible women*’ can be watched at [https://youtu.be/jF7V0vDp870](https://youtu.be/jF7V0vDp870)
4. Widows unknown heroes, Stella, 2.30mins

This video is a differently edited version of ‘Invisible women’. Stella later decided to re-edit the video, which she presents. As with ‘Invisible women’, this video is a digital story of the widowed women in Africa, mixed with still pictures. This video story ‘Widows Unknown Heroes’ can be watched at https://youtu.be/88HDzMK54iE

*Figure 5- A still picture from ‘widow’s unknown heroes’*
5. *The block system, Anna, 3.47mins*

This video is a personal experience story, told by Anna, about studying in an English language boarding school in Tanzania. Anna tells the story in the relaxed, natural environment of a playground. The video story ‘The block system’ can be watched at https://youtu.be/a-NHXuuanDQ
6. *We, the street ghosts, Mana, 1.17mins*

The idea behind this video comes from Mana’s concerns about the role of new technologies in modern society and people’s increasing dependency on them. As she mentioned in her interviews for this study, she always dreamed about making a documentary. The story is recorded on a DSLR camera, without a tripod, during a short journey in the Brisbane CBD. The video ‘*We, the street ghosts*’ can be watched at [https://youtu.be/F0sCxBIQbv8](https://youtu.be/F0sCxBIQbv8).

![An opening shot from 'We, the street ghosts'](image-url)
7. **Becoming the Phoenix—my story, Narges, 2.23mins**

This short video is a personal digital story by the researcher. The rationale behind this video was first, to address the researcher’s insider position; and second, because the study is inherently tied to the researcher’s personal experiences. The video ‘**Becoming the Phoenix—my story**’ can be watched at [https://youtu.be/RZK2Xo2jNVE](https://youtu.be/RZK2Xo2jNVE).

![Figure 8 - An opening shot from ‘Becoming the Phoenix’](image)

The video documentation and the seven short videos introduced above are attached components of this thesis, and all can be found on the YouTube page [Participatory Video Production Workshop—PVPW](https://www.youtube.com/c/ParticipatoryVideoProductionWorkshop).
CHAPTER 1—Introduction

This study explores the potential benefits of media literacy training for immigrant women from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) by conducting a participatory video production workshop (PVPW) in Brisbane, Australia. There are two separate but interlinked parts to this work: a creative element, which is the video documentation titled *Looking for the Phoenix Within*; and this thesis, which presents the methods, results and analysis of the study undertaken. This micro study has an interdisciplinary nature, as it is broadly situated at the intersection of three research fields: cultural studies, media studies and gender studies. The current study aims to set up a framework for implementing PVPW—as a medium for media literacy—to help individual immigrant women develop their personal abilities and social cooperation. At a personal level, this study connects theoretical ideas with on-the-ground experiences to assist immigrant women in regaining their voice in their new society by reinstating their confidence and self-efficacy, which is categorised as personal or psychological empowerment. The ideas are based on the changes in media interface from one-way communication to interactive media, which allows individuals to be more proactive in the online public sphere.

**Central research question and purpose of the study**

This study aims to explore the following broad research questions:

*To what degree can a participatory video production workshop (PVPW) assists its participants in overcoming the double stigma of gender and ethnicity they experience in their host society?*
To what extent can hands-on skills in creating media increase the self-efficacy beliefs that shape agency in the participants?

The primary objectives of this study can be summarised as follows:

1. To research how media literacy can assist immigrant women in gaining psychological empowerment to control their destiny. This idea is based on the assumption that community-based media and media literacy helps empower ‘ordinary’ people (Milne et al., 2012; Shaw & Robertson, 1997; White, 2003).
2. To create a clear picture of the empowerment process mechanism caused by media literacy education in the life of immigrant women
3. To map the mechanism of increasing self-efficacy beliefs in individual immigrant women adapting to their host society.

The scope of this study

This study is based on a PVPW, which includes four training sessions and four editing sessions for immigrant women. Methodologically, PVPW is positioned in participatory video methods. The PVPW conducted for the purpose of this study was simultaneously aimed at promoting basic media literacy and training participants to be ‘creative content producers’ by developing their video skills and assisting them in becoming active participants in the public sphere.

The participants were trained to work with their own video cameras and smartphone cameras during the workshop. However, they were also introduced to professional camcorders to strengthen their knowledge about the video production process. After two sessions, they were instructed on how to edit their captured videos on professional video editing programs, such as Final Cut Pro X program. The participants were assisted in
finding a video editing program they could use every day on their devices. They were asked to produce a short video at the end of the PVPW about a subject of importance to them as their video project, which they edited under the supervision of the researcher.

**Positioning the researcher in this study**

It is a common practice among researchers in various disciplines—that are involved with human subjects—to study outside the groups and cultures to which they belong. Being an outsider researcher has its advantages, such as being able to offer a fresh and objective perspective; however, it deprives researcher of an authentic insider’s perspective in their research. Being an outsider researcher may hinder the researcher comprehending the ‘real flavour and forcefulness of the experiences and perspectives of insiders who are engaged in the very behaviour under study’ (Fishman & García, 2010, p. 156). This has been particularly important in the current study, as it deals with ethnicity and culture:

> Without adequately taking into consideration the ‘insider’ views, convictions, and interpretations, no full or richly nuanced understanding of the behaviour being researched is possible (Fishman & García, 2010, p. 160).

The researcher’s reflexivity and subjectivity may shade their knowledge and understanding, which ‘produces a negotiated version of reality’ in relation to the research subjects (Pink, 2013, p. 39-40).

In response to criticism of bias in reflective research, Malterud (2001) contends that this is addressed by the researcher acknowledging their position. Further, she values the alternative perspective by researchers that ‘might lead to the development of different, although equally valid, understandings of a particular situation under study’ (Malterud,
2001, p. 484). Similarly, from an ethnographic view, Pink (2013, p. 40) emphasises that researchers ‘ought to consider how their identities are constructed and understood by the people with whom they work’.

Following these arguments, the researcher in the current study has taken all precautions to establish her position as an insider and immigrant women from a NESB, for the participants, from the start of the workshop sessions, and for readers of this thesis.

**Participants in this study**

This research involves a case study of six immigrant women in Brisbane, Australia, from NESB, who participated in the PVPW comprising four training sessions and four editing sessions. The women were from two different cultural and linguistic NESB; their ages ranged from 18–48 years; they have lived in Australia from 1–7 years; and each has undertaken higher education. Three of the participants were from an Iranian background with Australian permanent residency or citizenship. The other three participants were from two neighbouring countries in Southeast Africa, Zambia and Tanzania, and each holds a temporary student visa.

**Defining immigration**

For the purpose of this study, migration is defined as the temporary or permanent movement of people for various reasons from their land of origin to another land, either by force or voluntarily (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 4; Lee, 1966, p. 49). This research aligns with the United Nations’ recommendations for defining two types of migrants—long-term and short-term:
Long-term migrants are people who move to a country other than their usual residence for at least a year so that the destination country becomes their new country of usual residence. In other words, a person must have (a) had a usual place of residence in one country, (b) crossed an international border and entered another country and (c) established a new place of usual residence in the country of destination for at least 12 months. (UNPF, 2011).

The act of immigration has three stages: pre-migration, migration and post-migration (Akhtar, 1999). Apart from the push and pull factors, all immigrants experience similar issues during their adaptation to a new host society; although, those who immigrate willingly are often more prepared to face problems in their destination than those whose migration is forced.

As noted above, migration is the temporary or permanent movement of people for various reasons from their land of origin to another land (Hagen-Zanker, 2008, p. 4; Lee, 1966, p. 49). These reasons may be economic, political or social factors that push them from their place of origin or pull them towards a better place. Although the first and second stages of migration (pre-migration and migration) hugely influence an individual immigrant’s status in the host country and cannot be ignored, this research focuses on the third stage of post-migration.

**Rationale for this study**

This study is based on four rationales. First, the choice of NESB immigrant women is partly a result of my personal experience, but mostly due to the need to investigate ways to empower immigrant women through media education. The decision to adopt a participatory video approach is based on my previous experiences as a media and video
practitioner. One of the main goals was to draw on my personal experience of living as an immigrant to assist others who may be in the earlier stages of a similar journey.

Second, this research addresses the increase in female immigration, which is related to the economic revolution in women’s roles (Jolly & Reeves, 2005). There is a clear need for a firm policy to assist women in attaining higher-level empowerment, ensuring they maintain confidence in their situation even after immigration, as the gender patterns of migration have changed. For the past few decades, women have accounted for approximately half the world’s migrants—51.8 per cent female and 48.2 per cent male (Wright et al., 2016). In the same way that migration to Australia is increasing, the proportion of women is also growing to just over half the immigrant population or 51.4 per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2013). Notably, there are equal numbers of tertiary-educated migrant men and women (Colquhoun, 2015).

It is also significant that many female migrants are from NESB and especially from patriarchal cultures. In addition to encountering language barrier in a new and different culture, they are exposed to various forms of media and diverse gender arrangements, and therefore need some type of assistance to redefine their gender roles. In developed countries such as Australia, women have gained much more gender equality than women in developing countries. Thus, immigrant women from the backgrounds identified not only have to overcome their cultural oppression as women, but also the cultural shock and other migration issues such as employment and housing. Systematic assistance to help immigrant women from developing countries to reconstruct their identity, confidence and self-esteem is needed.

Third, the technological shift from analogue to digital in the media sphere that resulted in media domination in developed destination countries, make media literacy education
necessary for immigrants from both genders, and particularly for immigrant women from developing countries. Media literacy education can assist them in overcoming the different types of gender and cultural stereotyping promoted in mass media that construct notions of class, ethnicity, nationality and terms like ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Kellner, 2003, P. 1). Consequently, cultural diversity can have both positive and negative impacts. As proved by history, immigration during economic crises can lead to increased nationalism and radicalism. Conversely, cultural diversity can be a tool that addresses the root of conflict and promotes social cohesion (EU, 2014). This is important in fostering intercultural dialogue, especially because the integration of refugees and migrants is widely acknowledged as a two-way process. Moreover, this study is a search for a program to encourage immigrant women to become, more than ever before, active citizens and contributors to Australian society.

Fourth, the creative arts can provide immigrants with a creative space ‘for exploration and expression of identities, for challenging discrimination, and social exclusion, and for fostering intercultural dialogue’ (McGregor & Ragab, 2016, p. 7). Many scholars confirm the role of different types of creative art—music, theatre, cinema, creative writing and visual art—in generating a public sphere that enables immigrants to raise their voice and contribute to the community (Delhaye, 2008; Martiniello & Lafleur, 2008; McGregor & Ragab, 2016). Based on this concept, the current study examines the role of video creativity, as a creative art project, in helping immigrant women enact agency in society. The creative aspect of communication is merged with the concept of media literacy. In this case, media literacy education has an essential role to play in the life of immigrants, not only in countering the impacts of negative stereotyping in media but in actively supporting their participation in the public sphere.
Although scholars frequently consider and emphasise the role of media literacy in educating children, youth and adolescents (Dennis, 2004), there is an urgent need to educate all groups of citizens regardless of their ethnicity, gender and age (Buckingham, 2009; Kellner, 1998). In recent years, adult media literacy education has attracted the scholar’s attention, due to the intense changes in the ubiquity of digital media technology.

Importantly, a diverse body of previous academic research on participatory video (PV) and its effects assisted this study. The current study has significantly extended and added value to this field, by specifically concentrating on the adult NESB immigrant women in Australia as a developed country. Many previous studies in this area focus on adolescents, children or the broader range of immigrants in developed countries. This study argues that the concepts of power and empowerment found in previous PV projects have been limited in their investigations, and thereby necessitates further exploration of the empowerment hypothesis.

**Theoretical consideration**

The technological shift and emergence of new digital media formats that enable mass participation in the public sphere gives media literacy a significant role in the contemporary world. Here, ‘new media’ is a term used to distinguish contemporary digital communication systems from ‘old media’ such as print, newspapers and analogue radio and television. New media formats include, but are not limited to, all digital, interactive, incorporated two-way communication and computer-mediated communication mediums (Lister et al., 2008; Manovich, 2001). Another feature of new media is the way it enables users to efficiently process, store, transform, retrieve, search
Looking for the Phoenix Within

and hyperlink (Logan, 2010). This accessibility enables people to read, write and share their views and news with a wide range of people around the world. Social media platforms enable the public to enter a territory previously only open to professional journalists and media producers, which makes media literacy education a necessity for all.

Media literacy education helps develop individuals into well-informed and responsible citizens ‘who will be able to take a certain distance towards the immediate pleasures that media can provide’ (Khan, 2008, P. 15). Media literacy is defined as the ability to access, decode, evaluate/analyse and produce print and electronic media (Aufderheide, 1993; Martens, 2010; Silverblatt et al., 2014). The initial concept of media literacy was shaped in response to the influences of 20th century mass media on its audiences and had a strong emphasis on decoding, evaluating and analysing messages. However, changes in the media sphere and the emergence of widespread digital and interactive electronic communication media, have facilitated a ‘convergence culture’ (Jenkins, 2006) and highlighted the production element in media literacy terms. Convergence culture is partly the result of gradual changes starting in the early 2000s when the television industry moved from the network era to a multi-channel transition period and then the post-network era (Lotz, 2014). According to Henry Jenkins (2006, p. 2), convergence culture is ‘where old and new media collide, where grassroots and corporate media intersect, where the power of the media producer and the power of the media consumer interact in unpredictable ways’. A further aspect of cultural convergence is ‘participatory culture’; that is, the way media consumers are able to annotate, comment, remix and otherwise influence culture in unprecedented ways. Increasing numbers of individuals seek to use digital media tools to express themselves, explore their identities and connect with peers. As Jenkins et al. (2007) outline,
participatory culture provides opportunities for traditional audiences to create and share their own content. One aspect of this freedom is citizens acting as a new wave of journalists who are ‘writing or reporting anything based on facts or truths’ (Meadows, 2013, p. 48). Significant aspects of these activities include ordinary people sharing text, pictures, audio and video in blogs, on Facebook or YouTube (Goode, 2009). In the immigration context, promoting participatory culture is vital, as it may help immigrants adapt to the new society more quickly and easily. Adaptation is understood here to describe the fit or adjustment of the individual; that is, conformity, agreement, compliance, or yielding to external conditions and the environment (Cohen, 2012).

Every day or amateur media production is increasingly part of the fabric of modern life. This ‘vernacular creativity’ as Burgess (2007a, p. 6) names it, is:

[a] productive articulation of consumer practices and knowledge (of, say, television genre codes) with older popular traditions and communicative practices (storytelling, family photography, scrapbooking, collecting).

Burgess et al. (2006) argue that online participation is vital to civic engagement in the same way as offline participation. The public sphere that is formed by new media allows individuals to be cultural consumers, as well as active creators in social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia and the blogosphere.

Yet, the invisible and vigorous influence of media on our everyday life and the inequalities of power it engenders makes it more necessary than ever before to empower those who are exposed to media with media literacy education. According to Renee Hobbs (2011p. 16), ‘few people verify the information they find online—both adults and children tend to uncritically trust information they find, from whatever source’. She points out that individuals need to be able to judge the credibility of information by
answering the three fundamental questions of ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ a message is constructed (Hobbs, 2011). For instance, the importance of individuals’ critical judgment of information was highlighted in the 2016 presidential campaign in the United States of America (USA), with the widespread circulation of false stories or ‘fake news’ on social media (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). These fake news stories were more widely spread on Facebook than any other mainstream news stories and tended to favour Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton (Silverman, 2016). Examples such as this highlight the importance of media literacy awareness, even within the population of a developed nation that has a reliable connection to the internet and uses it regularly.

**Significance of the study**

In a world where old and new media have converged, digital literacy and media literacy have a very close association. This new media arrangement encourages most ordinary people to actively involve themselves in the distribution of news. However, many others are left behind in the communication revolution and programs designed to improve digital skills, and a critical understanding of media construction are needed.

For decades, the concept of ‘digital divide’ or ‘the gap between those who have ready access to computers and the internet, and those who do not’ (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 221) has been central to critical media and cultural studies. As the internet and smartphones find their way around the world, the concept of the digital divide is shifting to a second level; that is, a divide based on use rather than access to the internet. In brief, the second-level digital divide exposes ‘differences in how those who are online use the medium’ (Hargittai, 2001, p. 1). The second-level divide more closely relates to media literacy and skills; that is, those with more skill have greater access to information. The
barriers interfering in the processes of access, digital technology use and participatory
culture include age, ethnicity, gender and the economic status of individuals and
communities. These barriers are important to acknowledge, as access to a variety of
media and online services are increasingly recognised as being central to a society’s
political, economic, social and cultural development. While the media and new
information technologies are understood to cause some problems, they are also valued
as social and cultural resources. In terms of access to resources and technology between
industrial and developing countries, the digital divide is distinct. However, even in
developed areas, a significant gap is evident in relation to the use of digital media,
which is categorised as a second-level digital divide.

Australia is one developed country that still struggles with digital access. According to
the latest records from the ABS (2018b), 82–97 per cent of Australians use the internet
across a range of technological devices. The minority do not use the internet due to a
lack of availability or ability to choose (Leung, 2015). This percentage includes anyone
who has accessed the internet in the past six months, even if just once. According to
ABS figures, almost 2.6 million Australians do not use the internet, and approximately
1.3 million households are not connected (Thomas et al., 2018b). The ABS report also
shows a distinct relationship between age and connectivity, as younger individuals are
more active on the internet than older individuals. Two further areas that are influencing
‘access’ are employment and ethnic background:

Most people with jobs (95.1 per cent) are online, compared to just 72.5 per cent
of those not employed. Migrants from non-English speaking countries are less
connected (81.6 per cent) than those Australian born (87.6 per cent). Those
already at a disadvantage—the very people who have the most to gain from all
the extraordinary resources of the internet—are missing out (Thomas et al., 2018b, n. p).

Almost one-third of people living in Australia are born overseas (ABS, 2017a). Across Queensland, people speak more than 180 overseas languages, hold more than 110 religious beliefs and come from more than 220 countries (Queensland Government, 2018). According to the 2014–2015 census, similar groups are the ones left behind:

- the new migrants and refugees;
- people from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- older Australians, particularly women;
- people of low socioeconomic status;
- people in regional, rural and remote areas;
- Indigenous communities;
- and people with disabilities (Leung, 2015).

In the 2014–2015 census, the ABS asked households why they did not have home internet access. Responses were mostly related to cost and a lack of knowledge or confidence in how to use the internet. Unfortunately, this crucial question was not included in the most recent census, so current comparisons cannot be made.

**Methodological consideration**

This study employs a qualitative participatory action research (PAR) method with a visual approach and interpretive perspective, based on collaboration with its participants in the processes of production. This method was applied by conducting a series of video production workshops to assist participants in producing a short video and gain fundamental media literacy skills. Participants in the study were trained according to the principles of media literacy and practical video production in a PVPW, which was conducted over four training sessions and four editing sessions during June–July 2014.
At the end of the workshop, participants produced a short video on a topic of significance to them.

The strategies and methods employed to gather data for this study include:

- a short demographic questionnaire at the start of the workshop
- two sets of semi-structured in-depth video interviews with each participant (one during the first session of the PVPW, and one four weeks after completing the PVPW and video production task)
- video recordings of the workshop sessions as an observational tool
- the researcher reflective journal during the workshop period.

For the purpose of data coding and analysis, the video interviews were transcribed and, together with the other data (questionnaire, video logs and researcher’s reflective journal), manually coded. The transcribed interviews were read carefully to build preliminary connections between the aspects of personal empowerment self-declaration within the participants’ narratives.

**Ethics consideration and ethics clearance**

An ethical certificate for this study was approved on 10/10/2013, with protocol number HUM/44/13/HREC. An information sheet and a consent form were provided (see Appendix A & Appendix B).

The study got more relaxed as the targeted group changed. Participants were chosen from a group of educated immigrant women, as working with educated women minimised cultural risks due to their overall understanding of the way university research projects are conducted.
Chapter structure

This thesis divides into nine chapters to review related theories, topic, findings and analysis of outcomes, reflections on the process of the PVPW and implications and recommendations for future research in this area. Chapter 1 introduces the research ideas, purposes and topic backgrounds. Chapter 2 comprises a review of the literature that informs this thesis. The review includes literature from several academic disciplines, including media and cultural studies, social psychology, adult education and community development. The literature review is structured in three parts, which together emphasise the relationship between media literacy and empowerment. The first part examines the definitions and concept of media literacy and its two components, ‘media’ and ‘literacy’, and reviews the role of media as a tool for individuals’ transformation. This is followed by the concept of multiliteracies and discussion of different literacies—such as digital literacy, visual literacy and information literacy—in relation to progressive technology, emphasising their similarities, differences and relationships. The second part of the chapter focuses on the literature on participatory culture in the 21st century, by reviewing and defining the concepts of the ‘public sphere’ and ‘vernacular creativity’. The third part reviews the relevant literature on empowerment and its association with media literacy by examining similar projects and research.

Chapter 3 illustrates the immigration process, life in Australia and immigrants’ relationship with the Australian media. This chapter briefly reviews the media status in Australia, the policy of multiculturalism, media organisation, media literacy education and the standpoint of the immigrant in Australia.
Chapter 4 discusses the main methodologies, design and delivery of the PVPW, and is divided into three parts. The first begins with a review of participatory action research (PAR) methods, focusing on participatory video (PV) methods and continuing by relating the research instruments applied and procedures employed for collecting data in this study. The second part is a report on the workshop design and set up, commencing with the issues surrounding the participant’s recruitment and continuing with a report on the preparation and implementation of workshop sessions. The third part of this chapter deals with data analysis issues and outlines the methodological tools that were used to analyse the data.

Chapter 5 describes the key characteristics of each participant in the PVPW, followed by a review of the participants’ short videos produced in the PVPW. Chapter 6 outlines the analytical demographic resources and conditions of the participants’ lives. The chapter concludes with a review of the limitations of the study.

Chapter 7 is a reflective overview of the position of researcher/filmmaker and accountability. This chapter relays the view of the researcher and its relation to the video documentation that is presented as a component of this thesis.

Chapter 8 presents the outcomes and implications of this study, starting with an analytical review of the affiliation of media literacy and agency formation as a tool for empowerment. It is followed by a discussion on the research results and a critical review of creative activities that can result in the empowerment of the participants.

Finally, Chapter 9 provides a conclusion to the thesis and its finding, followed by the researcher’s experience and implications for future studies in this area.
This chapter reviews the relevant literature and covers the three different strands of literature that inform the primary focus of this thesis. The first section reviews definitions of media literacy in the literature. As Potter (2010, p. 679-80) argues, ‘media literacy means many things to many people’. The review establishes a firm understanding and definition of media literacy, and addresses the three questions Potter believes are the main issues research confronts when defining the term media literacy:

- What are the media?
- What do we mean by literacy?
- What should be the purpose of media literacy?

Further, this section examines the role of media literacy in the contemporary world and theories of related literacies in this field of study. The second part of the chapter reviews the dramatically changing role of the internet, from its previously singular, one-way form, to an increasingly interactive mode of engagement with media. Interactive media provides audiences with access to the world and news from around the world (Silverstone, 2004). Such changes have also altered the production model. Producers are now the people or ex-audiences who create new products from already available sources (Burn, 2009). The internet makes it possible for everyone to express their political opinions and share content. It is an effective medium to extend the voice of ordinary people on social media and makes the concept of ‘participatory culture’ relevant to everyday life. This section concludes with an outline of participatory culture barriers related to the subjects of this study.

The third part of this chapter reviews the concepts of empowerment and agency, and their affiliation with media literacy. Media literacy can be seen as a tool for agency,
which facilitates the process of empowerment by ultimately putting all individuals in charge of their learning (Thoman & Jolls, 2004). Media literacy has the capability to activate individual agency by empowering people to take an active rather than a passive role in acquiring new knowledge and skills (Thoman & Jolls, 2004). This section proceeds to acknowledge specific theories of critical media literacy and considers key arguments for the role of creativity in its development that support this thesis.

**Media literacy**

Media literacy has a vital role to play in the lives of immigrants in Australia due to the media’s dominant position at the centre of life in developed nations. Kellner and Share (2007c, p. 57) describe our contemporary world as ‘a media-saturated, technologically dependent and globally connected world’.

Historically, the concept of media literacy was formed as a reaction to the influence of mass media, especially television in the first decades of the 20th century. The broad definition used in most scholarly works settles on an empirical definition introduced in 1992 by the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy in the USA. Frequently cited in academic literature is the definition of media literacy as the ‘ability to access, analyses, evaluates and communicates messages in a variety of forms’ (Aufderheide, 1993, p. 6). The lack of specificity in this broad definition has resulted in the shaping of different definitions unique to particular research or pedagogy (Martens, 2010). For instance, building on Aufderheide’s definition, Silverblatt et al. (2014, p. 406) emphasise critical thinking skills in relation media literacy stating its purpose as ‘enabl[ing] individuals to make independent judgments about the information they receive and communicate through this dynamic medium’. Martens (2010) also endorses
Auferheide’s definition but emphasises the production component within the media literacy education.

In this thesis, media literacy is adapted as an education tool that, during its process, trains individuals to access media, analyse and evaluate its contents and messages, and be aware of potential risks when using media (Christ & Potter, 1998). To gain a clearer picture, it is essential to set a definition for ‘media’ and ‘literacy’ as two components of the concept of media literacy.

**Media as a component of media literacy**

When discussing media literacy, some scholars use the term ‘media’ as one medium, while others refer to media as a broad form of information sharing channels. The term ‘media literacy’ evolved as media forms shifted from analogue to digital, such as newspapers, television, computers, multimedia, digital media and all technologies that deliver information in various forms (Buckingham, 1993; Goodwin & Whannel, 2005; Hartley et al., 2008; Maddison, 1971; Messaris, 1998; Potter, 2010; Silverblatt et al., 2014). The wide range of what is known as media in the 21st century results in the growing awareness that media literacy should include divergent media formats.

Livingstone (2004a) argues that media convergence theory was shaped to conceptualise a merging process that comprehends the media environment as though no new forms will replace old forms. This theory of media convergence was introduced by Henry Jenkins (2006) to bring together different mediums—new and old—and consequently, redefine the media environment. According to Jenkins, changes in communications and information technologies reshape and change everyday life, altering patterns of creation, consumption, learning and interpersonal interaction. New technology redefines media
content and alters human interaction with social institutions such as the government, education and commerce (Jenkins, 2006).

In the context of this study, media is defined as the technological distribution of information in various old and new mediums with different purposes, and literacy as competency and knowledge about the message contribution process.

**Interdisciplinary nature of media literacy**

Media literacy is a concept that differs in varying social contexts and conditions (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). It is also a concept used in a number of academic disciplines, including cultural studies, history, psychology, library and information science, medicine and public health, linguistics, rhetoric, communication and media studies (Hobbs, 2006). Koltay (2011, p. 212) argues when studying media literacy, it is necessary to use ‘the tools and methods from sociology, psychology, political theory, gender and race studies, as well as cultural studies, art, and aesthetics’. The use of media literacy in different disciplines results in the creation of different terms that have blurred the boundaries between concepts of media literacy, media education, visual literacy, news literacy, health media literacy, digital literacy, information literacy and more (Hobbs, 2010, p. 17). However, each term elaborates key ideas and views from different perspectives. To clarify the concept, scholars and researchers often gather the terms in groups of literacies to close the gap. For example, UNESCO’s concept of ‘media and information literacy’ (Grizzle et al., 2014), ‘media, information and digital literacies’ (Griffin, 2008; Koltay, 2011; Kymes, 2011; Lee & So, 2014), and ‘visual literacies’ (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997). Each term emphasises one part of the media literacy aspect as a lens through which to view and tool with which to act on the world (Koltay, 2011, p. 212). However, ‘media literacy is an umbrella concept. It is
characterised by a diversity of perspectives and a multitude of definitions’ (Koltay, 2011, p. 212). By accepting this umbrella notion of media literacy, a media literate person must have a broad knowledge of different genres of media. The following section outlines the differences and similarities between the two literacies most closely related to this study—digital literacy and visual literacy, to clarify how these theories relate to media literacy

**Digital literacy, visual literacy**

A decade ago, Buckingham (2007) suggested a broader definition of literacy was required because the widespread usage of Web 2.0 had changed the communication perspective. He argued:

> The increasing convergence of contemporary media means that we need to be addressing the skills and competencies—the multiple literacies—that are required by the whole range of contemporary forms of communication. (Buckingham, 2007, p. 53).

In later work, Buckingham declares that in the modern world, just having access to the internet is not enough to guarantee a person could achieve their goals (Buckingham, 2010). He argues that it is necessary for users of the internet to also have digital competencies, which he describes as:

> an ability to participate in social networking applications and in collaborative environments, awareness of security threats and risks, and also an ability to use IS for creative and innovative purposes, irrespective of the context (Buckingham, 2010, P. 61).
For those of us living in the postmodern world, digital literacy is essential, and so is visual literacy. As digitalisation has made the creation and distribution of visual information more accessible and less expensive, visual literacy evolved into a living requirement. The term visual literacy was coined in 1969 by John Debs (Fransecky & Debes, 1972). He offered a tentative definition (Avgerinou & Ericson, 1997, p. 281) of the concept: ‘Visual literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences’. The deficiency of the definition led to ‘considerable disagreements among researchers and practitioners’ concerning a standard definition of visual literacy (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011, p. 7). Avgerinou (2007, p. 7) offers an operational definition of visual literacy:

in the context of human, international visual communication, visual literacy refers to a group of largely acquired abilities, i.e. the abilities to understand (read), and use (write) images, as well as to think and learn in terms of images’ as either a skill or a competency, or an ability.

However, visual literacy scholars have established a paradigm for visual competency by admitting the multidisciplinary nature of visual literacy (Avgerinou & Pettersson, 2011; Bamford, 2003; Griffin, 2008). Modern technology-driven societies demand a level of communication that leads to multi-literacy formats to cover the broader scope needed in the 21st century. In the context of media and communication studies, the relation between visual literacy and media literacy is very close. As Griffin (2008, p. 117) declares, ‘the terms visual literacy and visual competence are both more specific but also more opaque than the term media literacy’. Griffin also acknowledges the role of visual literacy as part of media literacy:
Media literacy education badly needs to pay more attention to the specific nature of visual imagery and visual design. [Further,] skills related to visual recognition interpretation and image making would seem to be necessary to the development of media literacy (Griffin, 2008, p. 118).

Consequently, media literacy concepts need competency in the digital and visual aspects of the real world and the cyber world. Moreover, as Carmen Luke reminds us:

Since all meaning is situated relationally—that is, connected and cross-referenced to other media and genres, and to related meanings in other cultural contexts—a critical literacy relies on broad-based notions of intertextuality (Luke, 2005, p. 70).

**Literacy as a component of media literacy**

The Oxford Online Dictionary defines literacy as ‘the ability to read and write, and competence and knowledge in a specific area’. When it comes to literacy in terms of media literacy, scholars debate their various perspectives. Some regard media literacy as increasing skills, others focus on building knowledge, and there are also those who define it as an activity or practice in political, social and cultural realms (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Brown, 1998; Christ & Potter, 1998; Hobbs, 2011; Messaris, 1998; Meyrowitz, 1998; Silverblatt et al., 2014; Zettl, 1998). Other literature takes a broader perspective and sees media literacy as an activity that requires both developing skills and building knowledge (Hobbs, 2011; Potter, 2004b); yet, there are inconsistent ideas about which skills, or which sets of knowledge, are essential (Potter, 2010). In this thesis, the broader concept of literacy in media literacy terms has been followed, as all attempts have been to train the participants in the PVPW in areas of knowledge (critical
media literacy), as well as specific skills (video production), to achieve media literacy education.

**Theories of media literacy**

Reviewing the literature identifies the different approaches scholars have towards media literacy. The older theories of media literacy are based on an understanding of media audiences as passive victims who should be protected against the effects of media. This approach addresses ‘the naturalising processes of ideology and the interrelationships with social injustice’ (Kellner & Share, 2007a, p. 61). However, as Buckingham (1993) indicates, the protectionist idea for media literacy could result in anti-media literacy ideas. Another approach is a skill-based media literacy. The fundamentals of this approach lie in seeing media education as means of teaching individuals to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of media and to use various media technologies as tools of self-expression and creation (Share, 2009). The aesthetics theory for media literacy is an approach more closely related to the current study and has excellent practical examples of critical media literacy that promotes ‘individualistic self-expression, over socially conscious analysis, and alternative media production’ (Kellner & Share, 2007b, p. 7).

**Media literacy aesthetics theory**

Two decades ago, Zettl (1998, p. 82) argued that from a theoretical aesthetics position, ‘media literacy does not mean just greater competence in “reading”, that is, decoding media messages, but also in “writing”—encoding them. Based on this belief, he introduced a four-tier media literacy model designed to facilitate decoding and encoding media messages. Zettl (1998, p. 85) looks at:

1. What screen images are made of, basic aesthetic image elements such as lighting, editing and camera proximity and their aesthetic fields.
2. How the screen image is structured for specific purposes
3. How the audience perceives the screen image and how they affect them.
4. How screen images fit into the various intellectual and cultural frameworks for media analysis.

Media literacy aesthetics theory emphasises visual literacy to illustrate how different visual elements, such as light and shadows, colour, dimensional space, time, and structure can influence viewer perception. Similarly, Messaris (1998) theory assumes visual persuasion is more effective than verbal persuasion because of the indexical, iconic and syntactic characteristics of visual signs. Thus, he argues that learning the grammar of visual media might be useful for resisting the influence of media messages.

This brings up the criticality associated with a certain level of education in media literacy generally, and visuals specifically. This highlights the fact that most of the academic literature on media literacy—apart from their different approaches to achieving it—believe that the main purpose of media literacy is to promote critical thinking. Critical thinking will help individuals protect themselves from the dangers of media effects and allow them to participate effectively in the democratic process.

Kellner and Share (2007b) argue that critical media literacy aims to expand the notion of literacy to include different forms of media culture, communication and new media, as well as develop a potential media literacy to enable audiences to analyse information critically. Skill-based media art programs promote media literacy through both production and critical analysis. Participating in an independent video production workshop provides insight into the construction of meaning through the process of creating media. Creating videos also encourages self-discovery and growth through artistic expression, and producing independent videos provides insight into cultural
perspectives and issues rarely addressed in mainstream media (Silverblatt, 2013). This argument is central to the PVPW in this study.

**Cognitive theory of media literacy**

Another theory that has significantly influenced this study is Potter’s cognitive theory of media literacy. The cognitive theory of media literacy is founded on two popular theories by Bandura: social learning theory (1977) and social cognitive theory (1986). According to these theories, people learn through observing others’ behaviour, attitudes and the outcomes of those behaviours through modelling, and this coded information later serves as a guide for action (Bandura, 1986; Bandura & Walters, 1977). In response to the need for a media literacy theory at an individual level, Potter (2004b) suggests a cognitive processing model of media literacy based on acquiring knowledge and skills that ‘could help individuals alter their behaviour in a way to empower them to use the media rather than default to the media using them’ (Potter, 2004a, p. 271). The cognitive theory of media literacy is supported by two principles: first, ‘the individual is prime’, and second, ‘within the individual, cognition is of central importance, that is, changes in behaviour build from cognitions’ (Potter, 2004a, p. 266).

This study acknowledges that media literacy builds a critical understanding of media usage and the role of media in society (Hobbs, 1998), as well as essential inquiry skills and self-expression (Buckingham, 2003). These skills, together with creativity, are necessary for citizens in a society to achieve unity and coherence. If immigrants gain a cognitive knowledge and understanding of media actions and relations in their host society, they are likely to adapt to more easily.
Make and connect agenda and everyday creativity

In *Making is Connecting*, David Gauntlett (2011) claims that by making things and sharing them with other users, creators can address social problems while also increasing their engagement in the world. He contends that the concept of making and creating has always been part of human life; however, he argues the internet added a spearing value to the concept. Gauntlett’s (2011, p. 2) making is connecting agenda is based on three principals:

1. You have to connect things (materials, ideas, or both) to make something new.
2. Acts of creativity usually involve, at some point, a social dimension and connect us with other people.
3. By making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments.

The free Web 2.0 platform gives everybody, who has access to the internet, has a chance to create and share ordinary or extraordinary things. The notion of ordinary creativity is fundamental to this agenda and its affiliation with the internet and new media that enhances cultural expression and citizen participation (Livingstone et al., 2005).

Social media has become a part of our daily life. The internet is no longer a ‘one-way’ or ‘top-down’ broadcast delivery system where the individual user downloads data, information and other resources produced by a relatively small number of content providers. Internet users now have access to platforms such as Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter and YouTube. These platforms give users the ability ‘to create, edit and share new forms of textual, visual and audio content; and to categorise, label and recommend existing forms of content’ (Selwyn, 2012, p. 1). In her study of the role of new media
and online participation of the ordinary people, Burgess (2007a) introduces ‘vernacular creativity’—a concept that is highlighted through digital technologies and platforms. She explains how vernacular creativity or everyday creativity by ordinary people has evolved from our old-fashioned private documentation—such as scrapbooks and family photo albums—to the public culture of social media. Though it does not mean the everyday creativity of users replaces professional mass media institutions, it does account for some disruption of the official media system. One of the critical effects of this disruption is what Gauntlett (2013, p. 4) describes as a ‘shift in the psychological orientation to the media material, once you know that to some extent you can do it yourself’.

In his earlier PV research, Gauntlett (2018, p.18) shows how the process of video making gives young participants a voice:

They were even able to use the persuasive vehicles of humour and satire to make their points. Such findings contrasted pleasingly with the findings of studies, which typically positioned young participants as likely victims of the media, and seemed most happy to find any partial evidence, which would confirm this view. By contrast, this study was able to show that children are far from being simply passive or reactive in relation to the mass media.

However, in his introduction to the second edition of Making is Connecting, Gauntlett (2018, p. 3) also acknowledges the negative consequences of internet use in modern society, which:

Cannot and should not ignore what we now know about the mass surveillance, the aggressive monopoly capitalism of the major online platforms, and the trolling and misogyny.
Nevertheless, the vital role the internet plays in shaping human psychological and self-concepts by everyday creativity cannot be ignored. The internet makes it possible for ordinary people to participate in their society actively, online by connecting people to each other in ways that are more comfortable. The next section reviews the participatory culture that makes everyday creativity possible and essential.

**Participatory culture and media**

The most significant impact the technological revolution has had on 21st century society is the way it enables ordinary people to fully participate in the public sphere via the internet. The participation that known as user-generated content (UGC) on electronic media is understood to be a ‘potent force for creating, supporting, and building open and democratic societies’ (Moeller, 2009, p. 4). Participatory culture refers to this new style that enables media consumers/audience to become media producers by creating different forms of expression and engaging in everyday public discourse (Jenkins et al., 2009). In their report for the MacArthur Foundation, Jenkins et al. (2007, p. 7) described a participatory culture as a culture:

- with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, and strong support for creating and sharing creations
- where people believe that their contributions to society matter and they feel some degrees of connection to others or, in other words, care about what other people think about what they have created
- Where members feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least they care what other people think about what they have created) .

Looking for the Phoenix Within
The presence of ordinary people making the news has been recognised under many different aliases of participatory, collaborative radical, community, gorilla, street, alternative and, most commonly, citizen journalism (Atton, 2009; Fröhlich et al., 2012; Meadows, 2013). However, many people practising as citizen journalist ‘do not think of themselves as journalists or have journalistic motives’ (Campbell, 2015, p. 706). The majority of these new forms of journalism have one basic commonality, which is UGC (Fröhlich et al., 2012, p. 1046). Professional journalists see ‘citizen journalism as another journalistic tool to find news angles and sources’ (Blaagaard, 2013, p. 1088). The informal relationship between novices—citizen journalists—and professional journalists, has created debates around the advantages and disadvantages of UGC. Jenkins (2006) argues that technology-enabled communication and media is a much more accessible and collaborative way of circulating ideas, as it gives traditional audiences the opportunity to create content and share all kinds of messages, which works as ‘an antidote to narrow corporate-centric ways of representing interests in modern society’ (Balnaves et al., 2004, p.192). Conversely, there is contention over the quality and standard of information spread by citizen journalists when compared to professional ‘journalistic standards such as objectivity, fairness, and multi-sourcing’ that make professional journalists ‘trustees of the public’ (Min, 2016, p. 568). Yet, citizen journalism has effectively created ‘alternative criteria such as interactivity and transparency’ (Min, 2016, p. 579). The everyday creativity of ordinary people also ‘shapes our concerns toward access, self-representation, and literacy, rather than resistance or aesthetic innovation’(Burgess, 2007a).

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5 New electronic media provides greater potential for interactivity as it opens up new possibilities for an active relationship between senders and receivers. This opposes the way audiences of traditional media—television, radio, magazines and newspapers—were just receivers of messages (McQuail, 1997).
The concept of citizen journalism plays a critical role in the problematic representation of marginalised groups in established media organisations (Atton & Hamilton, 2008). Different types of community and alternative media were developed in the 20th century to give voice to minority and underrepresented groups in different societies. This opportunity has been created by the internet, enabling all groups of society to be actively involved in the information flow, both locally and globally. However, there are barriers for minorities (see Empowerment and media section).

Citizen journalism is not only a successor of traditional journalism, but can be a type of alternative journalism that ‘can empower marginalised groups not only in the process of creating journalism, we argue, but also in the process of developing their identity’ (Luce et al., 2017, p. 266). Citizen journalism may create an alternative public sphere where citizens act freely and voice their opinion; however, it also has dangers.6

In our contemporary digital world, everyone can distribute information on social media platforms by creating original content or sharing already created UGCs. If we accept this as fact, the necessity of comprehensive media literacy education is vital. Critical media literacy training can help make online social media spheres safer and more secure.

Concept of the public sphere and its relationship with media literacy education

Jürgen Habermas (1991, p. 176) introduced the idea of the public sphere as a space ‘made up of private people gathered together as [a] public and articulating the needs of society with the state’. Habermas credits the role of elite journalists and mass media—

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6 The concept of citizen journalism is important in this study as workshops help participants to become citizen journalists.
mostly text—operating and mediating political communication to influence and lead
public opinion in the 1950s and 1960s (Highfield & Bruns, 2015). However, mass
media controlled by elites failed to create a real public sphere as they control public
political ideas by ‘force attention to certain issues’ (Lang & Lang, 1966, p. 468).
Emerging new media has significantly shifted the public sphere conceptualised by
Habermas and rooted in his place and time, that is the post war German political
environment (Garnham, 2007). Over a decade after first introducing the public sphere
concept, Habermas (2006, p 9) observes:

A dispersed public interconnected almost exclusively through the electronic
media can keep up to date on all kinds of issues and contributions in the mass
media with a minimum of attention, even in fleeting moments during the day, in
small private circles.

Advancements in technology and communication flows have seen epidemic usage of
smartphones during the second decade of the 21st century, which has transferred
previously public spaces to a new space—the internet. The role of information
technology in the contemporary public sphere is essential; however, even more,
important are the online interactions made possible by the technology. Some examples
of accessing this new public sphere via internet platforms are Twitter, Facebook and
YouTube, which are now open to ordinary people and allow them to engage with their
community and beyond. While technology has aided civic engagement in transformed
public spheres, its impact is complicated. A prominent example today is what is termed
‘fake news’. The premise of fake news is that the public trusts all news. This will be an
ongoing issue as long as the public suffers from a lack of media literacy education.
Notably, the online public sphere is mostly belief-based rather than reason-based, and
this is unlike Habermas’s conception. However, it is impossible to undermine the high-tech version of the public sphere, which increases the risk of obscuring its importance, especially its capacity to allow everybody around the world to witness the same images, information and events. To regulate electronic communication and promote democratic values, Livingstone et al. (2017, p. 7) suggest:

The policy should be grounded in the experiences of media use, learning, expression and civic participation among citizens; and it should be developed and implemented through collaboration with academic stakeholders, schools, the media industry and civil society.

**Video creativity and participatory culture**

As explained in the [Digital literacy, visual literacy](#) section, visual and audio-visual elements have a vital role in human communication. Consequently, visuals play a more active and essential role in our technological society as technological advancements make it easier to create and share. The invention of television changed visualising to a more public activity. The television industry brought visual culture to our everyday life, and new technologies powered by the internet make them even more accessible and easy to create. New applications and tools, including those on smartphones, have simplified the recording and sharing of moving pictures for ordinary people who have no attachment to the television industry. Video, as a critical part of visual culture, is now a more powerful, efficient and universal language than ever before. Further, video has the ability to capture aspects of human behaviour such as gaze and body language, which make it noticeable for everyone (Mackay, 1995).

Practitioners and academics have used video as a tool in communication for change for years. However, the affordability and penetration of video equipment—particularly in
the smartphones that can be found in the palm of almost every hand—is a tool or weapon for citizens who are fighting against injustice in their societies. Regardless of the various name used by academics and practitioners—PV, community video, alternative video, digital storytelling or process video—their common aims is to empower individual or communities that are marginalised and in need. Many projects based on video and PV around ‘the world have put video technology in the hands of the most marginalised in society for self-representation and social reform’ (Harris, 2009, p. 542). Video sharing platforms such as YouTube, Vimeo and Instagram have removed technological barriers to widespread sharing of video online (Burgess & Green, 2009) by ordinary people. They enable new players, as content producers, in the field of amateur video production by promoting both the participatory culture concept and citizen/participatory journalism. The emergence of participatory/public journalists and their role in spreading news has been the subject of ongoing tension between public and professional journalists (Lewis, 2012). Participatory journalism—or citizen journalism—is defined by Bowman and Willis (2003, p. 23) as:

The act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information, in order to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires.

Moretzsohn (2006) suggests that the credibility of news provided by citizen journalists is a natural attribute, as their eyewitness reporting comes from people’s desire to share their stories and publish the truth. However, the concept and definition of truth is debated by scholars (Hermida, 2012). Conversely, new technologies mean the public is exposed to numerous and varied news from completely different sources. From this
perspective critical media literacy hold a crucial place in people’s everyday life. Potter (2012) points out how a new line of mass media is created on the internet by new players such as Facebook. In this new mass media, people are more ‘senders of the message not only receivers’, which expands the focus of media literacy (Potter, 2012, p. 237). The ordinary people that are now active senders must have knowledge of and a critical view on ethical practice. For this reason, media literacy education has a crucial role in the contemporary world.

**Barriers to participatory culture**

Jenkins et al. (2009, p. xi) explain participatory culture as ‘a low barrier culture where everyone can express themselves by creating and sharing creations’, so it is essential to specify the barriers to define participatory culture. The ‘digital divide’ has been verified as the primary barrier to media literacy (Norris, 2001). This term describes the divide between the societies and individuals in terms of their access or lack of access to the technology or the internet (Alam & Imran, 2015; Van Dijk, 2006). The digital divide also refers to the divide between individuals in different categories of motivation, physical skill and usage (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 224). As already noted, having access is a necessary tool for participating in a democratic society at all levels of social life, including education, employment, health and wealth (Hargittai, 2001; Newhagen & Bucy, 2004; Van Dijk, 2006). Besides the divide in access to new technology—primarily between developing and developed counties—a second level digital divide within the communities with access has been identified to distinguish the inequalities related to the use of the internet (Alam & Imran, 2015; Hargittai, 2001; Van Dijk, 2006). That is, almost everyone has access to the internet in developed countries (Büchi
et al., 2015), but not everyone has the desire or skills to use them (Alam & Imran, 2015). The inequalities in media and digital literacy are due to barriers relating to:

- socioeconomic status (Buckingham et al., 2005)
- social factors (Livingstone et al., 2005)
- individual motivation or personal locus (Potter, 2012).

Factors such as age, gender, disability, education, income, ethnicity and language (ACMA, 2009; Alam & Imran, 2015; Buckingham et al., 2005; Hobbs, 2011; Livingstone et al., 2005; Potter, 2004b) are the main barriers to accessing media literacy. The obstacles most relevant to the current study are age, language and gender.

**Age**

The dramatic shift in technological platforms in the last decades has made it harder for people to follow and catch up with the technological changes as they get older. The literature is mostly focused on the needs of younger people and adolescents in media and digital literacy, and adults are mostly left out of the results (Dennis, 2004). Livingstone (2004b, p. 19) observes that adults are showing more knowledge and understanding of older media, which has long been a part of life, but ‘they may have a little or weak understanding of the process of selection and available systems’, or more specifically, of new digital platforms or tools. In this regard, the role of age is illustrated in Katz (2010) research findings on Latino immigrant children in Los Angeles. The researcher explains how children from immigrant backgrounds act as media brokers to connect their parent to the media and their community. Katz (2010, p. 299) uses ‘the term media brokering to refer to the ways that children facilitate their parents’ connections to and understandings of traditional and new communication technologies.
Language

Language and ethnicity are interconnected. Ethnicity is defined in the *Macquarie Dictionary* as ‘relating to or peculiar to a human population or group, especially one with common ancestry, language’, and ‘of or relating to members of the Australian community who are migrants or the descendants of migrants and whose first language is not English’. Language and cultural barriers have a direct impact on the level of media literacy. Bourdieu’s theoretical perspective on language explains the level and use of language in society as a mechanism of power and a form of cultural capital with variable exchange value in the social fields of institutions and communities. As he points out, different ‘language levels or users’ change the individual position and category of understanding in society (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991).

Language plays a crucial role in integration (Esser, 2006), and the use of arts and culture can help to promote nonverbal communication between different groups, which promotes intercultural dialogue as well as supports migrants in language acquisition. Although integration and culture have been dominant themes in contemporary academic and policy debates, the links and intersections of migration, integration and arts and culture remain understudied.

Gender

Livingstone et al. (2005, p. 58) claim gender roles remain significant in relation to advanced skills underlying access, and this is particularly evident ‘in content creation where men outnumber women in website creation and community media’. Gender-related issues multiply the other barriers, such as the digital divide, language and age, which are issues addressed by postcolonial feminist theory. Postcolonial feminist theory is mostly concerned with the representation of women from developing countries in
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their motherland or in western locations (Lewis & Mills, 2003). Compared to their western peers, these women—including immigrants to western countries—suffer from ‘double colonisation’ (Petersen & Rutherford, 1986), which is women’s simultaneous experience of the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy.

As identified in the literature, immigrant women are often in stigmatised groups, whereby cultural and environmental barriers can restrict their participation in the internet media sphere.

**Empowerment, media, and media literacy**

There is a wide range of academic literature emphasising on the affiliation between media literacy and empowerment (Aufderheide, 1993; Carlsson et al., 2008; Cortes, 1991; Hobbs, 1998; 2010; Hobbs & Jensen, 2009; Jolls & Wilson, 2014; Kellner & Share, 2007b; Livingstone et al., 2017; Semali & Paiilliotet, 2018). For the most part, the literature considers media literacy education necessary, as it allows individuals and communities to gain mastery of their life over the dominant media space. There are two views about empowerment within media literacy scholars and educators that are important to understanding the concept of the affiliation between media literacy and empowerment. The first is a protectionist view that sees the role of media literacy education as protecting the audience from the harms of media and infighting among audiences over the influences and effects of mass media. The second view is a practitioner vision, which is based on shielding the audience and helping them understand the structure of media messages by giving them the ability to be active producers. Web 2.0 is prominent in the latter view as it changes the traditional (passive) audience into active producers on various internet platforms (Hess & Waller, 2015).
It is necessary to define the concept of media power to consider empowerment’s affiliation with media literacy. Media power in this situation means the concentration of symbolic power in media institutions, particularly those of television, radio and the press (Couldry, 2001). The concentration of symbolic power in media institutions is based on:

- the fact that we take it for granted that the media have the power to speak ‘for us all’—indeed to define the social ‘reality’ that we share—a power which individuals, corporations, pressure groups, professional bodies and even perhaps the state do not have (Couldry, 2001, p. 157).

Maras (2013, p. 12) presents the view that ‘media power describes how the press and journalism occupy its field and has to do with the way public discourse is imagined and promoted and controlled, via terms such as objectivity’. He believes the power of the press is a power within and over society due to their capacity and certain actions.

Consequently, the ‘journey to empowerment’—by individuals in this context—is the creation of power within, which could manage the benefits, risks and harms of full participation in mass media, popular culture and digital media (Frau-Meigs, 2008). The following discussion reviews definitions of empowerment and agency.

**Empowerment and agency**

Empowerment is described as ‘the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make effective choices, and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes’ (Alsop et al., 2006, p. 10). This includes two components: firstly, enhancing the capacity to make choices, and secondly, the opportunity to exert agency. Notably, ‘the concept of empowerment is related to terms such as agency, autonomy,
self-direction, self-determination, liberation, participation, mobilisation and self-confidence’ (Narayan, 2005a, p. 3). Empowerment and agency are related concepts, as ‘empowering people simply help them to become agents’ (Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 8). The ability to act as an agent describes the ability and understanding of an actor of ‘alternative paths of action, decide among them, and take action to advance the chosen path as an individual or collectively with others’ (Petesch et al., 2005, P. 42). There is a clear and significant overlap between the definitions of agency and empowerment. To distinguishes these two words, Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) argue empowerment is conceived as the expansion of agency and is a process of increasing power or gaining power. The ‘power’ at the root of the concept of empowerment is the subject of further debate between negative and positive meanings. To conceptualise power as it is used in this context, Rowlands (1997, p. 13) focuses on four classified forms of ‘power as a process’:

- **Power over**: controlling power, which may be responded to with compliance, resistance or manipulation.
- **Power to**: generative or productive power, which creates new possibilities and action without domination.
- **Power with**: a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles the problem together.
- **Power within**: the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and make us truly human. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect, which extend in turn to respect for and acceptance of others as equals.

Agency also has an inherently multidimensional nature, depending on what sphere, domain and level is exercised (Malhotra et al., 2002; Samman & Santos, 2009). The
spheres refer to a social structure in which the person is a social actor (Samman & Santos, 2009). The domains are the multiple areas of life in which a person may exercise agency, such as religion, education, health, profession and freedom of mobility (Alsop et al., 2006; Malhotra et al., 2002; Samman & Santos, 2009). Correspondingly, agency may be exercised at the different levels of micro, meso and macro:

The set of skills required for the exercise of the agency at each level seems to be somehow different, though some skills may be transferable. At the individual level, people may need to be self-confident, self-determined, to know what they want, and to direct their actions towards that goal (Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 4-8).

Therefore, the level of empowerment varies according to the level or domain of the agency exercised (Alsop et al., 2006). Similarly, Pigg (2002) distinguishes that the three domains of empowerment—individual action or self-empowerment, organisational or interpersonal context, and social action—are inseparable. However, the first step in the empowerment process starts from an individual level, as the oppressed person needs to be confident, determined and efficient enough to know what they want and how to direct their actions. Empowerment at the individual level is the motivational concept of self-efficacy and is also known as ‘psychological empowerment’ (Leung, 2009, p. 1330). It is argued that influential individuals who gain mastery and control over their lives can act in society more effectively (Kieffer, 1984; Rappapon, 1984; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Psychological empowerment also enables individuals to participate in activities in the community and have the strength to successfully cope with non-routing situations (Leung, 2009). Another critical point related to the current study and the above argument is that the association of empowerment and media literacy in the
technological world is also dependent on the concept of self-efficacy (Serap Kurbanoglu, 2003).

**Bandura’s self-efficacy theory**

Albert (Bandura, 1994) introduced the theory of self-efficacy. He defines self-efficacy beliefs as:

> People's beliefs in their capabilities to exercise control over their own functioning and over events that affect their lives. Beliefs in personal efficacy affect life choices, level of motivation, quality of functioning, resilience to adversity and vulnerability to stress and depression. (Bandura, 1997a, p. 14).

To paraphrase, self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in themselves to act. Bandura specifies four sources that influence the development of self-efficacy beliefs:

1. mastery experiences
2. vicarious experiences (observational experience)
3. social or verbal persuasion
4. emotional and physiological states (Bandura, 1997b)

The most useful source is mastery experience, whereby having success strengthens self-belief, and failure undermines it. A resilient sense of efficacy is required to convince individuals to rebound from setbacks (Bandura, 1997a). For Bandura (1982, p. 135), ‘choices during formative periods shape life paths through the selective development of competencies, interests, and affiliative preferences’, In this theory, a self-efficacy belief mechanism is central to human agency, as it ‘enables them to influence the course of events and to take a hand in shaping their lives’ (Bandura, 2000, p. 75).
Changing the modern media sphere via Web 2.0 highlights the importance of self-efficacy beliefs in media and digital literacy. The internet has created an open platform that facilitates ‘user control, participation and emergent behaviour’ (Leung, 2009, p. 1328) through the creation of UGC. Everyday creativity, UGC, or citizen journalism, need individuals who have skills and a belief in their ability to use those skills. Livingstone et al. (2005, p. 5) indicate the role of creativity as a method that enables people to find their voice outside ‘traditional media and political channels by using the internet as a distribution mechanism’. They recognise the role, opportunities and values that researchers found in digital storytelling, as a tool for creation in facilitating media literacy projects. In traditional literacies, a literate person was required to have skills in both reading and writing. In the same way in new literacies, to be liberated, an individual needs to be able to understand message construct and also create messages in the digital world.

**Chapter summary**

This chapter started with a definition of media literacy and its emphasis on the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create. According to some recent research, media creation (which has been left out of the older definition) has a crucial role in media literacy education. These researchers emphasise media literacy education moving beyond reading and analysing media (Buckingham, 2009), especially in the case of a mature generation who have enough knowledge and understanding of old media message construction, but are unskilled at participating in the new media sphere (Livingstone, 2004a; Livingstone et al., 2005).
The contemporary technological world engages with the concept of participatory culture more than ever before. The convergence culture that has made new forms of media accessible for ex-audiences has changed one-way communication to interactional, two-way communication. Naturally, priority is placed on the generation growing up with this new way of communicating, to ensure more significant participation in the public sphere. When it comes to the public sphere, in each different society, the understanding of that society’s language is another way native members are advantaged over others who are not fluent in the language. Further, gender has a considerable influence on widening the gap in active participation in the public sphere. Adding to that, a deficit in media literacy is getting harder to overcome due to a lack of digital and visual literacy. Thus, media literacy training can encourage trainees to develop critical thinking. Practical, hands-on media literacy workshops can also assist those who were previously left behind to grow their creative sense and promote self-efficacy. As discussed in the chapter, such a shift in self-efficacy can help individuals gain mastery of their choices, goals and confidence, which may empower them at an individual level.
This chapter provides an overview of Australia’s multicultural policy and standpoints of immigrants in Australia, as it is essential to review the host society and policies into which the participants of this study have settled. The context of the natural environment of a research subject, mainly when an empirical research is based on the real-life study, ensures an understanding of the social and cultural setting of the study subject (Yin, 2013). By having this knowledge, the research shows it has paid attention to the details of a particular social and historical dynamic context (Schwandt, 2007). This chapter gives an overview of Australian society, its policies towards immigrants, the role of media in Australia, and the relationship immigrants have with the media, to clearly situate the study.

The female immigrants who participated in this study are from three different cultural backgrounds and two groups according to their visa type and residency status: permanent residents and citizens; and temporary residents (student visa holders and their dependents).

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is an historical overview of Australia as an immigrant nation and discussion of the government’s policies of multiculturalism and acceptance of new migrants. The second section examines the media space, the public sphere and the immigrants’ relationship with them. This chapter concludes with a comparison between media and internet accessibility in Australia, and in the participants’ origin countries.
### Historical background

Apart from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have lived in Australia for more than 5,000 years, many others (mostly Europeans) followed the First Fleet in 1788 from across the world to start a new life in this country. With them came a new variety of cultures and languages, which were added to the approximately 600 different Indigenous groups, who spoke over 300 distinct languages. According to the ABS's (2017b) report, more than one-fifth (21 per cent) of Australians speak a language other than English at home. Collectively, these migrants have shaped a unique multicultural society on the perimeter of Asia (Jupp, 2002)—Australia.

#### Snapshot of a nation built by immigrants

The first group large group of Europeans to arrive in Australia included 4,000 convicts sent to New South Wales. Notably, they were not just Anglo-Celtic, as 900 were non-whites and approximately 1,000 were Jews. The population expanded in the 1850s gold rush, which opened the doors to immigrants from other countries such as China, Germany, Poland, the USA, Canada, New Zealand and the South Pacific, due to the need for cheap labour (Castles et al., 2014). It is estimated that the Gold Rush attracted around 117,000 people. At the end of the Gold Rush period, some stayed out in ‘the bush’ (remote regional areas), and some went into the cities, effectively changing the ethnic face of Australia (Blainey, 1993; Jupp, 2002).

Meanwhile, there was opposition to the arrival of immigrants from non-Anglo-Saxon nations. Following Federation in 1901, Australia’s newly formed federal parliament passed an act restricting non-white immigration to Australia. These laws, known as the White Australia Policy, tried to reinforce the Anglo-Saxon nature of Australia. After
World War II, demand for labour and limited British immigrants forced the Australian Government to recruit displaced people in Europe, such as from Italy, Greece and Malta (Castles et al., 2014). These attempts failed in later years (Koleth, 2010) when Whitlam’s Labour government (1972–1975) announced its policy ‘to cut immigration sharply and to emphasise the need for skilled labour’ (Castles et al., 2014, p. 114).

Consequently, in 1973, the Whitlam government redefined Australia as a ‘multicultural’ society’ (Jupp, 2001). In December 1973, the Minister for Immigration, Albert Grassby, described Australian society as one ‘in which equal opportunity is accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance’ (seen in Murphy, 1993).

Multiculturalism in Australia refers to the policies and practices that recognise and respond to the ethnic diversity of the community. The most recent multicultural statement was launched in March 2017 by Australia’s Liberal government and emphasised shared values—respect, equality and freedom—and mutual rights and responsibilities for all residents, to encourage the economic and social participation of everyone, especially the new arrivals (Australian Government, 2017).

Although a multicultural policy is still supported by the Australian Government, as Markus (2014) observes, there is a lack of government-sponsored surveys in systematic public opinion research into attitudes to immigration and cultural diversity compared with the European Union, England and Canada. Most of these surveys include ‘few questions on immigration’ (Markus, 2014, p. 11). The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) in 2003 found 61 per cent of Australian respondents supported the current level of immigration or were in favour of an increase. However, there are
noticeable changes and ‘some recent surveys have reported high levels of opposition to immigration and high levels of intolerance of diversity’ (Markus, 2014, p. 12).

Castles et al. (2014, p. 114) contend that after the 2002 Bali bombing, concern about social cohesion and security has challenged Australia’s multicultural policies, and ‘led to the introduction of a citizenship test and a longer qualification period for citizenship’.

**Australian migration trends**

As Castles et al. (2014, p. 113) report, ‘Australia’s immigration policy is based on the principles of strict control of entries, the predominance of permanent settlement, and the expectation that immigrants will quickly become Australian citizens’. The annual Australia migration intake is set by the government as part of the budget and labour needs.

Since October 1945, more than 7.5 million people have migrated to Australia, and just over 800,000 of those were refugees (Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2015). In the last couple of years under the Migration Program, Australia has accepted 190,000 immigrants (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2014). Australia regularly receives migrants both onshore and offshore under two categories of general migration and under the Refugee and Humanitarian Program; for instance, 13,750 migrants were accepted in 2015–2016 (Australian Government, 2016b). General migration is determined by skills, family reunion and special eligibility granted to individuals at a state and federal level (Factsheet 60-Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2013). Net overseas migration has increased from 73,295 in 1993 to 189,770 people in 2015–2016 (ABS, 2005; Australian Government, 2016a). Australia also accepts refugees under a humanitarian visa.
Short-term migration includes those on student and working visas. According to the Department of Education and Training (2014), the number of international students enrolled in Australian universities and schools in 2013–2014 was 292,060, compared to 554,179 in 2016 (Department of Education and Training, 2017). International students play a significant role in the economy of Australia, as many educational institutions rely on the income from full-fee paying international students to assist in the provision of quality education to all students, both foreign and domestic. Further, almost 10 per cent of those students apply for residency in Australia after completing their studies. The rest have the opportunity to experience life in Australia and take it home as a precious souvenir.

**Australia’s media landscape and the public sphere**

Almost two-thirds of the daily press in Australia is published by News Corp Australia, which is under the control of the Murdoch family (Griffen-Foley, 2014; Sinclair, 2014) and indicative of Australia having one of the highest concentrations of media ownership in the developed world (Finkelstein & Ricketson, 2012). The Australian Government has institutionalised the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) — including the National Indigenous Television channel (NITV), which is part of SBS — to answer national needs and diverse background communities. The other group of media to consider under the multiculturalism umbrella is community media, which plays a vital role in the Australian culture, empowering participants and providing voices for different cultures and minorities (Jolly, 2014). Across the spectrum, all types of community journalism are viewed as crucial for enhancing and ensuring Australia’s media diversity (Hess et al., 2014). Community media in Australia has a strong presence and vast coverage across Australia:
The sector consists of over 360 long-term community radio stations broadcasting analogue free-to-air and 38 long-term digital free-to-air services. Nearly 100 stations also operate under temporary community broadcasting licences. There are three long-term licensed community television stations broadcasting to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne/Geelong (although there are approximately 80 community television licences). Two television stations operate in Perth and Adelaide under temporary licences (Jolly, 2014, p. 17).

The community media or participatory media and online social media platforms have a huge role in the life of different ethnicities in Australia. The most prominent community broadcaster, SBS, was founded on this policy. Meadows (2009, p. 162) emphasises grassroots community media, which ‘empowers local citizens to participate in their communities through, for example, the broadcast of cultural events from music festivals to local parents and citizens’ group meetings and almost everything in between’. He continues that the empowering role of community media in the alternative public sphere—especially in regards to Australian’s Indigenous community—being justified by the ‘continuing failure by the broader public sphere to account for Indigenous cultural needs’. This alternative public sphere also applies to other ethnic groups. Meadows et al. (2009) point out the power of community media to resist the financial pressures that limit the broadcast options of commercial media, as the modern technological era has shifted older versions of community media from radio and television to the internet.

**The digital divide in Australia**

As noted in the last chapter under the section of Barriers to participatory culture, the digital divide refers to the gap that exists in most countries between those with ready
access to the tools of information and communication technologies, and the knowledge they provide access to, and those without such access or skills. This can be due to socioeconomic factors, geographical factors, educational, attitudinal and generational factors, or physical disabilities (Cullen, 2002, p. 1). An individual’s ability to access and use the internet and digital communication has a significant influence on their social participation and social inclusion. The primary stage of the digital divide is defined by lack of physical access, and the secondary stage, which includes full utilisation of technologies (Sparks, 2013) have created inequalities in Australia. Australia’s performance compares poorly to other countries—developed or industrial countries—in terms of affordability and unequal access across economic, social and spatial lines (Thomas et al., 2018a, n. p). As ‘in the six months to June 2017, 89 per cent of Australian adults accessed the internet. This means an estimated 11 per cent had not been online during that period, a figure that has remained stable since June 2016’ (ACMA, 2017, p. 48). In Australia, the digital divide is mainly due to the economics of the household and geographic location. Those who have access may suffer from other critical factors that interrupt their usage, including training and affordability. In the previous chapter, the most relevant barriers to participatory culture were identified as age, gender and language. These are similar to and sometimes overlap with the barriers to access and use of the internet in Australia.

**Age**: Use of the internet varies by age. Internet access is available to Australians via a range of networks, devices and locations. In June 2017, 89 per cent of Australian adults had accessed the internet in the previous six months (ACMA, 2017, p. 48). Within the adult ranges, usage reduces with age: 100 per cent of 18–44 year olds, 94 per cent of those aged 45–64, and 68 per cent of those aged 65 and over accessed the internet in the last six months. Notably, these figures
show that although the percentages are lower in this age group, older people are also embracing their digital life (Sensis Australia, 2017)

**Income:** Most people who are employed (95.1 per cent) are online, compared to 72.5 per cent of those not employed (Thomas et al., 2018a). Earnings are a clear marker, with those earning less than $35,000 annually significantly less likely to have accessed the internet in the previous six months than those who make above $35,000 (Sensis Australia, 2017).

**Education:** According to Sensis Australia (2017), those who have never been online are more likely to be: people without a university degree (91 per cent of those who have never accessed the internet compared to 47 per cent of the survey sample), and/or women (54 per cent compared to 51 per cent of the survey sample).

**Ethnicity:** As Thomas et al. (2017, p. 16) in the report ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) shows, while 85.7 per cent of Aboriginal people living in urban and regional areas have accessed the internet in the last 12 months, only 53.1 per cent of those living in remote and very remote areas have done so’. Further, ‘[m]igrants from non-English speaking countries are less connected (81.6 per cent) than those Australian born (87.6 per cent). Those already at a disadvantage—the very people who have the most to gain from all the extraordinary resources of the internet—are missing out’ (Thomas et al., 2018a, n.p.).

**Gender:** According to the 2017 Australian digital inclusion index, ‘overall, Australian women have an Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) score 2.0 points below the score for men’ (Thomas et al., 2017, p. 6). While the gap
between men and women is changing, is also depends on age, income, ethnicity and disability (Thomas et al., 2017).

Closing the gap in terms of access to the internet is an ongoing issue being addressed by the Australian Government; however, closing the gap on the individual's usage needs more promotion and resources for training. Although the lack of usage for some individuals relates to personal choice over privacy and security concerns, fear, or resistance to new technologies, for many others, it is dependent on their global and social situations. By training individuals, they will be able to use the internet and participate actively in society.

**Role of immigrants in the public sphere and media landscape in Australia**

Integrating immigrants into the host society is an increasingly important, complicated and sensitive task. The digital divide among migrant refugee groups is based on inequalities in physical access to digital technology, the skills necessary to use the different technologies effectively, and the ability to pay for the services. The opportunity to use digital technology could support the social inclusion of migrant refugee groups in the broader Australian community.

Apart from the digital divide, the way Australian mass media or corporate media stereotype and represent ‘other’ minorities and ethnic communities is problematic. In this regard, Meadows et al. (2009, p. 149) declare, ‘Commercial media seems increasingly unable to deal with the diversity of cultures that now characterise 21st century Australia’. The role of media and its intervention in the process of immigrant settlement is a subject many scholars investigate from numerous angles (Allievi &
Nielsen, 2003; Bowles, 2010; Karim, 2003; Wong, 2003; Wood & King, 2001). The media in host societies can construct an image of immigrants that impact their experience and results in either exclusion or inclusion. Subsequently, negative media influence, mostly presented to attain political goals, creates stereotypes that are grossly inaccurate (King & Wood, 2013). Wood and King (2001, p. 2) posit that the media intervene in the migration process in three ways:

1. through the images transmitted from the destination country or by the global media, which then serve as a source of information for potential migrants
2. through media constructions of migration in the host country which affect migrants’ reception, and the experience of inclusion or exclusion they encounter
3. through the media originating from the home country, which plays a dynamic role in the increasingly transcultural identity and politics of diaspora communities due to new global distribution strategies.

**Representation and stereotype**

The potential role of media in stereotyping representations of social groups—including those defined by race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity—has been discussed in the academic research (Mastro, 2015; Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015; Tukachinsky et al., 2015). The term ‘stereotype’ is defined as the biased ‘beliefs, expectations and theories one holds about groups in society that influence information processing and guide judgment about and behaviours towards groups and their members’ (Nabi & Oliver, 2009, p. 375). The term ‘representation’ is the way the media portrays events, people and ideas, and the influences this portrayal has in real world contexts (Bowles, 2010). Jakubowicz et al. (1994) demonstrate how the Australian media portray Indigenous people as failed alcoholics who are involved in criminal activities and live in
a backward culture. To overcome these misrepresentations, community media in Indigenous outskirt areas help these communities to find a voice and regain their self-esteem. Meadows et al. (2002) explain:

Regional media in Australia, for example, play an important cultural role for their communities by constructing culture through meanings, values, and ideals. This happens in various ways—through news and information programs, talkback, request shows, etc.

Ethnic groups and immigrants have also been the target of stereotypical representations by the corporate media in Australia. To explain this process, Nunn (2010) refers to an example from September 2007 when an 18-year-old Sudanese-Australian man, Gony, was assaulted near a train station in Melbourne and later died in hospital. Although his assailants were two young men of non-Sudanese backgrounds, the media attention following the incident focused on gangs with Sudanese origins and violence in the area. A week later, the government announced a significant cut to Australia’s intake of African refugees in response to the Sudanese community’s failure to settle successfully in Australia. Nunn (2010) explains how the scarcity of ‘everyday’ representations of Sudanese-Australians and their frequently negative, stereotypical portrayal in the news and current affairs outlets following Gony’s murder, make them appear ‘alien’ to Australia, rather than as ‘ordinary people’, to the wider community. Another example of recent stereotypical media coverage that resulted in politicians’ declaration of a crisis is the so-called ‘African gang crisis’. According to reports, ‘over the holiday break, Australia’s conservative media outlets reported extensively on a wave of violent crimes—the robbery of a group of tourists, damage inside a McDonald’s restaurant, home and terrorised neighbours and an assault on a police officer at a shopping centre.'
They blamed the incidents on African gangs’ (Butler, 2018). The media coverage followed with political reaction from conservative federal politicians, especially Immigration Minister Peter Dutton, who claimed, ‘Melburnians are afraid to go out for dinner. Victoria Police have conceded there is a crime problem among young people of African descent’ (Hunter, 2018). Jason Wilson (2018b), a columnist for the Australian edition of The Guardian, criticised Channel 7’s presentation of the story:

The panic over Sudanese immigrant gangs has reached a fever pitch in this new year of 2018. Even though it’s rooted in selective distortion, both of crime rate and the concept of a ‘gang’, it’s triggered a hasty policy response.

However, this time, the African communities used social media to campaign against the media-created crisis (see The Guardian, 2018).

Another significant example is the role the media played in portraying the arrival of asylum seekers to Australia as an ‘invasion by boat people’, a threat to the nation’s sovereignty and security, which resulted in Australia’s policy of offshore processing of asylum seekers in Nauru and Papua New Guinea (Koleth, 2010; McKay et al., 2011; O’Doherty & Lecouteur, 2007).

Immigrants and social media in Australia

According to an Australian Psychological Society (APS) online survey in 2017, ‘90 per cent of those surveyed use social media, with Facebook and YouTube the most popular channels across all age groups’ (APS, 2017, p. 4). Unfortunately, there is not enough specific information about the ethnicity of those online in social media. Academic literature also clearly shows that immigrants are using online social and communication platforms to maintain active social, cultural and political relationships with their
homeland, regardless of their geographical distance (Bilgili, 2014; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014; Faist, 2013; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Further, the internet and social media make possible everyday connections of immigrants with their motherland media. Social media also plays a significant role in the life of immigrant with the host society ‘to consolidate weak ties or even to activate latent ties that provide new information. This can include information on, for instance, the labour market, legal conditions, or other practical issues concerning migration to or life in the destination context’ (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014, p. 16). Social media allows users to create ‘a sense of belonging to a greater social network other than one’s own local community’ (Sawyer & Chen, 2012, p. 154). Moreover, social media can resolve cultural differences by connecting people from different ethnic groups in society, which can positively influence their integration (Bilgili, 2014). Conversely, social media can also enforce in-group cohesion between individuals from ethnic minorities with a similar culture and language.

Now there are many social groups on the internet for different ethnic communities that are created to assist and answer the questions of fellow members with regard to the different ways of life in Australia. However, not everybody has ‘access’ to or the knowledge to use these tools on the internet. The next section is a review on varieties in regard to accessing and usage the internet, and also media literacy in the PVPW participants place of origin.

7 For instance look at these groups on Facebook:
https://www.facebook.com/IranianInBrisbane/?ref=br_rs
https://www.facebook.com/groups/AfricansInBrisbane/?ref=br_rs
https://www.facebook.com/groups/2045164672407797/
https://www.facebook.com/groups/10588830289/
Comparison between Australia and participants' origin countries

The importance of media literacy in everyday life has led to a global movement for adult education in this field. Most Western nations have already added media literacy as a subject to school curriculums. In Australia, media studies are one of five strands in the Arts and English Key Learning Areas at the Year 11 and 12 senior levels and are designed to train students how to deconstruct, construct and identify themes in the media (Luke, 1999, p. 623). For more than two decades, upon graduating from high school, Australians already have a certain level of media education. Thus, it is expected that a young immigrant gains access and develops the ability to evaluate and create media content to the level of a high school educated person in Australia, to achieve equal opportunity in society. This may not happen for the majority of NESB immigrants who come from ex-colonial or developing countries. According to the Year Book Australia 2012 published by the ABS, most of the approximately 1.4 million people aged 15 years or older who arrived in Australia in 2010 migrated from non-English speaking countries, which means that approximately 76 per cent or 548,100 migrants come from developing countries (ABS, 2013).

As already noted, the digital divide is getting wider when it comes to social groups defined by ethnicity, gender and age. Many of the adult immigrant women from non-English backgrounds are coming from developing countries where their level of media literacy education is equal to that in Australian. Specifically, the participants in the current study were from three countries: Iran, Tanzania and Zambia. Following are outlines of media freedom and the state of internet usage in these countries.

**Australia:** Australia is a country and continent surrounded by the Indian and Pacific Oceans. According to the Internet World Stats (2018), Australia, with a population of
24 million, had 21 million internet users in December 2017, with a penetration of 87 per cent.

**Iran:** The Islamic Republic of Iran is situated in the Middle East. The theocratic government of Iran regulates the media and heavily censors all news and information (Bruno, 2009). According to the Internet World Stats (2018), Iran, with a population of 82 million, had 56.7 million internet users in December 2017, with a penetration of 69 per cent. The fixed broadband speed is 11.06 Mbps download, in comparison with Iran’s neighbouring country the United Arab Emirates, with 52.99 Mbps download speed.

**Tanzania:** The United Republic of Tanzania is situated in Eastern Africa. This country was formed in 1964 after different parts became independent from Great Britain (Mascarenhas et al., 2018). There are numerous independent media outlets alongside state-owned media; however, the media has been declared as only partly free due to several laws limiting the effective functioning of the media (Freedom House, 2017). According to the Internet World Stats (2018), Tanzania, with a population of 59 million, had 6 million Internet users in December 2017, with a penetration of 38 per cent.

**Zambia:** The Republic of Zambia is also situated in Eastern Africa, and gained independence from Great Britain on 24 October 1964 (Roberts et al., N/A). Zambia’s world status of freedom is stated as partly free due to government restrictions on rights in practice (Freedom House, 2017). According to the Internet World Stats (2018), Zambia, with a population of 17 million, had 7 million internet users in December 2017, with a penetration of 41 per cent.
Chapter summary

To clarify the context of this study, this chapter has provided an overview of Australian society, its policies on immigration, the role of media in Australia, and immigrants’ relationship with that media. It is essential for research based on real-life human subjects to have a good knowledge of the context in which the subjects of this study—the participants in the PVPW—are settled. They were immigrated before and were living in Australia during the period of the PVPW.

In the Australian multicultural society, adaptation as a prologue for immigrants’ integration is essential. The commercial corporate media has proven to hinder the integration process by misrepresenting and stereotyping ethnic groups. To overcome this issue, the adult immigrants’ media literacy education—especially for those from developing countries—is a necessity; not only to bring them up-to-date with mainstream Australian society but also to give them a critical understanding of stereotypical representation in media messages. Conversely, the technological shift to digital technology encourages ethnic groups and their members to be more active in the social media sphere, and accept a more active role in their host society. Today, the internet plays a significant role for ethnic groups in modern societies—the same as earlier community media forms of radio, television and newspapers have had for the last century—so it is crucial to promote a participatory culture to members within those ethnic groups. Promoting participatory culture by giving the necessary tools and training would help members of ethnic groups in society feel more valued and included, and motivate those individuals to adapt more easily to their host society.
CHAPTER 4—Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodological foundation used in the research design of this study. A research design is a framework for fulfilling the goals of the research and producing significant and correct conclusions (Creswell, 2012). This study adopted a mixed methods research inquiry, taking a participatory qualitative art-based research approach. By combining methods and investigations in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator and/or one method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Stake, 2005). The research is descriptive in nature, ‘to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe “what exists” with respect to variables or conditions in a situation’ (Key, 1997). The current study uses the descriptive method to illustrate respondents’ socio-demographic status and factors contributing to their transformation in the PVPW, and to discuss changes in self-efficacy beliefs after the workshops.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first is a brief overview of the methods and major data collection tools, including observations, reflective diary and interviews. The second addresses the recruitment process and workshops design, procedure and implantation, elaborates on issues surrounding participants’ recruitment and manual booklet, and reports on the process of the PVPW. The last section discusses data analysis issues and the methodological tools used for coding and analysing the data.

**Participatory qualitative art-based research methodology**

The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to incorporate the values and perspectives of both researcher and participants on a ‘descriptive and exploratory
orientation’ (Guest et al., 2011, p.7). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) find qualitative approaches helpful in their research on narratives, to achieve descriptive meaning, perspectives and the life stories of participants ‘in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena regarding the meanings people bring to them’. For Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a method to explore and identify variables that cannot be easily measured. He believes that by ‘conducting qualitative research we can empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimise the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study’ (Creswell, 2012, p. 48).

Deacon (2008) supports using a qualitative methodology in cultural and communication studies and provides statistics on the number of qualitative research users in these studies due to its historical link to the anti-positivist movement of the 1960s. Likewise, most of the researchers in the media and communication and cultural studies field support qualitative methods due to the relation of these studies with context rather than the number of references and statistics. This involves a combination of interviewing and ethnography, most commonly in the form of limited participant ‘observation’ (Davis, 2008; Deacon, 2008; Jankowski & Jensen, 2002; Leavy, 2009; McQuail, 1987). The subject and aims of cultural and communication studies are mainly human, with a variable nature or measurable phenomenon (Jankowski, 1991).

This study was conducted on a PVPW comprising four formal training sessions and four editing sessions. The PVPW was a collaborative process between the participants and the researcher. The PVPW participants’ input was monitored and measured based on researcher observations and reflections. This aligns with Bergold and Thomas’s (2012, p. 192) definition of a participatory research method:
Planning and conducting the research process with those people whose life-world and meaningful actions are under study. Consequently, this means that the aim of the inquiry and the research questions develop out of the convergence of two perspectives—that of science and of practice.

The PVPW established an art-based means, together with video production training as a communication tool, to study the participants and their responses. Art-based research is defined as the use of any type of creative artistic process ‘as the primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their study’ (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 29). Various researchers from different disciplines have used creative and art-based research methods (Coemans & Hannes, 2017; Kapitan et al., 2011; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Woodgate et al., 2017).

Art-based participatory research includes many different genres, such as performance, writing, painting, photography and film. Jones and Leavy (2014, p. 1) describe art-based participatory research as ‘any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology. So, the arts may be used during data collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination’. There is an overlap between the art-based participatory method and case study method in this study, as the research focuses on getting an in-depth understanding of each participant’s experiences during the PVPW. Yin (2013, p. 13) observes that case studies are used ‘because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study’. In other words, in a case study research, the single case is typically selected to illustrate an issue, and the researcher collects a detailed description of the setting within an established theory (Yin, 2013). By collaborating these two methods, the participants in the PVPW have been studied as
separate individuals. Consequently, each participant in this study showed different levels of self-efficacy as a result of the PVPW.

**Positioning participatory video in this study**

PV is an action-oriented qualitative method that is regarded as a methodology under the PAR method (Buckingham, 2009, p. 633; Milne et al., 2012, p. 1). The similarity between PV and PAR methods is in their common objective to achieve social change, as well as the way each is conducted. Milne and de Lange (2012, p. 1) point out that ‘because of the action-oriented nature of participatory video it may also be regarded as a methodology for action research or as social change’. The PV and PAR are people-oriented research, and ‘people’s research and the results must be shared with the people among whom the research is conducted’ (Servaes & Arnst, 1999, p. 108-9). Correspondingly, PV has been described by many scholars, as a process *with* people, rather than involving research *for* people (Kindon, 2003; Olmos & Ramella, 2005; Shaw, 2007), as it generates knowledge through ‘the lived experience of participants’ (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Lennie, 2006, p. 28). Another similar method is digital storytelling, where the digital storytelling process is based on encouraging the individual and/or community to tell their personal stories to empower them. Whatever version of participatory media the researchers use in different disciplines, their common ground is in being communication for development (C4D) practitioners. The participatory media is a tool to help developing countries through C4D using diverse forms of communications and media tools such as community radio, PV, digital storytelling and entertainment education (Harris & Baú, 2014; Tacchi et al., 2009) to give voice to those deprived of access or without enough knowledge and conversancy to participate in them.
For this study, combining these methods has given me the opportunity to attain a broad understanding of the context in which my project works, as well as target perceptions of particular issues in immigrant communities, and involve participants in the actual process of the project.

**Data collection strategies**

This study uses several data collection strategies: observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews and a researcher reflection diary. The first strategy is participant observation during all stages of the process of the workshops and follow-up interactions. Gunter (2000) describes observation as a critical tool in qualitative methodology that helps to collect data about the human experience, characterised by viewing from the perspective of the people being studied to collect data on nonverbal behaviour. In this method, the observer has to pay attention to details in a socially and historically dynamic context (Schwandt, 2007). As Gunter (2000) indicates, due to their qualitative nature, the observational studies tend to use smaller samples than quantitative surveys, which make it suitable to embed in this research. In the current study, video recording is used as an observational tool, with a fixed camera set up for use during all workshop sessions. With this method, all activities are recorded and can later be used in the video documentation to provide an overview of all procedures. Further, recording the facilitator’s actions and performances enables evaluation of the facilitator-researcher-producer position in this study. It is essential that the researcher position is established before evaluating the research result. As Wolcott (2016, p. 36) observes, ‘our readers want to know what prompts our interest in the topics we investigate, to whom we are reporting and what we personally stand to gain from our study’. Many methodology scholars, including Mauthner and Doucet (2003), Flick (2004), Mruck and Breuer
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(2003) and Ortlipp (2008) now encourage researchers to adopt a reflexive approach to their research process in qualitative research. Researchers are urged to talk about themselves, ‘their presuppositions, choices, experiences, and actions during the research processes’ (Mruck & Breuer, 2003). Shinozaki (2012) discusses how her position as a researcher and immigrant assisted her in establishing a very close bond with research studies from immigrant women. She declares:

I maintain that in the research process the intersection of other social divisions such as ethnicity, gender and social and economic class may take on more dominant meanings than national belonging alone (Shinozaki, 2012, p. 1811).

Shinozaki (2012) believes the researcher cannot ignore that establishing a close researcher-researched power relationship is a changing factor in the power balance between ‘them’ and ‘us’.

To establish the position of the researcher during this study, a reflective diary was kept, recording arguments, opinions, thoughts and feelings of the researcher-facilitator-producer through the process of the PVPW. The reflective diary was used as a resource in the final analysis stages in this thesis. Moreover, the daily diary entries—which registered critical elements of change in the participants’ emotions, behaviours and reactions—emails, chats and the evaluation forms completed by the workshop participants, assisted the process of analysing the result for this study. The insider position of the researcher was also helpful to get a clearer insight into the process.

The other primary tool used for data collection in this study was a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews (Bryman, 2012) with the participants of the study. The aim was to reveal the participants’ stories, experiences and emotions. As Arksey and Knight (1999, p.2) explain, the value of the interview method lies in the ability to
explore ‘data on understandings, opinions, what people remember doing, attitudes, feelings and the like, that people have in common’. Regarding the main research question of this study, the interviews were conducted similarly for every participant in the project. Each woman was interviewed during the first session of the PVPW, and this was repeated one month after completion of the PVPW and production of her video. The interview questions explored different spheres to understand participants’ motivation and how the PVPW influenced them. In the final interview, the participants were asked to evaluate their possible level of empowerment\(^8\) from their perspective. Aiming to get the best possible results, participants were given choice and flexibility for the interview’s time and place (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Although a list of specific questions was prepared beforehand to maintain some consistency, there was some variation in the information provided during the interviews due to the ability and personality of interviewees. Samples of questions that were used are:

- What do you think is more essential for you to learn in this workshop?
- What are your reasons for participating in this workshop?
- How do you see yourself as a storyteller?
- As a migrant and especially a woman, how do you think this type of workshop helps you to gain mastery over your life?
- You have been informed about media literacy in the previous session. How do you think media literacy is essential in your personal life?
- Tell me about your feeling, the future, and past about the participatory video production workshop and your new skills?

In the final stage, for the purpose of analysis, the data gathered by the various tools explained here were manually transcribed and coded to highlight themes related to the

\(^8\) Empowerment at an individual level, is defined in this study as a sense of agency in an individual that enables them to take control of their lives; that is, set their own agendas, gain skills, increase self-confidence, solve problems and develop self-reliance.
possible empowerment process of the PVPW for participants. The data coding process and strategies are explained in the ‘Data analysis’ section at the end of this chapter.

**Foundations behind the methodology**

The foundation of the methodology for this study was laid when I was introduced to the concept of PV as a tool for bringing a divided Fijian society together outlined in Dr Usha Harris’s (2008) article, ‘Bridging the Divide with Participatory Video’. From this starting point, I studied this subject more widely, especially when I found that many women’s empowerment projects use this method. The PV enabled me, in this research, to practice video production in the area of gender and immigration study.

I also introduced to digital storytelling workshop method, which is based on empowering participants by giving voice to them. Considering these two methods are different, but at the same time are very similar, inspired me to design a workshop that is special to this study. The PVPW was the result of the exploration which in some ways is more based on the PV practice and in other way is similar to the digital storytelling projects as it gives priorities to individuals.

The PVPW is a practical media literacy workshop that not only helps participants gain video production skills but empowers them with a critical understanding of the construction of media messages. The following sections review the design and execution process of the PVPW sessions.

**Designing and conducting the PVPW**

The PVPW was examined to answer the study’s central research questions:
To what degree can PVPW assist participants in overcoming their double stigma of gender and ethnicity in their host society?

To what extent can hands-on skills in creating media increase the self-efficacy beliefs that shape agency in the participants?

The process of conducting the PVPW started with a pilot workshop to explore the scope and possible limitations in a similar environment. In the second stage, after identifying the issues and considering the limited resources and time, the PVPW was designed, and a manual for participants prepared. Then, a recruitment process for volunteers from targeted groups was started. Finally, the PVPW was conducted with the participants in June and July 2014. The following sections explain the details of these stages.

**Pilot workshop**

To examine the extent of possibilities and limitations, I became actively involved in a storytelling workshop in conjunction with the State Library of Queensland (SLQ), the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) and Griffith University. The journalism department of Griffith University hosted the workshop. The 11 volunteers from Australian South Sea Islanders in Queensland came together on 25–27 June to celebrate the 150th anniversary of their arrival in Queensland by making digital stories about their ancestors. The group included elders and a couple of artists. The participants in the workshop were the volunteers who expressed their interest by answering invitations that were sent to community members from the SLQ database. My role was to be one of the facilitators and video record the process of the workshop, to determine the practicality of my original ideas for this study. There were six facilitators involved in the project with the help of a technical person from Griffith University. The entire
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project occurred over three days with two extra pre- and post-sessions for facilitators. The workshop program was designed as follows:

- first day: preparation
- second day: recording
- third day: final production.

On the first day, participants became acquainted with the process of the workshop and were informed about the sponsor’s expectations. Later that day, they visited the Queensland Museum and SLQ collections to research and collect visual materials and documents relevant to their personal stories. On that day, facilitators worked closely with participants to finalise their stories and put them in a brief synopsis. The next day the videos were recorded in Griffith University’s media lab—one by one, the participants recorded their finalised stories in the studio. On the next (and last) day, some of the participants came to the media lab with different stories. As a result, part of the last day of the workshop that was allocated to editing was spent re-recording participants’ stories. Consequently, the participants were not able to finish editing their digital stories, and the facilitators were forced to edit their videos later in their spare time.

My responsibility in this workshop was to work as one of the facilitators with one of the participants, and help in the studio recording sessions, as well as record behind the scenes material, to assist in my study (see Figure 9). The video produced for the pilot study can be found at http://citizenj.edgeqld.org.au/telling-their-own-history/
The experience of this pilot workshop contributed significantly to this study by revealing some limitations and issues involved in conducting an effective PVPW. These include:

1. **A dedicated camera person is needed.**

   The experience showed that if a documentary was to be made of the workshop process, one person had to be dedicated to recording, separate from facilitating.

2. **The aims and expectations of the participants need to be clarified at the start of the workshop.**

   The lack of explanation of a clear goal for the workshop resulted in changing stories. The participants were also not happy about the restriction of three minutes for their stories.

3. **There is an urgent need to educate participants about the media.**
There was a clear need for media literacy education. The participants did not demonstrate any understanding of the process of constructing messages in media; as a result, they could not identify how to incorporate their political declaration in their story.

4. Consent for recording behind the scenes material has to be obtained. The participants were not informed of the intention to video record behind the scenes prior to the workshop. Consequently, some did not give consent to be filmed.

Preparation for the PVPW

The most common issues encountered during the pilot workshop was around design and development. The experience proved that if the process of the workshop had a specific schedule and participants had enough information about the goals, the result could be enhanced. To overcome this in the current study, more preparation time was allocated to avoid confusion during the PVPW, a guidebook was prepared for the PVPW participants, and scheduled into each session were details of some media literacy training and time for related discussion.

Targeted ethnic backgrounds

During the development phase, the planning for participant recruitment was started by identifying potential ethnic groups. During discussions with my supervisors, the African immigrant women in Brisbane were chosen due to the population and available contacts that could help in recruitment. As a contingency, the second potential ethnic group chosen was my fellow Iranian immigrants to align with my personal background and experience.
• **Iranian in Brisbane**

In her study of Iranian immigrant women in Brisbane, Jamarani (2012) explains that the participants in the study did not believe a cohesive and united Iranian community existed in Brisbane, despite the fact that the Iranian community is one of the registered ethnic communities in Queensland. The Iranian community in Brisbane includes sub-communities from different ethnicities and religions, such as Kurds, Turks and Baha’is. The Iranian community in Australia can also be categorised into two groups: pro-government and opposition.

The majority of refugees arrived in Australia after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, and also during the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq for economic, political and religious reasons. Most of the recent Iranian immigrants are skill migrants; however, many more arrived by boat. Both groups of immigrants and refugees are mainly under the influence of fear because of the Iran dictatorship. This anxiety prevents them from involvement in any media or publicity due to possible dangers to their families back in Iran. The level of this involvement varies, depending on the level of education and their socio-political view. According to the 2016 census, the first-generation Iranian immigrant population in Australia is around 60,000 (ABS, 2018a).

• **Africans communities in Brisbane**

In the 2016 census, 380,000 residents declared they were born in Africa. Approximately a third of those are from South Africa, and rest are from more than 20 different African countries (ABS, 2018a). A significant number of African migrants have come to Australia through a skill migration stream. African-Australians are also coming to Australia via the skilled and family reunion programs, and as refugees through Australia’s humanitarian program. Queensland has the third highest settlement
population of African communities in Australia (Hugo, 2009); however, these communities vary by nationality and language, race and culture. Most of the Queensland population of African-Australians have settled southeast of Brisbane in Logan and Toowoomba. On the national level, while the most significant and long-standing group of African immigrants in Australia have a South African nationality, the other half, which is a mixture of different nationalities from this continent, has increased during the last decades.

**Recruitment process**

In the first stage, the communities and contacts from the first targeted group—various African background communities—and the organisations that work with those groups were identified. These organisations included:

- the Queensland State Government multicultural department
- the City Council of Brisbane multicultural unit
- Multicultural Development Association (MDA)—settlement agency in Brisbane
- Access Community Services Limited (Access)—settlement agency in Logan and Ipswich
- Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland Ltd (ECCQ)—an advocacy organisation for community education for leadership and health.

At the same time, a flyer was designed in an effort to achieve a better result, which was later attached to the information emails (see Appendix D). Copies of the flyer also were distributed at different community functions and ethnic stores. The recruitment methods used include:

- Email: an email with all the information and a flyer was sent to targeted community leaders and organisations working with those groups.
• Personal contact: the researcher personally attending functions and visited targeted ethnic stores and libraries in the suburbs more populated with those communities in an effort to reach individuals.

• Internet: communities and contacts that provided email and phone numbers were sourced online; specifically, the targeted ethnic groups on social media platforms.

• Facebook: a Facebook page was created to promote the idea of the project. One of the successful recruitment strategies was placing advertisements on Facebook pages that were known for these ethnic groups’ dependency.

Initially, when community leaders and organisations were contacted, there was considerable interest shown in the study. However, in the second stage, many of the individuals within the communities did not feel strong enough to attend the information sessions. A few of those present at the meeting later declared their reluctance to participate in the workshop—some of the reasons they claimed were stopping them from attending the workshop are listed below.

1. **Unemployment**

According to the Australian Government (2018) *Labour Market Update*, unemployment within African ethnic groups is highest at the national level. An earlier report by the Department of Communities of Queensland Government in (2008) declared high rates of unemployment among African refugees compared with the general state population and highlighted limited transport options as exacerbating the issue.

2. **Women’s traditional role**

In a cultural context, African women, especially those from the working class, usually dedicate their lives to raising their children, which leads to a lack of education, resulting in unemployment. Numerous African-Australian women are single parents due to having escaped war. When in Australia, these women do not have the extended family
support that characterises their traditional the way of life. Further, there are conventional cultural barriers associated with their background that stops them from attending any unrelated family business. I heard from many of them that they do not have any spare time to participate in the PVPW.

3. **Limited English proficiency**

Lack of English-speaking skills was one of the main difficulties declared as a barrier to participation. Despite many being able to speak and understand English, some stated they were scared of being interviewed in English.

4. **Cultural barriers related to video recording**

Being judged by their peers was one of the most substantial reasons impeding the contacted immigrant women’s participation. Many women I approached seemed interested at first point; but withdrew after finding out about my intention to video record the sessions of the PVPW. Some declared they were camera shy; others said they feared judgment from community members. The women also asked who would view the video, what the purpose was, and what the content included to reassure themselves they were not placing their life in danger.

**Alternative plan and recruitment result**

In response to unsuccessful recruitment from the first targeted group of African immigrant women, the decision was made to expand the recruitment field to the second targeted group, Iranian immigrant women. To accomplish this goal, a flyer was sent to the ‘Iranian in Brisbane’ group page on Facebook. Instantly on the second day after that, more than eight women contacted me and announced their interest in participating in the PVPW. After further communication, four people were confirmed to attend the PVPW.
At the same time, the flyer distributed at an African Day celebration at the African House received attention. An African student from the University of Queensland (UQ) contacted me and announced her interest. Following her confirmation, she advised that her daughter and her friend would also attend the PVPW. After one of the Iranian women cancelled her attendance due to illness, the total numbers of participants in the PVPW was confirmed at six.

**Conducting the PVPW sessions**

The PVPW process was designed with two goals: providing media literacy education, and developing practical video production skills. The aim of both was to enable the participants to be more active in society. Increasing participants’ media literacy level would help shape critical thinking about media content and their standpoint on the role of media in Australian society. Therefore, the core media literacy topics covered a brief introduction on the media structure in Australia, concept of citizen journalism, a review on media ethics and copyright, and mechanism of message delivery in commercial media. As the PVPW was time-limited, the goal was to persuade participants to follow up these topics in the future to take their understanding to another level. The other aim of the workshop was to train the PVPW participants to enable them to create their short videos. The role of hands-on media production was to help them gain the confidence to participate more freely in the public sphere and also learn how a message is created to enhance their media literacy knowledge.

**Video production**

A manual for the participants was collated from related websites and resources. This guidebook explained the basic terms of video production methods and included associated pictures and illustrations to facilitate the learning. During the sessions,
participants were trained in the operation of different professional camcorders, transferring the videos to editing software, editing the video, and exporting and uploading on the different platforms, such as YouTube.\(^9\) As Bing-Canar and Zerkel (1998), in their research project with young Arab women in the USA found the practice of producing images by participants taught them about the constructed nature of media distributed models. They learnt that media messages are ‘constructed and not neutral but are infused with specific meanings and massages’ (Bing-Canar & Zerkel, 1998, p. 737).

While the participants were introduced to professional equipment, the primary goal was an efficient video production, so they were encouraged to use their available equipment, such as a smartphone, tablet or video cameras from home, to be able to create videos in their everyday life and not just during the PVPW process.

**Media literacy**

The brief outline of an introduction to media literacy in the process of PVPW was arranged based on the suggestions of the ‘Commission of the European Communities’ (2007) guideline to achieve:

- feeling comfortable with all existing media
- actively using media
- participation in virtual communities
- better exploiting the potential of media for entertainment
- access to culture, intercultural dialogue
- having a critical approach to media as regards both quality and accuracy of the content
- create and disseminate images, information and content

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\(^9\) A YouTube page was created for this PVPW and can be found via the following link: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiZjXvxKJ3MbNqYi-vzXOLQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiZjXvxKJ3MbNqYi-vzXOLQ)
• understanding the economy of media and the difference between pluralism and media ownership

• being aware of copyright issues which are essential for a ‘culture of legality.’

In the process of the PVPW, depending on the subjects introduced, short web-based videos were chosen to further engage the participants with video production and give them the opportunity to learn visually. These videos were mainly selected from YouTube\(^{10}\) and other online-based video sites, including examples of citizen journalist short video productions on the ABC Open channel\(^{11}\). Consequently, the participants were assured any video could be valuable as long as they have various video techniques and a relevant message.

• Preliminary session—Friday, June 13, 2014

The first session arranged was an induction session on a Friday afternoon in the media lab at Griffith University’s Nathan campus. The participants were introduced to each other, and the faculty technician introduced them to the facilities. As an ice-breaking activity, participants were encouraged to introduce themselves and their reasons for participation in a couple of sentences for the others. The goals and purpose of this study were explained, and participants were informed of their rights. They were asked to sign the consent forms for recording and researching purposes. The participants were given their guidebooks, and the session concluded over coffee and tea. The availability of

\(^{10}\)  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXLRukSt_bRM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXLRukSt_bRM)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M89_wjcwfT](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M89_wjcwfT)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgYH3qDyjE&list=PLmpmr41LhUA8vSmiCW7avFaA-Ck7Q-auu](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgYH3qDyjE&list=PLmpmr41LhUA8vSmiCW7avFaA-Ck7Q-auu)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vb70s5YSV8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vb70s5YSV8)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3WwR7HJ9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3WwR7HJ9)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO_H0-ok8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QO_H0-ok8)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRQ6oF0Qf](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRQ6oF0Qf)

\(^{11}\)  [https://open.abc.net.au/](https://open.abc.net.au/)
video equipment and gadgets was checked, with just one of the participants needing a camera for home, which was provided the next day.

- **First session—Saturday, June 14, 2014**

The official first session of the PVPW was held the next day, on Saturday morning. The session began with a PowerPoint presentation by the facilitator about the overall aims of PVPW and a discussion about media construction in Australia, the role of ethics and copyright in online platforms, and the concept of citizen media and citizen journalism. The facilitator-researcher briefly introduced these subjects, which were followed with relevant short videos from free online resources such as YouTube and the Australian ABC Open channel. The participants were encouraged to discuss the subjects and share some of their personal experiences related to the topics. The second part of the day was directed towards basic visual techniques, camera handling and essential equipment. The primary goal of the training plan in the PVPW was to enable the participants learn to work with any available and affordable camera phones and home camcorders; however, it was vital they were familiar with professional cameras on the first day of the workshop to maintain their interest in that first session. There were three professional and two consumer cameras available to experience in that session. The participants started to work with cameras to gain some practical knowledge about the importance of using a tripod and familiarity with the technical aspects of cameras, such as the quality of focus, zooming in and out, and framing. The participants divided into three couples and worked with different cameras in turn, to experience operating a professional camera and presenting in front of a camera. During this time, the face-to-face interviews with each participant were conducted in the television studio next to the

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12 See footnotes 9 and 10 in last page.
lab. During the interview, participants were introduced to interview techniques and the use of professional microphones. As they gained confidence in working with the cameras and helping each other handle and present in front of the cameras, two smartphones were installed on special tripods, one Samsung and one iPhone. The participants repeated the recording and presenting stages with the camera phones to experience the differences in the operating system of camera phones and professional cameras. The participants were encouraged to start work with their camera phones and were given special phone tripods for future work. Gradually, as they began to work with their phone cameras, the specific questions about the different cameras’ operating systems came up that was more related to their new knowledge and experience with professional cameras. At that stage, they were provided with camera manuals related to their phones, printed from appropriate websites, in accordance with the information gathered during the preliminary session. The participants were asked to record videos for the next week’s session and bring them to show each other.

- **Second session—Saturday, June 20, 2014**

The second session was held the following Saturday morning and started by providing information about the different concepts of the media literacy education on:

- the meaning of messages in the media
- a brief introduced to subliminal messages
- media ownership in Australia, including different channels of radio and TV
- the public, private and community media in Australia
- the impact of media ownership on everyday life.
Each subject was followed by a short video from YouTube, and the participants encouraged to discuss their new knowledge with the introduction of the following topics:

- **Each person interprets messages differently.** Each person who watches a commercial, movie, TV show or visits a website, understands messages differently based on their age, culture and life experiences. Audiences are capable of accepting or rejecting information conveyed based on these factors.

- **The media have social and political implications.** The mass media can serve to legitimise social and cultural values and reinforce political views and positions of cultural dominance and power. Individuals need to able to access information, identify its purpose (to entertain, inform, persuade), and assess the implications that come with these functions.

- **The media have commercial interests and implications.** Most media are supported by commercial advertising that generates significant profits for them. Therefore, messages are tailored to a particular group of people to whom related products are advertised. Knowledge of this fact, allows individuals to understand the process of how program content makes them targets for advertisers and groups.

- **How working as a citizen journalist can be helpful to others.**

The other topic covered in the session brought up the concept of ‘stereotypes’. Later, the participants showed the sample videos they prepared during the week as a homework exercise and received feedback from the facilitator and their peers. After the break, digital video foundations were discussed, and relevant terms introduced, such as pixel, megapixel, high definition video and frame rate. In the practical component, participants were encouraged to work in groups with the cameras and review the training materials from the previous week and ask any related questions. In this session, interview methods were also discussed, such as the positioning of a camera in an interview,
crossing the line and the camera level towards the subject. At the end of the session, participants had time to discuss the storyboards for their short videos, which they were supposed to start recording the following week.

- **Third session—Saturday, June 28, 2014**

The third session started with a short sample video from ABC Open. Then, each participant showed their recorded videos on the big screen in the media lab, followed by a discussion about their storyboards and ideas. Feedback and instructions were given on how to get a better quality result in the recording process, their message and storyboards. The participants were reminded that they could work on any subject they felt was important without unreasonable interference by the facilitator-researcher; however, assistance was available for the technical aspects of their story. In the last hour of the session, participants were introduced to camera movement and lighting principles, which they then practised on the training subjects with different recording equipment.

- **Fourth session—Saturday, July 5, 2014**

The fourth session was the last official training session and was planned around video editing. On arrival, each participant was asked to say a sentence in front of the camera and another participant had the responsibility to record it. The recorded videos were transferred to editing software on the lab’s computers. The procedure was shown on the big screen and followed by participants. After becoming familiar with the professional editing package, the participants were introduced to standard video editing terms.

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13 ABC Open publishes and broadcasts stories made by regional Australians. All across Australia, people are creating great videos, photos and written stories to share on the ABC. ABC Open brings these stories together for audiences. The link to ABC Open: https://open.abc.net.au/

14 The official editing package used was Final Cut X.
They later started to edit their videos with coaching from the facilitator-researcher and assistant facilitator. The participants showed their excitement in the process of editing to the extent that they stayed back in the lab for more than an hour, until they had to save their projects and finish up because our lab booking expired.

![Figure 10 - A sample of one of Mana's video in Final cut pro X environment](image)

- **Editing sessions—July 2014**

The editing lab was available to the participants during July for those who had not finalised their videos. They called and booked a time for editing, and the facilitator-researcher was present to provide any assistance they needed during the editing process. The participants’ commitment to finalising their videos resulted in the production of six different videos containing completely different subjects. The short videos covered personal and social issues that were important to them, and only one of the women did not finish the video, although she planned and recorded footage for her story.
After the PVPW

To evaluate the PVPW, the participants were contacted approximately four weeks after they finalised the short videos for an interview. In the interview, they discussed their life, their expectations and the influence of the PVPW on their life, which is addressed in the next three chapters.

The three African participants who went back to their countries after completing their study, and the three Iranian participants who still live in Brisbane have stayed in contact with each other and the facilitator-researcher.

Today, three years after the PVPW, these beautifully engaged women have moved to different stages in their lives.

Data analysis

This study is constructed on combined qualitative methods; thus, the analysis process follows the same path. In line with the primary concern of this project, the process of personal empowerment is explored by studying different indicators of personal empowerment. Personal empowerment or psychological empowerment is an individual process that is established on psychological theories. Due to the nature of this project—a mixture of PAR with gender factors highlighted—to evaluate and measure a potential empowerment process, the frameworks of women’s empowerment used through the application of community development studies. In the analysis process, the women empowerment indicators introduced by Naila Kabeer (1999) were most influential. Kabeer (2001) defines the concept of power as an ‘ability to exercise choice’, and
introduces three groups of indicators for measuring the empowerment process. These three interrelated dimensions are:

- **resources**, which form the conditions under which choices are made
- **agency**, which is at the heart of the process by which choices are made
- **achievements**, which are the outcomes of choices (Kabeer, 2001, p. 19).

According to Kabeer (2001), resources also can be found in different categories: material, social or human. In the context of this study, which is not a developing country, the emphasis is placed on the social and human indicators of the resource. For a straightforward adaptation of an immigrant in the host society, the levels of social connections and human assets are vital. In this study, the participant’s social relationships—as one of the socio-demographic positions—are reviewed in three categories:

- social bond—within their community
- social bridge—with other communities, especially mainstream Australians
- social links—in this research, the position of all sorts of mass media, including social media, and also the participants’ relation with those types of media.

In the human resource section, this study has an overview of the PVPW participants’ employment and education. In addition, barriers and enablers in the empowerment process of the participants and their adaptation to the host society have been reviewed. The role of language and cultural barriers and other sub-indicators such as level of cultural shock, sense of belonging and motivation for change are discussed. In this process, a short questionnaire (see Appendix C) was helpful. Further information was extracted from interviews.
In analysing the process of evaluating, the formation of the agency by the participants in the PVPW was also significant. Kabeer (2001) defines agency as indicators of empowerment:

Agency is about more than observable action; it also encompasses the meaning, motivation and purpose, which individuals bring to their activity, their sense of agency, or the power within (Kabeer, 2001, p. 21).

To evaluate the level of agency formation in the participants during the process of the PVPW, all the gathered information, including questionnaires, interviews, observational notes and researcher reflective diary, was coded to find the related themes to women empowerment indicators in the Kabeer framework.

**Coding**

The data gathered from video interviews, a short questionnaire and researcher observation and reflexive journal were utilised. The interviews were transcribed in a ‘word for word’ or semi-verbatim form in preparation for coding. Poland (1995) defines verbatim transcription as the word for word reproduction of verbal data, where the written words are an exact replication of the recorded video or audio words. However, as the participants were second-language English speakers, sometimes they lost a word or used the wrong tense. At those times, the correct word was added in square brackets to clarify meaning.

In the first stage of analysis, the video interviews were watched and listened to several times, and then transcribed. To understand the content and complexity of the participant’s dialogue, an interpretative analysis of the transcripts was employed ‘to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal experience’ (Smith
& Osborn, 2004, p. 95). The interview transcripts were read and re-read to identify the themes that aligned with empowerment theory and indicators. When the transcripts were first read, some notes and codes were elaborated in the margins of the text about any responses or phrases that were of interest or significantly related to the research questions. As a result, it became possible to build some preliminary connections between the personal empowerment self-declaration aspects within the narratives of participants. It is important to note that at the individual level, the cognitive concept of ‘self’ is important. Oyserman et al. (2012, p. 71) describe the self as a term that:

refers to a warm sense or a warm feeling that something is ‘about me’ or ‘about us’. Reflecting on oneself is both a common activity and a mental feat. It requires that there is an ‘I’ that can consider an object that is ‘me’. The term ‘self’ includes both the actor who thinks, ‘I am thinking’ and the object of thinking, ‘about me’.

After establishing the importance of self and the combinations of terms with self as a prefix, the transcribed interviews were searched for varieties of cognitive self-concepts. The words were highlighted and put together to determine the patterns of agency formation during the process of PVPW by the participants. In general term, self-conception refers to individuals’ knowledge and perceptions about themselves; specifically, it is our attitudes, feelings and knowledge about our abilities, skills, appearance and social acceptability (Byrne, 1984, p. 429). Enhancing the self-concept and constructing agency is one of the capabilities by which the process of empowerment occurs. Psychological empowerment is the main purpose of this study, and the related capabilities of self-esteem, confidence, self-efficacy and an ability to imagine and aspire to a better future, mean ‘individuals expand their freedom of choice and action to shape
Looking for the Phoenix Within

their life’ (Narayan, 2005a, p. 4-10). Agency in the process of empowerment is defined as ‘the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them’ (Kabeer, 2001, p. 21). The sense of agency or ‘power within’ is defined as the ability of an individual in decision-making (Kabeer, 1999), and whatever an individual freely pursues; that is, goals that are important to them (Sen, 1985). These definitions point to the importance of an individual’s human psychological capabilities. Samman and Santos (2009, p 3-8) observe that agency can also be exercised in different spheres, domains and at levels. It means there is a different agency sense forming in every situation, in every individual. As the self-concept includes a variety of ‘selves’, the meaning of each self-ability differs. For clarity in this analysis, I use the following definitions:

- **self-esteem**: ‘an individual’s subjective evaluation of his or her worth as a person’ (Orth & Robins, 2014, p. 381).
- **self-efficacy**: ‘people’s beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions’ (Bandura, 1997, p. vii).
- **confidence**: a common term that refers to the strength of belief but does not necessarily specify what the certainty is about (Bandura, 1977).

Put simply, self-esteem is how you feel about yourself overall, and self-confidence is how you think about your abilities and can vary from situation to situation. In the case of this study, the focus is mostly on the formation of self-efficacy and confidence. Since the empowerment phenomenon ‘can be assessed through its action or its results’ (Narayan, 2005a, p.15), measures have to be found indirectly through underlying substitutions, which in the case of this study, are individuals. Consequently, self-concept and self-efficacy beliefs have explicit value in reference to a person’s important abilities, behaviours and characteristics (Bauer & Bonanno, 2001, p. 426). It is important to note that in the current study, the PVPW participants were not asked to explain their ‘self’ or ‘empowerment process’ specifically; instead, they were
encouraged to speak freely, explain their background and describe their experiences to date during interviews. As a result, the interviews are narratives of the participants’ personalities, backgrounds, desires, emotions and goals. As Oyserman et al. (2012, p. 69) declare, a person uses the ‘self’ when they know themselves, and this feeling leads them ‘to make sense and make choices, using the self as an important perceptual, motivational and self-regulatory tool’.

Following a quick search, it was found that the words ‘my’ and ‘I’ and their combinations were used by the participants in their interviews around 1,000 times within a total of 9,700 words—a pattern that illustrates how they think and believes in themselves. In their interviews, the participants also used ‘self’ in combination with ‘my’, showing how strongly they think about themselves. However, there are many other combinations of ‘my’, and ‘I’ used by participants, which are illustrated in Table 1. The importance of understanding those combined words is that they suggest ‘self’ is ‘a collection of abilities, temperament, goals, values, and preferences that distinguish one individual from another’ (Tesser, 2002, p. 185).

The indicator of ‘self’ leads the study to look closer at the meaning of ‘self’ and its dynamic nature, and compare participants’ self-evaluation in the first and last interviews. The participants mostly used the word ‘I’ and its combinations, such as ‘I do/did’, ‘I want’, ‘I can/could’ and ‘I had/have’ approximately 350 times. As Maddux (2009, p. 336) clarifies, self-efficacy belief ‘is what I believe I can do with my skills under certain conditions’ and is naturally concerned with what ‘I believe I can do’.

Thus, the ‘I’ and its combination words are important in this study to determine participants’ self-efficacy beliefs. A self-efficacy believer can perform the behaviour that produces the outcomes of believing in personal ability, such as ‘I can do it’, ‘I will
do it’ or ‘I want to do it’. Notably, five of the six participants used these powerful words and explanations during their last interviews, which showed strong self-efficacy. For instance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My opinion</th>
<th>My community</th>
<th>My painting</th>
<th>My culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My situation</td>
<td>My way</td>
<td>My information</td>
<td>My job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My background</td>
<td>My intention</td>
<td>My English</td>
<td>My class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name</td>
<td>My money</td>
<td>My character</td>
<td>My skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal</td>
<td>My friends</td>
<td>My stories</td>
<td>My mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family</td>
<td>My education</td>
<td>My future</td>
<td>My feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mom</td>
<td>My study</td>
<td>My short movie</td>
<td>My experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My dad</td>
<td>My degree</td>
<td>My interest</td>
<td>My immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sister</td>
<td>My University</td>
<td>My self-confidence</td>
<td>My work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My brother</td>
<td>My day</td>
<td>My photos</td>
<td>My workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My husband</td>
<td>My age</td>
<td>My writing</td>
<td>My home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My baby</td>
<td>My colleges</td>
<td>My camera</td>
<td>My feeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child</td>
<td>My boss</td>
<td>My life</td>
<td>My ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My empowerment</td>
<td>My CV</td>
<td>My Facebook</td>
<td>My area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - The participant’s combination use of the pronoun ‘my’

- **I can** do something by myself.
- **I can** plan something to empower women through video.
- … but now, **I can** even judge.
- **I can** even tell the world what is going on [in] my area.
- **I can** do anything.
- Whenever I go somewhere nice and see something interesting, I feel that **I can** do the same thing [video recording].
- … but now I know that even **I can** create something and give some news to people.
- It’s not [too] late. **I can** do it.
- **I can** be a citizen journalist take a photo or do something, or maybe tell that message to other people.
The manual application of a priori codes (Stemler, 2001) to the participant’s interview transcriptions was very effective in finding the themes related to empowerment theory and its indicators. To apply the a priori coding style, also known as the template coding system (King, 1998), in the current study, the codes were defined within the self-concept domain as explained above. Further, a manual coding system was used to allow more ‘focus on the meaning’ (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007, p. 510) in the analysis and will enable the researcher to exercise reflexivity in the coding process.

After coding the participants’ interview transcripts, the codes were categorised and themes shaped, which are discussed in the next three chapters.

**Chapter summary**

Various data gathering methods were employed during the process of the PVPW to ensure consistent and reliable results, including observation, video recording, semi-structured interviews, a brief questionnaire and researcher reflection diary. This study is based on participatory qualitative research and inspired by PV projects for community development undertaken by media practitioners. The PVPW sessions were designed to incorporate media literacy education and hands-on video production training. The PVPW was conducted in four sessions during June and July 2014, and four informal sessions for editing the participants’ final projects. The PVPW participants were video interviewed individually in the first session, and again four weeks after completing their video projects in August 2014. The participants completed a questionnaire in the first session of the PVPW to assist in gathering individual socio-demographic information. The video interviews with participants were transcribed and coded according to the
empowerment framework. At this stage of the analysis process, the researcher reflective
diary, participant’s answers to the questionnaire, and recorded video logs of the PVPW
were utilised.

One of the significant highlights in this study was the complicated dynamics of working
with human subjects in a cross-cultural context. The sensibility of ethically handling
human emotions was essential issue. The participants were purposefully helped to
develop the technical skills necessary for creating video segments; however, not all of
them ended up being video producers in their everyday lives. Interestingly, the
participants in the PVPW used their active involvement in this creative workshop as an
engine to start their journey of self-discovery, which resulted in their increased self-
efficacy beliefs and set up their future goals. In the following chapters, this journey will
be discussed in depth.
CHAPTER 5—Creative Work Reflection

The previous chapters outlined the scope of this study, a literature review around the research context and methodology. This chapter is my written reflections on the process of making the video documentation of the process of the PVPW—the video report on the study—titled, *Looking for the Phoenix Within*. This video documentation is the second component of this study. Since Nisbet and Aufderheide (2009, p. 451) emphasise how crucial it is for filmmakers to ‘perceive their own actions and choices and the motivations behind them’, I define myself in this study and in relation to the video documentation, as a facilitator-researcher-video producer. The following sections are my reflections and critical overview of this triumvirate responsibility.

When I started the project, I could not imagine the difficulty of combining the positions of filmmaker and academic researcher. Clearly, for any video documentary, a filmmaker needs proper research around the subject of the film. However, combining filmmaking and academic research on a topic is not easy. This study was structured and designed to observe, review and analyse the effects of the PVPW on the empowerment process of its participants. Video documentation of the PVPW process was primarily to help me in the observations and then in creating a visual document that everybody could understand—especially those who may decide to use a similar framework for working with immigrants—as an encouragement tool for adaptations of immigrants in their society. However, when I started the PVPW, I found I was not occupying two positions; in reality, it was a triumvirate role of facilitator-researcher-video producer. The complexity of these positions led me to question whether I could achieve all aspect and goals of my study.
Although I had the opportunity to test a pilot workshop, the lack of budget and sponsors limited my ability to apply all the critically reviewed suggestions from the pilot workshop. While juggling the three roles, I tried to calculate how to more comfortably manage the project—with the help of a facilitator, or an assistant in videography. The only person I could have as an assistant was my teenage daughter, who helped a great deal in coaching the participants through the PVPW, but this resulted in the poorer quality of the video documentation.

At the end of this undertaking, and in reviewing the results, I have to admit that all sides of this triangular position suffered. However, the video documentation, which suffered most, is a more finished product that owes its existence to post-production. This is mostly because I did not have help from a professional (dedicated) cameraperson to record close-ups and participants’ emotions during the PVPW. As a result, most of the footage is from two, and at times three, fixed cameras located around the PVPW venue. Due to these restrictions, I prefer to identify this video part as a video report—that is, a video documentation—rather than a documentary video.

This chapter overviews the role of video in this study as a video documentation, as a research tool, its relation to documentary film, and my struggles as a researcher-facilitator-producer.

**Background overview**

As previously outlined, this study was conducted on the basis of observations and analysis of the outcome of a PVPW that included four formal training sessions and four editing sessions, with the aim of training participants in the technical aspects of video production, along with a foundational media literacy education. The PVPW formal
sessions were officially held on consecutive Saturday mornings, from 14 June 2014, for a duration of four hours. Six immigrant women from three different culturally and linguistically non-English backgrounds participated in the PVPW, which was held in Brisbane, Queensland. The designated venue was the media lab at Griffith University’s Nathan campus, which was equipped with Apple computers and a professional editing suite for video production. The lab was also equipped with a widescreen panel, and a large TV, used for teaching purposes, and access to the radio and special TV studios attached to the lab was provided.

During the PVPW sessions, different subjects related to media literacy were covered as much as possible within the limited timeframe of each session. A basic familiarity with media organisations in Australia, the concept of the message in the media, citizen journalism and copyright were the key areas explored. The main aim of the PVPW was to train participants to enable them to produce a complete short video. To achieve this, they learnt the basic rules of camera recording, camera positioning and movements, frame composition, different visual formats, transferring the recorded videos, editing and, finally, distribution on internet platforms. For distribution of the videos, a page on YouTube was created under the name of ‘Participatory Video Production Workshop’, which, in the later stages of the PVPW, was used by the participants to upload their finished short videos.

The participants in the PVPW had the opportunity to work with professional cameras; however, they were encouraged to use their mobile phones for their projects, as the most available digital media technology in their everyday life. Notably, the participants

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15 Final Cut Pro X was editing suite used
16 https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiZjXvxKJ3MbNqYi-vzXOLQ
readily accepted this transition, which even surprised me. At the time, I wrote in my reflection diary:

There were a couple of professional video cameras that they had a chance to work with it, but in the end, they prefer to work with their small cameras or mobile phones. I was surprised as expected that it takes longer for them to accept the quality of small cameras (entry 14th June 2014).

The participants in the workshop had access to the professional editing software Final Cut Pro X on the editing computers in the media lab to edit their short videos.

During the PVPW sessions, I also conducted video interviews with each participant. In the first session, they were interviewed separately in the TV studio attached to the lab; these interviews were later used in the analysis process and creation of the video documentation. Casual interviews also were conducted during the PVPW sessions with the participants, where possible. To support the reliability of the results, all six PVPW participants were approached for a final interview four weeks after the PVPW was finalised, during August that year. As noted earlier, each PVPW participant was asked to produce a short video as a task for the workshop to exercise their learning in a practical way. The participants were free to choose any subject of importance to them as a final task. Therefore, they were the sole auteurs of these videos, which they kindly gave me permission to use in this study. I sat with each woman separately to assist her in developing her story before starting production, and also coached them during the video editing process. The participants had access to the media lab until the end of August to editing the videos in informal sessions after the formal PVPW sessions were completed.
Video documentation production

During the production of *Looking for the Phoenix Within*, I purposefully employed a simple video production method, to let the participants—actors of this video—behave realistically and genuinely, and to capture the reality to the sessions to help me in the research of this study and for later use in the production of the video report. To achieve this aim, I avoided any pre-communication and negotiation over what would happen. *Looking for the Phoenix Within*’s approach to production was explicitly based on reducing the emphasis on control at the shooting stage. This style opposes the professional practice industry model that privileges careful control over the different shooting stages. Further, *Looking for the Phoenix Within* was created without a script. After some initial background research, I decided to use two mounted cameras on steady tripods to capture the entire PVPW. However, on special occasions, the cameras were unmounted to capture different angles. Later, the video shots were logged, and the interviews were transcribed. From that point, the story started to take shape, with a short synopsis of the overall video footage. The actual format of the video was formed in post-production, during editing.

**The motivation behind creating the video documentation**

Throughout the process of the PVPW, I personally video recorded all sessions, interviews and some of the activities undertaken. As explained earlier, the initial aim was to make a mini video documentary of the process of the PVPW as a visual statement of the study. However, the two significant features already noted—the limited budget and lack of professional crew—prevented me from creating what I had conceptualised.
The second rationale behind the video documentation of the PVPW sessions relates to my position as a researcher. The *Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Method* (2008) explains the researcher ‘insider/outsider status’ as: ‘the term insider researcher is used to describe a situation where the researcher is a part of the topic being investigated’. Thus, by producing a video, I aimed to follow in the footsteps of the participants in the PVPW, as this aligned with my insider’s researcher position as an immigrant woman from non-English background language.

In brief, the motivations behind creating the video were:

1. To examine the researcher-facilitator-producer position, as I am both an immigrant woman and researcher in this study. To complete this goal, I made a short movie in the same manner as the other participants in this project.
2. A short video is created ‘as a visual form of expression and (re)construction of social reality’ (Sooryamoorthy, 2007, p. 548). By running a workshop for other immigrant women and documenting it and its outcomes, there would be a simple version of what could be done in similar PVPWs in the future. Whatever I name this video, it is a version of a moving, visual presentation similar to a film.

Pauwels (2002, p. 151) states that film is made up of scores of moving images, and is a vibrant and culturally embedded medium that relies on much more than the purely visual channels of information. Therefore, a visual report on the research can be effective in engaging targeted groups with the findings of the study.
Video as a research tool

Haw and Hadfield (2011, p. 2) state that video in research is ‘capable of serving almost any purpose, the Swiss Army knife’. Video has been used in research for data collection, dissemination and the advancement of understanding novelty qualitative research (Friend & Militello, 2015; Gadanidis & Borba, 2013; Hadfield & Haw, 2012; Haw & Hadfield, 2011; Militello & Guajardo, 2013; Shrum & Duque, 2012). One of the areas that regularly used video—outside media and film studies is anthropology (Erickson, 2011). Communication researchers also use media and PV in research on community developments (Abah et al., 2009; Blazek & Hraňová, 2012; Buckingham, 2009; Burgess, 2006; Foster, 2009; Gemi et al., 2013; Guidi, 2003; Harris, 2008; High et al., 2012; Nair & White, 1987; Nemes et al., 2007; Shaw, 2012; Tripp, 2012; Waller et al., 2015; White et al., 1994; Yang, 2016).

However, the main reason the video has been incorporated into the research paradigm of the current study relates to researcher’s interest ‘in visual representations, or their [people’s] own, understanding of the “reality” surrounding them’ (Hadfield & Haw, 2012, p. 131). Jewitt (2012b, p. 3) explains how the presence of video people’s everyday life ‘means researchers often have access to “naturally occurring” video data’, which offer direct, firsthand, eyewitness accounts of social action—essentially answering the classic fieldwork question ‘What is going on here?’. The visual ability of video enables access to parts of lives that would otherwise remain out of researchers’ sight (Bloustien & Baker, 2003). Moreover, the video technique ‘substantially minimises the interviewer effect when the presence of an outsider influences the responses and behaviours of insiders’ (Shrum & Duque, 2012, p. 2).
Video as an observation tool

The video in this study is first used as an observational tool to witness verbal and nonverbal interactions and communication (Hall, 1966) during interviews and the process of the PVPW. Nonverbal language includes ‘all behaviours that are involved in the transmission of experience or information from one person to another’ (Siegman & Feldstein, 2014, p. 4). The ability to gather nonverbal communication in this study is important as the participants and researcher are all from non-English backgrounds. In the context of this study, personal interactions, emotional reflections and body gestures are important, as the participants had limited English words to explain their ideas and emotions. Human emotions are a complex concept and, as Erickson (2011, p. 208) points out, video is a powerful tool for researchers who are ‘attempting to understand events whose structure is too complex to be comprehended all at once, given the limits on human information processing’. In other words:

using the videocam reveals the paradox in the hyphen space of participation-observation where the tensions of being observed while directing that observation and positioning the researchers as both Big Brother and co-researcher can encourage particular enactments of the research process (Whiting et al., 2018, p. 334).

Video-based fieldwork is one of the most established methods in the social sciences, whereby the video camera collects naturally occurring data. As previously noted, the video recording techniques also work during a research process as a second eye for a researcher. Jewitt (2012a, p. 3) emphasises its fundamental role in focusing ‘on the

17 As was explained in previous sections of this chapter, the video observation has been done through the efforts was greatly limited by lack of professional crew and a locked off camera and lack of founding.
description of the structures of interaction order, the social and behavioural mechanisms and regularities that people use to coordinate and organise their activities with others’.

**Video as an aesthetic documentary**

A documentary is a broad term to describe a non-fiction movie or what Grierson (1933, p. 8), the man who coined the term at the heart of the UK documentary movement, defined as ‘the creative treatment of actuality’. However, there has been a lot of discussion over the last century about the nature of reality by addressing ‘what is actuality or reality?’ and whether the camera is able to present reality. For instance, some argue that the notion of reality has a vague meaning and ‘is a scarce resource’ (Carey, 2008, p. 66). Aufderheide (2007, p. 27) contests that ‘reality is not what is out there but what we know, understand, and share with each other of what is out there’. In other words, the reality is what the storyteller behind the camera tells us. As Comolli (1980, p. 135) declares, it is naïve to think the camera records a real event, ‘it provides us with an objective and impartial image of that reality’ as ‘the represented is seen via a representation which, necessarily, transforms it’. From this perspective, the producer standpoint is highlighted, as:

> [the] actuality is submitted to the creativity of the filmmaker, who manipulates it through more or less deliberate processes of selection and association, in order to go beyond the boundaries of direct observation, and to give it a precise, often politically-oriented meaning (Sapino & Hoenisch, 2011, p. 4).

My experience in producing *Looking for the Phoenix Within* suggests that such an approach has potentially far-reaching consequences for both the production process and the outcomes of that process. It affects the style and content of the story that can be told, which bring to mind the question of, what is the nature of the relationship between
visual stories and the world they seek to represent? Notably, when the role of an academic researcher is conflated with the role of documentary producer, it becomes critical to acknowledge the concept of the insider-outsider researcher.

**Insider-outsider researcher**

This study was shaped around the combination of my personal experience as an immigrant woman and my professional experience in the media, to find a way to help others in displaced situations. As a researcher—positioned as an insider researcher—I tried to ‘simultaneously being an onlooker in the stalls and a member of the cast’ (Shaw, 2011, p. 10). Positioning a researcher as an insider gives a view of reality or an emic perspective, which is one of the principals of qualitative research (Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods, 2008). Decades ago, linguist Kenneth Lee Pike (1969) also pointed to the need for incorporating emic view in cross-cultural research to reflect local practices of cultures. Being an insider researcher has advantages and disadvantages. Shinozaki (2012) argues researcher-positioning takes on a dominant meaning according to similarities in ethnicity, gender and social and economic class. In the same vein, Bonner and Tolhurst (2002, p. 8-9) identify three key advantages of aligning the researcher and research subject in the domains of ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic class as:

- having a greater understanding of the culture studied
- not unnaturally altering the flow of social interaction
- having an established intimacy that promotes both the telling and judging of truth.
Contrastingly, many other researchers point out the problems or disadvantages of being an insider researcher. A critical point is when an inside researcher unconsciously makes incorrect assumptions about the research process based on their prior knowledge or considered bias (DeLyser, 2001; Hewitt-Taylor, 2002). However, others answer this criticism by making the point that in qualitative methods, the researcher position and its effects are not relevant because insider researcher turns ‘this methodological point into a commitment to reflexivity’ (Malterud, 2001, p. 485).

Since reflexivity involves a process of ongoing mutual shaping between researcher and research, in any way the researcher’s background affects the subject and angle of investigation, making ‘the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions’ (Malterud, 2001, p. 483). The concept of bias has also been the centre of many debates in relation to reflexive research methods and the insider researcher position. In this regard, Malterud (2001) dismisses the bias issue as long as the researcher mentions their position. Further, she values the different perspective by researchers that ‘might lead to the development of different, although equally valid, understandings of a particular situation under study’ (Malterud, 2001, p. 484).

**Positioning the researcher in this study**

Following these points in the literature, I will pinpoint my position as an insider researcher in this study, and especially the video documentation as being based on my background. I am acutely aware of the myriad of decisions and inputs that go into the final form of any video documentation coming from the personal view of the producer or storyteller. *Looking for the Phoenix Within* is no exception. Although my identity at this point in my life is a mix of what I have been and what I am now—that is mostly shaped by my latest personal experiences as a female immigrant in Australia—as an
adult language learner, I still struggle with my accent and looking for words to make myself understood. During the last 15 years in Australia, I have encountered many of the difficulties that this study has revealed as common and similar issues for many immigrants, with similar experiences regardless of their background and culture.

The turning point in my migration life was when I was involved in volunteer work for organisations working with immigrants (further details are provided in the Preface).

Throughout those years, I met many other immigrants, both men and women, and many other volunteers, both native and from an immigrant background, from whom I learnt resilience and passion for a positive life despite the odds. These people were later my inspiration in designing this study.

**Academic video report/documentation**

*Looking for the Phoenix Within* is video documentation on the process of this study and the PVPW. The video structure was kept simple, in a similar style to everyday web-based videos. However, I believe *Looking for the Phoenix Within* video documentation serves the purpose of reporting on this study. Today it is easy to post research findings as a short video clip on the internet on different video-sharing and educational websites. Like others, researchers have the advantages of using video in its new form an availability due to technological advances and digitisation. The everyday web-based documentaries in different formats and lengths ‘have made possible mail-order video rental, digital video recorders, broadband television and cell phone movies’ (Aufderheide, 2007, p. 144).

The video documentation/reports that are made for publishing research results or academic reporting video documentaries are mostly distinguished by their ‘differences in audience, in emphasis, and, particularly, in the time frame’ (Shrum & Duque, 2012,
The other distinguishing aspect of an academic documentary is that it cannot have all the necessary features of a documentary film for the box office. An academic documentary ‘responds to issues in the research literature, is produced for presentations at meetings and classrooms, and is provided without charge on the internet is indistinguishable from the academic movies that characterise qualitative research products in the 21st century’ (Shrum & Duque, 2012, p. 5).

The other unique characteristic of Looking for the Phoenix Within video relates to the distribution style, which is designed for the internet. The overall aim of this study, and especially the PVPW training, was to enable the participants to play a more active role in the public sphere. Through digitisation, the public sphere is more open to those previously known as audiences who now play more significant roles in the online platforms. As the PVPW was designed to encourage its participants to distribute their videos on the internet to connect with others, the Looking for the Phoenix Within video was also produced to communicate and connect with an audience on the internet.

New media ‘documentaries are also becoming an ever-more-valued commercial enterprise at for-profit cable television networks and a popular amateur genre on YouTube’ (Nisbet & Aufderheide, 2009, p. 450). The video/visual explosion relates to what Thoman (1992) describes as the ‘image culture’ that changed our modern world. Video has the capacity to grab people's attention in completely different ways. The rise in visual cultural more than 20 years ago attracted Davis’s (1992,n. p) attention, as he claimed ‘oral and written communication are in decline because a new form of communication, communication by image, has emerged’. However, we translate it, and we have to accept the change in communication as inevitable. With the emergence of smart mobile phones, communication has changed in ways that were unthinkable 20
years ago. The image culture has now changed from the influences of television and cinema to the everyday life of ordinary people.

Moreover, videos on the internet are radically changing the distribution possibilities available to documentary films that do not always get attention from film study scholars. As Aufderheide (2007, p. 147) points out:

New technologies vastly increase the volume of production under the rubric of documentary. This volume may create new subgenres or may eventually force rethinking. When political operatives, fourth graders, and product marketers all make downloadable documentaries, will we redraw parameters around what we mean by ‘documentary?’

Addressing this crucial question has been a concern for practitioners and scholars, especially when websites such as YouTube continue to expand the possibilities for documentary production.

**Chapter summary**

A fundamentally practical activity occurs within a broader social and cultural context. Two of the critical methods used to reflect on my practice during the research project have been writing a reflective journal and video recording the PVPW sessions. My role was not to focus on the video recordings, as cameras were left in fixed positions, for the duration of the PVPW sessions. The audio captured by the cameras also severely affected the outcome of the production. All the gathered raw data—video footage from the PVPW and the participants’ interviews—had to go through to the process of post-production. My role at that stage was focused on making choices and decisions about what would be used and the outcome of the product in terms of the best available
options. The post-production process started with reviewing and logging the video clips. Then I wrote a script in line with the goals of this study and available footage.

Naturally, questions have to be answered, such as: which stories I wanted to tell, how those stories should be told; whether one take is better than previous one, whether the background sound is too loud; or the dialogue worth using, and so on. This involvement in the storytelling brought up issues around my position as a researcher and producer, including the extent of my influence and choices in the outcome video, and, importantly, whether a critical objective of this study that positioned me as insider researcher was the correct decision.

Given these points, I believe the strategy of being an insider researcher, with all the criticisms of the process of this study and production of the video report documentary, addresses its purpose well.
CHAPTER 6—Participant Characteristics

This chapter provides an in-depth description of the participants’ characteristics and backgrounds. As Mann (2016) explains, transformation in the life of an immigrant is a gradual process and resiliency will be required to restructure the ego and re-establish an optimal psychic equilibrium. The strength of an immigrant’s self-identity and cultural identity before immigration has an enormous impact on their resiliency and capacity for adaptation to the new culture. This section includes six biographies of the PVPW participants.

The participants in this study were from three different groups in terms of nationality and visa type. Three were East Africans from two neighbouring countries on student visas with their dependents. The other three were Iranian-Australian women who had lived in Australia for less than four years: two had Australian citizenship, and the third held a permanent visa. The age range varied from 18–48 years (see Table 2). Against those variables, the women had a lot in common—not only in their experience as immigrants but in their goals and ideas. Five out of six participants in this study had tertiary education, and two were studying in a higher education program at the time of the PVPW.

The participants’ similarities in education level and comparable level of English language were factors that brought them closer together during the PVPW. More details on the language requirements for those granted skill migration or student visas to Australia are explained in the next chapter in the ‘Language shock’ section.
Table 2 - The study participants information

Following is a review of the participants’ personal stories from the researcher’s perspective and the data gathered during the PVPW. Each participant’s story is accompanied by a brief description of her final short video.

Anna

Anna was from Tanzania, in Australia on a dependent visa and the youngest workshop participant. As she had been educated in English boarding schools, she spoke English fluently. She was the second child of well-educated parents, and her siblings were also in university or boarding schools back in Tanzania. Her father, a Christian pastor, was educated in the USA years ago and was a well-known civil rights activist for widowed women in East Africa. Her mother—Stella, who also participated in the PVPW—worked as a nutrition specialist for rural women for the government of Tanzania, which granted her a scholarship to start her master’s degree at UQ. Upon her arrival in
Australia, Anna completed a certificate in aged care and began to work as a personal carer in a nursing home. I met her in the first workshop session and learnt that she was the first and only person to respond to the PVPW flyers and encouraged her mother to contact me.

Anna’s social life was within the circle of work colleagues and her family’s church friends. She explained in one of the interviews that her best friends were also from immigrant backgrounds and fellow churchgoers. The legacy of activist parents weighed heavily on Anna and influenced all her ideas; although, she demonstrated a promisingly strong personality. Anna was highly dependent on her family and her culture, and at times during interviews, she echoed her mother's answers. Her ideas and goals involved assisting the goals of her family. Anna explained her reasons for participating in the workshop:

I may say that I was interested in video things because we have mum graduation just soon. So, I was thinking that instead of asking someone to come and take the video and pay him all my money, it is better [to] learn that then [take it] by my camera. I [will] be the one responsible for tak[ing] her video. Also, I got my little young brother, follows me, he is 12 years old, and at the end of the year he will have confirmation, it is a Christian religion thing, it is kind of graduation, but we call it confirmation. So it’s a bit of ceremony that you have to take ... also coming to Australia is interesting, so when [you] travelling you have to take also videos processing the new videos and the good ones, then when I go back home I’ll tell to younger [sibling] that look this how Australia is. And there will be good process video, and I will be a good example because I am the second one and there are two others following me, and they think they got a good sister.
The primary factor in her friendships was religion, as all the friends she mentioned were related to her church and from different ethnic backgrounds. Anna loves the same music as others in her age group and was active on social media. However, Anna explained cultural differences by addressing inappropriate dress codes in Australian television advertisements. She clarified that according to her background culture, ‘I can say that because of some [of] that advertisement as what we saw in the TV, people not wearing [clothes] properly but that [is] a bit different from my country’.

The cultural difference was also demonstrated in the way she introduced herself mainly, as a faithful daughter to her parents and loyal to her East-African culture. This difference in cultural identity is highlighted when she introduces herself as her parents’ child overall, but to identify herself in Australia, she acknowledges herself as a person working in a nursing home. Despite the age difference between Anna and the others, she actively participated in the workshop and produced a short video about the educational system in her high school. She presented the subject in the video and explained her school educational system. Later, she quickly and independently edited her video with little instruction.

- **The block system, a short video by Anna**

Anna was eager to tell a story from her experiences of studying in an English language boarding school. From the first moment, it seems she was fascinated by the subject of her video. The school’s block system was a program that forced students only to speak English and was based on punishing those who did not follow the rules. Although Anna does not explain the system in a negative way, it has obviously had a long-lasting

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18 Anna’s story could be watched in this link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-NHXuanDQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-NHXuanDQ)
influence on her, which she has not forgotten years later. She is the only presenter in the video, and at the same time, directs her mother, Stella, who is the cameraperson. In the video which is recorded in a playground (see Figure 11), Anna is continuously moving during her performance, which matches the continuous motion of the camera. Although she was provided with a tripod, she preferred the moving camera. Anna was advised to re-record the video footage, but she decided not to. Anna was confident working with technology when editing her video story, and when finished she told me she felt very proud.

- **Anna after the PVPW**

At the time of the PVPW in 2014, Anna and her family were hoping she could stay in Australia and follow her studies, but this dream faded due to problems with qualification recognition and high expenses for a foreign student in Australia. The family persuaded her to go back to Tanzania, get her undergraduate degree, and then apply for a student visa to Australia. As time passed Anna and her family decided to follow her studies back home as a medical doctor. In a messaging conversation with Anna in 2017, I found out she was a third-year medical student and later in 2018 that and she had started her internship in the hospital.
Luko

Luko was a Zambian student at UQ at the time the PVPW was conducted. She held a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Zambia and joined the Industrial Department in Zambia as a staff development fellow. At that time, Luko had been in Australia for over one year on a scholarship to complete her Master of Public Health. Stella, another participant in the PVPW, introduced Luko to me. The primary challenge during the project was to get this quiet girl to speak out. Luko was aware of her problem, as she mentioned during our first official interview that her main reason for attending the PVPW was to socialise with different people and learn new skills to help her overcome her lack of confidence. Luko’s awareness of her personality motivated her to learn new skills. In her interview, she expressed wanting to find a way to solve her problem:
To be more confident [in] speaking to others and voicing my opinion and also helping other people in my situation who find hard to come out and just speak their minds. So, I am hoping that through [the] video, I can be empowered to help others in similar situations.

As a short-term immigrant, Luko was struggling to find her place in Australian society. In early interviews, she tried to avoid giving a direct answer on her feelings about living in Australia by referring to environmental similarities between Australia and Zambia. However, she mentioned it was hard for her to find a job and the trivial nature of casual jobs which were very different from the level of education and experience she had. In her first interview, she expressed her willingness to go back home to Zambia. In her last interview, Luko changed her view towards staying in Australia. She was looking to find a way to stay if possible, and emphasised that she believed she could ‘fit’ into Australian society:

The first time I came here I must have been homesick, and I was thinking to finish my study and going home, but later on I became used to this place; I can find my way, find the new friends, getting comfortable, life is easier, and I don’t have to be worrying about the problems we have back home and then ... It will be good for me to stay here.

She was a regular social media user and eager to improve her skills by learning to produce videos. As she explained in one of her interviews:

I expected to learn new skills or how I can make and take photographs and video and editing come up with something that is good and quality.
In Australia, she had a few, and not very close friends from mainstream society, whom she mostly met at church. She was also close to her housemates, who were from African and Asian ethnicities.

Her eagerness after learning to work with an editing program prompted her to speak up and ask for any accessible free editing program she could have on her laptop. In her last interview, she confessed that gaining confidence from the PVPW helped her produce her final short video. The skills give her a new position with her peers, as she explained:

I show it to my friends, and they were so amazed and so excited and [they said]
Oh wow you did such good things.

These new skills gave her efficacy, she explained, ‘[I am] very excited, and I want to take videos and then work on them’. She knew she could easily use her skills to make new videos:

When I go to some exciting event and some beautiful places, I like to take videos and make stories out of those videos.

Learning about the concept of citizen journalism was instrumental in her journey towards confidence in her ability to create content:

If there are issues that people around me want to bring forward to [the] government and other people I can just take the videos of them and just give them to media.
• *A traditional African dish, a short video by Luko*

Luko recorded and edited the short video ‘A Traditional African Dish’. As its name suggests, it is a traditional visual recipe by one of Luko’s housemates (see Figure 12). She recorded the video from the starting point of the dish. The performer explains different steps of cooking and Luko, as an observer and videographer, asks him questions to clarify the steps. In her first editing draft, she was cutting all the recordings of her voices from the video, but after some discussion with me and the other participants, she decided to leave her audio in at certain points.

• *Luko after the PVPW*

Our last meeting in October 2014 was a week before her departure from Australia. A new, relaxed Luko showed me her latest video works. She was hopeful that if she could not get her previous job back in Zambia, she could use her newfound skills to get another job. Fortunately, Luko got her job back, and she is still working for the University of Zambia as a lecturer. In our last, lengthy messaging conversation at the end of 2017, I found out she was designing a new course for a student about the use of video in training public health in society.

19 Luko’s short video can be watched in [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJOkgHKjhXc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJOkgHKjhXc)
Mana

Mana was an Iranian-Australian woman with a background in industrial engineering. She graduated from one of the top universities in Iran and worked in the industry for an extended period. She immigrated with her husband to Australia in 2009 and was working in the same industry until two years before the workshops. Her passion for art—specifically, photography—finally won, and she left her job to make her dreams a reality. She followed her goals by taking courses in photography, although at the time she contacted me to put her name down for the video workshops, she expressed that she was not yet sure quitting her job had been the right decision.

Mana had a well-established position in Australia. She had mainstream friends from her workplace, which she described as a ‘good relationship’. However, her best friends are from her ethnic community of Iranians. In terms of adjusting to her new host country, Mana declared that despite the friendly and caring people, and freedom she gained in
Australia, she found everything different, especially culture and language. She was very passionate about learning video making techniques and determined to make a documentary one day. She described her passion for art:

I love sharing my ideas with other people and one of the reasons that I love photography is that because I see something, but it's not enough for me [to] enjoy those subjects alone. I want to share it. I want to show beauty to other people, [the] beauty of a subject to other people, and I think it is similar [to] the video. I think some subjects that I want to share some moment. I think [video] will help me do that. And, I always loved journalism as well; I want to be a photojournalist, hopefully, one day, and also, I want to be a portrait [photographer] I think, I love and enjoy sharing that to the media as well.

In our interviews, she mentioned that she always wanted to be an artist from a young age. In one of her first interviews during the workshops, Mana said:

I love to create movies, to record what I love [is that] I can play them, I can get photos, but I never tried video. I have some things in my mind that to put them together to make, to tell stories.

A set of factors such as family, cultural background and an uncertain future prevented her from following that. She explains:

I think as a result of immigrating, I could be brave enough to shift from engineering, which was my background major, that I didn't like, to photography, something that I like, and I think it wasn't possible in Iran. I was forced from outside. It was something made from our culture that [was forced me not to be] feel free to do what I want.
• **We, the Street Ghosts, a short video by Mana**

Mana is passionate about the documentary videos, as is shown in her final short video, a critical social view on the use of mobile phones in our everyday life, ‘We, The Street Ghosts’.\(^20\) She used her experiences as a photographer and her curious mind to record her journey one day in the Brisbane CBD, regarding the way people are attached to their mobile phones. In this video, she preferred to keep her position behind the camera and use the visual elements, which still need practise, to tell her story.

• **Mana after the PVPW**

After the completion of the PVPW, Mana finally made the decision to start her business in professional photography. During 2015 and the following year, she had struggled to establish her business, which from 2017 has been stable and profitable. Along with changing her profession, Mana also had to fight in her personal life to form a new identity for herself, which was finally resolved in 2018 (in a good way).

Now, she is an established children and portrait photographer who lives independently and tries to be a mentor to fellow immigrant women.

\(^20\) Mana’s short video can be watched in [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0sCxBJQbv8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F0sCxBJQbv8)
Stella

Stella was a woman with a strong personality, which comes from her role in private and public life. Stella introduced herself as an active health officer in the Tanzanian government with a mission to help rural women, and as a mother and wife. Stella and her family were in Australia over the course of the one year she was studying on scholarship for a Master of International Public Health at the time of the workshops. She had left behind three more children, who were studying in boarding schools in Tanzania. Our first interaction was when Stella sent an email regarding the workshops. Later, she also offered to help find more participants. I met Stella two days later at the UQ library, where she also introduced me to Luko and told me her 18-year-old daughter would also be attending the workshop.

Stella’s outgoing and confident personality helped her to find her place in Australian society; however, her friends were limited to classmates and churchgoers. She admitted that while people are amiable, there was a definite cultural difference between her
culture and Australian culture. Stella and Anna’s participation in the workshops became a family affair. Her husband, a Christian activist for widows in East Africa, was also indirectly involved in the workshops. As Stella explained:

Even in my family with Anna with my husband all of us, it is the first time... so we look at [ourselves and say] ‘oh I can do something [by] myself’. So it [has been] just a miracle to us.

Stella’s husband’s activities had a significant role in their life, and this persuaded Stella and Anna both to learn the skills of video production for the organisation:

So, when we are going back, we can just do more than that. As I’ve told you, my husband is working with widowed [women]. And they have stories. We can just help him; maybe arrange video or pictures as well, after this workshop. So, I was thinking more of that about using our knowledge when we [are] backing home after we do this workshop, so we thank you so much for this... this our time to make changes.

She was determined to attend the workshop and was sure the training could help her goals in the future. During the first interview, she told me:

First of all, it was my daughter, it was something in African House then she came with a flyer and showed me ‘mum look at this, there is the video workshop somewhere’, and I told[said] ’oh this is only for immigrants’, but when we first went through that flyer we thought that’s even we have a chance and because we just leave in [a] developing country, there is no much on this, no much training in this area, so we were so much interested we can learn something and make changes in our area.
Stella was aware of her lack of skills in the area of media and was determined to change the situation as much as possible. She explained her experience with a video camera she bought years ago:

I purchase even my camera, and never used it, and I never thought in my life someone could do it. Then you start teaching your video empowering women [workshops]. I never thought of that, but when I learnt I found that so useful … there [are many] people [which] they like visual things [there is] no [need for] reading much, they want to see something and learn something and make changes through video.

Stella, as an active nutrition advisor and professional in Tanzania’s rural areas, has a plan to use video for change. As a government official, she was sure that her learning video making could change the lives of women in that area. She explained her intentions:

My intention is that when I am back, I want to proper special video for them and help them in that area so that we can work for [a] healthier generation [by] correcting the stunted rate which is 2%, only through food.

• **Invisible Women and Widows Unknown Heroes two short video by Stella**

Stella was passionate about learning, and she was the first participants to complete her video ‘Invisible Women’ 21 about her husband’s organisation (see Figure 14). Later, she completed another short video about her passion, ‘Widows Unknown Heroes’ 22 (see Figure 15). She was the only participants to make two short videos. The amount of

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21 Stella’s short video can be watched in [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF7V0vDp870](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jF7V0vDp870)

22 Stella’s short video can be watched in [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88HDzMK54iE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88HDzMK54iE)
practice she had made her a suitable assistant to help other participants in their video editing progress. She explains her excitement as:

I never thought of that, but when I learnt I found that so useful … there are [many] people [which] they like visual things. [There is] no [need for] reading much; they want to see something and learn something and make changes through video.

- **Stella after the PVPW**

After Stella and her family left Australia, Stella showed a lot of interest in video making. She went back to her previous job as a nutrition trainer for women in the rural area for the Tanzanian government. During 2015 and 2016 Stella collaborated with a Tanzanian TV station to increase nutrition awareness and the food status of children and women in rural areas. In 2017, Stella accepted the position of National Consultant for Food Security and Nutrition, with the United Nations and is still active in this position.

*Figure 14 - A shot of Stella’s short video, ‘Invisible women’*
Tarlan

Tarlan was an Iranian-Australian immigrant and mother of two. With a bachelor’s degree in statistics, she had experience working as a planner in oil companies in Iran and Australia. At the time the workshop started, Tarlan was in the process of a lengthy court case to get custody of her daughter from her ex-husband. Although she was happily remarried and had a baby boy, getting her daughter back was vital to her, as the child was stolen from her seven years ago and left in the US. She was also profoundly in grief for her mother, who had passed away two years earlier in the absence of her children in Iran. The severity of the tragedy forced her to step away from work and re-assess her goals and identity. Tarlan was determined to follow her dreams of being an artist. Although she was an excellent painter and had attended some art classes, at the time she had decided to participate in the PVPW:
[I] always like art and painting and making films and I have always done this thing, so I want to give myself the opportunity to study and try to do this kind of things.

The idea of being an artist had always been with her. Like Mana, she was not interested in following her profession. Tarlan was still at the stage of uncertainty between leaving her profession and planning to enter the art industry. She explained her passion for the film industry as:

I know that because since I was a child, I had it in myself and always... saw my life as part of a movie or film and everything I saw and everything I heard I just felt oh my god this is going to be a perfect movie… I should make this, I should record this thing, and that’s why I was very interesting to paint. I am still really enjoying painting, but I still thought that... there is a lot more I want to do like I love to write stories, stories that I heard, about myself and this thing the music, the sounds they were all interesting to me.

Again, the disincentive of factors within Iranian society stopped her. She explained her passion for being an architect despite the inhibiting factors:

Unfortunately, in Iran, not anybody can study the thing that they like. I always like both art and I like mathematics as well, but because of maybe the culture or the way that people thinks about, it’s better to be [an] engineer, rather than be an artist ... you earning more money or you’re doing [the] more important job. So, I never thought to go to university as an artist to study art or filmmaking.

She had experienced many personal problems during her life, but she emerged with strength. Immigration and issues with her first child’s custody significantly impacted
her life. When I first met her at the start of the workshops, she was determined to tell her story to the others:

And another reason [have] I had some experiences in my life that some of them [are] not very happy experiences. Some of them were sad, but I gain some very good experiences out of them, which I really wanted to share those stories with other people. Hoping it can help others, the people who might have the same situation or they're in [the] same situation maybe they can benefit from these stories.

Tarlan had to put in a lot of effort to participate in the PVPW sessions each Saturday. She had to leave her infant son at home, which was a difficult decision. She was eager to learn and had many fresh ideas for making films, mostly about her past and the problems she had experienced:

I wanted to make films, but I didn't have much hope I really wait. I stop[ped] my job about two years ago, I had my baby and then ... but all the time I was thinking about this, and suddenly I ask my husband to buy me a new camera. I promise that I'm going to make a short movie. I was searching for [video] classes, but it was very hard to find one. I had no idea ... when I was comparing myself to Hollywood, like film directors and I said that’s impossible. And then when I saw that advertisement on Facebook, it was kind of like something happens that someone is, I don't know ... [it seemed] that God is sitting there and listening to what you say, giving you whatever you want. But to me, it was really something like the story. You wish to do something; you don't have an idea what you can do, and suddenly you see.
• *A Day with Aiden, a short video by Tarlan*

Tarlan’s final video story, ‘A Day with Aiden’, was about her life. She later revealed that the video helped her overcome the issue of motherhood. Tarlan changed her story a couple of times during the course of the PVPW. At first, she hoped to tell the story of the child custody battle she experienced with her ex-husband. However, she found it difficult as her daughter (the subject of custody) was not ready to appear in front of the camera. ‘A day with Aidan’ is also the story of struggling as a parent during a day with her baby boy. The video followed Tarlan, her husband and their 18-month old son from morning to afternoon (see Figure 16).

• *Tarlan after the PVPW*

During the PVPW, Tarlan was in the process of deciding what to do with her life. She was in love with painting, and after the PVPW, chose to follow her dreams. During 2015, she completed a couple of training courses in story writing and traditional dancing. In 2016, she completed a diploma in art therapy, and now actively works as an art therapist with the Iranian Community of Queensland. As a dancer, she has found her position in the community and performs at different Iranian community events and celebrations.

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23 Tarlan’s short video can be watched in [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjfyITbO3Ec](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjfyITbO3Ec)
Zahra

Zahra was a refugee from Iran who gained permanent residency in Australia two years earlier. Zahra was a very gentle person who lacked confidence. As she had not lived in Australia very long at the time of the workshop, she was still struggling to find her way in her new country. Zahra had a Bachelor of Information Technology (IT) and previously owned and managed an internet cafe in Iran. Zahra was also a talented writer, and as she stated in her interviews, was interested in the video workshops so she could visualise her stories. At the time of the PVPW she had just finished her English language course and was desperate to find a job:

[Having] financial independence in Australia is not easy for migrants. Actually, for people who speak English as a second language. So, I had a hard time to look for [the] job into two years of been living in Australia. So, I think the most
important thing for me, to make my future here, is to be financially independent of government.

Even though her bachelor’s degree qualified her in Australia, Zahra did not have confidence in her knowledge and started to study IT at TAFE. She explained:

There are some reason[s] that makes me decide to go to the TAFE. One is because it’s more practical than theory that's exactly what I was asking for. Because, as you said I did a bachelor’s degree in Iran, but that was more theory staff rather than practical, and I feel pretty much weak in doing practical in networking. So, I suppose that was a right decision. And one more thing was that I'm not really familiar with the education system in Australia, which is quite different from education system back at home. So, it is a good start for me to enter to [the] education system here because TAFE is pretty much easier than university and as I said is more practical.

As noted above, Zahra was interested in video making as a way to bring her short stories to life:

I am not a camera person, I even don't have a camera, but since you [gave me] permission to take the camera with me and go into the society and record peoples life and behaviours. That might give me the knowledge to write about them better as I said I am practising writing. So, yeah, that might help me.

• **Zahra final short video**

Unfortunately, Zahra was the only participants who did not complete a short video for the PVPW. Despite having recorded some footage and starting to edit videos in the PVPW, she did not finish any of them. Mostly, she was not happy with her position as a
cameraperson, and her personal confusion and lack of confidence stopped her choosing a story.

- **Zahra after the PVPW**

After the PVPW, Zahra continued her studies and graduated from the Queensland University of Technology with a bachelor’s degree in IT in 2016. Zahra still writes short stories. In 2015, she founded a volunteer group with the Iranian Society of Queensland, which audio records fiction literature for people with disabilities. In 2017, Zahra commenced in a position as a network and IT specialist with the Brisbane City Council.

- **Where are the participants now?**

In brief the participants attained positive outcomes in their personal lives after the workshop. While some of their achievements may not seem related to the PVPW, they are relevant to the participants’ progress in terms of self-efficacy

Immediately after the PVPW was finalised, Mana started her own photography business. Two years on, she is a well-known and highly regarded professional portrait, newborn and pregnancy photographer.

After the PVPW, Tarlan put away some of her dreams to be a filmmaker and decided to complete an art therapy diploma. A couple of years on, she is now a qualified art therapist, conducting art therapy sessions almost every week in the Iranian Society of Queensland building. She also has found fame as one of the traditional Iranian dancers in Queensland.

Two years after the PVPW, Zahra graduated as a networking IT professional from the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane and now works in one of the city
council offices. She is still an active writer and leads a group of volunteers who audio-record books for people with disabilities.

Straight after the PVPW finished, Stella and Anna went back to Tanzania. Stella went back to her continuing position as a nutrition coach for rural women in Tanzania. During that time, she has recorded nutritional recipes to teach illiterate women to use foods in better ways. One year later, Stella was assigned as a UN ambassador for nutrition in Tanzania. Upon returning to Tanzania, her daughter, Anna, went back to college and three years later is a medical intern in a Tanzanian hospital.

Six months after the PVPW, Luko graduated from UQ and went back to Zambia. She has a lecturing job at the University of Zambia. Luko’s interest in video making which was developing at a personal level making private videos, shifted to a higher level. In 2016 she asked me for more information about video making, as she was designing a course for university about the use of video in promoting public health.

Chapter summary

This study has built on the personal experiences of the individual participants in the PVPW. For this reason, it is essential to not only have an overview of the Australian context of the study, but also to become familiar with the PVPW participants. This chapter fills this gap by collating information gathered from face to face communications, interviews and details provided by the participants in the questionnaire. Notably, the descriptive characteristics of the participants provided here is limited to the study period four years ago, with some subsequent correspondence after that, and has been written from the researcher’s perspective. This limitation is
recognised, as this chapter is not a representation of the personality and whole character of these incredible women.
This chapter presents the study’s findings in three sections. The first is an overview of the resources and socio-demographic characteristics of participants at the start of the PVPW. The available resources are the subject of empowerment assessment, as they are known indicators of the process of empowerment. Acknowledgement of the primary resources and the ones created later during the empowerment process can have a critical and direct influence on the level of empowerment of the subjects. Kabeer (2001) categorises empowerment indicators into three groups of conditions/resources, agency/process and achievements/outcomes. Human assets, such as education, wellbeing and socio-demographic characteristics, have a positive impact on agency and empowerment (Samman & Santos, 2009, p.19). Thus, ignoring participants’ pre-existing resources would lead to an inaccurate estimation of agency formation. The second section of this chapter examines the participants’ attitudes toward immigration issues such as culture shock, language shock and stereotyping. The last section of this chapter reviews the limitations of this study.

Demographic resources and conditions/socio-demographics

This section provides an overview of data on the resources and socio-demographic characteristics of the PVPW participants and their attitudes towards immigration hardship. Resources and agency are the two main components of the empowerment process that work together to empower the individual (Kabeer, 2001). Personal resources enable individuals to choose and make their environments to help them towards a successful life. (Bandura, 1997b). In this study, ‘resources’ are defined in accordance with Kabeer’s (2001, p. 20) framework, which explains them as ‘material,
human or social resources which serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice’. In this
definition, resources or conditions are important tools in enabling individuals to
transform their lives by participating in a life-changing process. In the context of
immigrant women, these conditions are specifically about the way they settle into their
new host country, both as women and immigrants. The resources and conditions of each
immigrant are different due to their various geographical and cultural backgrounds.

Consequently, the process of integration or adaptation varies for every person.
Immigrants with more pre-existing resources, such as high skills and education, can find
integration much more comfortable. Notably, adaptation is a two-way process, and the
role of the host society’s acceptance should not be ignored. However, this emic study
aims to explore the process of adaptation from the immigrant standpoint. The action of
becoming involved and communicating with the host country’s society by an immigrant
is a critical element of immigrant adaptation.

Although not a sufficient condition for empowerment, as noted above, resources are
essential to establish the position of the individual in the process of empowerment
(Lokshin & Ravallion, 2005). Thus, the resources are direct indicators of assistance in
the agency being exercised (Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 11). Next is a review of the
participants’ resources.

Social connections
Social connections are central to immigrant gaining the information they need to adjust
(Walker, 1999, p. 161). Gsir (2014, p. 3) argues that interaction between immigrants
and their host society in the three domains of public, private and governmental
institutions can result in integration. According to Putnam (2000), immigrants’ contacts
with natives are a form of bridging social capital that is crucial for providing access to
external assets and information diffusion, while connections with co-ethnics are a form of bonding social capital that strengthens reciprocity and solidarity. Ager and Strang (2008, p. 177) also find these social contacts important in the integration of refugees into the host society and add a further category as a social link.

For the purpose of this project, each participant’s social connections were divided into two categories—bond, within their ethnic community; and bridge, with other communities (see Table 3)—to give a clear picture of their interaction with others in society. Two contributing factors that influence participants’ connections are their length of stay in Australia and their immigration status. An extended stay in a host country makes it easier for immigrants to become familiar with their new social context; that is, time spent in the adaptation process is a ‘sleeping partner’ (Miglietta & Tartaglia, 2009, p. 48). Participants in the PVPW with shorter living times in Australia have lower interactions with the host community, and their social friendships are mostly bound to their ethnic and religious communities. Outside friendships are more limited to other non-English background communities.
As they stay longer and their residency status changes to permanent residency or citizenship, their relationships extend into mainstream society.

This study also reviews the participants’ level of media access and usage as an essential aspect of the social link (see Table 3). Uslaner (2003, p. 18) contends that well-informed people are more engaged in civic and social communication. Mass media is one medium that plays a crucial role in helping immigrants understand and adapt to the new culture. The media disseminates cultural elements, patterns, norms and values inherent in the new culture (Walker, 1999). Immigrants may consume mass media for information seeking, entertainment, and to learn English and improve their language skills (Lee, 2005). Zahra addresses this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Immigration status</th>
<th>Length of stay</th>
<th>Origin of friendship</th>
<th>Depth of friendship</th>
<th>Origin of friendship</th>
<th>Depth of friendship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Dependent student visa</td>
<td>One year</td>
<td>From her course Church Workplace</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Church—a refugee from Burundi</td>
<td>Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luko</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>A few from church</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>African-Asian</td>
<td>Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana</td>
<td>Citizen (skill migrant)</td>
<td>Five years</td>
<td>Workplace</td>
<td>Good relationship</td>
<td>Mostly from the Iranian community Europeans from workplace</td>
<td>Very close comfortable Good friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarlan</td>
<td>Citizen (skill migrant)</td>
<td>Six years</td>
<td>Workplace Art class</td>
<td>Good relationship</td>
<td>Mostly from the Iranian community</td>
<td>Very close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahra</td>
<td>Permanent resident (refugee)</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>No friend</td>
<td>Mostly Different Iranian ethnicities from TAFE</td>
<td>Good relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Social connections
I watch TV because I have to. I am not a TV person, but to get to use to Australian accent, I need to watch more TV shows.

With the rapid growth of modern technology, immigrants are able to connect with their old country more easily and frequently than ever before. As the participants in the PVPW were living in Australia for the duration of the study, they all had potential access to the media at the same level as mainstream Australians. How they differed from mainstream women of a similar age and education was the way they use the media. These women were from NESB, and despite their moderate level of English speaking, the participants frequently used various media formats in their native language. That is, the participants divided their media usages between their motherland media and Australian media. Comparing TV and radio usage, they were more interested in TV and visual formats of Australian media. All participants are active users of different social media platforms such as Facebook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>The internet</th>
<th>Radio</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall usage</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Almost 18 hours</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>News Games sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luko</td>
<td>Almost 24 hours of a day</td>
<td>Very active</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (not specified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana</td>
<td>Few hours a day</td>
<td>Very active</td>
<td>Just when driving</td>
<td>News Documentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>Maybe 9%</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>News back home</td>
<td>News SBS/ABC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarlan</td>
<td>Busy mum</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes (not specified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahra</td>
<td>3-4 hours</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, every day (not specified)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3- Media access and usage
Consistent with the rapid growth of modern technology and the internet, immigrants show the most interest in connecting with media from their own country, which ‘denotes either or both in their language and from their country of origin’ (Siapera, 2016, p. 36).

The participants in this study are regular users of the internet and active members of different social media channels. Three out of six participants did not show any interest in listening to radio compared to almost all watching TV, although at different levels. None of the participants indicated an interest in reading newspapers. English language skills could be the primary reason for more significant interest in the visual aspects of media. When immigrants become exposed to a new culture, their language skills are often not proficient enough to interact with media in their host society (Kim, 2001; Lee, 2005; Walker, 1999).

Lee’s (2005) study of Korean immigrants and Walker’s (1999) research on Haitian immigrants in the US indicate that ethnic community media is used more than host country media by immigrants. They recognise the availability of ethnic media in the USA as the main reason for immigrants relying on them. Both studies found that in the previous 10 years, advanced technology and the internet have made it easier for immigrants to listen, watch and interact with media in their mother language.

**Employment**

Richardson et al. (2001) suggest the successful settlement of a cohort of migrants can, in part, be judged by their employment experience (cited in Broadbent et al., 2007, p. 587). Social contact with host society members increases with immigrants’ employment rates (Kanas et al., 2011). Employment is consistently identified as a factor influencing many relevant issues, including promoting economic independence, planning for the
future, meeting members of the host society, providing opportunities to develop language skills, restoring self-esteem and encouraging self-reliance (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 169-170). During the process of participant recruitment, many women showed interest in being involved with the project because they were desperate to find paid work. The final volunteer participants in the project also struggled with their employment status. The de-skilling of highly educated migrants in host societies and the insecurity associated with that is a significant and ongoing concern in migration studies:

The concept of precariousness involves instability, lack of protection, insecurity and social or economic vulnerability … It is some combination of these factors which identifies precarious jobs, and the boundaries around the concept are inevitably to some extent arbitrary (Rodgers & Rodgers, 1989, p. 5).

At certain stages, immigrants can get caught up in temporary working positions (Anderson, 2010). Similarly, as the PVPW participants were in different stages of their immigration, they were engaged with employment issues. For some participants with a shorter stay in Australia, unemployment or underemployment were the main problems, while for others with a longer stay in Australia, job satisfaction was the central concern (see Table 4).

Although this project was not about the employment status of participants, it is essential to consider whether vocational training and participatory projects can help immigrants by restoring their self-esteem. From another perspective, newcomers may experience disadvantages because they lack social assets or social capital. However, growing resources may help immigrants, as Reitz (2007) indicates, by increasing access to the local networks that will link them to job opportunities.
As previously noted, participants in this project were from three different countries: two countries in East Africa (Tanzania and Zambia), and Iran. Their residency status in Australia also was varied, including immigrants with permanent residency, citizenship and temporary residency (student). The three participants on student visas left Australia soon after the project was finalised at the beginning of September 2014. When living in Australia, these three participants struggled with underemployment. Conversely, the Iranian participants, especially Mana and Tarlan, who were Australian citizens, had left their professional job due to a lack of satisfaction. The other Iranian participant, who at the time of the PVPW had been in Australia for just two years, also struggled with unemployment.

The employment issue also influenced the participants’ future goals and decisions. For instance, Stella, a student visa holder, planned to go back to her family in Tanzania. She was optimistic that she could leave her daughter Anna, who was on a student visa, in Australia to follow her studies. After some research, she was disappointed to find the high university fees meant it was not possible for Anna, an aged care worker, to provide
for herself and study at the same time. Ultimately, their plans changed, and Anna went back to Tanzania to study there. Underemployment was a big problem for these women, which even took over their pride:

I think it is about getting a job. It is not as easy as it [was] back home. Most of the jobs here need application. You can easily [get] casual jobs, but if you are to get [a] job qualification, [it] is not that easy.

Job satisfaction was an issue raised by two other participants who were classified as skilled migrants. They had worked for years in their professions in Australia and Iran, and now decided it was time to change their field of work. Identities can be understood as the constant process of rewriting the self and social collectives (Milligan, 2003). Therefore, reforming a person’s identity has a considerable influence on their goal setting for the future, and ideas on life as an immigrant. This reconstruction of identity is also influenced by two further factors: a change in cultural views, and a change in the host country’s level of freedom. Two highly skilled participants in the PVPW, originally from Iran, were affected by these two factors. Tarlan decided to stop working due to personal complications. She found that:

You need to spend your time the way that you like to be free to do it. Since always like art, and painting, and making films and I have always done this thing, so I want to give myself the opportunity to study and try to do this kind of things. I was always doing my painting or writing some short stories for myself …., and I always wish to have this opportunity to do the things that I like.

Mana fostered her creative side in Australia to overcome social pressure and become a successful photographer:
I had some difficulty from when came here because everything was different, but It [gives] me freedom. I found myself, especially as [a] woman, [I] was telling some of my friends last week that was the biggest thing that I [found after] my immigration. I was able to find myself as a woman to [obtain] normal rights and I think as a result of immigrating, I could be brave enough to shift from engineering, which was my background major, that I didn't like, to photography, something that I like, and I think it wasn't possible in Iran. I was force[d] from outside. It was something made from our culture, that [forced me not to] feel free to do what I want.

Conversely, the other Iranian participant who was also highly educated but had a shorter stay in Australia was affected by the lack of employment:

Financial independence in Australia is not easy for migrants. Actually, for people who speak English as a second language. So, I had a hard time to look for the job into two years of been living in Australia. So, I think the most important thing for me, to make my future here is to be financially independent of government.

**Education**

Education is widely recognised by its strong correlation with multiple forms of civic and social engagement regardless of gender, race and generation (Putnam, 2000, p. 186). Well informed people and citizens who feel more powerful are more likely to participate in all forms of civic and political life (Uslaner, 2003, p. 18). Malhotra and Schuler (2005) observe that education and employment are the most used indicators of empowerment. However, they argue that these resources ‘do not automatically indicate control: the connection must be established rather than assumed’ (Malhotra & Schuler,
2005, p. 604). Thus, an immigrant’s education level and civic engagement are not directly related, as the host society’s perceptions are also relevant.

Although five of six participants in this project held a tertiary education degree (see Table 5), they did not feel confident in engaging in social communication.

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### Table 5: Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Immigration status</th>
<th>Length of stay</th>
<th>Relevant employment</th>
<th>The highest level of education</th>
<th>Qualified degree in Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Dependent student visa</td>
<td>One year</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Year 12 high school Certificate III in Aged Care</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luko</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science in Agriculture</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana</td>
<td>Citizen (skill migrant)</td>
<td>Five years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Bachelor of Industrial Engineering</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella</td>
<td>Student visa</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bachelor of Science in Nutrition</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarlan</td>
<td>Citizen (skill migrant)</td>
<td>Six years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Bachelor of Mathematics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahra</td>
<td>Permanent resident (refugee)</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bachelor of Information System</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malhotra and Mather (1997) observe that education and employment have been most frequently used as a proxy for empowerment, arguing that ‘[e]ven if these measures can be considered indicators of access to resources, they do not automatically indicate control’.

### Immigration attitude

The immigrants’ resources and attitudes towards confrontation in their host society can influence empowerment results. Basadur and Basadur (2011, p. 85) describe attitudes as ‘summary judgments of a stimulus, object, or event which aid individuals in structuring their complex environments. As such, attitudes can be seen as items of social
knowledge, built from experiences, beliefs, and feelings generated by an attitude object’.

Horenczyk (1997, p. 37) indicates that the process of cultural transition for many immigrant groups and individuals, ‘involves a reconstruction of the cultural and social images of their minority groups and the larger majority society’. In this two-sided transformation towards adaptation to the new culture, from an immigrant’s perspective, an individual has to overcome shocks and misrepresentations.

**Culture shock**

One of the main characteristics of the immigration process is a culture shock. Culture shock can be defined as anxiety resulting from the disorientation encountered upon entering a new culture (Schumann, 1986, p. 383). The cultural shock has a negative impact on immigrants as it may stop the process of adaptation by ‘a sudden unpleasant feeling that violates expectations of the new culture and causes one to evaluate one’s own culture negatively’ (Bhugra, 2004, p. 252). For immigrants facing new circumstances, it can result in feeling deprived, rejected and confused in terms of values, making them mentally retreat into the familiar (Bisin & Verdier, 2017). Culture shock generally moves through four different phases: honeymoon, crises, adjustment and adaptation (Winkelman, 1994, p. 122). Individuals experience these stages differently, and the impact and order of each step varies widely.

Table 6 shows the extracted data from the PVPW participants. Their emotions towards Australian’s culture is divided into two groups—positive and negative—in accordance with their interviews. As Table 6 shows, the PVPW participants used affirmative sentences and positive words towards the host society in their final interviews one month after completion of the PVPW. A change in the attitude of the participants
towards the host society culture may be interpreted as the positive impact the PVPW had on their attitude towards their adaptation to the host society and their situation.

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<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
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<td>Stella</td>
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<td>6. Braveness to change my job</td>
<td>6. It was hard</td>
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<td>7. Life pattern to try new things</td>
<td>7. Shocked by [the] dress code</td>
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<td>Tarlan</td>
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Table 6- Cultural shock

**Language shock**

Guven and Islam (2015) argue that language proficiency affects both the economic and social outcomes for immigrants. Although Australia has a history of accepting immigrants from non-English speaking countries, particularly those in Eastern Europe, recent years have seen an influx of immigrants from non-English-speaking countries, including Africa and Southeast Asia. It has been previously noted that in the Australian population today, approximately one in four were born overseas, of which more than half come from non-English speaking countries (ABS, 2017b). At the time of writing this thesis, nearly one in five Australians speaks a language other than English at home (ABS, 2018a).
In their study on the influence of age on language proficiency and the wellbeing of non-English background immigrants in Australia, Guven and Islam (2015) found those with better English proficiency have better incomes and happier lives. Significantly, they found gender has a different influence on this process:

Women with better English skills report higher subjective health levels, fewer chronic conditions, and higher values of objective health. These women also report drinking more. Men with greater English skills take more risk, and smoke and exercise more. A proficiency in English decreases male-dominant gender views, increases the age at first marriage, and affects partner choice: specifically, it improves the spouse’s English and subjective health, and increases the amount they drink. English language proficiency also increases the likelihood of the spouse being Australian and belonging to a different country of birth and ancestry (Guven & Islam, 2015, p. 515).

The PVPW participants are officially categorised in the excellent skill in English language group. This directly relates to the fact that to be eligible for a study or work visa in Australia, a NASB immigrant must pass the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The IELTS test is divided into two groups, general and academic, with nine band scales on listening, reading, writing and speaking (British Council IELTS). Those immigrants wishing to apply for a skilled migration visa or a student visa must gain a score that shows they are competent and have good English speaking language skills (IELTS Australia). Interestingly, while all PVPW participants came to Australia on student or skilled migration visas, which means they achieved an excellent level of proficiency on the IELTS test, practically, they showed a lack of self-confidence in their English language abilities.
Language proficiency is a ‘significant factor influencing immigrants’ opportunities to integrate with the host society’ (Soto Huerta & Pérez, 2015, p. 485). Language is unique human capacity that involve our consciousness, sociality and culture. It is natural to accomplish all human capabilities in our mother language, but it gets complicated when achieving them in a different language, learnt later in life. Schumann (1986, p. 382) describes language shock for adults as a fear that they will appear comical or ridiculous when attempting to speak a second language. Further, an adult speaking a second language in a host country is often haunted by doubts over whether their words reflect their ideas.

**Stereotyping and misrepresentation (I can’t see myself in media)**

Stereotypes and misrepresentation of ethnicities by media have a strong influence on the adaptation of immigrants and the host society’s perceptions of them. Lee and Fiske (2006, p. 752) describe the effect of stereotypes in the host society: ‘people perceive immigrants as low in competency and low in the warmth, specific trustworthiness’. Stereotyping also stops immigrants and ethnic group members from connecting with the mainstream media in the host society (Lee, 2005).

In his presentation on race, media and cultural ethnicity, Andrew Jakubowicz (2010) declared that ‘despite policies that promote diversity in agencies such as Screen Australia and the ABC; most Australians are entertained by programs that do not reflect the nation’s cultural diversity’. The absence of diversity in media programs makes it ‘others’ media’, not ‘ours’ for many newcomers. The participants in this study are no different. For example, Luko is a regular user of different types of mass media but could not connect with Australian TV shows and programs as:
Don’t [make them] for everyone from a different background. So I think, sometimes, I feel they can leave out. They are more focused on maybe Australia themselves.

In another example, Stella explained how she had a chance to watch a rare program on TV about an Australian-Sudanese student in Australia who dreams of being a politician in his native Sudan. However, Stella finished her story by emphasising: ‘but not much [of] the black people [are] on Australian TV’. Lee (2005) points out that the consumption of television programs with African American actors is more inclusive for African Americans because they feel attached through cultural affinity and ethnic identification while watching them. Thus, the presence of different ethnicities in TV shows and advertisement could help immigrants feel more included in Australian society.

Further, racial framing in media inhibits different ethnicities from trusting mass media. While black people are not present in regular TV programs, they are easily found in negative coverage. Small crime gangs involving African youths get broad coverage in the media due to political agendas (Wahlquist, 2018), which fuel radical far-right anti-immigration groups (Wilson, 2018). The way media portray Africans in Australia is as a group of criminals holding a city in fear. As a 2017 report by the independent organisation, Police Accountability Project, declares, the coverage of ethnicity in Australian media is selective:

Race is not discussed in the media coverage of New Year’s brawls on Phillip Island or schoolies week on the Gold Coast. Knowing that these young people are predominately fair-skinned or Caucasian does not help the police or the
community understand or respond to these incidents (Police Accountability Project, 2017).

Opinions about migrants are commonly formed around visual representations and news images in media (Leurs et al., 2018). Mana explained that she feels the media ‘don’t present us very well’. She points out the stereotype of Iranians in the media by explaining that:

I realise that the way they look at Middle Eastern people is very different from the way that we really live in Iran. [For example] everyone asks me if you have to wear ‘burqa’, the one that Arab people use [to wear]. Or lots and lots of Australian people thought that Iran is a very dry country. So when the first time I put two photos on my desk at work one of them was somewhere close to Tehran just full of snow, the other one was from north of Iran, just very green, everyone that passed my desk [ask me] ‘where is the pictures of Iran?’, they couldn't believe me at [the] first time. [They were] thinking Iran is very dry [country] and [have] camels and this sort. I think the way that we are presented in the media here is not completely the way that it should be.

The politically-motivated negative ethnic stereotypes in host countries’ mass media obstruct immigrants’ adaptation (Keshishian, 2000). Stereotypes and less cultural affinity in the mainstream media might somewhat affect people who have culturally diverse backgrounds, and those factors are likely to lead immigrants to avoid the host country’s media, and use their native language media instead (Lee, 2005). Stella and Anna expressed their view about the way people dress on TV shows in Australia as inappropriate:
I guess it is a bit different from my home country, because back in my country advertisements [are] a bit morally. I don't [know] how I can say that, because some [of] that advertisement, as what we saw … people not wearing properly, but that a bit different from my country. Not in that much, because in Australia, the culture is a bit different and they can wear something that when we look back in my home country, we can see it is not moral. But on [an]other side it’s correct. It is depend [ing] to the culture because we [are from] different culture[s].

When confronted with a new and different culture, as an immigrant, the identity, behaviour and value system should change to meet the new social settings. As Kim (1988, p. 52) explains:

Intercultural encounters provide such situations of deviation from the familiar, assumed and taken-for-granted, as individuals are faced with things that do not follow their unconscious cultural program.

As Stella explains, this difference is very confronting:

Yes, when we came, we just shock[ed] [about] the way they dressed. In my country, we can't even walk with [that] dresses. Yes, [we can] just wear [them] in our bedroom, but some of people just walk with those [here]. So, we are so much disturbed [about] what they wear.

However, Stella laughs off her ideas and says she is now more comfortable accepting these differences. Kim (2001) states that this is unconscious progress but acknowledges the importance of willingness as the motivation that is necessary to help the transition on this bumpy road.
Chapter summary

This chapter has painted a descriptive portrait of the participants in the PVPW, by detailing their intellectual assets, the situation in society, connection with the community, and emotional states in confronting the immigration process. Social relationships inbound and outbound are vital to maintaining healthy communication in the life of immigrants. This connection helps them find employment and smooths the process of adaptation or integration. The educational level of immigrants has a significant role in both employment and inclusion.

The six participants in this study were from three cultural backgrounds, Iranian, Zambian and Tanzanian. The three Iranian participants had higher education in technical and mathematical majors. Two had engineering qualifications and worked extensively in that field, but during the PVPW, they were unemployed due to a lack of interest in their work. All three Iranians were interested in the artistic world. One had already started planning to work as a correspondent photographer and thought that video production skills might help her in her new career. Tarlan, was interested in painting and intended to work as a video maker. She told me that she always wanted to make video stories, but was not sure how to do it and thought the workshop was an excellent opportunity for her. The third Iranian participant, Zahra, was qualified in IT, but her primary interest is writing short stories.

Conversely, the three participants from African backgrounds with student visas in Australia did not indicate any particular interest in art. Stella had a strong motivation for learning video production skills as she had planned to use these skills later in Tanzania as a tool to communicate her messages with the illiterate women in Tanzania’s rural
areas. Anna, Stella’s daughter and a college student in Tanzania at the time, hoped to pursue filmmaking in her future studies. The third African girl, Luko, also did not have any background in art but was willing to learn and was hopeful to use her skills in her home country, Zambia, as a tool to help others.

All immigrants, apart from their available resources—especially when coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds—eventually suffer from culture and language shock. To overcome the bitterness this fosters, they need personal strength and a positive attitude towards the immigration process. Emphasising the role of immigrants’ enthusiasm to overcome those migrations issues does not necessary means ignoring the significance role of the host society being willing to accept these immigrants. Special attention also has to be paid to the role of mass media in Australia, which impedes this process through stereotypes and misrepresentations of those from different cultures.
This chapter discusses the outcomes of media literacy education and its role in the participants’ sense of ‘agency’ formation during the PVPW. Once more, it is emphasised that due to the nature of this study, the focus and analysis is undertaken on an individual level. Consequently, this study’s interest is on factors and outcomes associated with personal empowerment. The participants’ narratives and researcher observations have been used to examine the process of transformation and agency formation in the context of self-efficacy beliefs, confidence and creative mindsets.

In light of the research findings, the participants exposed different levels of agency formation during the workshops. The sense of efficacy they presented in their final narratives also helped them set specific goals for their future. Further, the creativity factor had a significant role in their transformation, as it was linked to assisting individuals to adapt in daily life (Cropley, 1990). This study observes how the PVPW participants’ self-image transformed into an active mood, which helped them be more active in the public sphere. The self-efficacy beliefs can be characterised as mainly competency-based, prospective, and action-related (Bandura, 1993, 1997b). Self-efficacy belief is also task-specific or domain-specific and should be conceptualised in a situation-specific manner (Bandura, 1997b), and tailored to the selected situation and environment (Bandura, 2018).

This chapter is in two major sections. The first looks at how critical hands-on media literacy—that is, creativity—shapes not only an awareness of the media’s role in the society, but how it informs self-efficacy beliefs and shapes a sense of agency in the individuals who participated in the PVPW. The second section addresses four primary
elements that predicate agency formation in the PVPW participants. These four main elements are motivation, effects on confidence and self-efficacy beliefs, goal setting and, finally, self-efficacy beliefs as a key to the public sphere. A conclusion on how media making is empowering closes the chapter.

**Media literacy as a tool for agency formation**

The technological shift has changed media platforms from traditional one-way mediums—radio, TV and print—to two-way communication media (the internet). Media literacy has also shifted to a new level to answer the need for new media literacy. To be media literate today requires acquiring a range of skills in both old and new media (see Chapter 2 under section Media literacy). A media literate person has multiple literacies, which means they are not just able to develop robust skills for interpreting messages, but move beyond interpretation to comprehend creative ability. A media literate person in this context can develop ‘a critical understanding of media message across different mediums and also has skills and operation abilities to be involved in everyday creation’ (Livingstone et al., 2017, p. 8). The concept of creation has a significant role in this study as a basic critical understanding of media contents.

**Critical media literacy—critical thinking**

Critical competency in identifying the message within media content was one of the outcomes of the project. During the workshop, I tried to introduce the basics of media literacy as much as possible, despite the short duration of the PVPW. Participants in the workshop were introduced to some aspects of media such as messages, hidden messages in media, the structure of mass media in Australia, copyright and the concept of citizen journalism. As these subjects were briefly discussed in a short period of time, it was
expected that participants’ curiosity would lead them to follow up on the concepts, later and learn more. To reach the point of critical understanding and skills, Celot (2009) distinguishes three components: understanding media content and its functioning, knowledge about media and media regulation, and user behaviour.

At the beginning of the PVPW, the participants showed their disappointment over the representation of their ethnicity in the mass media, especially on TV. All three East African participants mentioned that black people are underrepresented on Australian commercial TV. The Iranian participants were more concerned about the stereotypes of the Iranian society by the media, leading to misunderstandings about their background in Australian society. Yet the views of both groups shifted from this stage to taking TV and video content more seriously. They started to distinguish between commercial, state and community broadcasters, and were particularly interested in messages hidden in media content. The other subject that piqued participants’ interest was the concept of citizen journalism. For instance, Luko explained her delight about being a citizen journalist:

I didn’t know that anybody could be [a] citizen journalist. And I think that [would be] helpful in my community because if there are issues that people around me want to bring forward to government and other people, I can just take the videos of them and just give them to media.

Mana also shows her excitement by expressing that:

I found ‘citizen journalism’ very interesting because I didn't look at the subject like this, that the everyone can be a citizen journalist, and [we] can do our share to spread the news in the sphere. I didn't even think for example something like
Facebook [can be media]. I’ve known it, but I focused on it more [now] that we are sharing something through these types of media.

By gaining the knowledge that they are actually involved with content sharing every day on social media, their interest was turned to other subjects of the PVPW, such as copyright. Mana explained her astonishing new knowledge as:

I even after [a] discussion about copyright, and that sort of things that is ‘rule’, for [every] journalist, I [felt] splash something in my face but telling other people that some photos that you're sharing is media, [and] you should follow some rules. You should know about the copyright, you can't share someone's photo in your page without permission, so it was interesting for me to [learn about] different types of media [that] you using our sort of similar spreading the news.

However, the experience was varied for each participant, and they each explained their journey differently. For example, Zahra showed interest in the adverse effects of media. She pointed out how her understanding of the mechanism of hidden messages in media content, made her feel vulnerable:

I've learned that the way they are filming, they might have a purpose behind it and they want to make [the] audience to feel in a way that they want or be influenced in the way that they want. So, I think the way that I am watching TV now is somehow different.

Conversely, others were interested in the positive side. For instance, Tarlan expressed her new video production skills as an eye-opening experience that has helped her understand the technical aspects of media:
Previously I was just looking at the story of the film. When I [was watching] some nice things, [I was] thinking ok this is nice. But now, I think each time; I see something, a move or something on the TV, I look at the pictures, focus and zooming and different kind of things. I noticed the transition within films, and I found that very interesting.

As previously noted, acquired techniques not only brought a sense of empowerment for the PVPW participants, it contributed to their interest in being more critical towards media programs. In this regard, Blazek and Hraňová (2012, p. 163) point out that video as a product in the process of the PV has an important role, as it ‘reveals deep and important aspects of participants life experiences’. The next section reviews signs of empowerment in the participants and the goals of the PVPW.

**Practical media literacy—the creative mind**

The PVPW was a transformational experience for the participants and the facilitator. It took everyone, consciously or subconsciously, on a short but startling journey that changed their conception of the self. Moreover, the experiences and outcomes for each individual on this journey were varied. The participants’ sense of empowerment is evident in terms of self-efficacy, as the creation of short videos changed their views towards more definite ideas about what was happening around them.

Self-efficacy beliefs develop over time and through experience (Maddux, 2009). In conceptualising self-efficacy, Bandura (1982) categorises four modes that increase it: mastery experience, social modelling, verbal persuasion, and physical and emotional states. The acquired mastery experienced by the participants in the PVPW and their final creative task was influential in shifting their self-efficacy. Likewise, Byrge and Tang’s (2015) examination of the effect of creative training sessions on individuals,
found it could significantly impact the self-efficacy, confidence and creativity of participants.

In other words, creating a video and distributing it on the internet was equal to mastery over their peers. The participants changed the self-image that shaped their identity (where self-image is not what people see from outside, but what a person sees of themselves). During the journey of identity reconstruction, an individual evaluates their social behaviour weaknesses and pinpoint their strengths. For example, Luko started to see herself as more capable and self-reflective when making a video with her roommates. In her final edited version, Luko overcomes her sense of shyness by using her own voice as an interviewer in the video—a big step for Luko, a shy girl, who had cut her voice out in her first draft video. Conversely, Anna and Stella became more self-confident both behind and in front of the camera.

**Agency formation**

Participants in this study showed a sense of empowerment and strong agency formation. In the context of empowerment, agency is described as every subject related to the ability of an individual to set their own goals and act upon them (Kabeer, 2001). Empowerment is also defined as the extent to which an individual gains control over their own destiny (Mason & Smith, 2003).

Some factors indicating a change in the PVPW participants were the motivation for going forward, stronger positive confidence and self-efficacy, setting goals for their future and being actively involved in the public sphere.
Motivation (Where there is a wish, there is a way)

Being motivated and having self-esteem is a necessity that pushes a person to participate in aspects of social life and specific projects. Participating in social activities has long-term effects and potential benefits for an individual, which eventually result in positive outcomes beyond the primary individual’s expectations (Murnighan et al., 1993). The PVPW participants showed a high level of motivations for further involvement in society as a first step. Their final work also persuaded many more fellow immigrants to put aside their problems and follow in their footsteps.

Participation in the host society has an essential role in an immigrant’s life, but the main factor is the willingness of the participant to be part of an activity, as self-esteem is essential for their participation in many different activities. The PVPW participants showed a stronger level of self-esteem than others who approached me but decided not to participate in the study. Although many individuals were interested in the subject of the study, their lack of self-esteem kept them from being involved, as many felt too shy to be filmed, or had a low estimation of their ability in English language skills.

Consequently, self-esteem and motivation are interrelated, with lower self-esteem in an individual ‘characterised by unwillingness to accept risks, focus on avoiding outstandingly bad qualities, avoidance of many strategic ploys, and reluctance to draw attention to self’ (Baumeister et al., 1989, p. 547).

However, motivation and self-esteem have different levels and take different forms. The PVPW participants presented different motivations for their involvement:

- Luko mentions two motivations: overcoming her shyness and gaining skills.
- Anna’s personal motivation was to help her family, as well as record her time in Australia to take home as a souvenir for her siblings.
• Stella’s social activities are her main motivation, as she wanted to help rural women in her country.

• Mana and Tarlan are motivated by their interest in creative arts.

• Zahra participated ‘to meet people and to find some people in my own interest’.

Similarly, motivation has an essential place in the process of immigration, as Boneva and Frieze (2001, p. 487) argue, ‘individuals who want to emigrate, possess a syndrome of personality characteristics that differentiate them from those who want to stay in their country of origin’. They continue that against their motivated personality, ‘immigrants undergo a psychologically complicated process of adjustment to the social, cultural, and political conditions that can lead to severe frustration of their strivings’(Boneva & Frieze, 2001, p. 487). The motivation to overcome these conditions is what help an immigrant integrate and adapt to the host society. People are motivated to get involved in activities—for example, civic participation—and by their need to be with people who share their views. In her research on immigrants in European countries’ level of civic participation, Kosic (2007) found that resources such as the language, education and background of immigrants are essential to participating in different positions. Similarly, the socio-demographics of participants in the PVPW show they are highly educated and proficient in English speaking, which gives them a level of self-esteem to be motivated participating in the PVPW.

Being motivated and having self-esteem are a necessary characteristics to push an individual to participate in social life or a specific project. However, participation in social activities has long-term relationships with potential benefits for an individual, and eventually results in good outcomes, even more than an individual may first expect (Murnighan et al., 1993)
Confidence and self-efficacy beliefs

In this study, the participants with a stronger sense of ability demonstrated more confidence in producing short videos as their final task. In other words, learning video recording, editing, working with equipment and programs, and finally, a sense of creating something new by themselves, gave them a sense of efficacy and power to transfer their knowledge to others. Here are two examples of their view:

- I made a short movie during the workshop, and to me, it was a message that I wanted to give other people that they are like my situation.
- I think video filming is empowering woman and I hope this can pass on to many others who benefit [from] this.

The word ‘confidence’ also was used as a strong descriptor of their sense of ability, to give positive accounts of their participation experiences, increase in self-confidence, and personal development. Bandura (1997b, p. 382) describes confidence as ‘a catchword rather than a construct embedded in a theoretical system’ without an inclusive meaning. He suggests research uses more theory-based constructs as a guid to determining self-efficacy beliefs levels. However, he notes that while confidence can increase self-efficacy beliefs, the opposite is not necessarily the case. When confronted with complex decisions, individuals who have confidence in their ability to solve problems use their skills to solve the problem effectively. At different times during the PVPW, participants acknowledge gaining confidence:

- I gain a lot from this workshop first and the most I gain confidence, and I learnt how to be creative and also how to work with others in a team.
- I feel confident enough to do a video documentary.
I think it affected my self-confidence. I can create a movie myself, and I can transfer that message and also because we were with the girls with other countries and it was interesting working with them, and I think it was [the] main idea of transferring what you know to others, work with them and teach to others.

Self-efficacy beliefs can enhance motivation and involvement in different social activities, as well as personal aspirations and school achievement, depending on an individual’s beliefs about their own capabilities. High efficacy beliefs are also related to the expansion of satisfying social relations that bring about an individual’s satisfaction with life (Bandura, 1997b).

Of the six participants in the workshop, only one was unsure of her abilities in video making. Yet, she acknowledges that she reached a certain level of self-awareness about her weaknesses.

I think this is a floor (base), that I’ve got. I’ve been shy to filming people. So I am [going to] work on it.

While she did not try to finish her short video task for the PVPW, upon completion of the workshop, she emphasised her sense of confidence in her writing skills: ‘I feel I am more free and I can write more of my feeling’.

**Goal setting**

Interestingly, after the PVPW, participants show more determination by setting goals for their future. The goals had been shaped from two perspectives: personal goals, and goals for social change. Their plans for the future ranged from intensely personal goals such as improving their profession and boosting their skills, to changing their society.

For instance, Stella, a nutrition professional from Tanzania, planned to make video
copies of recipes for illiterate rural women in her homeland; and Tarlan planned to read more about the technical aspects of video creation to be able to share her personal life experiences with other people.

They found ways to use their new skills and confidence at work. Goal setting was different in the two groups of participants. First, the group with temporary visas (mostly student visas) with the view to going back to their origin country, speak out of their willingness to help their homeland society. Notably, they declared their goals as helping widowed women, fellow women, rural women, and being a voice against domestic violence, through their video creation skills. The second group, with stable permanent or citizen residency, demonstrated goal setting on a more personal level. They struggled more with reconstructing their identity in their new homeland, looking for more options and even finding a way out of a previous profession.

Bandura (2015) states people’s beliefs in their efficacy affect their goal setting type and level and the strength of their commitment to those goals in the face of difficulties. An individual with clarified goals shows control over their life, towards their desired achievement. Consequently, as the goals heighten, the self-efficacy beliefs get stronger (Bandura, 2018).

Setting goals on an individual level indicate existing power in the individual. Guinote (2007, p. 1076) argues that powerful individuals resist external influences and ‘they can devote their undivided attention to the pursuit of their goals’. Guinote goes on to explain how powerful individuals perform better and achieve greater things because they have access to more resources. By increasing an individual’s resources, they show more self-regulation and prioritisation of their desire, which is the signature of power (Guinote,
Similarly, the PVPW participants demonstrated higher goal setting abilities due to having gained skills or resources, which gives them power over their desires.

**The self-efficacy beliefs as a key to the public sphere**

Confidence makes engagement in the public sphere easier. When self-efficacy beliefs are increased in individuals, they can overcome their stigma, and be more active on social media platforms, and in their personal and social interactions. Confidence and self-efficacy increase when an individual feels secure about their social standing. As building confidence is about achievement, confidence is built on the small wins. As they are making new things—in the context of this study, creating videos—the positive feedback they get from their peers increases their confidence. Subsequently, they demonstrated a more active role in social media, especially after sharing their stories online. Burgess et al. (2006, p. 6) argue that online participation is just as essential as offline participation, as online participation is a new way of civic engagement.

Information and communication technology usage and the role of new media in our everyday life has enabled citizens’ unconventional expressions of participatory culture. Yet, this makes it hard to measure the impact of such sociocultural activity and artefacts on civic participation in society. However, it is not possible to ignore the ‘vernacular creativity’, or daily amateur production merely as what makes our social interaction in the modern world.

**Making media is empowering**

Ultimately, I returned to David Gauntlett (2011) proposal on ‘making is connecting’.

This proposal is based on the fact that making things and sharing them with other users will increase a person’s engagement in the world: ‘The internet enables people to
connect with others, share creative projects, and be inspired by each other, in ways which were not possible before—because it is global and searchable’ (Gauntlett, 2018).

The participants in PVPW also relied on their new knowledge of media literacy, which gave them an understanding of the ability to play a more active and effective role in their social life. They positively followed their goals for the future and used their connections with others to help them. This is because one of the most effective ways to develop self-efficacy beliefs is through mastery experiences. Success builds self-efficacy belief and failure undermines it (Bandura, 1995, p 5). One of the goals of this project was to examine the process of empowerment by implementing skill-based media literacy workshops. The practical nature of this study aimed to not only help participants learn about the media. It also encouraged them to be more creative and active in the public sphere, and by accessing media and encouraging them to create their content, they would become active in the society (Rodriguez, 2004).

Technological competency and updated skills can help individuals feel confident and improve their self-efficacy beliefs. It is also the starting point for creativity that involves both external transformation of a field and internal transformation of self. Adaptation is evident in both aspects. External transformation requires sensitivity to a context as well as awareness of the limitations of a field and the desire to work hard to transform it (Cohen, 2012, p. 10).

Many of the PVPW participants explained in different ways how they felt more confident and efficient by gaining new video making skills. For example, Luko saw the power of being involved in everyday creation, which gave her not only confidence, but also excitement:
I want to take videos and then work on them. When I go to some exciting event and some beautiful places, I want to take videos and make stories out of those videos. I gain a lot from this workshop first and the most I gain confidence, and I learnt how to be creative, and also, how to work with others in a team.

However, Mana saw the effect on her confidence more practically, with the ability to transfer messages by creating videos:

I can transfer that message better and also because we were with the other girls from other countries and cultures, I got to know more about them, and I was connected to them.

The other influential factor mentioned under the ‘Motivation’ section was the concept of ‘mastery’ over the technical aspects of video creation, which had a direct effect on their self-efficacy beliefs.

…being a woman skill[ed] with video editing; this will be added advantage to me and make me a bit more superior and bring me respect, not just to fellow women but even men.

or

By this time, I can stand somewhere [and record] the video, but beforehand, I couldn't even think of doing video. Now I am bit trained how [] to record video, how to position the video.

or

[We] can do our share to spread the news in the sphere. I didn't even think for example something like Facebook [can be media]. I’ve known it, but I focused on it more [now] that we are sharing something through these types of media.
As seen in the quoted sentences above from the last interviews with the PVPW participants—they fully acknowledge the impact that improving their technical skills and critical thinking on media have had on them.

**Chapter summary**

The analysis of data gathered in this study provides evidence that the PVPW benefits its participants by contributing to their interpersonal motivations, self-esteem and by creating new things, which elevates their self-efficacy. Maddux (2009) states that self-efficacy beliefs develop over time and through experience. It means the level of self-efficacy, which ultimately could result in the sense of empowerment, needs to be promoted over time. Bandura (1982) names four modes influencing the sense of self-efficacy: mastery experience, social modelling, verbal persuasion, and physical and emotional states. The practical outcome not only helped them acquire self-efficacy, but gave them a prime understanding of media literacy. The creation of short videos by the PVPW participants gave them a mastery experience on certain levels, which resulted in their peers’ positive review. This process encourages them to be more active in the online public sphere. The start of their positive transformations can be seen in the level of their goal setting for their future. However, the level was varied in different individuals.
CHAPTER 9—Conclusion

This chapter summarises the findings, limitations and recommendations for further research, and concludes with an overview of my personal experiences during this study. The aim of this study was to examine the affiliation of the PVPW with empowerment in the case of immigrant women. The study was carried out mainly based on the three research instruments of observations, interviews and a reflective journal. The data gathered during and after the PVPW were coded, and major themes related to the literature review were determined. The current study is presented in two components: this thesis and video documentation on the workshop process, accompanied by six short videos produced by the participants of the PVPW.

As a result, this study contributes to existing research on media literacy education, gender, immigration and communication studies by mapping the PV’s empowerment hypothesis outcomes. Previous studies on PV projects revealed a contextual empowerment result but not the process of how it happens (Ager & Strang, 2004; Bery, 2003; Colom, 2009; High et al., 2012; Milne et al., 2012; Shaw & Robertson, 1997; White, 2004; White, 2003; White et al., 1994). The scale of empowerment and the procedure for achieving empowerment in those studies are vague or domain specific. This study put these hypotheses to the test, to explore the mechanism of empowerment resulting from a more distinct shape of PV, the PVPW.

Summary of results

The PVPW for this study aimed to increase information for its participants in two areas—media literacy and video production skills. The results are the outcomes and
effects on the PVPW participants, which are categorised into two different but interrelated capacities—critical thinking and creativity. These two elements demonstrate a level of personal/psychological empowerment in the participants’ final narratives. These narratives also imply further elements of the individual’s agency formation. Although each PVPW participant’s experience varies, they showed similarities and overlaps in their sense of empowerment.

Analysis of the data associated with the research questions of this study led to identifying several critical themes in the participant’s narratives, relevant to different domains. These domains are mostly related to participants’ dissimilar cultural and language background, along with their residency status. These diverse backgrounds—what some name ‘spheres’—are influenced by their demonstrated level of empowerment and wide-ranging desires and choices. However, some of these choices and desires were common across participants with similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and others across those with similar residency status. For instance, three participants originally from Iran with stable residency statuses, demonstrated strength in reconstructing their identity and achieving their goals. Whereas, the three other participants from two neighbouring countries in East Africa with temporary residency, were more oriented towards community advocacy. When it comes to participants’ length of stay in Australia, they also show different reactions, as those who have been in Australia longer looked for long-term goals at the individual level, while those with a shorter stay were still trying to solve their primary needs, such as finding a suitable job.

**Empowerment concept regards to ethnicity and gender**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature concurs on the existence of an affiliation between empowerment and functional media literacy. Empowerment in this study is
considered on an individual level and based on insights from psychological empowerment theory and self-efficacy conceptualisation. Empowerment eventually leads individuals to gain mastery and control over their lives, and enables them to act more effectively in society (Kieffer, 1984; Rappapon, 1984; Zimmerman et al., 1992). The mastery that an individual gains—in the context of this study, an immigrant woman—is over their ‘transition time’ to adjust to their new identity. This happens by overcoming the media bias and stereotypes, putting aside fears of not being able to do things, and being an active participant in the public sphere. This level of empowerment is associated with a ‘power from within’ and based on changing some aspects of a person’s life. Therefore, power from within is enhancing self-acceptance, as the person ‘may need to be self-confident, self-determined, to know what they want, and to direct their actions towards that goal’ (Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 8). Notably, people who act as agents in their individual lives are more likely to engage in the community (Alsop et al., 2006; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007).
In the case of female immigrants from developing countries, they are also facing modifications in their established gender and family roles. Consequently, these changes can generate a higher level of stress in their life, giving them a sense of loss of control and power. However, immigrant women with those backgrounds have to overcome the stigma of gender and ethnicity, as it can contribute to disqualifying them from full acceptance in society (Goffman, 1963). Scholars acknowledge that immigrant women experience more difficulties than immigrant men in the process of adaptation to the host society (Beiser et al., 1989; Berry, 1997; Carballo, 1994; Ghaffarian, 1998)—especially when ‘attempts by females to take on new roles available in the society of settlement may bring them into conflict with their heritage culture’ (Berry, 1997, p. 22).

Further, like the other immigrants, immigrant women are not immune to the threat of the media on race and gender bias and misrepresentation, which might push them to the margins of their host society. Media literacy education assists immigrants—especially female immigrants—to overcome this threat. Critical knowledge of media messages preserves immigrants from being dominated by the media.
Creativity and self-efficacy beliefs

The final short videos were produced by the participants in the PVPW as the final task and reinforced their sense of ‘can do’ (i.e., self-efficacy). Sood (2002) research on the influence of audience involvement on interpersonal communication shows individuals with high levels of engagement with media are more likely to increase their self-efficacy beliefs.

Self-efficacy beliefs can be characterised as predominantly competency-based, perspective, and action related (Bandura, 1993, 1997b). Like empowerment, self-efficacy is task-specific or domain-specific and should be conceptualised in a situation-specific manner (Bandura, 1997b) and tailored to the selected situation and environment (Bandura, 2018). The PVPW participants mostly achieved a task that seemed impossible to them before, especially the technical aspect of recording and editing a well-presented video:

I bought my camera, and never used it, and I never thought in my life someone can do it ... then you start teaching your video empowering women [workshops]. I never thought of that, but when I learnt, I found that so useful.

When people participate in everyday cultural exchanges on internet platforms, they actually exercise their confidence. The improved self-efficacy beliefs in the PVPW participants resulted in their proactivity on the internet. ‘The every day, the mundane and the in-between’ creativity is named ‘vernacular creativity’ by Burgess (2007b, p. 26). It is a process where available resources ‘are recombined in novel ways so that they are both recognizable because of their familiar elements, and create effective impact through the innovative process of this recombination’ (Burgess, 2007a, p. 206). The short videos the PVPW participants created are impressive because each is the
participant’s own creation and their unique view of the world. Yet in terms of professional creativity, their short videos are not comparable. However, as Winston et al. (2017, p. 3) point out:

Voices of the excluded and the marginalised all over the world are being heard because what were once insurmountable technological barriers to entry, thanks to complexity and expense, are no more.

The other concept affecting the PVPW participants was that of citizen journalism, which was introduced to them at a basic level with a short video from YouTube. It had a significant impact on them—much more than I expected. Mostly, the participants saw themselves as active contributors to the public sphere and responsible agents transferring their messages to others in society. Given that the participants were most active on social media networks, they started to see themselves in the position of a citizen journalist with a reasonable level of responsibility. They began to think differently about what they distributed online and as a result they were attracted to associated subjects such as copyright laws and messages in the media. The attention they showed towards the rights and responsibilities of information distributions could only be described as the level of their knowledge and media literacy.

Self-efficacy beliefs were also shaping agency in the individuals to deliver content and actively participate in the public sphere. In the context of empowerment, agency is described as every subject related to the ability of an individual to set their own goals and act upon them (Kabeer, 2001). The level of goal setting at the end of the PVPW was higher than at the beginning for all six participants. It is important to emphasise here that

24 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXLukSt_bRM
the participants in the PVPW were already highly educated with a certain level of empowerment. However, the way they described feeling empowered after the process of the workshop highlights that even when individuals have a proactive attitude, they may be constrained by the institutional environment in which they operate, and not able to transform their choices into the desired outcomes without assistance.

**Limitation of the current study**

Like all research, this study contains restrictions. The main limitation of this research was the restricted sample of just six NESB immigrant women with relatively high education. Although the PVPW participants were from a wide age range and residency status, they are categorised as educated women with adequate English language skills. This restricts the study from claiming that the result could be generalised to other groups of immigrant women with lower education or insufficient English language.

However, as Donmoyer (2000) notes, the study results still produce an enriched cognition that allows a kind of intellectual generalisation in different contexts.

The second limitation concerns native bias, as I am both the researcher and from the researched area. However, for the purpose of context, this bias helped establish a lived-experience for the research.

Another factor to be considered is the presumption that the participants responded to the interview questions honestly. Although there is no guarantee of honesty, the academic literature recognises the presumption is valid because the purpose of the interviews was to explore participants’ transformation from their persecution.
Recommendation for future research

Further research on immigrant women in similar PVPWs is required to refine the outcomes of this study. It is crucial that replications of this study be done with broader groups of NESB immigrant women. Future research on different groups of immigrant women from NESB will justify or challenge the results of this study, due to the complexity of interpreting human behaviour (Bruner, 1990). Although the participants of this study were from a wide range of age, class and residency status, they were limited to two ethnic groups and educated class. They also had a good level of English speaking skills, which makes the results of this research limited. Conducting the PVPW with new immigrants to Australia, women with a low level of education or even those with an insufficient level of English language skill can test the results of this study in broader samples.

This study also has recommendations for policymakers and organisations working with a diverse community. First, this study proves it is possible to conduct PV workshops with a limited budget and human resources and achieve respectable outcomes. Second, for adult women from developing countries migrating to Australia (and other Western countries), it is essential to provide media literacy education. It does not matter how highly they are educated or adjusted in their society, media literacy—and especially hands-on creative workshops—can help them adapt to the situation and overcome stigmas. The beneficiaries of the outcomes of these types of creative projects are not just the immigrants, but all members of an active multicultural community.
Personal experience

I began this study following my own experience as a NESB immigrant woman. This study was to personally show appreciation to those who helped me with the immigration and adaptation process. I also learnt from facilitating this study that no matter where you are from, when you are in a similar situation of encountering a reasonably different culture in the host society, the feelings are the same. I learnt it is possible to change our lives, accomplish our desires and dreams, and start again. It is just a matter of motivation, confidence and efficacy.

When I started my PhD, I naively had the idealistic expectation that I could change others’ lives, in the ways others had changed mine. I expected that the participants would look at my camera with confidence and express their new identity, their strong ‘self’, and their peace with the world at the end of workshops. I believed the change would have a significant effect. However, the participants did not experience that specific sparkle, and I did not miraculously change in the years after immigration. The PVPW participants acknowledged the skills they learnt and appreciated the inspiration they got from the PVPW process. There were small behavioural changes at the time, although these were not recognised by them as evolution at the time of these effects.

When I later started writing this thesis and looked back at my immigration life’s experiences, I found it is difficult to speak about certain times and feelings, some of which are personal, some are unknown (even to myself), and some are unspeakable. Yet, at the time, the experiences that made me different were happening, I was not aware of any change.
However, living as an immigrant for more than 15 years has given me an insider perspective as an immigrant woman that has assisted me in completing this study. The experiences I cannot deny have put me in the unique and privileged position of being one of them, as well as having more experience in Australian society as an Australian-Iranian.

**Conclusion**

This study has considered the potential affiliation between creativity and empowerment. It provides significant knowledge and understanding of the way PVPWs can influence individual participants from more traditional cultures into more Westernised cultures such as Australia. This PVPW had an effective role in restructuring the identity of its participants and at the same time, supports the argument that media literacy education is important.

As explained in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, ABS figures show that adult immigrant women are more likely to be part of disadvantaged groups, regardless of digital availability. The concept of the digital divide in terms of both access and use can be inferred by age, ethnicity, gender and economic status. Notably, even those who have access and, in some ways, use the internet are not necessarily active participants in the public sphere. The PVPW in the case of this study—or PV as a general term—can help its participants develop strong agency by gaining increased levels of self-efficacy beliefs, and ultimately participate confidently in the public sphere. In sum, they recognise the capabilities that assist them in reshaping their new identity. The self-knowledge accumulated by the PVPW facilitate new ways of adaptation into modern society, setting goals for the future, and starting to plan to achieve them.


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McKay, F. H., Thomas, S. L., & Warwick Blood, R. (2011). ‘Any one of these boat people could be a terrorist for all we know!’Media representations and public perceptions of ‘boat people’arrivals in Australia. In: Journalism, 12(5), 607-626.


Looking for the Phoenix Within


Looking for the Phoenix Within


Appendix A: Ethical clearance

Protocol number: HUM/44/13/HREC

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

This certificate generated on 10-10-2013.

This certificate confirms that protocol 'THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATORY VIDEO IN THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA' GU Protocol Number HUM/44/13/HREC has ethical clearance from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee HREC and has been issued with authorisation to be commenced.

The ethical clearance for this protocol runs from 19-08-2013 to 01-10-2016.

The named members of the research team for this protocol are:

Prof Michael Meadows

Ms Narges Shokohi-Tehrani

The research team has been sent correspondence that lists the standard conditions of ethical clearance that apply to Griffith University protocols.

The HREC is established in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct on Research InvolvingHumans*. The operation of this Committee is outlined in the HREC Standard Operating Procedure, which is available from [www.gu.edu.au/or/ethics](http://www.gu.edu.au/or/ethics).

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries about this matter.

Rick Williams

Manager, Research Ethics
Office for Research
Bray Centre, N54 Room 0.15 Nathan Campus
Griffith University
Phone: 07 3735 4375
Facsimile: 07 373 57994
Email: rick.williams@griffith.edu.au
Appendix B: Research information and consent form

Information Sheet

Project title: The role of participatory video in the settlement process for non-English speaking background immigrant women in Australia

Student Researcher:
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Research Supervisors:
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Centre for Cultural Research
Griffith University
Nathan QLD 4111
Telephone: 07 3875 4055/Mobile: 0409 729 785

Associate Prof Trish Fitzsimons t.fitzsimons@griffith.edu.au
Griffith Film School
South Bank QLD 4101
Telephone: 37350106

Background

If you are reading this, then you are one of a number of people who have been invited to participate in a research project about the topic listed above. This project sets out to explore the role that participatory video might have in empowering immigrant women by giving them a voice. The project plans to do this by inviting you to participate in a video production workshop, which will be videotaped. You will also be involved in producing several short video documentaries as part of the workshop outcomes. This research forms part of my studies for a PhD research program under supervision of Prof Michael Meadows at Griffith University. As either an expert in the area or someone who would like to learn new skills, you have been invited to be part of this research. This information will help new women immigrants, people
involved in the settlement process, and social workers to better understand the key issues around this topic.

**What participation in this study involves**

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to attend four workshops of between 4-5 hours, which will introduce you to basic and advanced video production skills. The workshops will be video recorded so that a documentary can be made at a later time. You will be involved in short interviews during the workshops, which will become part of the documentary in edited form. At any time during the interviews and the workshops, you will be able to raise issues you think are important.

**Consent to participate**

Your participation in this research project is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate if you do not wish to. If you do choose to take part, you may cease participation at any time without penalty or without providing an explanation. We hope that you will consider participation in this study because your stories and information will help in better understanding and improving the immigration process in Australia.

**Risk**

Participation in this research may involve low risk to you. The main goal of the project is to learn skills and make short videos about your concerns. However, if you or the researchers have concerns about any problem during the project, you will be referred to a consultation with specialists.

**Confidentiality**

The information you provide and your identity will be kept confidential unless you consent either to participation in a videotaped interview for public release or inclusion in the written element of the thesis. You may contact any of the Chief Investigators at any time if you have any concerns regarding the research. For more information, refer to [http://www.griffith.edu.au/or/ethics](http://www.griffith.edu.au/or/ethics)

**Concerns or complaints**

If you wish to contact an independent person for concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research, you may contact the Manager, Research Ethics, and Office for Research, Bray Centre, Griffith University, Nathan, QLD 4111, telephone 07-3735 5585 or email research-ethics@griffith.edu.au

Griffith University ask you for your consent and participation in this research.
CONSENT FORM

The role of participatory video in the settlement process for non-English speaking background immigrant women in Australia

I have read or have heard someone read the Information Sheet to me and I understand that:

- This research forms part of a PhD research program at Griffith University.
- This research will involve video recording of sessions I attend and possible interviews with me for use of my voice and images for use in a video documentary.
- I am being asked to take part in this project to share my views as an expert on this topic.
- My participation is voluntary and I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty or explanation.
- A copy of the final report and the video documentary will be provided to me on request.

I have read the information on the consent form or someone has read it to me. I agree to take part in this documentary video and give my consent freely. I understand that the study will be carried out as described in the information statement, a copy of which I have kept. I understand that whether or not I decide to participate is my decision. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time and that I do not have to give any reasons for doing this. All questions I have asked about this research have been answered to my satisfaction.

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**Principal researcher:**

Prof Michael Meadows:
m.meadows@griffith.edu.au

Centre for Cultural Research
Griffith University
Nathan QLD 4111

**Student Researcher**

Narges Shokohi-Tehrani:
narges.shokohi-tehrani@griffithuni.edu.au

Humanities School
Griffith University
Nathan QLD 4111

Looking for the Phoenix Within
Appendix C: Research questionnaire

Name: ________________________________

Country of origin: ________________________________

1. Age ___ years
   ○ 18-24 years old
   ○ 25-34 years old
   ○ 35-44 years old
   ○ 45-54 years old
   ○ 55-64 years old
   ○ 65-74 years old
   ○ 75 years or older

2. Occupations: ______________

3. How would you identify your ethnicity (cultural background)?
   ○ Black (African) or African American
   ○ Asian including Chinese, Japanese, and others
   ○ Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
   ○ White, Caucasian, European; not Hispanic
   ○ American Indian/Native American
   ○ Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
   ○ Other

4. Language of origin: ______________

5. When you arrived in Australia: ________________________________

6. Your proficiency in English Language
○ Fluent read, write & speak
○ Speak well
○ Read well
○ Write well
○ Not very good in speaking
○ Not very good at writing
○ Not very good at reading
○ Just understand

7. Your proficiency in language of origin
   ○ Fluent
   ○ Good
   ○ Just speaking

8. What was your latest qualification (University or experience) in your mother country?
   ○ Under high school
   ○ High school
   ○ Undergraduate
   ○ Post graduate

9. Is your qualification/experience in Australia is accepted?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

10. Have you had success in finding employment?
    ○ Yes
    ○ Not in my field
    ○ No

11. Do you listen to your origin country music more or English music?
    ○ English
    ○ My origin language
    ○ Mixed
12. What language you use where?

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<tr>
<td>Work</td>
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13. What food types do you regularly eat?
   - Your origin country foods
   - All type of foods

14. What language TV/Radio do you listen to most frequently?
   - Your language ____%
   - English Language ____%

15. Your friends mostly are from:
   - Your ethnicity group
   - Australian mainstream
   - Immigrants from other countries
   - Mixed

16. Do you consider yourself:
   - Australian
   - Your ethnicity
   - None
17. **What type of camera/phone you own?**
   - Smart phone
   - Small camera
   - Nothing
   - Others ___________________________

18. **How much experience do you have with using video cameras?**
   - Not much
   - Just recording
   - Good experience
   - Other ___________________________

19. **Have you been involved in making videos before today?**
   - Yes
   - Short ones without edit
   - No

20. **What do you hope to achieve by participating in this workshop?**
   - New experiences
   - Like to creative your video
   - Help others
   - No idea

21. **Do you feel confident being in front of the camera?**
   - I am confident
   - Not sure
   - I will try
   - I don’t want be in front of camera
Appendix D: The flyer

FREE VIDEO WORKSHOPS FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN BRISBANE

We are looking for participants (immigrant women in Brisbane) from non-English backgrounds for our participatory video project. The project is a series of workshops which will teach potential participants on how to go about making, editing and sharing videos.

The aim of this project is to examine how a participatory video project can empower immigrant women from ethnic backgrounds and help establish a practical frame work for settlement agencies and government to help immigrant communities, especially immigrant women from those communities, find a voice and face.

Who are we?

This series of workshops are part of a PhD research. The PhD research student is Narges Shokohi-Tehrani and is based in the School of Humanities, Nathan Campus in Griffith University. Narges is an Iranian immigrant of more than 10 years and has been through the good and bad experiences of migration. Her aims are to help immigrant women from diverse ethnicities to achieve their best and have high self-esteem. She has more than 2 decades of experience working as a radio and TV journalist, producer and freelancer in both Iran and Australia.

Dr Wendy Keys from School of Humanities and Associate Professor Trish FitzSimon from Griffith University Film School are the supervisors of the project.

What are you learning in the workshops?

- shot types
- editing
- uploading on the web (webpage, Facebook, YouTube, etc…)

Who can apply?

You are eligible to apply if you are:

- from a non-English ethnicity
- immigrated to Australia for more than 3 years but not less than 10 years
- haven’t found a job suitable with your experience and qualifications
- ready to learn

Why bother applying?

You will be able to:

- make short videos about events
- record your life story or someone else important to you
- document important issues around you and your community
- record your community’s events
- and many more….

By gaining this ability you can help your community to find a way to fill the gap of silence by propaganda media. You can also teach your fellow community members. It means there will be another voice in your community.

Contact Us

If you think you are interested in participating, please contact Narges Shokohi by either:

narges.shokohi@gmail.com

or

narges.shokohi-tehrani@griffithuni.edu.au

You can also like our page on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/pages/Participatory-Video-workshops/1389298617961673
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Looking for the Phoenix Within
Looking for the Phoenix Within