Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

"New" New Zealanders, or Harbingers of a New Transnationalism?

1.5 Generation Asian Migrant Adolescents in New Zealand

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at Massey University, Albany
New Zealand

Allen Bartley

2003

ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the experiences of acculturation, settlement and ethnic identity formation of a sample of 1.5 generation adolescent migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, who migrated to New Zealand as children, and who participated in the research as fifteen-to-nineteen year-olds. Advocating a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods as a particularly effective way of 'doing sociology', the thesis addresses the experiences of these migrants by exploring their perceptions and assignments of meaning with regard to their own ethnic identity, their sense of belonging and the social distance between themselves and others in New Zealand society; their acculturation experiences and strategies; their relationships with their parents and other family members; and their engagement with the wider community, through participation in clubs and other extra-curricular activities. The thesis posits that the experiences of migrant adolescents have been under-theorised, despite their particular sociological appeal, as they are located at the convergence of a number of different social pressures: between childhood and adulthood; often between their parents and the local community; between origin and host societies; and between competing demands on loyalty and attachment. These particular migrant adolescents are also sociologically interesting as children of highly-skilled, well-educated parents, who possess not only significant economic capital, but also high levels of social capital, and who have employed strategies of transnationalism in order to preserve and enhance these forms of capital. They have maintained their businesses and relationship networks – and sometimes their family homes – in their origin societies, in addition to pursuing forms of settlement and acculturation in New Zealand. With reference to survey and interview data, and drawing on the relevant literature, the thesis explores the meanings, motives and aspirations of migrant adolescents, and problematises conventional explanations of migrant adjustment and settlement. It posits that many 1.5 generation migrant Asian adolescents develop transnational identities through strategies of selective acculturation and aspirations of pursuing educational and occupational opportunities in other overseas destinations. Analysis of the data suggests that these particular migrants possess the cultural, social and economic resources to reproduce their parents' transnational identities, rather than the conventional and normative model of migrant settlement.

Acknowledgements

In the very early days of my PhD studies, a friend overheard her sons talking with my daughter, just five at the time, about what their respective parents did. The boys talked in some detail about their father, who owns and manages a small furniture manufacturing business. Having been to his workshop many times, they were able to offer a detailed picture of large machines, timber, sawdust, and finished products of tables, chairs, cabinets, hutches, and so forth. When they came to ask my daughter what I did, she said, without ceremony, "Oh, he sits down." They pressed for details: what did I do while I was sitting down? Did I draw, did I make things, did I talk to people? What did I actually *do*? Lauren coolly replied, "Nothing. He just sits down."

During my many hours of sitting down, my wife, Naomi Bartley, has managed our household, provided order, structure and continuity for our children, as well as patient attention well beyond the normal bounds of physical and mental endurance. She has tolerated my preoccupied absentmindedness and the precarious nature of a student's income for considerably longer than anyone anticipated when we both embarked on full-time study in 1994. Mere 'acknowledgement' would be meagre return indeed for expending so much of herself to make up for my 'sitting down'. She has my deepest gratitude for encouraging (and occasionally urging) me to pursue this goal, for being able to close the office door and leave me to it when she would have preferred to share a cuppa, and for knowing when to draw me out of myself and back into the home and family I love so dearly.

Grateful thanks are also extended to Paul Spoonley and Ann Dupuis for their attentive supervision, despite extremely demanding workloads. I have relished the intellectual engagement into which they have been prepared to enter so willingly, often at considerable inconvenience. From people for whom time is such a valuable commodity, such investment and encouragement – not to mention interest and opportunities for professional development – are an invaluable expression of confidence. I am also grateful for Ann's insistence that doctoral study is an important

vehicle for addressing questions of how we 'do' sociology. The influence of her argument is manifest in this thesis.

I am also indebted to Carl Davidson, a teacher, colleague and friend, for the many weekly coffee dates, during which I was able at times to develop thoughts and test-run ideas, but more often to allow myself to be led across huge expanses of intellectual terrain by one whose free-ranging appetite for knowledge is both astonishing and humbling. I owe him great thanks for expanding the bounds of my thought, and for inspiring me to think of social research as a genuinely fascinating pursuit. I also owe him a great many double-shot latte bowls, and muffins containing anything but blueberries.

Finally, I must gratefully acknowledge the students who took part in the research, as well as the principals, teachers and counsellors at the eight schools in and around Auckland who facilitated my access to the research participants. Without the willing co-operation, good faith, interest and accommodation of individuals such as they, social research of this kind would not be possible. I offer special thanks to Ian Frayling for his generosity in sharing his professional expertise and personal insights into the experiences of Asian migrant adolescents to New Zealand. I am deeply mindful of the commitment, energy and time invested by these and others in the preparation of this thesis.

Table of Contents

Abstract i

Acknowledgements ii

Table of Contents iv

List of Tables viii

List of Figures x

Foreword xii

1. Introduction 1

Introduction **1**

The Role Of New Zealand **4**

Doing Sociology **5**

Thesis Structure **5**

2. New Zealand Immigration Policy in Context 10

Introduction **10**

New Zealand Immigration Policies – A Brief History **12**

"Whiter Than White" Immigration Policy 13

Radical Policy Shift And Demographic Implications 16

Challenges Of Social Cohesion **20**

Host Society Reactions To Increased Ethnic Diversity 21

Winston Peters And The 'New Racism' *24*

The Incorporation Of Migrants 28

Regimes Of Incorporation *30*

Australian And Canadian Multiculturalisms *31*

New Zealand And Biculturalism *35*

Citizenship *43*

Conclusion **47**

3. Theorising Contemporary Immigration 49

Introduction **49**

Assimilation 50

Transnational Migration / Transmigration 55

Arguments Against Transnationalism *59*

Transnationalism Extended *61*

Interpretive Views: Theorising Individual Incorporation **68**

Migrant Identities, Motives And Aspirations 69
Singaporean Transnationals In Beijing *70*
Chinese Transnationals In New Zealand *70*
'Parachute Children' In California *73*
Migrant Generations 75
The 'In-Betweenness' Of The 1.5 And 2nd Generations 82
In-Between Sending And Receiving Countries *83*
In-Between Childhood And Adulthood *84*
In-Between Dominant And Other Minority Cultures *86*

Conclusion 88

4. Discovery 91

Introduction 91

Doing Sociology 92
Respondents As Expert Correspondents Of Their Habitats Of Meaning 92
The Role Of The Reflexive Researcher 99
Multiple Research Methods 100

The Process Of Finding Out 102
Starting Points: Applying The Literature 103
Survey Participants 105
Interview Participants 108
Ethical Considerations 109
Methods 1: The Survey 114
Ethnic Identity 118
Ethnic Dissociation 121
Acculturation 122
Intergenerational Family Dynamics 125
Community Engagement 126
Methods 2: Interviews 128
Reporting The Findings 129

5. Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Dissociation Indicators 131

Introduction 131

The Question Of Identity 135
Legal And Administrative Considerations 136
Essentialist Notions - Being Asian 140
Who Is A Kiwi? *145*
Identity And Gender *147*

Ethnic Dissociation: How Different Are 'They' From 'Us'? 148

Conclusion 154

6. Acculturation 160

Introduction 160

Boundaries 163

Adjustment **174**
Cultural Acquisition 180
Language *184*
Gain / Loss 186

Belonging **189**

Aspirations **191**

'Home' **199**

Conclusion **204**

7. Intergenerational Dynamics 208

Generational Strategies **211**
The Migration Decision 212
Parents' Adjustment 216
Cultural Brokers 225

Generational Tensions **228**
Maintenance Of Language And Culturally-appropriate Behaviours And Values 229
School Performance 234

Gain/Loss **236**

Conclusion **239**

8. Community Engagement 243

Introduction **243**

Who Engaged? **247**

Activities **249**

Why Participants Got Involved In The Community **252**
Opportunities To Participate 252
Engagement With Kiwi Society 254
Maintaining Contact With Co-Ethnics 256

The Effects Of Community Involvement **261**
Statistical Control 262
Gender *263*
School Attended *265*
Length Of New Zealand Residence *267*
A Transnational Explanation 272

Conclusion **273**

9. Conclusions 276

Introduction **276**

Cultural Diversity In New Zealand **277**

'Doing' Sociology **278**

Research Findings **279**

Identity 280
Acculturation 281
Belongingness And Attachment To Place 282

The Future Of The 1.5 Generation 285

Afterword 286

Appendix A: A Literal Translation Into English, Made In New Zealand, Of The Maori Version Of The Treaty Of Waitangi 289

Appendix B: Model of Multiculturalism Proposed by the Conference of Churches, 1990 291

Appendix C: The Auckland Region, with Migrants' Most Popular Suburbs, 1996 (from Chapter 3) 292

Appendix D: Group Interview Schedule 293

Appendix E: Univariate Tables of Major Survey Variables 295

References 300

List of Tables

Table		page
1.1	Number of People Approved for Residence in New Zealand by Nationality, 1983-97	2
2.1	Major Ethnic Groups in New Zealand, 1986 and 2001	11
2.2	Removal of 'Country-of-Origin' and Racial Restrictions on Immigration: Canada, Australia and New Zealand Compared	20
2.3	Citizenships Granted in 1996: Country of Birth, as a Proportion of the Normally Resident Population	45
4.1	Long-term and Permanent Arrivals from Target Source Countries, 1981 - 2001	105
4.2	Migrants' Most Popular Suburbs, 1996	106
5.1	Respondents Citing 'Citizenship' as Element of Identity	136
5.2	Correlation Coefficients for Ethnic Self-description and Participants' Friends' Ethnicity	140
6.1	Correlation Coefficients of Variables Compared to "Friends' Ethnicity"	173
6.2	Other Aspects of Life in New Zealand Difficult to Adjust to	177
6.3	Circumstances in which Respondents Preferred Using Origin Language	186
6.4	Where Respondent Thinks of as 'Home'	200
6.5	Crosstabulation: Where Respondent thinks of as 'Home', by Aggregated Length of Residence in NZ	200
6.6	Crosstabulation: Where Respondent thinks of as 'Home' by Age of Respondent at Migration	207
7.1	Participants' Ages at Migration	213
8.1	Respondents Involved in Clubs or Out-of-School Activities	248
8.2	Variable Correlations with Participation in Clubs or Out-of-school Activities	249

8.3 Variable Correlations with Participation in Clubs or Out-of-school Activities 250

8.4 Participation in Origin-language AND English-language Clubs and Extra-curricular Activities 251

8.5 Association between Assorted Variables and Participation in Extra-curricular Activities (Controlled for Predominant Language) 262

8.6 Association between Assorted Variables and Participation in Extra-curricular Activities (Controlled for Predominant Language) 264

8.7 Correlation of "Friends' Ethnicity" Variable with Participants' Involvement in Extra-Curricular Activities (Controlled by School Attended) 267

8.8 Correlation Coefficients: How Well Respondent Speaks English, By Participation in Extra-curricular Activities (Controlled for Length of New Zealand Residence) 268

8.9 Crosstabulation: How Well Respondent Speaks English Now, By Aggregated Length of New Zealand Residence 269

8.10 Elaborated Table - Where Respondent thinks of as 'Home', by Involvement in Clubs or Out-of-school Activities (Controlled by Length of New Zealand Residence) 271

8.11 Correlation of "Friends' Ethnicity" Variable with Participants' Involvement in Extra-Curricular Activities (Controlled by Length of New Zealand Residence) 272

List of Figures

Figure		page
3.1	Foreign Fee-paying Students in New Zealand Primary and Secondary Schools, 1996 - 2001	73
4.1	Survey Question Regarding Consent for Follow-up Contact	113
4.2	Example of Section Label and Explanation	115
4.3	Sample of Combination-response Question and Graphic	116
4.4	Example of Graphic Continuum Response Question	118
4.5	Friends' Ethnicity Question (from Survey of Taiwanese Students)	119
4.6	Ethnic Description Question (from Survey of Korean Students)	120
4.7	Adjustment Questions (from Survey of Hong Kong Students)	123
4.8	Secondary Adjustment Questions	124
4.9	"Cost to Respondent" Question	125
4.10	"Cost to Respondent's Family" Question	125
4.11	Respondent's Club Involvement Question (from Survey of Korean Students)	127
5.1	Major "Ethnic Identity" Response Categories	135
5.2	Respondent Ethnic Self-description - Major Categories	136
5.3	Respondents' Friends' Ethnicity	139
5.4	Descriptions/Labels and Respondents' Reactions	143
6.1	Ever Felt Misunderstood?	170
6.2	Friends' Ethnicity	172
6.3	Compared Responses to Adjustment Questions: How Easy or Hard is it to Adjust to. . .	176
6.4	Survey Responses: "Moving to New Zealand was a good idea"	180
6.5	How Well Participants' Spoke English at Migration, and at Time of Survey	185
6.6	"Reflective" Acculturation Variables Compared: Respondent Lost More	188

than Gained by Moving to New Zealand; and Moving to New Zealand Was a Good Idea

6.7 Survey Responses Compared – Most Likely and Most Preferred Destinations 193

6.8 Survey Responses Reconfigured: Where Respondents Would Most Like to be Living in 2005 194

7.1 Respondents' Perceptions of Whether Parents Enjoy Living in New Zealand More than Respondents Do Themselves 221

7.2 Respondents' Perceptions of Whether Parents Wished to Return to Origin Country 221

7.3 "My parents have helped me adjust to life in New Zealand" 224

7.4 "I have helped my parents adjust to life in New Zealand more than they have helped me" 224

7.5 "It is easier for younger people to adjust to life in New Zealand than older people" 225

7.6 "How Often Do You Speak English at Home with Your Family?" 230

7.7 Respondents' Perceptions of What Was Lost in Moving to New Zealand 239

Foreword

I am an American migrant to New Zealand, and am married to a New Zealand Pakeha. We had met and married overseas and, having decided to settle in New Zealand, arrived on Labour Day, 1992. My wife is herself a migrant, and is a child of migrants. Her parents were British colonials in Kenya, and their move to New Zealand, when my wife was still a toddler, brought to three the number of countries, and distinct regions of the world, which they called 'home'.

As migrants, my wife's family neatly fit into New Zealand's historic immigration regime. In 1968, the year they migrated to New Zealand, 16,077 people holding British passports arrived in this country as migrants. For over a hundred years, New Zealand maintained a 'country of origin' preference: as a result, immigrants to New Zealand have been overwhelmingly of British and Irish origin. Migrants from the United States, while relatively few (only 762 in 1968), have nonetheless been consistent arrivals to New Zealand since the days before 1840 when whaling ships and seal-hunting expeditions frequented New Zealand waters.

However, due to changes in immigration policy, the cohort of all migrants to New Zealand in 1992, when I first migrated, was dramatically different from those who arrived in 1968 with my wife and her family. Since 1987, many more people from non-European backgrounds have arrived in New Zealand than had ever settled here before.

My arrival in New Zealand as a new permanent resident occurred less than a year before former National Party member and sacked Minister of Maori Affairs Winston Peters launched his new opposition party, New Zealand First. The New Zealand First campaign strategy for the 1993 general election, repeated in 1996 and 2002, was oriented around opposition to immigration and foreign investment. 'They' threatened 'our' culture, 'our' way of life, 'our' economic sovereignty.[1] On a subjective level, while I was an immigrant, a new resident, and a property owner, I knew on an intuitive

[1] Winston Peters' anti-immigration discourse will be analysed theoretically in Chapter Two.

level that Winston Peters was not talking about me when he referred to foreigners inflating house prices and driving up the interest rates. When Peters – and others – talked about the flood of immigrants, and demanded that something be done about it, I did not feel threatened. When he linked these social problems with the issue of 'astronaut parents' or 'parachute families', I knew that it was not me he was using to gain political traction. The undercurrents of unease, suspicion or outright hostility to 'foreigners' which were moving through New Zealand, and which Mr Peters sought to ride to power, did not threaten me, *because I knew that I was not among the foreigners targeted in his campaign.* He – and others – were talking about Asians; the 'new' migrants to New Zealand who had begun arriving since 1987, who were so different from the typical migrants this country had welcomed and assimilated into New Zealand society. How did I, and presumably the thousands of other American, English, Irish, Australian, South African and Dutch migrants living here, know that we were not the subjects of the discussions of the 'immigrant problem'?

One answer to that question lay in the history of migration already mentioned, and the resulting fact that 'white' migrants had been perceived in mostly positive terms throughout the country's history. There have been exceptions, of course: Dalmatian migrant workers in the nineteenth century were not readily accepted, and were relegated to mostly rural occupations of gum digging and stock herding (Brooking & Rabel 1995:28-9). However, as a 'white' migrant in New Zealand, *I blend in* – that is, at least until I speak, and my accent betrays my origins.

The fact that I have been untouched by the racialised anti-'immigrant' discourse in the society to which I have migrated has made me both sympathetic and sensitive to non-European and non-Polynesian migrants in New Zealand. Since living here, I have wondered about how their reception by the host society – so different from my own – has affected their experiences of adjustment and settlement in their new country.

This thesis represents the first opportunity for me to explore those questions seriously and methodically.