

An Immigrant at Heart: Andrew Trlin

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Abstract

There were few academics more closely associated with research on immigration and population policy in New Zealand than Andrew (Andy) Trlin. A scholar, writer and raconteur, Andrew's impressive output of academic papers, reports and submissions is testimony to a dedication and determination that has been widely appreciated by the population community in both New Zealand and abroad. In this retrospective paper, I review Andrew's work on immigration and settlement, immigration policy, fertility and race relations in addition to his meticulous research into the history Croatian settlement in New Zealand. The review contains a full bibliography of Andrew's sole and co-authored publications.

Andrew Trlin was well known to many readers of this journal and to the wider demographic and migration research community.¹ His ebullient and forthright manner belied a very careful and thorough scholar whose work has enriched our collective understanding of New Zealand society, particularly of what it means to have arrived in New Zealand as an immigrant.

Andrew has left us with a legacy of 136 publications written over a period of 45 years (1967 to 2012) that covered immigration, settlement, demography and race relations. While this article will discuss his contribution under those four headings, Andrew's interests spilled over into health issues including mental health, social work and housing. His impact was not confined to print, of course. He taught thousands of undergraduates in both geography and sociology, supervised numerous PhDs, presented at a wide range of conferences both in New Zealand and overseas, and served on several professional bodies and government organisations. To Massey University, he devoted his professional life.

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Background

To gain an appreciation of Andrews's research we have to start with the decision of his parents to emigrate from the then Yugoslavia to New Zealand.² Andrew's father, Mate Trlin, was born in 1908 and came to New Zealand in 1924 to work in the gum fields. His mother, Ruzia, was born in 1915 and came to New Zealand in 1939. They were both born in Ravca, a tiny village near the larger town of Vrgorac. Andrew's father later left the gum fields and went to Sydney to join his sister, where he ran a little tobacconist on Circular Quay. Andrew's mother was en route to New Zealand and met Mate during her stopover.

Like so many New Zealanders who were born to immigrant parents, Andrew was subject to the full range of economic and social challenges but also to a rich body of stories and anecdotes about a land far away that they still called "home". Andrew was born in Auckland in 1942 and his early years were spent within a close Yugoslav community, so much so that he did not learn to speak English until he was five years old. (Both his parents learned most of their English in New Zealand). Such an upbringing had a profound effect on what Andrew chose to research as a young adult. Like many second-generation immigrants, he felt a need to search for an understanding of his family's journey and their experiences in encountering a new land. From this came a deep commitment to work for a deeper understanding by all New Zealanders of what it means to be an immigrant in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Andrew's parents moved to Wellington to go into partnership with his mother's brother who had set up a business in Petone called The Dominion Café. It had a fish and chip shop out the front and a restaurant behind. A large part of their clientele were the Gear Meat workers, and Andrew and his sisters were expected to work in the shop, wash dishes and wait on tables.

Andrew attended Petone Primary School, Hutt Valley Memorial Technical College and Hutt Valley High School. He went on to study geography at Victoria University of Wellington and graduated with a BA Honours in 1965. His potential was recognised and Andrew was encouraged to write a master's thesis by the newly appointed geographer Terry McGee (McGee, 2007). Terry was instrumental in introducing Andrew to Professor Charles Price, whose book on *Southern Europeans in*

Australia had a profound influence on Andrew's thinking and future direction. He subsequently spent time with Professor Price at the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. Andrew's thesis carried the title *From Dalmatia to New Zealand* and was awarded a distinction by Victoria University of Wellington in 1967. This research set the base for Andrew's academic career.

Andrew was soon offered a position as a junior lecturer in the Department of Geography at Massey University, Palmerston North, which he took up in January 1967. (He completed a Diploma in Teaching in the same year). He was subsequently promoted to lecturer in 1969. He taught Population Geography at second year and offered an honours level paper. He also taught the Geography of Eastern Europe as well as Introductory Geography.

In January 1972, after five years in the Department of Geography, he switched next door into the Department of Sociology, headed by a newly appointed Professor Graeme Fraser. Andrew became a senior lecturer in 1975 and a reader in 1985. He was appointed to the position of associate professor in 1992, and he served in what subsequently became the School of Sociology and Social Policy and Social Work until his retirement from full-time employment in April 2004.

The move from geography to sociology allowed Andrew to develop his interest in demography, to which he was to make an important contribution. In sociology, Andrew taught Social Demography, and Population and Society, and he wrote the text *Social welfare and New Zealand society* (Trlin 1977e). Within sociology, Andrew taught Race and Ethnic Relations and shared the teaching of research methods with Peter Perry.

Andrew was able to take up three visiting positions during his career. The first was as Visiting Fellow in the Department of Demography, Australian National University, Canberra, in 1974–1975, and he returned there for a second fellowship in 1982. His third visiting fellowship was in 1996, at the International Institute of Social Sciences, University of Edinburgh.

Immigration and Settlement

The immediate story Andrew wanted to tell was about “Yugoslav settlement in New Zealand, 1890–1961”, which he did succinctly in his 1968 *New Zealand Geographer* article (Trlin 1968b). The paper cemented Andrew’s reputation as a scholar with an eye for both the main story and the detail, which made his writing highly readable. The paper was the forerunner of the book that was to be a defining contribution to the history of Yugoslavs in New Zealand (Trlin, 1979b).

It was not difficult at that time to see the influence of one of Andrew’s most influential mentors, Professor Harvey Franklin.³ It was quite evident, for example, in Andrew’s description of Dalmatia as “a technologically backward, peasant society, almost completely committed to subsistence agriculture”. Like so many other immigrants’ backgrounds, it was the limited potential of their homeland to provide a livelihood for a new generation that led Andrew’s parents to settle in New Zealand.

The touchstone of Andrew’s concern was the prevailing view that:

...an immigrant became *assimilated* only when he quickly became indistinguishable from his host society – accepting all its rights and duties, its language, customs and values, simultaneously cutting legal, political and social ties with his home country. In brief, a one-way process of adjustment by immigrant into complete cultural conformity. (Trlin, 1967, 27)

Having grown up in an immigrant family as part of a strong wider Yugoslavian community, Andrew was well aware of the deep flaws in such views. Later, as a scholar, he was in a position to articulate the damage they wrought and to point out to a poorly informed host society of the consequences of assimilation. To a large extent, Andrew’s writing throughout his career reflected that mission.

Highly sensitive to the way immigrants were portrayed in New Zealand, Andrew saw in the reported relationship between immigrants and crime an opportunity to expose the subtle and not-so-subtle misrepresentation of the immigrant. In what he termed “some preliminary observations”, Andrew meticulously unpicked the Magistrate Court statistics in search for the evidence that might have supported a less-biased account. He found that the popular association between immigrants

and crime had less and less empirical support as the post-war period unfolded:

Perhaps one reason for such reports specifying ethnic or racial origin lies in the ready acceptance of the theory that our social difficulties are *not* to be charged to our own mistakes and failures; a theory sustained by one of the most controversial and persistent beliefs (generally unfounded) about immigrants, that they commit a disproportionately high number of crimes. (Trlin, 1968a, 27)

His paper ends by reminding his late 1960s audience that “cultural integration is a process of adjustment by *both* the immigrant group and the host society” (Ibid p. 33, my emphasis). Andrew revisited this topic again in the early 1970s (Trlin, 1973c). Two other articles from the same period foreshadowed a lifelong concern with immigration policy and what it meant to be an immigrant (Trlin, 1969a, 1969b).

It was while teaching at Massey University that Andrew wrote his PhD, entitled *Immigrants in Auckland: A Contribution to Human Ecology*, which was submitted to Massey University in 1974 and conferred in 1975 (Trlin, 1975f). In 1976, Andrew received an invitation to visit Croatia and present at a symposium organised by the Institute for Migration and Nationalities in Zagreb, Croatia; he presented his paper there in his native language (Trlin, 1978b).

Andrew received two other invitations to present internationally. The first was in 1996 when he was invited by the Institute of Migration, Turku, in association with Ministry of Labour, Finland, to give a public address entitled “New Zealand’s immigration policy in the mid-1990s”. The second was to the 1997 conference on “Asian immigration and racism in Canada” hosted by the Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, where Andrew was invited to speak on “Asian immigration, public attitudes and immigration policy: patterns and responses in New Zealand”.

It was twenty years before Andrew returned to writing about Yugoslavs (Croatians) and this time it was about identity in a chapter of a book edited by S. Grief on *Immigration and National Identity* (Trlin & Tolich, 1995a). His paper on print culture was a further opportunity to discuss the Croatian context (Jelicich & Trlin, 1997b), with a translation some three years later (Jelicich & Trlin, 2000a).

The decade of the 1970s was a particularly productive period for Andrew, in spite of having a young, expanding family. Of the 35 publications he completed in the 1970s, 29 were sole authored and they appeared in an unusually wide range of high-quality social science journals. His concern for the way in which immigrants were perceived saw expression in several papers, one on social distance and assimilation in *Pacific Viewpoint* (Trlin, 1971c), and another on attitudes towards Western Samoan immigrants in the *Australian Quarterly* (Trlin, 1972). A co-authored paper with Ron Johnston on attitudes towards migrants was published in the *Australian Journal of Psychology* (Trlin & Johnston, 1973e). This paper used responses to a random sample of 317 registered voters in Auckland who were asked to identify preferred migrants from 14 birthplace groups using Bogardus's Social Distance Scale. The analysis revealed a clear separation of "white/non-white", an implicit status differentiation on the basis of race that did "not augur well for the probable progress of inter-group relationships in New Zealand's 'multi-racial' society" (Trlin & Johnston, 1973e, 187).

Andrew's work had begun to embrace a number of other immigrant groups including Niueans, whom he wrote about in *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* with geography colleague Cros Walsh (Walsh & Trlin, 1973f). He conducted a factorial ecology on the Dutch in Auckland, which was published in *The New Zealand Geographer* (Trlin, 1975d), and he documented their residential movement in *International Migration* (Trlin, 1976b). In that paper he drew on the Aliens and Naturalisation Registers administered by the Department of Internal Affairs which gave him access to date of arrival, age, sex, marital status, birthplace and residential changes of 968 Dutch arrivals (16 years of age and over) between 1960 and 1967 who resided in the Auckland urban area. Not eligible for state housing, Dutch settlers' locational decisions were driven primarily by the "availability of low-cost private family dwellings" on the expanding fringes of suburban Auckland. Chain migration and demographics propelled the Dutch to the periphery, in contrast to class and ethnicity that confined Māori and Pacific Islanders to the inner city. One model clearly did not fit all.

Andrew also undertook a factorial ecology of Samoan immigrants, which he published in *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology* (Trlin, 1977d), an application that fostered some debate with contemporary

sociologists (Trlin, 1978a). He also undertook a study of Western Samoan marriage patterns for *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* (Trlin, 1975e) which was a theme he had addressed earlier in his study of birthplaces and intermarriage (Trlin, 1971a).

During his time in the Department of Geography at Massey, Andrew played the major role in assembling and editing papers for three monographs: *Immigrants in New Zealand* (with Keith Thomson), in which he contributed a chapter on “The Yugoslavs” (Trlin, 1970c); *Population Patterns in the Manawatu* (Trlin, 1971b); and a third that addressed a variety of themes dealing with urban growth (Thompson & Trlin, 1973b). His move to the Department of Sociology freed Andrew to expand into demography.

Demography

Andrew’s earliest demography paper was a review of abortion in New Zealand for the *Australian Journal of Social Issues* (Trlin, 1975b). He published a paper for the *Journal of Biosocial Science* (with a colleague at ANU) entitled “Non-marital pregnancies and ex-nuptial births in New Zealand” (Trlin & Ruzicka, 1977a, and a rejoinder in 1978d). He had an opportunity to more fully explore issues of fertility in his work with Massey colleague Peter Perry in a special report for the Department of Health called the *Manawatu Family Growth Study* (Trlin and Perry, 1981a). Among the topics he covered was the use of the long-acting contraceptive Depo-Provera, breastfeeding, side effects of oral contraceptive use, and premarital sex including contraceptive knowledge, attitudes towards sex roles and anticipated family size, and the role of maternal employment. These papers were all published between 1981 and 1984, with the last of them addressing socio-demographic factors associated with breastfeeding (Perry & Trlin, 1985b).

Not confined to issues around fertility, Andrew was one of a number of academics who drew the public’s attention to the social dimensions of health and disease in an effort to extend our understanding of the epidemiological transition (Trlin, 1994a), notably as a co-author of a broader coverage of the same theme (Spicer, Trlin, & Walton, 1994b). It was a logical step towards an evaluation of alcohol and drug education (Jakob-Hoff & Trlin, 1995b, 1996a) and risk implementation in the case of

CYPFS (Jakob-Hoff, Coggan, & Trlin, 1998a). Further evaluations under the same consultancy followed in the late 1990s. Women's employment and family size are interlinked, of course, and it was not surprising to find Andrew involved in a number of debates over this relationship (Khoo, Krishnamoorthy, & Trlin, 1984a, 1984b).

Race relations

The 1970s saw the beginning of several papers that Andrew was to write on a topic that shared many parallels with attitudes to immigrants – race relations. This theme goes back to his very earliest writing which appeared in the journal *Te Maori*: “Attitudes and policies towards immigration” (Trlin, 1969a), “Maori and Pakeha in Patea” (Trlin, 1970a) and “Those strangers – our neighbours” in *Comment* (Trlin, 1969b). Both *Te Maori* and *Comment* were widely read publications at the time. The same themes were to surface at the end of the decade as a chapter entitled “Race ethnicity and society” in Neville and O'Neill's well known *The Population of New Zealand* (Trlin, 1979c) and his *Comment* article which drew the Race Relations Act to people's attention (Trlin, 1979a). The workings of this Act were articulated in *Political Science* subtitled “Conciliators, conciliation and complaints” (Trlin, 1982a). Andrew was drawn to the Australian Racial Discrimination Act in a paper for *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (Trlin, 1984c), and further detailed the nature and outcome of complaints in the *Australian Journal of Social Issues* (Trlin, 1984d). Much of this work culminated in the *International Handbook on Race and Race Relations*, which he wrote with Paul Spoonley (Trlin & Spoonley, 1987c). This set the base for his later contributions to the Human Rights Tribunal.

Immigration policy

It was a logical step from Andrew's writing on the experience of migration to writing about immigration policy itself.⁴ His initial discussion of immigration policy appeared in the first of the *Digest and Bibliographies* published by Massey University's Department of Sociology (Trlin 1986a). Always conscious of the difference between the rhetoric and the reality, Andrew asked whether entry/residence provisions, entry statistics and immigrant composition were consistent with stated responsibilities and objectives. Any affirmative answer, he cautioned, “should be qualified by

recognition of the actual or potential conflicts inherent in the range of considerations, responsibilities and objectives underlying New Zealand's immigration policy" (Trlin, 1986a, p. 18).

Many of Andrew's concerns were echoed in a comprehensive review he wrote with colleagues Bedford and Farmer in the *New Zealand Population Review* (Bedford, Farmer, & Trlin, 1987a). Concerns were further aired in the Centre of Migration Studies, East-West Population Institute, Honolulu conference proceedings (Trlin, 1987b). His writing on immigration policy increased during the 1990s as he reflected on the changes that took place in the late 1980s (Trlin, 1992c). This included a detailed case study of business immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan (Trlin, 1992a), and the shared links between the institutional context of immigration policy and its social effects in the *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* (Trlin, 1993). In a further paper he explored the relationship between immigration policy and economic growth (Trlin, 1997c), and in another he addressed public attitudes towards Asian immigration (Trlin, 1998e).

While seeing benefits in the transition from selective to promotional entry rules, Andrew was again concerned about what it all meant from the perspective of the immigrants themselves. In particular:

...whether or not special immigration provisions (not necessarily for family reunification alone) should be devised and implemented to meet the needs, desires and the aspirations of immigrant communities, families and sponsors at different stages of their life cycles. The decision made, because it bears upon national identity and the qualities of citizenship, will ultimately be more important than decisions made on entry rules with an eye on the strength and structure of the nation's economy. (Trlin, 1992c, p. 25)

Many of Andrew's interests in immigration came together in the New Settlers Programme he led, supported by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) multi-year grant which ran from July 1997 to June 2006. His assessment with colleagues was captured in a report published out of the Third National Conference in 1997 (Trlin 1998). Another paper on Asian immigrants appeared in the proceedings of the University of Otago conference on the overseas Chinese (Henderson, 1999). Then, after a decade of writing on in-migration, Andrew found himself drawn into its counterpart: emigration (Trlin, 1980).

By the mid-1970s, Andrew and colleagues had assembled an impressive corpus of work on migration to and adjustment of immigrants in New Zealand and this resulted in a bibliography being published by the Department of Demography, Australian National University (Trlin, 1976a). This was the first of several bibliographies Andrew had a role in compiling. Under various institutions, Andrew played a leading role in four other bibliographies, which were published, along with topical papers, over a period of almost twenty years: the first in 1986, the second in 1992, the third in 1997, and the fourth in 2005.

Numerous issues were picked up in these digests; for example, unregistered immigrant doctors (North, Trlin, & Singh, 1999e), and the effects of unemployment among skilled immigrants from India (Trlin, Henderson, & North, 1999g) and among new Chinese arrivals (Trlin & Henderson, 1999). A study of the link between employment and mental health among immigrants was an important extension, resulting in a *New Zealand Journal of Psychology* publication with co-authors (Pernice, Trlin, Henderson, & North, 2000b) and later another publication on the “squandered skills” of such immigrants (Henderson, Trlin, & Watts, 2001d). Coping with immigration imposes particular demands on women and the experience of Latinas in New Zealand was addressed with co-authors in the *Women’s Studies Journal* (Rivera, Nash, & Trlin, 2000g).

When it came to researching the key issues, Andrew was in the thick of it, covering diversity as a productive resource (Watts & Trlin, 2000d, 2000e), issues around the young migrant (Watts, White, & Trlin, 2002b), the role of local authorities in meeting immigrant needs (Watts and Trlin, 2002d), the role of social workers (Nash & Trlin, 2004c; O’Donoghue, Munford, & Trlin, 2006a), self-employed immigrants (North & Trlin, 2004d), self-reported illnesses of immigrants (North, Trlin, & Henderson, 2004g), psychological well-being (Alpass, Flett, Trlin, Henderson, North, Skinner, & Wright, 2007) and health care (North, Lovell, & Trlin, 2006b), as well as the role of the media (Spoonley & Trlin, 2004f), cultural capital (Watts, White, & Trlin, 2004a, 2004b) and housing (Johnston, Trlin, Henderson, North, & Skinner 2005a). Andrew also addressed debates around skilled workers (Trlin, Henderson, & North 2004e) and, in his last published paper, the experiences skilled South Africans had of moving to New Zealand (Trlin, 2012). By the turn of the century, immigration had already spawned an industry devoted to

facilitating the process and Andrew jointly authored an evaluation (Lovelock & Trlin, 2008).

It was difficult when studying immigrants, particularly from the Pacific, not to come up against issues of social welfare, and after moving to sociology and social work, Andrew was in a good position to edit and write the introduction and conclusion to one of the first volumes of *Social welfare and New Zealand society* (Trlin 1977b, 1977c, 1977e). Andrew also contributed two chapters to this volume, the first dealing with state housing, aptly named “welfare in suburbia” (Trlin, 1977f). He later covered social work in practice (Dale & Trlin, 2007c, 2007d).

It is not difficult to understand why in the mid-1990s Andrew also began to focus on the issue of language, and he wrote a number of important papers with colleagues beginning with a review (Henderson, Trlin, Pernice, & North 1997e) and the use of immigrant language resources in international business (Watts & Trlin, 1999j). Closely related were issues around employers and company employment policy as they related to immigrants (Watts & Trlin, 1999i); the two authors also presented a paper at the *Eighth Conference on Labour, Employment and Work* (Watts & Trlin, 1999h). Several papers on English language issues further developed the argument (Watts, 2000; Watts, White, & Trlin, 2001; Watts 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; Watts, White, & Trlin, 2002c, 2000d).

Summary

One cannot but be impressed at the consistency of Andrew’s focus over the 45 years of writing covered here. With the exception of a brief period when he turned his attention to fertility issues, it has mainly been about immigrants, their experience, their concerns and their attempts to make New Zealand home without losing their cultural integrity.

Another impressive feature of Andrew’s work is what in the current jargon is referred to as “translational research” – research that aims to make findings from basic social science useful for practical applications that enhance human health and well-being. By repeatedly involving himself in contemporary issues immigrants face, Andrew and his colleagues were able to bring such issues back into the university and assemble projects that looked at the issues dispassionately and with the

intellectual rigour the academy demanded. Andrew's ability to bridge the divide between the scholar and the street was one of his greatest strengths.

Andrew also co-convened the joint conferences of the New Settlers Programme (Massey) and the Strangers in Town Programme (Waikato). Begun in the late 1990s, these conferences are now an annual fixture involving co-sponsorship with Immigration New Zealand. This was another example of Andrew's collaboration with university colleagues across a range of disciplines as well as his engagement with officials (researchers and policymakers) addressing immigration policy and migrant settlement issues.

No activity more clearly illustrates Andrew's commitment to bridging the divide between gown and town than his involvement with the Ministry of Justice's Human Rights Tribunal on which he was appointed a panel member in 2005. This gave him an opportunity to apply much of what he had learned and written about over the years to the range of cases that came before the Tribunal. Over this same period, Andrew served as an honorary research fellow with the School of Health and Social Services, Massey University, Palmerston North.

Complementing and underpinning his sympathy for the immigrant sits his early scholarship of the settlement of Yugoslav immigrants to New Zealand. It will surprise none of us to learn that Andrew was updating his book when his illness took over. New chapters were to include the fishing industry, farming communities in Northland, Oratia and South Auckland, the consequences of political developments in the "home" country 1990–1995, and the experiences and ethnic self-identification of the second generation. These additions did not come to pass, but Andrew will be remembered for the dignity and compassion he bestowed on all Croatian New Zealanders. He will also be remembered by all of us in his professional capacity as a scholar deeply committed to making a difference.

Acknowledgements

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professional career, together with his five children, Matthew, Natasha, Alexander, Belinda and Miranda.

Andrew Trlin: bibliography

This bibliography is ordered by date of publication within each decade.

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Notes

- 1 Andrew Trlin passed away on 17 December 2014. A tribute to his role as president of the Population Association of New Zealand (PANZ) in the early 2000s and as a council member from 1980 to 1982 and again from 1991 to 2005 appeared in an earlier issue of the *New Zealand Population Review* (Butcher, 2014). See “Other references” at end of the bibliography.

The writing of this retrospective began in early 2014. Andrew’s collected works were assembled into two big boxes and we hired VUW master’s student Rebekah Smith to enter the bibliography that appears at the end of

this paper. Several months before his passing, Andrew and I spent a very enjoyable sunny afternoon at his impressive family home on the Kapiti Coast, reminiscing about his work and career. Later in 2015, I spent time with Annette, Andrew's wife, at Victoria University discussing a draft of this paper. I wish to thank the Trlin family for the assistance they provided in gathering the material I draw on here.

- 2 After World War 2, Croatia became a founding member and federal constituent of Second Yugoslavia. In June 1991, Croatia declared independence, which came into effect on 8 October of the same year. The Croatian War of Independence was fought successfully during the four years following the declaration.
- 3 Franklin's own career was written up in Morrison and Willis (1994), following his retirement in 1993.
- 4 For a treatment of this topic in the context of British immigration, see Morrison, P. S. (2009). A demographer's demographer: Arvind Zodgekar. *New Zealand Population Review*, 35, 1–22.