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'When do I become a Kiwi?': A Qualitative Account  
of New Migrants Experiences in New Zealand

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Abstract

Integration is the preferred acculturation strategy of migrants (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006b). Berry et al. have conceptualised integration as a 'profile', made up of several interconnected components. This research investigated whether migrants adopted integration as a general strategy or whether they simultaneously adopted different acculturation strategies. There is also a lack of clarity regarding whether national and ethnic labels relate to the acculturation strategy adopted (Phinney, 1990). The markers and processes involved in 'becoming a Kiwi' were also investigated. Aspects of a participatory action research design were used in this study. The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (NZFEC) initiated the research, which aimed to produce a practical guide for migrants. Ten interviews were conducted and a thematic analysis approach was used to interpret the qualitative data. Migrants were found to have adopted integration as a general strategy. There was no evidence of a relationship between cultural labels chosen and self-reported behaviours. The results can inform migrants about the markers and processes involved in becoming a Kiwi.

‘When do I become a Kiwi?’: A Qualitative Account of New Migrants  
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Immigration is a global process (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006a). Economic opportunity is the most common reason for migrants to move (Winter-Ebmer, 1994, cited in Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). In New Zealand, immigration has been taking place over a long period of time (Berry et al., 2006b). Around twenty percent of the population were born outside of New Zealand (Ward & Lin, 2005). With migrants entering a new society and the workforce, it is essential for migrants and society to ensure that they adapt successfully.

*Integration Strategy*

A number of cultural and psychological changes can take place as a result of intercultural contact, and this is known as acculturation (Berry et al., 2006b; Ward et al., 2001). One of the most prominent models used to study acculturation is Berry’s (1970, 1974, 1980, cited in Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002) acculturation model (Ward, 2007). It is based on two independent factors: the extent to which a migrant’s cultural heritage is maintained and the degree to which the host culture is adopted. Combining these two factors produces the four acculturation strategies of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation.

The strategy preferred by virtually all migrant groups is that of integration (Berry et al., 2006b). Integration describes the strategy whereby migrants retain their cultural heritage while also adopting aspects of the host culture. Integration is associated with the most positive outcomes in terms of psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry et al.). Psychological adaptation is concerned with

emotional wellbeing and sociocultural adaptation is based on behavioural competence (Ward, 1996; Ward et al., 2001).

In the International Comparative Study of Ethno-cultural Youth (ICSEY), a study of immigrant youth in thirteen settler societies, the acculturation strategies are treated as 'profiles', made up of several interconnected components (Berry et al., 2006b). These are compiled through the combination of individual variables using cluster analyses and exploratory factor analyses and result in four acculturation profiles. An integration profile describes migrants who have strong ethnic and national identities (as indicated by their attitudes and feelings of belonging to these cultures); endorse integration (as measured by their attitudes regarding cultural traditions, language, marriage, social activities, and friends); are proficient in English and use it frequently; and have strong ethnic peer contacts.

The Relative Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM) (Navas et al., 2004, cited in Navas, Rojas, Garcia, & Pumares, 2007) is a new, alternative model to Berry et al.'s (2006b) conceptualisation of acculturation as a cluster or profile. Navas et al. (2007) have found that different acculturation strategies may take place in different domains (for example, at work or within family relationships). While a migrant may seek an integration strategy in one domain, they may assimilate in other areas (Navas et al., 2007). There is a need for qualitative research which investigates whether people narrate their acculturation experience in terms of a cluster or profile, or whether they talk about their behaviours and attitudes more as implicit habits or strategies deployed almost automatically in particular situations.

*Ethnic/National Labels and Acculturation*

Changes to cultural labels may be one indicator of migrants' acculturation strategies (Phinney, 1990). Migrants can use a number of different cultural labels to describe themselves. For example, they can choose a national label of 'Kiwi' or 'New Zealander', or an ethnic label such as 'Chinese', or a hyphenated identity, which incorporates both their ethnic and national connections, for example 'Chinese-New Zealander' (Ward & Lin, 2005). These labels are subjective – for example, there is no common definition of the term 'New Zealander' or 'Kiwi' (Liu, McCreanor, McIntosh, & Teaiwa, 2005; Ward & Lin, 2005).

Presumably, a hyphenated identity would be used by a migrant who had integrated; a national label would correspond to the assimilation strategy; and a migrant who used an ethnic label would be separated. However, the relationship between identity labels and acculturation remains unclear. Researchers who have investigated the relationship between ethnic self-identification and ethnic behaviour have found mixed results (Phinney, 1990). For example, Ullah (1987) and Der-Karabetian (1980) found that ethnic self-definition was related to ethnic behaviour. However, Hutnik (1986) did not find a correlation between ethnic or national identification and cultural behaviour, and Garcia (1982, cited in Phinney) found a negative relationship between ethnic self-identification and ethnic practices. Therefore, a question that is yet to be answered is how national and ethnic labels relate to acculturation (Phinney).

*Project Focus*

Aspects of a community-based participatory research design were used in the current project. Typically, in a participatory action research model, the research is

initiated by the community and a qualitative methodology is used, especially in the early stages of the research (Liu & Ng, under review). It involves working alongside community members with the aim of contributing to both theory development and to providing concrete outcomes of value to the community involved (Liu & Ng). The results are often disseminated in the form of a community report (Kesby, Kindon, & Pain, 2004).

The initial idea for the present research was formulated using a bottom-up approach. A needs assessment was conducted with members of ethnic communities, who identified acculturation as an important area in need of research. The research was designed and implemented in collaboration with the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (NZFEC) who wanted to produce a practical guide for migrants. NZFEC is a nationwide umbrella organisation for ethnic groups. Members of NZFEC are unlikely to have adopted an assimilation strategy, given the nature and objectives of the organisation. NZFEC aims to help migrants feel included in New Zealand society while simultaneously celebrating their diversity.

The overall research question of ‘When do I become a Kiwi?’ was formulated by NZFEC. The researcher’s narrative position was informed by participatory action research, whereby the project was driven by the needs and goals of the community.

The project aimed to investigate migrants’ experiences adapting to New Zealand and maintaining their cultural heritage. The purpose was to examine how New Zealand migrants thought of themselves in terms of their cultural identities, including how people described themselves and the reasons behind choosing particular identity labels. The changes that occurred for participants as a result of immigration were also analysed. Another aim was to assess whether integration was discussed as an overall profile, made up of several interconnected factors, or whether

different acculturation strategies were employed in different situations. Another goal was to help clarify whether there was a consistent relationship between identity labels and self-reported behaviours.

Overall, previous research has tended to have a stronger focus on ethnic identification rather than researching how migrants identify with the host society (Berry et al., 2006b; Liebkind, 2006). These are, however, both important processes to study.

The current research also focused on identifying the key markers and signposts along the way to 'becoming a Kiwi' and achieving successful integration. The purpose was to provide NZFEC and new migrants with information on some of the ways in which migrants could 'become Kiwis' while maintaining their ethnic culture. For this reason, the majority of participants were migrants who had been successful at integrating, as these participants could provide the most useful narratives to help other migrants.

Acculturation research has been dominated by quantitative research assessing changes and cultural maintenance in particular areas, such as language use and food habits (Berry, 2001). There have been relatively fewer qualitative studies informed by acculturation theory with a community project focus. The use of qualitative methods in the current research allowed migrants to express their complex migration experiences without being limited by the wording and categories pre-selected by the researcher. More subjective and personal aspects of participants' journeys were thus allowed to become the central focus.

There are numerous factors that influence people's cultural identity and acculturation strategy. For example, people can differ in terms of whether their

identity label is self-chosen (embraced) or imposed by other people (Doan & Stephan, 2005). Also, migrants can change by losing parts of their culture, either deliberately or not (culture shedding); or by acquiring new cultural behaviours (culture learning) (Berry, 1992). Personal narratives allow factors such as these to be discussed in their intricacies (Mishler, 1986; Phinney, 2000). That is, detailed data can be obtained in a way that elicits most information from the participant (Giddens, 1991, cited in Lewis, 2005).

As well as helping migrants, another goal of this research was to enhance the knowledge of New Zealanders in understanding the diverse range of migrants' experiences. It was hoped that this would be helpful in the building of a more welcoming and inclusive society.

Ten interviews were conducted and analysed. The analysis involved identifying themes that were salient to the participants and contributed to addressing the above aims. NZFEC may use this as a pilot study for a broader and more representative community project investigating identity and acculturation of migrants in New Zealand. In line with the participatory action research design, this study will also produce a community report (written in simple language and shorter in length) (Liu & Ng, under review).

## Method

### *Interview Schedule*

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). The interviews were conducted in English. The first part was comprised of three questions relating to demographic information about the migrant: where they were born and their age; their length of residence in New Zealand; and their migration



history (i.e. whether they have lived in countries other than where they were born and New Zealand). Eight questions explored the identities of the participants and their acculturation experiences. In particular, the questions investigated: whether participants felt that New Zealand was home; if they had attachments outside of New Zealand; their reasons for migrating; how they described their identity; whether they considered themselves to be Kiwis; whether Maori culture or bicultural aspects of New Zealand influenced their acculturation experience; the significant changes that occurred as a result of migration; and their opinions about how people could become Kiwis.

A pilot study for the project was conducted to ensure the questionnaire was appropriate and elicited the relevant information. The questions asked in the pilot study were all kept in the final study. Three further questions were also added. The question: “How did you get to New Zealand, did you come directly here or have you lived in other countries as well?” was added as it became apparent that participants’ migration history could affect their experiences of New Zealand. The question concerning the bicultural nature of New Zealand was included to establish whether this unique aspect of New Zealand influenced the migrants’ experiences at all. The question “What have been the most significant changes that have occurred for you or your family since moving to New Zealand (for example the celebration of festivals, accessing services, getting social support, etc.)?” was added after discussion with NZFEC, who indicated that they would like this question included.

After the first two interviews, the question “Would you consider yourself to be a Kiwi?” was omitted as it became apparent that this question was already being answered in the previous question “How would you describe yourself to other people now (for example, as an Indian-New Zealander or a New Zealander)?”

*Research Participants*

This study was intended to serve as a pilot study to provide helpful advice to migrants and to New Zealanders, rather than use representative sampling. Participants were initially people involved in ethnic council groups in the Greater Wellington region (the Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt, and Wellington Ethnic Councils). However, due to time constraints, not all participants were eventually recruited through their involvement with NZFEC. All of the participants were currently living in the Greater Wellington region.

Ten participants were selected to be interviewed. There were a number of criteria that migrants had to meet to participate in the study. Firstly, the participants must have migrated to New Zealand a minimum of five years ago. The rationale behind this criterion was that it was less likely that migrants who had lived here for less than five years would have had the opportunity to integrate or would consider themselves to be Kiwis. Also, it was important to have participants who were comfortable using English in an interview situation.

Secondly, participants were chosen based on their age and gender. Four participants were young adults, aged between 18 and 24 and six participants were mature adults, aged between 43 and 72. Half of the participants were male and half were female. This meant that a diverse range of experiences could be analysed.

Thirdly, the culture of origin was important in selecting participants. Four participants came from East Asia (China and Taiwan), four from South Asia (Malaysia and the Philippines), and two from European English speaking countries (Ireland and Scotland). These different backgrounds were selected in order to provide a sample of the different ethnicities within NZFEC. NZFEC requested that this study

have a broad focus, rather than systematically comparing different ethnic groups or looking at one group in particular.

### *Procedure*

Participants were contacted by the researcher and after being informed about the research they were asked if they would be happy to participate in the study. Any initial questions were answered by the researcher. Participants were informed that the research would be confidential. The researcher and participants discussed where and when the interview would be conducted. Interviews took place at locations which were most convenient for participants. These included a meeting room at a participant's workplace; the researcher's residence; the participant's own residence; and a meeting room at Victoria University.

At the interview the participants were provided with an information sheet (Appendix B) and consent form (Appendix C). Any questions that participants had were answered. Participants were informed that the interview consisted of open-ended questions. Confidentiality was reiterated – in particular, participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used in the transcription so that the data would not be directly traceable to them. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

The interviews took between 30 minutes and one hour and were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Immediately after the interview, participants were asked if they had any further questions. Participants indicated whether they would like a copy of the results to be sent or emailed to them at a later date. Each participant was thanked for participating in the research.

### *Data Analysis Procedure*

The interviews were transcribed in electronic format. A thematic analysis approach was used to describe the entire data set in depth and interpret the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The researcher analysed each interview line-by-line, and coded the data. Codes were used to identify and organise interesting features of the data that related to the research aims. All of the data extracts were then collated and organised by code.

The initial codes were subsequently organised according to themes. Themes and sub-themes were used to group codes in a coherent way and to further identify what information was relevant and of interest. An inductive approach was used to identify themes, that is, the themes that emerged were 'data-driven' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, it is acknowledged that the researcher could not view the data entirely objectively when choosing the themes (Braun & Clarke). The initial themes identified were then revised, including the names for the themes. For example, initially 'family relationships' was classified as a separate theme. This was later changed to a sub-theme under the main theme of 'changes that occurred'. Another theme, 'society's acceptance', was later broadened to 'the New Zealand environment' in order to include social and political factors.

The final themes were then organised so that they fitted into the overall 'story' in relation to the research aim. The sub-themes were organised from the most to the least prevalent.

### Results

The thematic analysis resulted in six main themes and 24 sub-themes. The main themes identified by the researcher were: home; identity labels; changes that

occurred; maintaining ethnic involvement; the New Zealand environment; and how to become a Kiwi.

### *Home*

Under the theme 'home', the participants stated the reasons that New Zealand did or did not feel like their home. The majority of participants said that they felt that New Zealand was their home. Three sub-themes fell under this main theme: family, length of residence, and comparisons to original country of residence. A number of participants had many reasons for feeling that New Zealand was or was not their home.

*Family.* Family situations impacted on whether participants felt that New Zealand was their home in a number of ways. For four participants, New Zealand became their home when they had children in New Zealand or when their children became settled here. For example, one participant said that New Zealand felt like home "when my kids were born because I've got three Kiwi kids. So probably when the first one was born. This became their home so that became our home. So that's what made up my mind".

One participant mentioned that now that her children are grown up she can feel "more settled over here". She also said that the communication systems are better now than when she first moved, so being in contact with family more easily has helped her feel that New Zealand is home.

For one participant, getting his parents' approval to live in New Zealand made it feel like home. "Very important for me was getting my parents' permission to live long term in New Zealand...Once I got that permission say about four years ago, this became home".

The one participant who did not feel that New Zealand was home said that one of the reasons for this was that his family was not here, but that New Zealand could become home if he did have family here. “Here I only have friends, no family. Maybe when I married here I feel more like home. But now I still feel it not home”.

*Length of residence.* Four participants mentioned that the length of time they had actually been here, or felt that they had been here, contributed to whether New Zealand felt like home. For example, one participant stated: “I just feel like I’ve always been here and that’s how it is”. For this participant a feeling of committing to living in New Zealand for the long-term was also important, as when she was granted permanent residency and “bought the house to settle in”, this made her feel that New Zealand was home.

Another participant did not have particular events that made her feel that New Zealand was home, and instead felt that it was “a gradual process”. Another participant said that New Zealand was home because he had “grown up here with all the people”. This participant, however, without realising, went on to refer to both his country of origin as well as New Zealand as “home”. Contradictions are common in discourse (Billig et al., 1988), and in this case may highlight the idea that the participant feels ‘at home’ in both settings. For the participant who did not feel that New Zealand was home, another reason provided was that he was not born here. However, as previously mentioned, this participant felt that New Zealand could potentially become his home if his circumstances were to change, so place of birth is not the sole determining factor for this participant.

*Comparisons to original country of residence.* Three participants felt that New Zealand was their home because their country of origin no longer felt like home. For

example, one participant stated “I don’t really see myself living in Malaysia anymore...so I guess yeah I would call New Zealand my home”.

One participant felt that she no longer fitted in when she went back to Taiwan: “when I went back I felt just like a tourist. I was shopping and eating and I didn’t have any friends so you know, I knew that New Zealand was home. I couldn’t wait to go home”. The participant who felt that New Zealand was not home also made a comparison, saying that when he goes back to China it feels more like home than New Zealand.

*Summary of ‘home’ theme.* Participants did not have to feel that they were New Zealanders to describe New Zealand as their home. Almost all of the participants described New Zealand as home, while only four participants described themselves as New Zealanders. This suggests that identity labels change more slowly or people are less likely to want to change their identity label, but are more likely to feel connected to New Zealand as a home. While the nine participants who felt that New Zealand was home indicated that they wished to remain living in New Zealand, the one participant who felt that New Zealand was not home had not chosen to come to New Zealand and expressed a desire to return to China to be with his family.

### *Identity Labels*

Under the theme ‘identity labels’, there were four sub-themes that people used to describe themselves: national identity; ethnic identity; hyphenated identity; and unmarked/undifferentiated. This theme looked at how participants preferred to identify themselves and their reasons for the label they chose.

*National identity.* Four participants described themselves as New Zealanders. There were many reasons that people felt that they were now Kiwis. Two participants

felt emotionally connected to New Zealand. For example, one participant said she felt like a New Zealander because she is “really passionate about things happening here”. This participant went on to talk about how “things are set up here a bit better...socially and economically and that people have the opportunity to do well if they want to”.

Another participant said: “I know I’m a New Zealander when something happens in the community and I feel sad like anyone else, or if something happens in the community I feel good”. This participant compared “the fair mindedness in New Zealand” to the “corruption in the politics” in his country of origin. He said: “these are the things that make me feel I’m a New Zealander”.

Two participants chose to describe themselves as New Zealanders because they felt they fitted into New Zealand and understood the New Zealand way of life. For example, one participant said that she felt like a Kiwi because she had “adapted to the New Zealand way of life”. While this participant chose to call herself a New Zealander, she adopted a highly integrative discourse, expressing that she felt able to combine her Taiwanese and New Zealand identities. She stated:

There have been times I’ve asked myself who I am, like how much am I more Kiwi or am I more Taiwanese, and then I’ve realised I don’t need to put a scale to it. I can just have the best of both worlds. Just keeping all the good parts.

Three participants talked about concrete changes that had made them feel like Kiwis. One participant mentioned he could talk about New Zealand things now. Another participant said she was a New Zealander because she had “a Kiwi accent”. Another participant said he remembered feeling that he had started changing to



become more a New Zealander when he stopped using his own language at school and used English terms. He said:

We were trying to adapt to the New Zealand way of life so we were kind of hiding our language, and our culture and stuff. So I think that's when I started changing more to become more a New Zealander than a Filipino.

One participant said that other people see him as a New Zealander and this contributes to him feeling like a Kiwi and describing himself as one. He stated:

In this person's [New Zealander's] mind, the way that I talk, the things that I talk about are very New Zealand. So why should I say that I am anything else other than that? To say anything else other than that is possibly not true.

While four participants called themselves 'New Zealanders', this involved different things for different people. While some participants indicated that they had become New Zealanders by losing some of their own ethnic identity, others talked about successfully combining their ethnic and New Zealand identities. This suggests that calling oneself a New Zealander can be defined in different ways.

*Ethnic identity.* Three participants described themselves using an ethnic label. All three participants talked about not calling themselves a New Zealander because they were not born in New Zealand. One participant rejected a bicultural identity. When asked if she would call herself a Chinese-New Zealander she replied: "This one is about local Chinese. Local Chinese are New Zealand born... They have a totally different experience... that's why we say Chinese-New Zealand for them, not for me". One of the reasons this participant gave for describing herself as Chinese was due to other people's perceptions: "I am still Chinese because people see me as Chinese".

Another participant chose to call himself Chinese because of his age when he came to New Zealand and due other people's perceptions:

I think I could never feel that I am a Kiwi. Because all my family are in China and by my looking I am Chinese, so I'm never going to be a Kiwi I think...I think those guys who come here when they are very young, like three or four years old with their parents. They are 100 percent Kiwi. But for me I come here at fourteen.

One participant rejected the term 'New Zealander' because of the length of time she had been here. "I would say I am a Malaysian living in New Zealand that's what I would say...No I wouldn't really call myself a New Zealander because I haven't been here very long". For this participant, it was also about where she was born: "I am from Malaysia I was born in Malaysia that's who I am, I'm Malaysian".

*Hyphenated identity.* One participant described herself as having a hyphenated identity, saying "Actually at the moment I always say Malaysian-New Zealander". This participant felt that her identity could change over time. "I was thinking the other day...that after maybe a few years I stay here I will say I'm a New Zealander". For this participant, her identity was determined by a number of factors, for example, her "love" of New Zealand and her connection to Malaysia. "It always will be there you know. We cannot change our culture, we cannot forget about things - where we were born and who we are". This participant felt that New Zealanders would never see her as a Kiwi: "They can't accept me as a Kiwi...Always I'm aware I'm an immigrant". This participant felt she would not be accepted as a Kiwi because of her accent, skin colour, and culture.

Another participant did not have a particular term to describe himself. However, he said: “I’m definitely affiliated, associated with New Zealand but...I can’t forget where I was born”.

*Invisible/unmarked identity.* One participant did not like to describe himself by any ethnic or national label and instead preferred to describe himself by his profession, “as a lecturer”. This participant did not like to use labels that emphasised differences, saying: “in my view it’s wrong to emphasise differences”. He felt that focusing on what was “common among people” was important. He also described himself as a “World citizen” or an “international citizen”.

*Summary of ‘identity labels’ theme.* The majority of participants described themselves as Kiwis or by an ethnic label. Identity labels did not necessarily reflect self-reported behaviour in other domains. That is, participants who called themselves Kiwis did not always report more changes and less cultural maintenance behaviours than those who identified as ethnic. The labels participants chose did not always describe the acculturation strategies used by participants. Through looking at the participants’ attitudes and self-reported behaviours, it appeared that nine of the ten participants had integrated into New Zealand society. These participants chose varying identity labels: national, ethnic, hyphenated, and invisible/unmarked.

Ethnic labels were used as a result of other people’s perceptions more often than for national, hyphenated, or invisible/unmarked identity labels. Other people can place constraints on migrants’ choices of labels (Barreto & Ellemers, 2002; Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). One of the reasons two participants provided for not calling themselves Kiwis was because New Zealanders saw them as Chinese due to their physical appearance. Discrepancies between cultural labels used by migrants and the category perceived by others can also occur (Barreto & Ellemers). For example, one

participant chose to use a hyphenated identity and felt that she would eventually call herself a New Zealander, but she felt that New Zealanders would always see her as an immigrant because of her appearance.

### *Changes that Occurred*

Under this theme, people talked about the changes that occurred for them since migrating to New Zealand. There were six sub-themes: language/communication; celebration of festivals; social relations with Kiwis; family interactions and relationships; food and clothing; and financial/professional.

*Language/communication.* Changes in language and communication occurred for almost all of the participants. For two participants, there were specific communication patterns that had to be learnt and adapted to. For example, one participant talked about Kiwis being “a bit more reserved” and went on to say that he had adapted to this: “I think I’ve learnt to be a little more reserved”. This participant also talked about the differences in non-verbal communication in New Zealand compared to his country of origin: “There’s a lot more, you’re straight out there, you’re straightforward. Here...you have to read their facial expressions and yeah and play little games”.

Another participant talked about non-verbal communication, saying: “my body language and all was quite alien to people here”. This participant also said that he had learnt that “In New Zealand you have to be very specific with your requests”. He found that he “was not sharing emotions in ways that other people understood” and therefore learnt that he “needed to talk the emotions up”. He also talked about his language selection having to change, saying: “the terminologies and metaphors that were used were different”.

Three participants talked about losing aspects of their language. For one person, this was in the private domain. This participant talked about limiting the amount of Malay she spoke at home:

We used to speak English at home as well in Malaysia but we kind of mixed it up more like we would speak English then we would put in a couple of Malay words while we were talking and stuff but now we hardly do it.

Two participants talked about limiting their language use in public, one, to try and become a Kiwi, and the other, because she considered it to be rude to speak her language in front of Kiwis: “if Kiwi people are around I try to talk in English rather than talking in my own language. I find that some people get offended”.

Two participants talked about the difficulty of not speaking English and having to learn once they were here. One participant said: “It was quite hard to communicate. I don’t know how to tell them what I want, how I feel”. He then talked about his current situation: “Not really good English but I can say what I want to say. Let people know how I think. It’s much easier than before”.

This participant also talked about how his communication had changed since being in New Zealand so that now it was sometimes difficult to communicate when in China: “sometimes my thinking is different to those people in China who never come overseas. So sometimes it’s quite hard to communicate with them even when speaking Chinese. They don’t know what I thinking I don’t know what they are thinking”. Adjusting to the New Zealand accent was also mentioned by five participants.

*Celebration of festivals.* The majority of participants mentioned that their celebration of festivals in New Zealand had changed. Four participants did not

celebrate their festivals to the same extent that they had previously. The most common reason for this was due to practical and environmental limitations. For example, one participant talked about Diwali celebrations being “not so grand anymore” due to her extended family not being in New Zealand and because it is often a school day.

Another participant said: “For Chinese New Year celebration, you can never have a Chinese New Year really like a real one in China... Mostly it’s not because of my choice to celebrate or not but because mostly it’s a working day”.

A change that occurred for four participants was that they had begun celebrating new festivals including Waitangi Day and Christmas. One participant talked about being “very conscious of Waitangi Day” and wanted to recognise the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi. Another participant had decided to use Christmas “as the primary family occasion” because it was difficult to get people together on other holiday dates.

*Social relations with Kiwis.* The majority of participants mentioned that Kiwis were now part of their social networks. A number of the younger participants talked about making Kiwi friends at school. For example, one participant said: “I formed really good deep friendships with my friends in high school and yeah they were all Kiwis. Actually all Europeans”.

One participant said he had friends with a range of ethnicities, but said he tended “to get along with more the Maoris and Pacific Islanders better”. One participant said he made a conscious choice not to stick with other Chinese people, saying: “I don’t just go with Chinese, I don’t do that because in my work, my job, my life I’m required to deal with people”.

*Family interactions and relationships.* The physical distance between family members living in different countries was discussed by two participants. One participant said that one of the most difficult things about living in New Zealand is that “when family are sick, you can talk to them and tell on the phone that they’re quite down and depressed and you can’t be there, you can’t just jump on a plane and be there in five minutes”.

One participant mentioned that the physical distance had changed his relationships in a positive way. This participant and his parents had learnt to value their “mental closeness” to each other.

Three of the younger participants said that they had experienced conflict with their parents as a result of the move and the acculturation process. For example, one participant said: “it was during my teenage years I probably had a few big fights with my parents saying I’m not back home in the Philippines anymore like you have to give me a bit of space”. All three of these participants found that the conflict was resolved through compromise and over time.

One participant said that the New Zealand lifestyle allowed her more time to spend with her immediate family who had migrated here. Another talked about communication being different with his New Zealand-born children compared to what it was like for him with his parents. While acknowledging the positive aspects of his children identifying as New Zealanders, he also said: “sometimes there are downsides as well. They speak in English and think in English sometimes. And sometimes what I say is misinterpreted”.

*Food and clothing.* Three participants mentioned that they now eat a greater variety of food. One participant mentioned finding it difficult when she first came

here as she was restricted in terms of what food she could buy: “I didn’t find it difficult except for food wise because in those days we couldn’t get the food like whatever we wanted to eat”. However, this is no longer a problem for this participant as a wider range is now available.

One participant mentioned the impact of changing from eating a main meal at midday to evening: “the main meal is always lunch in Malaysia. My main meal is dinner and I made that change and that change has made a change in me I have put on a whole lot of weight”.

Changing clothing was something that three participants mentioned. One participant mentioned the changes that had to be made due to the weather, for example saying: “because of the intense light I have to wear dark glasses”.

*Financial/professional.* Two people mentioned the financial or professional sacrifices they had made due to migrating. For example, one participant talked about the economic sacrifices he had made for the lifestyle benefits of New Zealand:

Had I been in Malaysia with my qualifications, experience and all I would probably be in a more senior profession here and now. But what I think I’ve traded that off for is a lifestyle that is fair, inclusive and my children benefit from that.

Another participant mentioned the initial salary drop that occurred, but found that his financial situation improved after a period of time. “Going from a pretty good salary to a low paid salary was quite hard. But there’s always a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow so you’ve got to look ahead. You struggle you struggle financially”.

*Summary of ‘changes that occurred’ theme.* Participants placed a large emphasis on fitting in. This was done through both losing aspects of their culture and



by adapting to aspects of New Zealand culture. A number of changes occurred as a matter of necessity, such as learning English in order to communicate or adapting to the New Zealand climate. Most participants felt that both positive and negative changes had occurred. Despite the emphasis on adapting to the New Zealand way of life and fitting in, all participants had aspects of their culture that they did not wish to change.

### *Maintaining Ethnic Involvement*

This theme looked at ways migrants maintained their ethnic involvement, rather than focusing on the particular ethnic values and behaviours they maintained. There were three sub-themes under the main theme maintaining ethnic involvement: friendship/structured ethnic social groups in New Zealand; sharing values with others; and the media.

*Friendship/structured ethnic social groups in New Zealand.* Half of the participants talked about having friends of the same ethnic group as themselves while in New Zealand or belonging to structured ethnic groups. There were different levels of involvement with these groups. For example, one participant talked about having some contact with Malaysian families only when they have “big functions”.

Another participant talked about having quite extensive involvement with a structured ethnic group and also having “close ties” with his Filipino friends in New Zealand. One participant said that most of his friends were Chinese and stated: “I think it’s quite easy for me to maintain identity if you have friends that are from the same place as you. Even though you’re overseas but the people around you are still Chinese. I think you won’t change much”.

*Sharing values with others.* Sharing one's values with friends or family members was mentioned by half of the participants. One participant talked about always wanting to be able to continue speaking Mandarin. She talked about being able to do this by speaking Mandarin with her parents at home and she did not want to lose this ability, saying: "Of course if I really don't use it at all I'm going to lose it eventually but I'm trying I try not to let that happen". This participant also talked about sharing her values with New Zealand friends. When talking about Chinese New Year she said: "Sometimes I really go to a bit of trouble to collect information to explain to my friends about it".

Passing on values to children was mentioned as important for three participants. For example, one participant said: "It is expensive, but it's very important to take them back to Malaysia once every two years...I'd rather that I shared the journey with them".

Another participant said she passed on her ethnic values to her children because she wanted them to: "know what kind of belief system they will follow". One participant talked more generally about being open about his Filipino background: "I think you can be more open with the fact that you are Filipino and you should take that, you should never forget where you come from".

*The media.* Two participants talked about maintaining their ethnic involvement through the media. One participant said: "I never want to lose the ability to write, speak and listen and comprehend Mandarin language. And also yeah just to know what's going on and be able to feel still feel one at heart with Chinese people". One of the ways she maintains these things was through reading Chinese newspapers. "I pick up...Chinese Weekly, it's for the Chinese community. And I try to find out what's going on, even the current situation".

Another participant said: “I watch the news every day so I know what’s going on there”. He watches Asian television channels and describes the role of technology in helping people to feel connected to a place:

We’ve got TV, Asian channels, actually I see more of those on the screen than previously in China! So you know, it’s not so much because of your location when determining your level of attachment to a place, it is how much attention or interest you have in that place.

*Summary of ‘maintaining ethnic involvement’ theme.* Participants overall placed a large emphasis on maintaining their ethnic involvement. While participants varied in terms of the importance they placed on this, this was not related to the labels that they used. Many participants felt that they had been successful at finding methods to maintain their ethnic culture, while also adapting to New Zealand society. Thus, while the majority of participants were integrated, there was individual variation within this classification in terms of the extent to which participants emphasised adapting to New Zealand culture and maintaining their ethnic involvement.

#### *The New Zealand Environment*

‘The New Zealand environment’ theme looks at the situation in New Zealand. It is comprised of three sub-themes: attitudes of New Zealanders; biculturalism/multiculturalism; and social and political barriers and opportunities.

*Attitudes of New Zealanders.* Nine participants talked about the attitudes of New Zealanders. The majority of these participants had experienced discrimination. A number of participants did not see discrimination as a problem particular to New Zealand and felt that it occurred everywhere. All six participants who had experienced discrimination felt that they could cope with it. For example, one participant said:

“it’s everywhere so its just how you deal with it really instead of being so hung up about it you should just shrug it off” and that “you just have to move on”.

One participant felt that New Zealanders had been accepting of his Filipino background. He had not experienced discrimination and said: “They’re open to my faith, my religion, my culture and stuff as well as who I am”. This participant mentioned that he felt that he could fit in, in terms of the way he looked, saying: “if I was to sit around with some of my Samoan friends I’d fit in just cos of the colour of my skin”. He felt that this had prevented him from being discriminated against and said it seemed that people from China and Korea experienced more discrimination. One other participant also mentioned that migrants who are more visibly different experience more discrimination, and coming from Ireland, she had not experienced discrimination.

One participant who had migrated to Australia before living in New Zealand said that while New Zealanders were “polite” and “nice” she had found it “difficult to get close to” New Zealanders. She felt that Australians were more “relaxed” and “open” and she had more “close good friends in Australia” despite living longer in New Zealand.

However, a number of participants had found it easy to make friends in New Zealand. For, example one participant said that “the friendly people” was one of the reasons she decided to return to live in New Zealand.

*Bicultural/multiculturalism.* The bicultural nature of New Zealand was mentioned by two participants. One migrant stated: “I think because of the bicultural element in New Zealand I think there is a huge tolerance for different ethnicities. We are far ahead of many countries in Western society”. The other participant felt that

migrants had to struggle to find their place in New Zealand society: “When Asians come in I think you do have a unique sort of issue of how to understand society, how to fit into – in a sense whether you think you fit into the European part or the Maori part”.

One participant perceived New Zealand as becoming a multicultural society with advantages for migrants. “Well New Zealand is getting more multicultural...you don’t feel like you’re the only Indian or the only Malaysian walking around and stuff like that which is quite cool”.

*Social and political barriers and opportunities.* Although not a lot was said about the barriers and opportunities that migrants faced, one community leader mentioned a number of factors affecting migrants. One social change that this participant advocated was increasing the awareness of New Zealanders about other countries. One suggestion was through “better reporting” in the media. This participant also said “The government is now becoming a barrier, because they are increasing funding for government agencies, and not giving enough support for NGOs”.

This participant also felt that one of the reasons “migrants are getting stuck in Auckland” is because of the perception that the services available there are better. This participant thought there should be better education to change this perception. He discussed the idea that New Zealanders do some voluntary work for migrants, as part of their job description, in order to enhance the experience of migrants.

*Summary of ‘the New Zealand environment’ theme.* Participants generally reported having positive experiences in New Zealand and chose not to dwell on negative experiences. Participants who were more visibly different from New

Zealanders tended to have more negative experiences than those who looked more similar to Pakeha or Maori.

*How to Become a Kiwi*

This theme described the ways in which people felt migrants could ‘become Kiwis’. There were five sub-themes: respect/accept what is here and fit in; mix with New Zealanders and community involvement; be yourself; takes time; and practical culture specific knowledge.

*Respect/accept what is here and fit in.* Half of the participants felt that for people to become Kiwis they had to respect and accept the situation in New Zealand and fit in. For example, one participant said that to become a Kiwi “you learn about the way of life in the country and you accept the laws and regulations of the country...and just respect the cultures and the people who are already here”. This participant also stated: “when in Rome do as the Romans...I think if you’re coming into a country you must accept what’s already there the way of life of the people and the culture and how things are done”.

Another participant stated: “we shouldn’t be trying to change New Zealand to fit round us. ‘Assimilate’ is probably a bad word, but you have to fit into New Zealand culture”. This participant also said that in order to fit in, it was important not to “always talk about back home. Don’t. Cos you do tend to alienate a lot of people when you say oh back home we did this”. One participant said that when migrating to New Zealand it was important to “Understand their lifestyle and what they really want and what they really like and adapt to that”.

*Mix with New Zealanders and community involvement.* Five participants felt that getting to know Kiwis or getting involved in the community was important. For

example, one participant mentioned said that the way people can try to become Kiwis is “to make more Kiwi friends. To know more about Kiwis, their lives”.

Another participant said: “I do think that new immigrants, especially at the start they really don’t go out so much, they stay quite inclusive...I definitely would encourage more acculturation. To just go out there and know what’s going on”. One participant suggested joining groups to get to know people so that “you feel like you fit in and you feel like it’s easier to adapt”. Another participant said it was important to “get involved in the life of the community”.

*Be yourself.* Half of the participants felt that there was no one way to become a Kiwi, and that was a matter of being yourself. For example, one participant said: “just be yourself really...you don’t really have to change yourself to fit into the New Zealand society”.

Another participant said: “I never really tried to become a Kiwi. I never really tried to become Chinese. I think what we do now is we try to be just a person”. Another felt that there was “no one thing that you can put your finger on that says this is what makes you a Kiwi”.

*Takes time.* Two participants said that becoming a Kiwi took time. For example, one participant said:

I think the key thing for anyone that’s migrating to New Zealand or to a different country, is you’ve got to give it time. You can’t say I’m going to go for six months or twelve months and if I don’t like it after then I’m just going to throw it all out. Cos you go through cycles of good days and bad days.

Another participant stated: “I would say it will take time. The first ten years we were here, we came in ‘72 and by 1982 I think we felt really nice and comfortable

and settled”. One other participant felt that she would never be accepted as a New Zealander, but that her grandchildren’s generation would, as they would “speak like a Kiwi” and would be “brought up here”.

*Practical culture specific knowledge.* Three participants talked about specific things people had to know about New Zealand in order to become Kiwis. One participant said language competence was one of two essential things to know in order to become a Kiwi: “First of all you have to understand the language I think. Because Kiwi English is quite different to other cultures, other English”.

For this participant the second important thing to learn was “how to get around”. For example, this participant said that one should know that “there’s not so much rules and restrictions in this society”. Another participant also talked about needing to “find your way around”. This participant talked about a cultural misunderstanding that had occurred when she came here and said: “there’s quite a few things you’ve got to learn about the culture and the community”.

*Summary of ‘how to become a Kiwi’ theme.* Participants who did not identify as Kiwis still had suggestions as to how one would become a Kiwi, however, those who identified as New Zealanders tended to have more ideas as they had experienced this transition. Most participants stated that it was important to make changes and adapt to aspects of New Zealand culture in order to become a Kiwi. However, participants did not explicitly articulate what Kiwi identity was or what one was supposed to fit in with. While participants had previously emphasised the accepting nature of New Zealanders, being friendly and tolerant was not mentioned as something one should be in order to become a Kiwi. Rather than migrants being unaware of what was involved, they may have implicit ideas about what is involved in becoming a Kiwi. Those born in New Zealand, while implicitly knowing what to do



to fit into New Zealand society, have trouble defining the definition of New Zealander (Ward & Lin, 2005).

## Discussion

The current study examined migrants' subjective experiences of integration. It identified the key markers associated with successful integration and the indicators and processes involved in becoming a Kiwi. It also examined how New Zealand migrants thought of themselves in terms of their social identities, and whether this was related to the acculturation strategy they adopted.

### *Integration Strategy*

Almost all of the participants valued and strived to simultaneously fit into New Zealand society and to maintain their ethnic involvement. Changing to fit into New Zealand society did not result in migrants' losing their ethnic culture. This supported the two-dimensional process described in Berry's (1970, 1974, 1980, cited in Berry et al., 2002) acculturation framework, whereby adoption of the host culture and ethnic cultural maintenance are independent processes.

The results also supported Berry et al.'s (2006b) conceptualisation of integration as a profile. Nine of the ten participants in this study appeared to have adopted integration as a general strategy. There was no evidence that migrants simultaneously adopted different acculturation strategies in different areas of their lives, as has been found by Navas et al. (2007).

### *Factors that Facilitate Adaptation*

Participants discussed a number of factors that have been found to predict sociocultural and psychological adaptation (Ward, 1996, 2004; Ward et al., 2001). For example, culture-specific knowledge (such as non-verbal communication

conventions), English language ability, friendships with New Zealanders, and time spent in New Zealand were discussed by a number of participants. All of these factors have generally been found to predict greater sociocultural adaptation, and contact with host nationals is also related to psychological adaptation (Ward et al., 2001). These were discussed by participants as factors that helped them to fit in and they advised potential migrants of their importance.

Many of the changes that occurred for participants were seen as necessary due to the New Zealand environment. For example, the most common change was to language and communication. The changes that occurred for participants tended to involve aspects of both culture shedding and cultural learning (Berry, 1992). Culture shedding took place because participants wanted to fit in, or more commonly because of situational constraints, for example not celebrating cultural festivals to the same extent due to the absence of a public holiday.

#### *Ethnic/National Labels*

There was no evidence of a relationship between the cultural labels chosen by participants and their self-reported patterns of behaviour. The labels participants chose were used simply as identifiers, and did not correspond to the acculturation strategy that they had adopted. The four participants who described themselves as New Zealanders displayed behaviours and attitudes that would class them as having adopted an integration strategy. Two of the three migrants who used an ethnic label, and the participant who chose not to use a cultural label, would also be classified as integrated. The results are in line with the findings of Hutnik's (1986) research with second generation Indian migrants living in Britain. Hutnik found that participants could label themselves as Indian, yet report primarily displaying British behaviours. To summarise, migrants do not have to relate to the label 'Kiwi' or 'New Zealander'

to have successfully integrated into New Zealand society. Migrants who did describe themselves as Kiwis had not lost their ethnic culture.

Participants had numerous reasons for choosing their identity labels. One factor that constrained the cultural label choice for a number of migrants was other people's perceptions about which cultural group they belonged to. The judgements of others were based on migrants' behaviours, for example their accent, and their looks. According to self-categorisation theory, people's own views of themselves are influenced by the way they are treated by others and other people's perceptions (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001a). For example, if a migrant from China is seen as, and treated as, Chinese this will increase the likelihood of this migrant self-labelling as Chinese (Reicher & Hopkins). Thus a subjective identity can either be accepted or rejected by others.

#### *When do I become a Kiwi?*

Who fits a particular category and the nature of the category itself can both be points of contention (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001b). The definition of the label 'Kiwi' is one that is highly debatable. There is no commonly agreed upon definition of 'Kiwi', even amongst Maori and Pakeha New Zealanders (Ward & Lin, 2005). The flexible meaning of the term 'Kiwi' was reflected by participant's diverse responses regarding why they felt that they were 'Kiwis', and the markers and processes involved in becoming a 'Kiwi'.

Participants identified 'adapting to New Zealand and making changes to fit in' as one of the key processes involved in becoming a Kiwi. It appeared that this was a reference to fitting into the majority Pakeha culture. Few participants felt that New Zealand's bicultural nature had influenced their acculturation experience.

The difficulty of explicitly articulating what had to be done to fit in, was observed. While there is no one definition of the term 'Kiwi' that can be stated, participants appear to have implicit ideas about what is involved in becoming a Kiwi. Another way many participants felt that migrants could become Kiwis was by 'being themselves'. This indicated recognition of New Zealand as a liberal democratic society (Ip & Pang, 2005).

A number of migrants used a national or hyphenated label to identify themselves. This contrasts with past research which has found that first generation migrants almost always use an ethnic label (e.g. Rumbaut, 1994, cited in Phinney, 2003). It is possible that migrants perceive the term 'New Zealander' to be an inclusive term that incorporates diversity.

However, Pakeha New Zealanders have been found to view the notion of 'New Zealand' differently. Sibley and Liu (in press) investigated Pakeha's explicit and implicit associations between pictures of Pakeha, Maori, and Asian New Zealanders, and the notion of 'New Zealand'. They found that Pakeha participants perceived Pakeha and Maori to be New Zealanders but not Asian-New Zealanders.

One area for future research would be to compare New Zealanders' perspectives about the identifying features of New Zealand national character to the responses of migrants. This would help to determine whether there was a shared understanding of what it means to 'be a Kiwi' or whether there are discrepancies.

#### *Limitations and Applications*

One limitation of the current project is the small number of participants, and therefore it is not possible to make generalisations. This research may contribute to a larger study using a more representative sample in the future.

It is also important to note, with any qualitative research, that the researcher can not be entirely objective as narratives are context sensitive and are subject to interpretation (Mishler, 1986; Potter & Wetherell, 1998). However, the narrative position in this research was informed by participatory action research and driven by the needs of the community to produce practical advice, as opposed to an epistemological perspective.

This research can help to inform new migrants about the markers and processes involved in becoming a Kiwi. Future migrants can also see some of the changes that may occur for them when adapting to New Zealand culture and gain some perspectives on how to become Kiwis. Some of this information has been included in a pamphlet (Appendix D) which will be given to NZFEC. Participatory research involves a cyclic process of action, evaluation, and planning (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). This initial information combined with a community report can be used as a basis for feedback and further research.

The results can also inform New Zealanders about the diverse range of experiences migrants have. It can increase the awareness among New Zealanders about possible barriers to integration faced by migrants, and what Kiwis can do to help in overcoming those barriers.

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## **Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

### *Demographic and Background Questions*

1. Where were you born and what year?
2. What year did you arrive in New Zealand?
3. How did you get to New Zealand, did you come directly here or have you lived in other countries as well?

### *Acculturation and Identity*

1. Do you consider New Zealand your home now?
2. Do you still have attachments outside of New Zealand?
3. Can you tell me how you decided to come to New Zealand?
4. How would you describe yourself to other people now (for example as an Indian-New Zealander or a New Zealander)?
5. In your experience how does one become a Kiwi?
6. Has Maori culture or the bicultural side of NZ influenced your experiences in adapting to this country in any way?
7. What have been the most significant changes that have occurred for you or your family since moving to New Zealand (for example the celebration of festivals, accessing services, getting social support, etc.)?
8. What advice would you give to new settlers coming to New Zealand about becoming a Kiwi?

## Appendix B: Information Sheet for Participants



Sally Robertson

**Honours Student**

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Dr. James H. Liu

**Assoc. Prof.**

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04-463-5153

### What is the purpose of this research?

- The purpose of this research is to look at how New Zealand immigrants manage their ethnic identity in New Zealand. I am particularly interested in whether migrants consider themselves to be Kiwis.

### Who is conducting the research?

- We are a team of researchers in the School of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) working with the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (NZFEC). Dr. James Liu is supervising this project. This research has been approved by the University ethics committee.

### What is involved if you agree to participate?

- If you agree to participate in this study you will be interviewed. The questions asked will include questions about your ethnic identity and your personal experiences living in and adapting to New Zealand. A sample question might be “Would you consider yourself to be a Kiwi?”
- With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped and I will transcribe it later on.
- The interview will take no more than one hour. You are free to withdraw at any point up until the completion of the interview, and the data pertaining to you will not be included in the transcriptions.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

- During transcriptions, we will replace your name and pertinent details by codes so that no data will be directly traceable to you. Hence, you will not be directly identified.
- Only my supervisors and members of the research team will have direct access to data collected. Anonymous extracts may appear in NZFEC reports. As requirements by some scientific journals and organisations, your coded data may be shared with other competent professionals. No identifying information will be displayed.

### What happens to the information that you provide?

- Together with other data, the results of this research will be a part of my honours research project. Overall results of this research may also be published in scientific journals or be presented at scientific conferences. The overall results may also be presented at NZFEC conferences or meetings, or be published by NZFEC as a report.

### Feedback

Results of this study will be available by approximately 12 December 2007. The results may be viewed via the CACR webpage in PDF-format at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/cacr/>. Alternatively, you can indicate your email address or postal address, if you want us to notify you regarding the availability of the results or the presentation materials.

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact one of us (either Sally Robertson or James Liu at the School of Psychology, Victoria University, PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand, email addresses indicated above).

Thank you for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Robertson and Dr. James Liu

## Appendix C: Consent Form for Participants

### *Statement of consent*

I have read the information about this research and any questions I wanted to ask have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research.

I give my consent to participate in this interview that will be audio-taped and later on transcribed.

I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time and any information or data I have given will not be included in the research.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a copy of the summary of the results of this study. YES / NO  
(If yes, please indicate email address or postal address below)

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ or, Postal Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Copy to:*

*[a] participant,  
[b] researcher (initial both copies below)*

## Appendix D: Pamphlet containing advice for migrants

<h3>How do I become a Kiwi? Advice from Migrants for Migrants</h3>		
<p><b>How can this pamphlet help me?</b></p> <p>If you've recently moved to New Zealand, or you're about to migrate here, read on...</p> <p>This information can help you to see some of the changes that may occur for you, and provides you with some ideas that migrants have come up with on how to fit in and become a Kiwi. The migrants who provided this advice have all lived in New Zealand for at least five years.</p>	<p>The back of the pamphlet will contain contact details of the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils (NZFEC), which they will supply.</p>	<p>The front cover of the pamphlet will be provided by NZFEC. NZFEC will also provide the artistic design of the pamphlet.</p>
<p><b>A few important points on becoming a Kiwi:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Many migrants have been very successful at fitting into New Zealand society, yet they do not always feel like Kiwis. You do not have to feel like a New Zealander or a Kiwi to be successful at fitting into New Zealand.</li> <li>2. If you do want to become a Kiwi, this does not mean you have to lose your existing culture. Migrants who call themselves Kiwis value both their original ethnic culture and their new Kiwi culture.</li> </ol>		

**Will my migration experience be positive?**

Migrating to New Zealand often involves both sacrifices as well as gains. For example, some migrants have found that they make financial sacrifices, but that they have had positive lifestyle gains. Your situation will change over time too, so initial sacrifices you make may not last.

Some migrants have experienced discrimination, but generally migrants have found that New Zealanders are accepting.

**Can I choose what changes occur?**

Some changes may be necessary due to the particular situation in New Zealand. For example, you may have to change your clothing to adapt to the New Zealand environment. Migrants often find that the way they celebrate their festivals changes because public holidays occur on different days.

Some changes you will have a choice about. For example, many migrants choose to make Kiwi friends.

There are also lots of ways you can maintain your ethnic culture. Many migrants choose to meet with members of their own ethnic group either informally or through a structured community group.

By Sally Robertson, Victoria University, Wellington

**What will help me to fit in and to become a Kiwi?**

Here are some of the main points that other migrants have talked about:

*1. Family*

Migrants often feel more settled in New Zealand once their family has become comfortable with the move. Some migrants have found that if their children feel at home here, this makes them feel more like New Zealanders.

*2. Language and Communication*

Being able to speak English really helps migrants to fit in and to become Kiwis. There are also other aspects of communication that are likely to change. Depending on where you come from, you may find that Kiwis have different ways of expressing their emotions or use different non-verbal communication.

*3. Getting to know Kiwis*

Effective communication will help you to get to know Kiwis. Migrants have found that friendships with New Zealanders have helped in the process of becoming Kiwis. Having Kiwi friends may also help you to understand the New Zealand way of life and learn some of the practical things about New Zealand, such as how to get around.

**How long will it take me to fit in?**

Feeling settled in New Zealand will take time. Every migrant is different in how long it takes them to fit in. Some migrants end up feeling that New Zealand is their new home and for others New Zealand may simply be the place they live.

**How will other people see me?**

Some migrants feel that other people will never see them as Kiwis, perhaps because of their accent or because of the way they look. There may be differences between how you feel about yourself and how other people see you.

**How will I know when I'm a Kiwi?**

There is no one way to feel like a Kiwi or to become a Kiwi. It is important to be yourself. However, changes will occur. Migrants have found that becoming a Kiwi has involved changes to their behaviour as well as emotional changes. Behavioural changes may include speaking English, or developing a Kiwi accent. You may also start to feel an emotional connection to New Zealand.

**TOP TIP:** Be prepared to make changes, but you can fit into New Zealand and become a Kiwi without losing your own ethnic culture.