

Forty Years in Aotearoa New Zealand:
Identity, Home and Later Life in an Adopted Country

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Abstract

New Zealand settlement began with waves of Māori settlement, then, in the last few hundred years, colonisers and opportunity-seekers have come from many countries. After World War II, New Zealand government actively sought 'suitable' migrants to power the economy. British continued to be the strongly favoured group, however, policies expanded to include dozens of nationalities. Over 400,000 people migrated to New Zealand between 1945 and 1965. In this research, I have made contact with members of this diverse group. Twenty-two immigrants were interviewed for this study. Having arrived as young adults in the twenty years after World War II, they have now been in New Zealand for forty to sixty years and are now between fifty-nine and eighty years old. They come from a variety of backgrounds in twelve different countries. They can all be considered 'white' immigrants in relation to New Zealand's indigenous Māori population and other non-European immigrant groups such as those from Pacific Island nations or Asia.

This thesis avoids a 'snapshot' approach that is frequently used to record only the charismatic 'leaving' and 'arriving' stories. It also argues against the assumption that decades of continued residence, particularly for white immigrants in a white-majority nation, imply an 'assimilation' of cultural identity. Assuming instead that this is an incomplete picture, this thesis questions: Where is home and how do they define it? What role does their homeland have now? How has their national identity changed? Are they still treated as foreigners? Do they still think of themselves as immigrants? Do they have a sense of what life would be like as an older adult in their country of origin?

Considering the migration experience over many decades, this research utilizes a narrative approach, speaking with those who have lived this experience and made sense of it in their own lives. Viewing the interviews as strong, empirical data, this thesis stems directly from what the participating immigrants told me. Utilizing the methods involved in grounded theory, data was collected and analysed without a preconceived theory in mind. Three themes emerged from intense analysis of eleven of the interviews: Identity, Aging, and Concepts of Home. Chapter Two focuses on the immigrants' experiences of identity as it relates to their respective homelands and New Zealand. This chapter addresses identity

negotiations over time and identity management in the context of post-World War II New Zealand. Chapter Three considers concepts and experiences of home: the changing role of an immigrant's homeland, the simultaneous development of New Zealand as home of the 'everyday' and the effect of globalization and transnationalism on these experiences of home. Chapter Four looks at later-life experiences and concerns as an immigrant. The creation of continuity from their arrival through to the present is also considered. A consistent undertone quietly but undeniably runs through these categories and ties them all together: The passage of time. This undertone is addressed throughout this thesis with the concluding suggestion that there is a negotiation of gain and loss over time for a long-term immigrant.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I must thank the participants of this research. They opened their homes, hearts and minds to me, a complete stranger. They trusted in my ability to hear their stories and interpret them. This was extremely courageous. I hope that I have done the participants, and their stories, justice. I left every interview feeling immensely privileged to have met each participant and as though I had just made a new friend. I looked forward to every interview and never grew tired of this research. Their wisdom, trust and stories truly touched and humbled me. Yes, they offered me incredibly rich 'data' for this thesis. But they also provided me with soulful conversation over countless cups of tea and coffee. A new immigrant in town myself, these interactions were not taken for granted. They probably do not know it, but they helped me with far more than this research.

I also wish to extend my most sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Ruth Fitzgerald, who provided just the right amount of supervision. Thank you for giving me the freedom to truly carry out my own research, formulate my own ideas and utilize my own style. But thank you too, for not letting me drown, for always keeping my head above water with ideas, direction and feedback. Thank you for the meetings, where I never felt rushed, but enjoyed the conversation about research and life.

Thank you to my husband, James, for keeping the house warm while I sat at the computer for endless hours, for being my dear friend and for believing in my desire and ability to undertake this project. Thanks to my mom, who has always offered unconditional love and has listened to the pros and cons of my immigration, all the while quietly dealing with the unexpected twist of having her daughter emigrate. Thank you to my sisters and friends who keep me, no matter where I am, grounded in who I am. Thank you to the Tuesday Social Anth Coffee Group for being bright little lights in my week.

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My Life in Two Parts
-Kapka Kassabova¹

1

Outside my window is a row of poplars
growing from the turf of childhood.
Poplars grow in rows, never on their own.
It is Christmas. The sky is full of stars,
the branches are bare,
the wolves distant and menacing.
Now is the only time for oranges.
Their brisk fragrance fills the nails
as we lie in cold rooms high in the Balkans
dreaming of palm trees and the world.

2

Outside my window is a palm tree.
It is winter. The sky is enormous
and the ocean follows the moon.
Oranges are on the window-sill with other
tropical fruit no longer of interest.
Bright-plumed parakeets sway in the palm tree
and that's the only time I look up.
I lie in the low, stuffy rooms of adulthood
dreaming of poplars and the world.
Always, they come in rows.

¹ Kapka Kassabova immigrated to New Zealand from Bulgaria.

Chapter One

Introduction

Five years ago, while studying with an exchange scholarship to the University of Otago, I befriended the woman who essentially inspired this research. Working part-time for an organization that helps older people with tasks in their own houses, I met Mrs. T. She lives in a small, sun-filled house on a quiet cul-de-sac. She has lived on this street since her arrival in New Zealand over fifty years ago. She is a kind woman with a great sense of humour and a love for conversation. After helping her make her bed or vacuum the carpet in her already clean and tidy house, we would sit down for a cup of coffee at her round kitchen table in the corner by the window. She always served instant coffee and condensed milk in delicate white cups on saucers. Hot, bitter and creamy, it always hit the spot. We talked about all sorts of things, her kids, the renovations done on her house years ago, my family. One day, she told me how her husband used to knit. “He learned to knit when he was hiding from the Nazis,” she mentioned in passing and then continued on with the story. I don’t remember much else of what she said, I was too struck by the realization that she had been a young woman during World War II and that she may have left Europe, left her home and her family, because of it. To her, these stories seemed almost mundane. To me, she was living history.

And then *my* story took an unexpected twist. As luck would have it, I met the young man, James, who lived across the street from Mrs. T through another connection. We began dating and enjoyed a lot of time together, but I was still planning to head back home to America in several months. Now when we sat down to talk, Mrs. T. noticed me looking out her window, always trying to catch a glimpse of James. When she found out we were dating, she checked with some other neighbours to make sure he was “a nice, young man.” That young man is now my husband and I have spent three more years in New Zealand than I ever intended to. I still wonder, shaking my head sometimes, how exactly this happened. I remember the first time I said, “I am an immigrant.” I was overcome by the magnitude of this realization at the very moment that I said it. I have travelled a lot but I love my home

and my country and I never intended to live overseas with any sort of permanency. It's a huge mental and emotional adjustment.

I always found Mrs. T's life fascinating, but I did not think I would follow quite so closely in her footsteps. Now, I too am an immigrant to New Zealand. Mrs. T. and I migrated under different circumstances and within different worlds. I have not left a war-torn country behind and I have not had to learn another language. Mrs. T. immigrated as a young woman in the early 1950's when New Zealand was a once-in-a-lifetime, six-week boat ride from Europe, whereas I have been back to America several times in these last four years. All of my immediate family members have been to see me in New Zealand. I 'see' my mom weekly through video phone calls. I hope any future children I might have will know both countries. Mrs. T. did not have the same opportunities to span two countries that I now have. But there are similarities in our stories. We both left our homes as young women; we both have accents that will always make us stand out as foreign. She told me how annoyed she has become with the question, "Oh, where are you from?" I told her about the waitress at the local café who always asks me if I am enjoying my holiday in New Zealand. We talked about how people from both of our original cultures are more opinionated and blunt, and how we have to watch our tongues around New Zealanders. I thought I would get used to that in time. Mrs. T. playfully suggested that I would not!

It seems so obvious to me now – that this research I am now absorbed in is an exploration into my own future, an attempted mapping of my own fate. Some days it seems overwhelming to consider a career here, raising children here, celebrating Christmas in summer, driving on the left, constantly having an accent that I never knew existed until now. Through personal, daily experiences I am learning the magnitude of the cultural differences (which are deceptively subtle at first). I am figuring out how to cope with being so far from family, friends and familiarity. I am learning to love the green hills and I use local lingo without even knowing it. I have learned to cook kumara in countless ways. I see myself at the beginning of a journey that Mrs. T. has been on for fifty years – negotiating experiences of two homes and identities throughout life. I no longer work with Mrs. T. and she did not participate in this research. But I still go over and visit and have a cup of coffee now and then. I now live in the little house across the street from her with that "nice, young man." Some days when I go out to get the mail at the end of our driveway, I see her sitting in her window, in her favourite chair, watching her favourite TV show. Sometimes I wave and if she sees me, she raises her arm in response.

As I began to formulate the ideas for this thesis, I thought about Mrs. T's life and also began to look for literature about long-term, older immigrants. Much of what I found seemed to address the problems of older immigrants from a social services point of view. Other literature revolved around the charismatic stories of 'leaving home,' the journey itself and then 'arriving in New Zealand.' Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich is an exception and has undertaken and written about extensive field research with German immigrants in New Zealand. She says that there are three types of migration narratives: 1 – stories about leaving and arriving, 2 – stories about the adjustments during the first year in New Zealand and 3- the form of narrative that covers the whole life of the migrant with on-going comparisons between two countries and cultures.

Bönisch-Brednich writes that migrants share key narratives which are told often, are well-structured and ready for presentation. She calls these narratives 'Ready-Mades' (Bönisch-Brednich 2002b: 70). While searching for literature by or about long-term immigrants, I found that many 'Ready-Made' narratives focused on 'leaving and arriving' or the first year in New Zealand. These were stories of heart-wrenching goodbyes, six weeks at sea, and early cultural misunderstandings in New Zealand (some of which must have been painful at the time but are told with a hearty laugh now.) However, sensing that this was only the beginning, I aimed to coax the participants of this study beyond 'Ready-Mades' and to address the life-long nature of being a long-term migrant in a host country.

Through this research, I have been able to ask twenty-three long term immigrants in New Zealand the questions that entered my mind after meeting Mrs. T, questions that were refined as I began to plan this research: What, or where is home to you? After fifty years in New Zealand, is this home? What role does your homeland have in your life now? Do you consider yourself a New Zealander? Do New Zealanders think of you as a New Zealander? How has your identity changed through this experience? Now, several decades after you set off for New Zealand, what is it like to be approaching or travelling through older age here? The immigrants in this study openly answered these questions with careful thought. Each participant shared stories of his or her journeys with me – a journey that began forty or fifty years ago, a journey that is still unfolding.

Participants

The participants in this thesis arrived in New Zealand shortly after World War II when several European countries struggled with a shortage of jobs and housing and offered

few opportunities for young adults to start new families or working lives. At that point, many of these young citizens left for America, Canada, Australia, South Africa or New Zealand. At this time, the New Zealand government was actively seeking out 'suitable' migrants to power its burgeoning economy. British were certainly the favoured group, followed by the Dutch. But policies expanded to include dozens of nationalities from Europe and the rest of the world. Over 400,000 people intending permanent residence migrated to New Zealand between 1945 and 1965 (Census and Statistics Department, Wellington, 1946 - 1966). For this thesis, I sought to make contact with members of this diverse group. Out of my desire to consider the *long-term* experience of migration, I looked for participants who arrived during this era and had now been in New Zealand for at least forty years.

Initially, I found several participants by simply spreading the word through friends, family, co-workers, club members, other students and my supervisor. In a few instances, participants referred me on to other immigrants. When the snow-ball stopped accumulating more participants, I placed two advertisements: one in the University of Otago newsletter and one in a free community weekly newspaper distributed throughout Dunedin. The response was overwhelming, possibly suggesting that these immigrants have few opportunities to openly reflect on their life as an immigrant in New Zealand. After twenty-two interviews (when initially aiming for twelve to fifteen) I began focusing on transcribing, analysing and writing. I also believed I had reached a level of data saturation. Interviews were no longer generating completely novel conversations or ideas, though they did continue to be most enjoyable and thought-provoking.

At this point I did, however, continue to seek *specific* participants. I pointedly searched for immigrants from a variety of Asian countries, particularly India or China and also from any Pacific Island nations. Through a variety of avenues, I tried to find participants from these countries, but to no avail. Part of the problem was that there were few members of these communities, who had been in New Zealand for at least forty years, in the Dunedin area. I considered travelling north, possibly to the North Island, where there were certainly more people from these nations and this time frame. In order to properly integrate these interviews into my thesis, however, I would have had to do at least eight or ten more interviews with participants from these populations. Considering the logistical organization and time required to do this, I decided my energy would be better spent on thoroughly analysing the substantial data I already had.

The immigrants in this study came from the following countries: England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, Denmark, Hungary, Finland, Spain, Italy, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Zambia, America, Australia. All are of white-European descent. And so this became, in part, a study of white immigrants to New Zealand. Though much of what is discussed in the following pages will certainly apply to immigrants of a wider variety of backgrounds and ethnicities, these are the stories of those who could physically blend in to New Zealand Pākehā (white) society. Though this was not the original goal of this research, I came to see there was great value in a study of white immigrants to a majority-white nation. In such cases, white is often taken for granted as the majority, as the norm, and therefore goes unacknowledged. Though their whiteness is certainly not the focus of this study, it is addressed. This is particularly interesting in the New Zealand context because of the favourable emphasis placed on white immigrants until about twenty years ago, and because of the development of New Zealand's official bicultural status.

The immigrants in this study came to New Zealand between the ages of seventeen and twenty-nine years old. By purposefully looking at those who immigrated as adults (rather than as children) my hope was to explore how migrants negotiate identity and concepts of home when two countries have been integrated into one life-experience over time. Ten of the twenty-two participants are female, twelve are male. The participants were between fifty-nine and eighty years of age and had been in New Zealand for thirty-eight to sixty years. (Although one participant had been here for thirty-eight years, in the interest of brevity, I will continue to refer to this group of participants as having been in New Zealand for forty years or longer.)

Interviews, Methods and Analysis

As this research was taking shape, it seemed the way to gain insight about the long-term immigration experience was to ask long-term immigrants themselves. Wanting to consider the experience over many decades, from arrival through to the present, the best approach seemed to be to speak with those who have lived this experience and made sense of it in their own lives. I therefore chose a narrative approach to this research. Narrative is retrospective meaning-making or the shaping and ordering of past experience; it is a way of understanding and organizing events and actions into a meaningful whole, connected over time (Chase 2000: 656). Chase writes that the stories people tell constitute the empirical

material that interviewers need if they are to understand how people create meaning out of events in their lives. In addition to describing events, narratives also express emotion, thoughts and interpretations (Chase 2000: 656). This seems the richest kind of data for exploring such a dynamic life experience as migration.

To collect these migration narratives, I conducted twenty-one interviews with twenty-two long-term immigrants. All interviews took place in the participants' homes, with the exception of one which took place in my home. The atmosphere was casual and conversational, seated at a table by a window on a sunny day or in comfortable chairs by a heater on a cold day. Most of the interviews were conducted in mid-winter. In the early days of interviewing, my husband and I would sit down with the participant's address and a map. We would figure out the best way for me to get to their house. By the last interview, I was able to 'wing it' – scrape the ice off of the car, throw the map in and head off in the right direction. Through these interviews, I learned my way around Dunedin's residential neighbourhoods and outlying areas. Still relatively new to the area myself, these interviews had unexpected, enjoyable consequences: I appreciated learning my way around Dunedin, meeting new people, socializing, being invited into their homes. If I had an interview in the morning, I learned not to have a cup of tea or coffee before I left my house. Without fail, I was offered tea or coffee and a biscuit in their homes upon arrival or during the interview. More than once I left with a box of chocolates or a bag of muffins to take home and share with my husband. The participants showed me photographs, old and new, suggested books to read, and let me peruse old, personal letters. I left every interview feeling immensely privileged and simply grateful for an interesting conversation at a time when I did not know many people in town. My own adaptation to New Zealand has become intertwined with knowing these open and wise immigrants. I came home from each interview brimming over with new ideas for this research. I have heard that many thesis students become 'sick of' their topic by the end of it. I have not come close to reaching this point and it is because of the wealth of rich information that these immigrants shared with me.

One interview included two married immigrants, Erik and Inger². During three interviews, the New Zealand spouses of the participating immigrant sat in on the interview.

² The participants in this study were offered anonymity. Most preferred to have their real names used. I respected the wishes of each individual participant, thus most of the names used in this thesis are real and a few are pseudonyms. To prevent confusion, I would like to point out that there are two participants with the same name but different spelling: Erik and Eric. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University of Otago IRB: 08/040.

In one of those interviews, the spouse did more talking. In the other two interviews, though the spouse's presence undoubtedly had an influence, I did not get the sense that the immigrant was restricting his or her conversation. Both 'good' and 'bad' stories of New Zealand were told by the participant, the spouse sometimes helping to remember the details of each kind of story. With the emphasis clearly on the immigrant participant, they seemed to enjoy the process together, sharing openly.

All interviews consisted of open-ended questions and lasted between forty-five minutes to three and a half hours. I had a guideline which I set off to the side and only referred to when I needed to make sure that we had covered all the topics that I wanted to cover. These topics were usually covered easily and, prompted by a few questions from me, one idea would flow into another. Near the end of the interview, I would refer to my guideline and ask a few more pointed questions on topics we had not come around to in the ordinary flow of conversation. My own migration experience and my status as an immigrant in New Zealand turned out to be a crucial component of the flow of these interviews. As is discussed by most of the participants in various contexts (and addressed later in this thesis) they have learned to avoid offending New Zealanders. Thus, had I been a New Zealander, they may not have spoken so freely about their ups and downs in New Zealand, their likes and dislikes of New Zealand culture and society. Perhaps Ann said it better in her interview than I am saying it here. She said, "You are away from your country, aren't you?... It's even better that you are not born and bred in New Zealand. Because you have the feeling, more feeling. Because if you were a Kiwi you'd think, 'What the hell are they talking about?'"

I believe my status as an immigrant also helped 'sensitize' me to what the participants were saying. For example, an interviewee might be broadly talking about their thoughts of having migrated to New Zealand and say, very casually, "sure, there have been losses, but there have been so many benefits," and then go on to tell me about those benefits. Having had days in my own life since moving to New Zealand, when the losses inherent in my migration stood at the forefront, my ears perked up at some of these fleeting phrases, like the mention of loss tucked into a broader story about gain. I would then say, "Could you also describe some of those losses you just mentioned too?" If needed, I could additionally say, "Because I, myself, have felt there are both gains and losses, so I'm curious about that." This type of statement on my part would inevitably lead to interesting further conversations.

Many immigrants seemed to have developed a style of narrating their migration experience in which any story of hardship or displeasure in New Zealand is quickly followed

by a statement of appreciation and positivity about New Zealand, even if that statement is out of context or has little to do with the story. Consider this example from Erik and Inger. Here Inger is talking about her daughters:

Inger: They didn't want to be different. When we had things sent from overseas, I was so delighted. Erik has got a sister that had twins that was two years older than they was. She was such a knitter that her clothes, she sent clothes out here, and they were just like twins' had never worn, that's how beautiful they were. And of course they were yarn, pattern from Norway and all this, and I thought my children was just great... And the girls didn't know how not to be able to wear them. And I didn't know this until a few years ago... When they had socks, beautiful patterned socks, they said, "Now how do we get rid of them? We don't want to wear them, do we?" You see that was, it must have been very hard for them and I didn't realize. And my next door neighbour said, when I told her, they were Dutch and they had the same problem. One time one of their daughters came home and said "I'm not wearing these socks anymore." She said, "Why?" "They call me wool socks. I'm not having it." So children can be cruel... And the girls felt they didn't like, that our language wasn't as good. Our pronunciation wasn't up to it. So they wanted to teach us, you see. And our grandchildren have sometimes said, "Look at my mouth grandma. Look at my mouth." When they were little tots, because children have got a lot of patience, they don't mind if they have to repeat ten times. Very good. Everything is gone smooth now.

Erik: We never had any problems. No. And certainly never felt at any stage, "Oh my God we got the wrong place."

Inger: Nope, never. And our friends are more or less saying, "You're one of us." And we like learning new things. And we have got more New Zealand and English friends than we've got Danish friends. Because lots of the Danes went up north I think.

This type of narrative, a story of hardship or challenge quickly finished off with positive comments about life in New Zealand, was common in the interviews. I have come to believe that this is for two reasons. The immigrants themselves need to end the story in the present and on a positive note. It is a way of making sense of it all, of reassuring one's self that you made the right choice, that life overall has been good. Also, I believe immigrants 'sandwich' their stories with positive statements so as not to appear ungrateful or overly critical to a New Zealand audience. This is discussed later in this thesis at more length. Here, I want to note that I believe my experience of immigrating to New Zealand made me sensitized to this type of narrative and the reasons for it, which in turn, made me more able to hear the full story being told, that of both positive experiences and challenging or negative experiences.

Sometimes in this thesis, it may seem that the stories of difficult times or negative and challenging experiences prevail. I want to stress that this is not because these immigrants report an overall experience in New Zealand that is more about hardship and negativity than about benefits and positivity. The reverse is true. The immigrants in this study

overwhelmingly report satisfaction with and appreciation of their lives in New Zealand. However, in the interviews, I aimed to create an atmosphere where the participants felt comfortable telling me some pros *and* cons of their experiences. The discussions of difficulties or challenges allow great insight into the long-term experiences of migration. This is the side of the story that is told less often and contributes greatly to an understanding of the passage of a life-time as an immigrant in a host country. The participants also seemed to appreciate the opportunity to discuss the many sides and variables of their migration experiences with me, a fellow immigrant.

Viewing the interviews as strong, empirical data, this research stems directly and primarily from what the participating immigrants told me. All ideas and themes considered in this thesis have emerged from all of the interviews. Utilizing the methods involved in grounded theory, data in the form of interviews was collected and analysed without a preconceived theory in mind. Rather, the ideas, themes and theories emerged from the interviews (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 12). Strauss and Corbin note that while close inspection during the early phases of research builds tightly-integrated theory, as the study proceeds, every interview need not be analysed microscopically (Strauss & Corbin 1998:281). Eleven of the twenty-two interviews were transcribed and analysed at length. Twelve people were interviewed in these eleven interviews, seven females and five males. These twelve immigrants come from a variety of backgrounds and immigrated from eight of the twelve countries listed above. These interviews were selected not because they were unusual and stood out, but because they are representative of the whole and of sentiments that I heard discussed repeatedly. These participants did excel at expressing typical views comfortably and at length. In this way, they were illuminating and useful for in-depth discussion.

These eleven interviews were transcribed and read through several times each before a process of coding began. I started by looking at the many different concepts that were discussed during the interviews, particularly those that were discussed by several or many participants. Strauss and Corbin discuss conceptualizing as an integral part of the analysis process: "Conceptualizing is the process of grouping similar items according to some defined properties and giving the items a name that stands for that common link. In conceptualizing, we reduce large amounts of data to smaller, more manageable pieces of data" (Strauss & Corbin 1998:121). The repeated concepts emerging from the interviews included things like 'how changes in the homeland, over time, have been experienced,' 'concerns about aging in New Zealand,' 'experiences of national identity,' and 'migration and developing

independence.’ This process was aided with some basic use of NVivo software, which also allowed me to keep my own memos, ideas and insights about these concepts as I formed them.

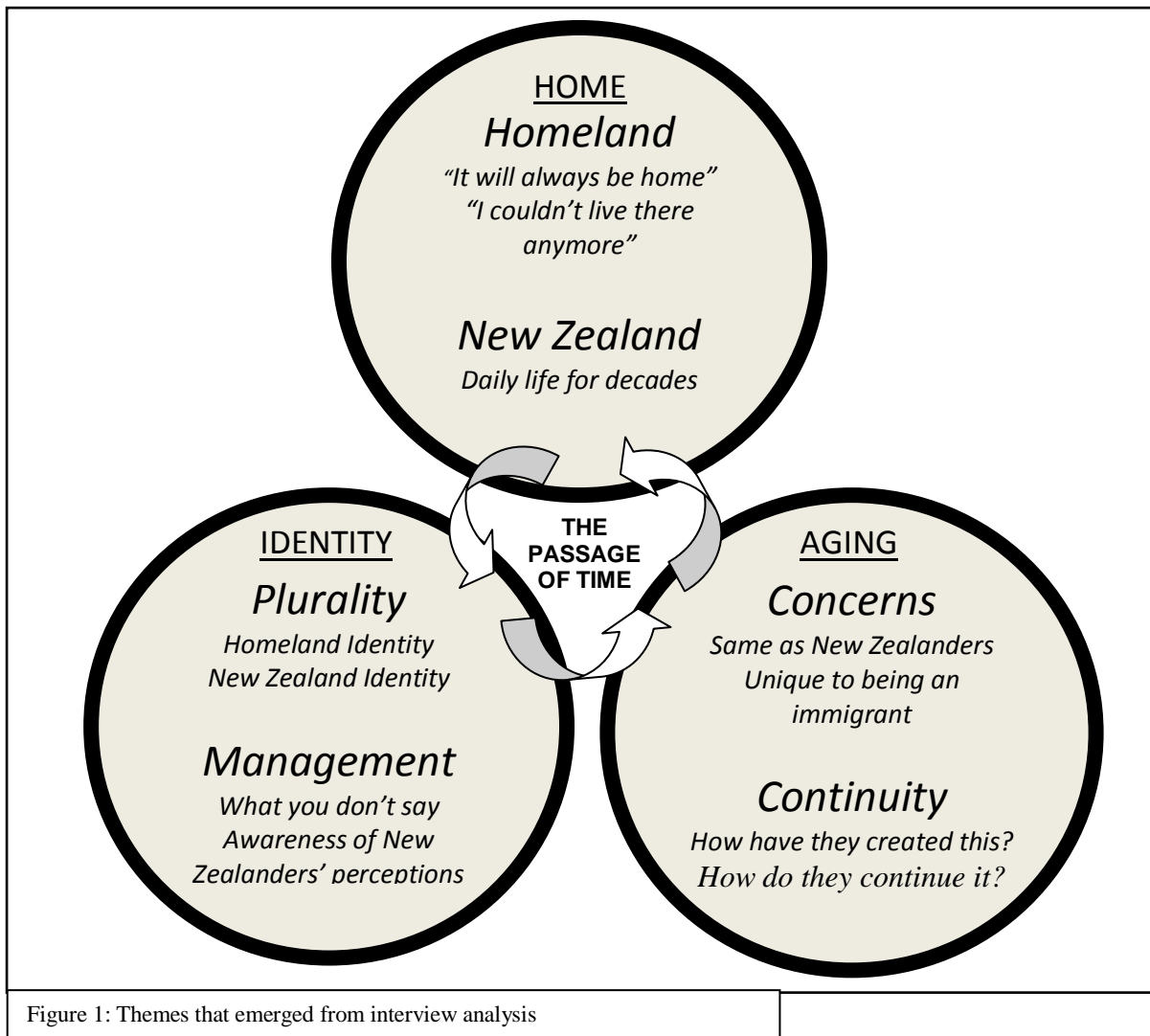
As these thematic concepts began to emerge, they were discussed with my supervisor, who shared her expertise in anthropological research with the added personal insight of an immigrant who has been in New Zealand for eighteen years herself. Emerging concepts and related literature and theories were also discussed with three other Social Anthropology post-graduate students over numerous cups of coffee. These three students acted as disinterested peers: offering objective, anthropological opinions and insight. They offered constructive interaction as I ‘thought out-loud.’ Lastly, another valuable source of feedback came from fellow participants in a reflective writing workshop for migrants. This small group of creative writers, hosted by a gentle and open Scottish woman, all immigrated to New Zealand recently (from three to fifteen years ago.) Aware of my research, they provided an interesting ‘compare and contrast’ opportunity between themselves, more recent immigrants, and the participants of this study, long-term immigrants. These comparisons helped me consider the changes that have taken place in New Zealand and the world between the time that the participants in this study immigrated and the time that the recent migrants in the workshop immigrated. Thus, the passage of time became an obvious element in stories of long-term immigration. This reflective writing group also provided an outlet for me to consider my own bias. By providing a wonderful and crucial space, participation in this group helped me consider my own migration journey and separate it from my research and the experiences of my participants when needed.

Research is the interplay between researchers and data; it is both science and creativity (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 13). Living as an immigrant in New Zealand, I could have approached this research as an autoethnography. While many exciting studies and research developments have stemmed from autoethnographic approaches, one criticism is that it elevates “the autobiographical to such a degree that the ethnographer becomes more memorable than the ethnography, the self more absorbing than other social actors” (Atkinson 2006: 401). In my research here, the focus is strongly centred on the narratives told by twenty-two participants. All ideas and themes in this thesis have emerged from these interviews. However, I have intertwined my own reflections and insights from my personal experience of migration and living as an immigrant in New Zealand. Thus my approach and writing is reflexive.

Reflexivity in ethnography refers to the fact that “there can be no disengaged observation of a social scene that exists in a ‘state of nature’ independent of the observer’s presence” (Atkinson 2006: 400). Interviews are co-constructed between the interviewer and the informant. My own outward identity as a young, white, female immigrant inevitably shaped the answers that the participants gave me. My own migration experience in New Zealand also shaped the questions that I asked and my interpretation of the answers I received. Consistent with a reflexive approach, I deliberately reveal some of my personal experiences that shape the formulation of my research and interview questions, the seeking of the answers to those questions, and the presentation of the findings (Myerhoff 1982: 5). While undertaking and producing this thesis, I have continuously been aware of my own personal effort to make sense of what it might mean to be an immigrant in New Zealand for the majority of one’s life, including my own. I have thus peppered this writing with some personal insights and experience.

The Passage of Time: Identity, Home and Aging

To uncover, name and develop concepts in the interviews, I used a process of ‘open coding.’ During open coding, “data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined and compared for similarities and differences” (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 102). Based on the disciplinary methods of grounded theory, the coding process involves “a close reading of all data, labelling certain pieces of information according to the themes they depict, and relating these themes to each other, forming a cohesive original argument that remains faithful to, or ‘grounded’ in the data collected” (Frank, Fitzgerald & Legge 2007: 171). As concepts emerge from the interviews, the data is then reassembled accordingly; similar concepts are then grouped together under the umbrella of larger ‘categories.’ I chose to focus on three main categories that emerged from the interviews: Identity, Aging, and Concepts of Home – both in relation to New Zealand and the homeland. A consistent undertone quietly but undeniably runs through these categories of Identity, Home and Aging: The passage of time. (See Figure 1.) Time was, and is, moving forward in both an immigrant’s homeland and in their host country. For several decades, the immigrants in this study have been experiencing the passage of time in New Zealand and have not been physically experiencing the passage of time in the homeland.



Elena, who spoke with me about her immigration experience during a rich and interesting interview, described how time in her homeland stood still for many years after she left Spain in the early 1960's. She began by telling me that her house in New Zealand was a little piece of Spain, but specifically a 1950's and early 1960's Spain:

From the front door in, the house was Spain. We spoke the language, we brought up the children the same way... The problem was when they became teenagers. Because we were living in the 50's and they were in the 70's and 80's. And we wanted to have them with us all the time and it was very hard for us to let them go... We were not authoritarian, I don't think so. But sort of strict compared with the way of life in New Zealand... So we couldn't really understand why the children would come at one in the morning. "Oh I'm so worried. I'm so worried. Where are they, where are they?" And they would come so happy, "Oh, that's ok, we've been just sitting down in the coffee shop and just talking with our friends." But that was very hard for us. And I think it was very hard for them too. Because it was two different cultures. We had one culture here [*in the house*] and one culture outside. And that was the hardest thing we've been through until we understood, "well this is the way - the way it is

here and the way it is in Spain too.” Because [*Spain*] has changed too. But we didn’t change, you see, we were living in the 50’s and early 60’s. We were not living in the 70’s and 80’s... Even just here, even now, when it’s Election Day, I get a thrill to be able to go and vote. After all these years. Because we were never allowed [*to vote in Spain*]. They are now, for the past thirty years or thirty-five, since Franco died in ’75. They do have elections and they do have democracy and it is quite good, it is great. But I have never lived in that atmosphere... It’s the same thing, when we were young the parents were very authoritarian. And uh, you couldn’t really say “I’m going flatting” for many reasons. Socially they would never look at you because you had left home to live somewhere else. You have left the family, that’s very wrong. But now they do it. It’s exactly like here. But as I say, WE didn’t change. We didn’t see the changes. When you don’t see the changes you live in the past.

Elena and her family, particularly her children (for they knew no other place) were experiencing the passage of time physically and consistently in New Zealand. However, for Elena, the passage of time in Spain had stopped when she left. She lived as if she was in 1950’s Spain in her house... on a street, in a city, in a country that was 1980’s New Zealand.

Over the last forty to sixty years, the immigrants have experienced the passing of time in many ways. He or she has been passing personal time, with different identities developing, changing or diminishing over the life-course. A migrant is faced with balancing an identity that is associated with their homeland and original culture, an identity that becomes more intertwined with the place they have migrated to, and, for some, an identity that is shaped largely by the process of migration itself. The immigrants in this study manage these identities in a way that allows them to quietly create and maintain a continuous, cohesive self, across changes in time and place. They also manage these identities according to the options available in the context around them, particularly that of the country and culture in which they are now living.

Time has also played a part in concepts and experiences of home for each immigrant. As time has been passing in both New Zealand and the homeland, both countries have experienced cultural, political, and economic changes. While the immigrant has experienced changes in New Zealand gradually, as they happen, the passage of time in the homeland is not experienced directly or physically; it is not smooth or consistent. Rather, the passage of time in the homeland may be noticed intermittently through visits or communication with others ‘back home.’ Time’s passage has brought more opportunities for visits to and communication with the homeland for most of the immigrants in this study. Thus an interesting and unexpected component to the experience of home emerged: the development of a globalized and transnational world over the last fifty years.

There is a linear aspect to time, it is irreversible and unidirectional. “You cannot un-know or un-do things... the arrow of time reigns supreme,” (Adam 1995: 18). The passage of time is often rendered as a series of sequential, one-directional events. However, there are many different experiences of time that exist within or alongside this linear aspect of temporality. In our minds, we can “transcend the present and extend our environment” (Adam 1995: 79). We can go to the past and bring it into the present. We can consider the future. Every day we learn new things, have new experiences. We change. The entirety of our reality is constantly re-activated and recreated in the present, reconstructed in light of new knowledge (Adam 1995: 27). The immigrants in this study are still experiencing the passage of time. Time is still passing in their homelands, in their absence, while the time of daily life passes in New Zealand.

At this point, I wish to overview the organization of this thesis. In its whole, this thesis attempts to address the long-term experience of living as an immigrant in New Zealand over the last forty to sixty years. Chapter Two focuses on the immigrants’ experiences of identity as it relates to their respective homelands and New Zealand. This chapter addresses identity negotiations over time and identity management in the changing context of post-World War II New Zealand. Chapter Three considers concepts and experiences of home. The changing role of an immigrant’s homeland over many years away is addressed, with particular attention paid to the effect that globalization and transnationalism have had on their access to and experiences of their homeland. The simultaneous development of New Zealand as the home of the everyday, over many decades, is also considered. The two are tightly intertwined. Chapter Four looks at the experience of later-life as it is approached by the immigrants in this study. Unique concerns of older immigrants are considered. I also examine how these long-term immigrants have created continuity throughout their life in New Zealand and how they continue to do so now.

Chapter Two

Migrant Identity in Post-World War II New Zealand

Migration allows great insight into the processes of identity formation because “one thinks of identity whenever one is not sure where one belongs” (Bauman 1996: 19). By looking at long-term immigrants we can explore how a person’s identity changes over time and due to circumstance. We can consider how a person reconciles these changes and adjustments, adding new identities, manipulating or shedding old ones and adapting to differing contexts. In speaking with New Zealand’s long-term immigrants, I wanted to see if an immigrant still identifies with a place and a culture that was left forty or more years ago. Do they still identify with a country that has only been visited once or twice, if at all, in the last forty or fifty years? All of the immigrants in this study have now lived in New Zealand for two or three times as long as they lived in their homelands. Have they then developed an identity associated with New Zealand? Does the old identity shift over and make room for the new one on the couch, or does it get up and leave the room? Do they sit there together?

When I began asking the immigrants in this study, “How would you describe your national identity?” their answers portrayed a high level of ambiguity. They sometimes answered with sighs or muttered, “I knew you were going to ask that.” As they spoke, it was obvious that they had thought of this very issue before and that there is simply no quick or easy answer for the vast majority of them. Erikson’s psychosocial theory of identity acknowledges the role of any change that creates a new imbalance between context and person, such as migrating, in triggering an identity crisis or negotiation (Smith, Stewart, & Winter 2004: 613). As Huberta put it, when you migrate, “you lose a bit of yourself, I think. And it takes a long time to build that back or incorporate, find those little threads that really make you the person you are regardless of where you are.” These migrants have been faced with the challenge of redefining themselves in relation to both where they come from and where they have settled; both with their homeland and their host country.

Identity theorist Stuart Hall speaks of the multiplicity and changeability of identity and also describes it as “a process never completed” (Hall 1996: 2). For a long-term immigrant then, there is an un-ending process of negotiation among their identities in relation to their homeland and host country. The immigrants in this study overwhelmingly report

identifying with both their homeland and New Zealand. These are not opposing aspects of an immigrant's identity; it is not a zero-sum trade-off. A strong identification with one country or culture does not necessarily mean a weak identification with the other (Berry 1997). As Eric said, "I am English. Always be English... Always cheer England over the All Blacks. Always lose (*laughter*)... I think of meself as both... Gradually you come to think like a Kiwi." There is a continuum that stretches between feeling totally like a member of one's host nation and feeling solely like one's original nationality. Most immigrants in this study illustrate the wider modern reality of identity today: plurality of being two or more things at once and grey areas of 'in between.'

In this on-going process of defining and managing plural and changing identities, there is another force at work. Hall refers to this defining force as "what is left outside" (Hall 1996: 3). In other words, identity is partly solidified in relation to what it is *not*. As immigrants negotiate new and old identities, altered by their journey across space and through time, they are defined in part by what they are not. Having lived several decades away from their homeland culture, they no longer identify solely with their original country. However, New Zealand also is not the only place and culture that has shaped their identity. They are not solely New Zealanders. This is reinforced by the knowledge that while they do their best to negotiate the delicate terrain of New Zealand's expectations and society, New Zealanders do not consider them to be New Zealanders. Therefore, they undertake the complex process of mental-mapping, adapting to a new environment but accepting one's foreign status. (Bönisch-Brednich 2002: 201).

As I began to analyse the discussions of identity in the interviews, I realized that all of the identity negotiations being performed by the immigrants in this study sat upon the foundation of the context of post-World War II New Zealand. Psychology researcher, John Berry, writes that people have access to a variety of identities depending on context (Berry 1997). He writes that context is a major factor in which strategy an immigrant adopts in his or her host country: separation, assimilation, marginalization or integration. Integration, he says, can only occur in a host country that values different cultural groups without prejudice. Assimilation is more likely if the host society expects immigrants to shed their native culture and adopt the host country's dominant culture (Berry 1997). Assimilation was largely the strategy available to the immigrants in this study who entered a country that many described as narrow-minded and isolated. Ann recalls the pressure to assimilate immediately upon

arrival: “As an immigrant they tell you, ‘Now don’t speak Dutch. You speak English.’ So we learned that way.”

As I learned more about the context of post-World War II New Zealand that these immigrants were living within, I began to see how they actively managed their identities accordingly. In a book about New Zealand identities, Liu *et al.* write that identity is “constructed out of a dynamic interaction between people and the aims they are trying to achieve in various situations” (Liu *et al.* 2005: 14). The immigrants in this study wanted to take advantage of the opportunities that New Zealand offered them and to make as good a life as possible on its soil and within its communities. To do this, they have undertaken not only identity negotiations spurred on by migration, but also identity management. They have learned what they can reveal and what they cannot say if they wanted to fit in and have the best chances of relationships with New Zealanders and success in the many realms of life shared with them.

The identity negotiations of migrants in this study illustrate the multi-faceted nature of identity today in a highly mobile world. While earlier uses of the term ‘identity’ implied singularity and solidarity, identity as a singular concept seems not to exist in contemporary texts (Sokefeld 1999: 417). There is now assumed plurality, fragmentation and difference. Sokefeld writes that “the identities embraced by a person do not remain the same, identical. Their meaning is constantly being transformed... This change has no beginning and no end” (Sokefeld 1999: 423). If identities are accepted as plural and even contradictory over one’s life-course, it is the self that manages these identities and the self that provides coherence (Sokefeld 1999: 424). The self is imbued with agency as it manages identities based on reflexive monitoring of conditions, actions and outcomes (Sokefeld 1999: 430).

Thus this exploration of long-term migrant identity also addresses how these immigrants have managed their identities in the context of post-World War II New Zealand. They have trimmed and shaped their identities according to what was required of them by New Zealand society and also according to what they thought gave them the best chances of success. With identities that change over time associated with two countries and cultures that also change over time, it is the agency of the self that acts as a framework holding the plurality of identities together, adjusting to context but also maintaining some continuity. This chapter aims to pay attention to the critical element of context, but also acknowledges the agency of individual immigrants as they have managed their identities over time.

The context of post-World War II New Zealand

Hall emphasizes the importance of context when considering identity formations and negotiations. “We need to understand identities,” he says, “as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formats and practices” (Hall 1996: 4). Migrants do not navigate through their various identities, brought into consciousness during transitions, in a vacuum. Identities are greatly impacted upon by what is going on around a migrant culturally, socially and politically. When considering the identities of any immigrant group, the stage of their host country must be set and be positioned in history. Therefore, for this study, it is important to describe the cultural point in time and place of post-World War II New Zealand.

The immigrants in this study came to a country that had only very recently loosened its ties to Great Britain and was beginning a journey to define itself and develop confidence as a nation unto itself. Through World War I, New Zealand had remained closely and tightly bound to Britain. This close connection was fostered through ‘double patriotism’ during the war, and through Britain’s role as the main exporter of New Zealand’s imported goods and the main receiver of New Zealand’s exports. A general fear and dislike of nations and cultures that were not British was evident. For example, until 1948, a New Zealand woman who married a non-British immigrant lost her British citizenship and her right to vote (King 2004: 368). As for the ‘aliens,’ European immigrants of non-British origins, they “merged as rapidly and as smoothly as possible into the ranks of mainstream culture” and non-European immigrants had a very hard time (King 2004: 368). Ann Beaglehole, who has written about post-World War I refugee families to New Zealand, states that during the 30’s, 40’s and 50’s, cultural differences were not welcomed by New Zealanders (Beaglehole 1990: xi).

Leading up to World War II, New Zealand society valued and urged conformity. New Zealand was “a society in which there was widespread agreement about what was right and what was wrong, about what constituted appropriate and inappropriate behaviour” (King 2004: 375). Beaglehole writes that some New Zealanders themselves were commenting on the country’s homogeneity as stifling self-expression, creativity or culture: “Those New Zealanders who saw themselves in some ways as outsiders noted the cultural homogeneity, conformity and antipathy to self-expression and originality” (Beaglehole 1990: 16). Why was there such a strong emphasis on conformity? The full answer to this question is outside of the purpose of this thesis, but it was due in part to the early rumblings of New Zealand’s identity development separate from Britain. For example, at this time, a new group of New

Zealand artists and writers, known as ‘cultural nationalists,’ was beginning to pursue a New Zealand separate from Britain, with its own national pride, identity and will (King 2004: 384). As New Zealand began to toy with the notion of its own uniqueness and importance as a nation in and of itself, it was particularly threatened by any challenge to this early identity formation. The seeds of New Zealand as an independent entity, not just a colony or settler state, were being planted.

This burgeoning independence became obvious in New Zealand’s approach to World War II. Previously, New Zealand only had representation in the overseas governments of Britain and Australia, but in 1942, Walter Nash was sent to Washington DC as a representative of New Zealand. At that time, “nothing could have signalled more strongly the Labour Government’s determination to act independently of Britain in foreign affairs” (King 2004: 402). After the war, in 1947, New Zealand finally ratified the Statute of Westminster, giving the country complete autonomy in foreign and domestic affairs and establishing New Zealand as a fully independent member of the British Commonwealth, as opposed to a dominion or colony (King 2004: 422). But it was a reluctant break in many ways; other colonies had signed the statute nearly fifteen years earlier.

Splitting from Britain was a slow process and “as much a product of British reluctance to maintain empire as any initiative of New Zealanders” (Liu *et al.* 2005: 13). This process was evolutionary, not revolutionary, and thus did not lead New Zealanders to think of citizenship consciously except, ironically, in relation to the arrival of new immigrants (McMillan 2004: 284). Although New Zealand settlement had begun with waves of Māori settlement about 800 years before the first European ship arrived, captained by Abel Tasman in 1642 (Walker 2004: 78), after Captain Cook’s arrival and subsequent British settlement and colonization of New Zealand, it was seen as “a Utopia for the chosen few; preferably white, Protestant Britons” (Brooking & Rabel 1995: 23).

Accordingly, through World War II, New Zealand’s immigration policy, in terms of preferred ethnicities, can be described as “whiter than white” as it not only actively discouraged non-European immigrants but specifically sought British and Northern Europeans (Brooking & Rabel 1995: 39). New Zealanders were not only suspicious of people who were culturally different, but also had the strong view that those immigrants who did come to New Zealand must assimilate as quickly as possible. When, after World War II, New Zealand government actively sought ‘suitable’ migrants to power the economy, British were still by far the favoured group, followed by white, Northern Europeans (such as the

Dutch) who were considered the least different and viewed as those who would assimilate most readily (Beaglehole 1990: 13).

While there certainly had been Asian migrants in New Zealand, such as the Chinese who came during the Otago Goldrush and Indians who came in the early 1900's, Asian groups were particularly discouraged through prejudiced policies and attitudes. Xenophobia and outright racism were prevalent and sometimes still persist (McMillan 2004: 46). With the exception of roughly 1000 entry permits granted to refugees from Southeast Asia, New Zealand's restrictive and discriminatory policies towards Asian migrants continued unchanged from New Zealand's colonial inception until 1987 (McMillan 2004: 46). Though it was never officially or publicly declared as such, many New Zealand historians refer to a "White New Zealand policy" that was in place through World War II (Ward & Lin 2005: 156, McMillan 2004: 42). Up until World War II, 96% of the non-Māori New Zealand population was made up of British immigrants and their descendants – a higher percentage than any other British colony (McMillan 2004: 43).

In the years following World War II, New Zealand was slowly becoming "more pluralistic and less prone to uninformed or pejorative stereotyping" (King 2004: 369). However, there was a new social conservatism and little variation in recreation, creativity or food. As Beaglehole notes, in the eyes of immigrants, the leisure activities of New Zealanders seemed particularly homogenous: "sport, gardening and handy-man activities for family men, sewing and cooking for women" (Beaglehole 1990: 17). Eating habits showed similar uniformity with the daily repeated meal of "meat and three veg." New Zealand historian Belich writes that "social retrospects on the 1950s and 1960s range from 'our country's golden age' to the most boring time and place on earth" (Belich 2001: 307). The 1950's were a prosperous decade overall, and after the war, there was a "desire of the nation as a whole to enjoy the good times and not rock the boat" (King 2004: 434). Beaglehole puts this into context: Having lived through the Depression and two world wars, that generation of adults was hungry for a period of peace and security (Beaglehole 1990: 28). I would add to this, again, that New Zealand was also solidifying its own national identity and cultural norms.

In spite of this preference for homogeneity, New Zealand found itself in need of more immigrants than Britain could provide to meet its labour demands in the 1950's and 1960's. One of the places New Zealand looked to was the Netherlands. The two governments made an agreement that paved the way for many young, single Dutch people to enter New

Zealand's work force. Why the Netherlands? The answer to this reveals New Zealand's emphasis on assimilation and preference for white immigrants. Lochore, who wrote *From Europe to New Zealand, An Account of our Continental European Settlers* in 1951 wrote that New Zealand's growing economy required that it "make new Britishers: by procreation and by assimilation" and that New Zealand should look to northern and western Europe. He argued that the Netherlands was similar to Britain in lifestyle and the Dutch should be seen as "honorary Britishers" (Lochore 1951: 89). Many parliamentarians agreed that they were desirable, and were thought to be able to "help themselves and be of great assistance to this country" (NZPD 1950, (289)534 in Roggeveen, 1996).

In the 1950's, however, New Zealand's unofficial White New Zealand policy was beginning to change with the arrival of large numbers of non-European immigrants: people from the Pacific Islands and Nations. This did not come from New Zealand beginning to see itself as a member of these Pacific Islands (Liu, *et al.* 2005: 13). Rather, it was New Zealand's need for labourers that led them to look toward these close neighbours, territories and former territories as an inexpensive and convenient source (McMillan 2004:124). These immigrants mainly came from Western Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau, with smaller numbers coming from Tonga, Fiji and French Polynesia (McMillan 2004: 54). Though they still made up less than one percent of foreign-born New Zealand residents, by 1956 immigrants from Pacific Nations outnumbered those from Asia and became the largest non-European immigrant ethnic group, (Palat 1996: 44 and Brooking & Rabel 1995: 40). As opposed to the European post-war arrivals, immigrant populations from the various Pacific Islands continued to be bolstered by continuing arrivals (Brooking & Rabel 1995: 41). Through the 60's and 70's, this population continued to increase exponentially.

Regardless of where they came from, all immigrants coming to New Zealand in the decades after World War II arrived in a country with some unique cultural circumstances. Unlike many white-majority nations, New Zealand has a 'label' for its white born citizens – Pākehā. The word 'Pākehā' has largely, though not entirely and not without controversy, been adopted into common use. Pākehā and Māori together constitute New Zealand's formal bicultural status. At the heart of this bicultural history is the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 by the Tangata Whenua, the indigenous people or Māori, and the colonizers (Spoonley & MacPherson 2004: 175. Also see Orange, 1987 & 2004). A unique historical and cultural document among former British colonies, the treaty has always been rife with controversy. Perhaps the biggest controversy surrounding the treaty is translation. The official English

version of the treaty lodged with the Colonial Office does not match the Māori version which the Māori chiefs of New Zealand signed (Walker 2004: 91). These discrepancies are fundamental to the different interpretations that have been debated ever since the day the treaty was written. Of particular importance is the clause that, in English, says Māori cede rights and powers of sovereignty while the Māori version says they cede complete governance of their land, but says nothing of sovereignty (Walker 2004: 91).

There is continuing current debate and doubt that the chiefs signed with free and intelligent consent because the real meaning of the treaty was concealed by imprecise translation (Walker 2004: 96). Kawharu succinctly captures the interpretive dilemma surrounding the treaty: “For the Māori, power was to be shared, while for the Crown, power was to be transferred, with the Crown as sovereign and the Māori as subject” (Kawharu in Dominy 1995: 360). Subsequent to the signing of the treaty, the Pākehā behaved toward Māori on the assumption that they, Pākehā, held sovereignty. Māori responded in the belief that they had never surrendered it (Walker 2004: 93).

Contemporary Māori and Pākehā are engaged in the conscious establishment of a political and social partnership of a type that was, paradoxically, envisaged by the founding document of the nation, but never achieved through it – a nation within which Māori are equal partners and their culture, language and land rights are protected (MacPherson 2004: 216, 232). MacPherson writes that to secure a future the past must be acknowledged by all, including Pākehā, who need to see the power and the privilege they have enjoyed (MacPherson 2004: 233). However, while not disagreeing with this, Michele Dominy, an ethnographer working in New Zealand’s high country, warns us not to strip away settler or Pākehā culture as inauthentic. She urges us to acknowledge ways in which Pākehā have created a sense of belonging and connection to the land (Dominy 1995: 360).

Dominy writes that the anthropology of post-colonialism has tended to neglect British settler descendants’ various expressions of cultural and national identity as developed in the former colonies (Dominy 1995: 358). Pākehā identity in New Zealand is an example of vague notions of settler identities in post-colonial situations. Pākehā identity is so diffuse that only 35% of New Zealand Europeans believe there is such a thing, and 28% believe it is the absence of Māori characteristics (Ward & Lin 2005: 162). Pākehā identity can partially be likened to Schech’s description of Australia’s white majority identity: as a former British colony, European consciousness and ancestral memories wear the mask of a strange, new

land and a society still uncertain of its own style. The result is ambivalent articulations of white, multi-generational New Zealand identities (Schech & Haggis 2000: 232)

Pākehā and other white settler groups have often not been given the analytical attention that other diaspora have received until recently. Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk write that the two parts of the term ‘white diaspora’ seem almost antithetical. The term ‘diaspora’ is commonly used to address racially marked people who are viewed as a minority in the places that they settle. “White” is hardly ever addressed for it is normalized in racial hierarchies as an unmarked universal (Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk 2005: 105). Whiteness is not just about having white skin, but is a reference to the historical legacy of colonialism and contemporary power structures (Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk 2005: 108). As Europeans have moved to far corners of the globe and decimated or oppressed the indigenous people there, the white diasporas then became indigenized as native and rightful, albeit controversial, owners of the land (Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk 2005: 113). How these white diaspora came to develop an attachment to the land and places they settled, how they developed a unique identity and culture, have been areas left largely unexamined.

In New Zealand, Dominy writes that Māori *and* various other settler descendants, all with rights of cultural identity, compete and seek definition within the ideology of post-colonial biculturalism (Dominy 1995: 359). If New Zealand’s biculturalism does not account for *Pākehā* or other contemporary settler’s formation of attachment to and identification with the land, it also does not provide immigrants with certainty of place or belonging. Biculturalism also assumes *Pākehā* is one category and Māori is another and denies any variation within each category (Marotta 2000: 180). Mulgan writes that biculturalism homogenizes both *Pākehā*, who are seen as synonymous with the Crown, and Māori, who are lumped together in one group, negating their Iwi identifications (Mulgan in Dominy 1995: 359).

In addition, biculturalism also denies the existence of a third, fourth, or fifth recognized category of New Zealanders. Thus, while the process of defining a national vision of biculturalism is far from completed, another debate has begun. With the changing contours of New Zealand’s increasing diversity in the last forty years, the biculturalism New Zealand still strives for must contend with an added component: whether New Zealand’s vision of nationhood should be not *bicultural*, but *multi-cultural*. Marotta writes that a policy and vision of multiculturalism risks negating the unique, integral and foundational role of the Māori in New Zealand’s history and culture (Marotta 2000: 180). As New Zealand continues

to define Pākehā, Māori and their relationship to each other, new migrants have an ambiguous status and there is an implicit suggestion that immigrants must ‘wait their turn’ to negotiate their place in New Zealand’s identity (Ward & Lin 2005: 169). In the meantime, the immigrants in this study arrived and were expected to slot into one of the two existing categories of New Zealand’s biculturalism. There have been exceptions, but white immigrants, obviously not part of New Zealand’s indigenous population, with white skin (the dominant marker of Pākehāness), were largely expected to assimilate into Pākehā society.

Whiteness

Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk write that whiteness can enable the application of a vanishing cream for white people who immigrate to a majority-white society. The movement of white people in this situation does not result in diasporic formations (Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk 2005: 109). Without diasporic formations, the cultural identity of these white migrants is not assumed to be hybrid. It is assumed that such white migrants will not create any ‘problems’ but will assimilate and integrate (Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk 2005: 123). As one of the white participants of Beaglehole’s study of refugees in New Zealand said, “I am identified as part of the majority which I do not feel part of at all... But if you are not obviously from another cultural group, then there is an expectation that you will be like that majority” (Beaglehole 1990: 130).

“Who counts as white and what it means to be white changes over time and from place to place” (Rothenberg 2002: 3). All immigrants in this study are white, or at the least, can certainly be considered white in relation to Māori and other prevalent immigrant groups in New Zealand, such as Pacific Islanders and Chinese. There are one or two exceptions where Māori society has been a very significant part of the participants’ lives, but otherwise most participants have primarily integrated into Pākehā New Zealand society. This is in no doubt at least partly attributable to their white appearances. Participants in this study were from eleven different countries and represent different religions, cultures and socio-economic statuses, but their common ‘whiteness’ has played a largely unspoken but central role in the experiences of immigrating to New Zealand.

Whiteness has too often “gone unnamed and unexamined because it has been uncritically and unthinkingly adopted as the norm throughout society” (Rothenberg 2002: 2). The recent field of studies called Critical White Studies aims to apply the ideas and studies of

‘race’ to whiteness: to make whiteness visible and strange, to subject it to the same critical examination often made of ‘other races,’ to stop assuming the normality of whiteness and contrasting those ‘other races’ to it (Dyer, 2002). Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk say that they have written about white diaspora to “shake the ground so that common sense assumptions and prejudices are undermined, so that it is interrogated and not imagined as neutral and natural (Kalra, Kaur & Hutnyk 2005: 123).

In this study, it is important to draw attention to the ‘whiteness’ of the immigrants in this study for two reasons. First, it is assumed that *non*-white immigrants to a white-majority nation will have hybrid identities and will maintain strong ties to their original culture. Alternatively, there is an assumption that when white immigrants move to a white-majority nation they will assimilate easily and completely. It is important to question this assumption for it negates the importance of white immigrants’ homelands and cultures and the possibility that they too will have hybrid identities. Second, it is important to address the participant’s whiteness because historically the treatment of non-European immigrants in New Zealand has differed considerably from the treatment of European settlers (Ip in Ward, 2005: 155.) Participants in this study largely report being well received by most local New Zealanders who they described as having been “incredibly friendly,” generous and easy to work with. Alice told me this story about her wedding in New Zealand, not long after her arrival, with no family nearby and few friendships formed yet:

When I got married-, as I say, I come out and I didn’t know anybody. Two of the women at work gave what’s called a kitchen evening... It’s just like a bridal shower only this is all kitchen stuff... That really made me feel it was good. And then they came, they were at the wedding cuz as I say we didn’t know that many people. But, yeah they gave a nice kitchen evening... asked everybody at work so they all came. It was nice. My mum was very pleased, you know, she said “Thank the people for me,” when I told her. (Alice)

The experiences of the white or European immigrants in this study have differed significantly from those reported by many Asian immigrants who have continually arrived to a backdrop of racism (Spoonley & MacPherson 2004: 185. Also see Palat 1996, Brooking & Rabel 1995, and Morris, Vokes & Chang 2007). So too have they differed from the experiences of many Pacific Island immigrants. Many migrants from Pacific Nations obtained employment and accommodation through family members already in New Zealand. This ‘chain’ migration was well established in the 1960’s, leading to geographic and occupational concentrations of Pacific Islanders from certain villages or countries settling into specific suburbs of three New Zealand cities (McMillan 2004: 125-6). European

immigrants after World War II, by contrast, did not settle in concentrated areas. Whereas the numbers of people from Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands in New Zealand outnumbered those in their origin societies, many European immigrants arrived in relative isolation, sometimes with a friend or spouse at most.

We came to New Zealand in 1964. So was 44 years back. And we were the only Spanish family in the South Island. Another family came at the same time, more or less... to the North Island. So, we're the pioneers... My husband could read and write English. He couldn't speak it. And I couldn't speak English and I couldn't read or write English. So that was quite frightening. I was frightened to answer the door if anyone knocked on the door, I just, didn't know what to say. (Elena)

I came here four and half weeks on the boat, then we ended up in the railway station, eventually. My husband - we were not allowed to be married, so he was just my boyfriend - they sent him straight to Roxborough to work on the dam because he was a carpenter. And I left standing on the railway station. And, I could not speak English at all, not at all... I was with another girl. So we went back about four or five times to labour department to get a job because I didn't have a house or nothing. So they sent me into a hostel with English girls and Scottish girls... So, and then it ended up we couldn't find much, I had so many things we'd go to, not suitable or whatever... I ended up in the factory. Never seen a factory before. Making boxes, must be hilarious because I had no idea how to make these boxes, was just crazy. But in the meantime, he was in Roxborough, he had a hut and he made a nice fire. He was really settling in. And I thought "well that's all very well for you but I'm bloody lonely. I'm not coming all the way from Holland to be miserable and on my own." So, I made up a telegram and I got him back. (Ann)

Most European refugees and immigrants in New Zealand after World War I and II did not live in ethnic communities. The participants of this study illustrate how some European immigrants of this era know others from the same country, socialize occasionally and as Inger said, "keep track of each other." However, they have mainly interacted with New Zealanders, isolated from others with a similar background. In the years after World War II, concentrations of villages or suburbs inhabited by the same European ethnic group were very rare (Brooking & Rabel, 1995). "The forces of assimilation were consequently more powerful in New Zealand" (Beaglehole, 1990: xi).

Scattered throughout New Zealand, all the participants of this study also looked the part of a white New Zealander. Many participants discussed their foreign accent as a constant betrayer, revealing their foreign status. This is important because unlike Asian or Pacific Island immigrants, these immigrants could, and still can, go undetected as foreign *until* they open their mouths.

I only have to say something, “Oh where are you from?” That is, that is every time...
But that annoys me. You open your mouth and you give yourself away. (Huberta)

I only have to open me mouth, luv... Oh no, we can't hide that. We can't. (Eric).

This contrasts sharply and significantly with immigrants who look different, and therefore never can hide their otherness. Gwynneth, with white skin and almost no accent, has largely fitted in ‘undetected.’ Arriving at 17, determined to fit in and wanting to feel safe, she practiced at losing her accent. She largely succeeded and thus exists for large periods of time with no one knowing that her origins lie elsewhere. The subtlety of her accent, combined with the learned lesson of keeping her background and differences quite private act as a blanket laid over her intensely potent African upbringing by English and Scottish parents. When the subject of her background or childhood does come up, then her accent is sometimes mentioned: “We always thought you talked with a bit of a plum in your mouth.” This is in stark contrast to most of the other immigrants in this study, whose accents give them away instantly. They have no choice, they are revealed. But, again, with white appearance they are revealed only when they speak and not before. In relation to Asian immigrants who were the recipients of political and attitudinal discrimination, and compared to Pacific migrants who came in large numbers and settled in concentrated areas, white immigrants of European descent largely blended in.

Describing themselves

The participants in this study show the awkwardness and ambiguity inherent in the seemingly benign goal of assimilation. Dispersed and white, assimilation was expected and largely occurred socially. But how do they define themselves personally? Eric and Inger were the only two who defined themselves easily as ‘New Zealanders’ saying that after so much time in this country, and particularly in contrast to other Danish people, they notice how much they have changed. For them, their identity as New Zealanders stems in large part from realizing they no longer feel Danish. Two immigrants told me the exact opposite, describing their national identity as strongly tied to their homeland.

Oh I'm still Irish. No, they won't take that away from me. No I've never taken on citizenship. Like, I'm a permanent resident enough but no, I would never, never give that up. (Alice)

I'm Scottish! There is no doubt in my mind at all, I'm Scottish... I'm kind of tap-rooted to Scotland. (Beatrice)

By far the majority, however, described feeling like they are some sort of hybrid combination of their homeland and New Zealand.

Every time we've gotten the forms to become naturalized... we just, you know, "hm"[*shrugs shoulders*]... I am Dutch, and that is the weirdest about it all. That I can't get rid of my Dutch passport which means that I still see myself as being Dutch... And yet, when we're overseas, we're only just too proud to say we're from New Zealand... we don't hesitate, "oh no, we're from New Zealand." (Huberta)

I would say a percentage... Your character is formed in the first twenty years of your life... To think if I'm a New Zealander, I'd have to lie to say that. But I try to find a percentage... I would say forty percent maybe Dutch, forty percent Kiwi. And the grey area in between. (Rene)

Identities are constructed through difference, in relation to what they are not (Hall 1996: 4). The immigrants of this study illustrate the formative power of what they are not on both sides: after forty or more years out of their homelands, they do not identify *only* with their original culture. And, while most participants do think of themselves as New Zealanders, they are *not* entirely or solely New Zealanders. This is in part because an entire, formative chapter of their lives and identities was written outside New Zealand. But it is also because they know that New Zealanders don't think of them, or accept them, as New Zealanders.

When asked if they felt like or thought of themselves as New Zealanders, eleven out of twelve immigrants answered in the affirmative (including those who feel like a New Zealander *and* like a member of their homeland.) However, ten of the twelve said that New Zealanders do not think of them as a New Zealander. This is a striking contrast between what the participants feel about themselves and how they know themselves to be perceived by New Zealanders. Simon still thinks of himself as 50% Hungarian, but also as 50% New Zealander because the English language is generally easier for him now, and he has been in New Zealand for most of his life. During our interview, Simon debated whether or not, upon his death, he would like the Hungarian flag upon his coffin as some of his fellow immigrants have done. There is no debate however, when I ask him, "Do New Zealanders think of you as a New Zealander?" "Until I die," Simon replied with gusto and a hand on the table, "I will be a foreigner." It was, perhaps, the most certain, black-and-white statement he made during the two hour interview.

Many immigrants talked about being reminded, from the outside by other people, of their foreign-ness. When, going about their daily New Zealand life, they themselves could forget they are an immigrant but they are continually reminded by the people around them, particularly in relation to their accent. As discussed earlier, because all participants of this study are white, it is the accent that is a constant betrayer, re-enforcing an immigrant's outsider status nearly on a regular basis even fifty years later.

You open your mouth and that's it. As long as you don't say anything it's fine... I could easily forget about it, say you know you go to the shop, forget about it that you are an immigrant. But then they, sometimes, "Where you come from?" Oh, god, you know... It's the people who remind you. I can forget about it, but they won't let you. No, they won't let you. (Ann)

They accept me as a New Zealander but they don't think of me as a New Zealander. I think that's to do with the accent as well. I never lost it... Like I say, if they see me as a Kiwi, I don't think so. (Rene)

A well-intentioned inquiry, "Where are you from?" may be an annoyance for some immigrants, and others describe the unsettling feeling of being 'welcomed' to New Zealand years and years later. Alice recalls a woman who moved to her neighbourhood many years after Alice settled there. The woman also joined Alice's church parish.

Then, she joined the church group, and of course I'd been in it for a long time because that was my parish since I come here. And then, "Oh," she says, "[Alice], welcome to the parish." And I'd been in it since, well, it wasn't even a parish. And I thought that was strange, welcoming you. (Alice)

Simon has had similar experiences:

What really annoys me, when a young man say to me, "And how do you like our country?" I felt like to say, "You were not even born when I was here." (Simon)

A handful of immigrants shared a few stories that, while seemingly much more rare, were more aggressive reminders of their foreign status. Here is one such story:

A few years ago, I went to the supermarket, I happen to say to a particular couple, husband and wife who are right there, "Oh, isn't the mince expensive?" And she turned around and she said, "But it's cheaper than in Hungary." And I said, "Oh, yeah." I've learned to keep my mouth shut. You know. It's hurt, but you don't say anything. She could have said, "Oh, yes it is." But just the way she said it, "It's cheaper than in Hungary." Other words, 'you're still a foreigner.' You know, and I was here many many years by then, but you're still a foreigner. And it's stick there,

you can't help it, it stick there... Those were the words, she knew she let me know that nevermind how long I stay here, I'll still be the foreigner and I'm not one of them, or one of us, sort-of style. (Simon)

These kinds of experiences, while rare, contribute to the immigrants' knowledge that others do not think of them as New Zealanders though they may often feel like such in their everyday lives. Not entirely a Kiwi, they are also *no longer* only Danish, Dutch, Scottish, Hungarian, etc. These immigrants are very aware of how much they have changed due to life in New Zealand and due to the migration process itself. They notice these changes in themselves particularly when they are in contact with others still in their homelands. If a person defines herself at least partly by what she is not, then these immigrants are not New Zealanders, nor are they solely, purely, a product of their original nationality. A combination of identities emerge and co-exist, developed both from feelings of what they are (or have become) and what they are not. Elena and Gwynneth illustrate the complexity of defining national identity and the subsequent inadequacy of labels.

I: I'm not a New Zealander anyway. I've got permanent residency, but I haven't got citizenship. So I'm Spanish, my passport is Spanish. I was going to become Kiwi and I thought, "What for? As soon as I open my mouth someone is going to say, 'Where are you from?'"... Even if I feel like a New Zealander, I will never be a New Zealander because I wasn't born here. I have been here so long [*but*] I still got another culture, you see? I'm in between two cultures. No I am Spanish even though I love New Zealand.

M: Do you feel like a New Zealander?

I: Most of the time, yes. Most of the time. (Elena)

How do you own all of them [*the different parts of her national identity*]? How do you acknowledge all of them and sing a song of truth? I really don't know the answer to this question and am very perplexed about it. Sometimes I just rest easy and tick yes, I am a New Zealander. Sometimes I just tick yes, I am Pākehā... I want to enter into the full complexity of it all and it seems rather wrong to actually have to simplify. It's in no way adequate; in no way is it a measure of any small iota, the truth... It's very messy territory. And in the end, labels are so unsatisfactory... because there is so much that they don't cover. (Gwynneth)

Individual immigrants span the continuum from identifying only strongly with one's homeland or identifying mainly with New Zealand. With a handful at each end, most are spread out across the middle, in between the two. Stuart Hall writes that "identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses,

practices and positions” (Hall 1996: 4). The immigrants in this study primarily show this to be the case. After forty or more years in New Zealand, it is clear that they have thought about the question of their national identity but most participants are ambiguous about any definite delineation. They have no easy answer – the complexity of the issue on a personal level was obvious. It is perhaps this very uncertainty that allows them to be and privately understand themselves as two or more things at once. “Ambiguity is not a threat but a resource” (Sokefeld 1999: 424). Ambiguity allows plurality, and integration of many identities without trade-off. Changing meanings and restructuring creates room for new relationships and opportunities (Sokefeld 1999: 424).

What you don’t say

A plurality of identities can simultaneously or subsequently be enacted by the same person. It is the self that manages these identities (Sokefeld 1999: 424). The immigrants in this study learned to manage their identities in accordance with what was socially acceptable in New Zealand, pushing their difference into the background. This identity management continues as an on-going process. One strong example that came up repeatedly in the interviews, often without being asked, is a lesson learned early on of what they, an immigrant, can and cannot say to New Zealanders. I have come to call this ‘rule,’ “What you don’t say.” Many host countries and host-country citizens do not want to hear what is perceived as an immigrant’s complaints. Most people of most nations would have some resistance to a new-comer’s criticisms of their culture and country. Alice and Simon say they know this is not unique to New Zealand:

So you hold back a bit, you know, and just think about their attitude like that. So there is that, but then, I think you’ll get that in every nation, won’t you. (Alice)

S: I think people like you much better if you’re a good listener... If you’re not going along and saying, you know, what we done back home. That’s what the kiwi people really would hate. And you would hate it, I would hate it and everybody.

M: They want you to be grateful.

S: Exactly. But that’s what you’ve got to take when you are living in that country. (Simon)

While it is true that many people do not like to hear what is perceived as criticism of their country, New Zealand society has some specific characteristics that have made open expression of difference difficult for immigrants. The high value placed on conformity and

its young, defensive national identity have already been mentioned. It was also geographically isolated in an era before accessible, fast travel and communication. Historian Michael King says that New Zealand's isolated location in the South Pacific, particularly in the age before jet planes and TV, meant that it "had no borders with other countries or cultures to mitigate a sense of racial solipsism" (King 2004: 367). "New Zealanders' contact with groups of different cultural origins was very limited... a certain amount of unease about the foreigners who had settled in New Zealand was not uncommon" (Beaglehole 1990: 12). Elena understands this:

When we came people didn't really travel much, it was a lot of like, "I don't know who they are..." They didn't want to mix... I understand that because it was very isolated. New Zealand was very very isolated... There was no television. There was just the radio. So you cannot imagine other countries. (Elena)

Immigrants in this study seemed to know and understand two things: One, that it is natural for a migrant to talk about their personal past and original country, to compare and contrast, making cultural observations based on a perspective gained through migration. And two, that it is natural for New Zealanders to resist what they see as criticism of their country or culture. This results in a process of continual self-editing. Over forty years and longer, the practice of watching what you say means an immigrant cannot be openly present as a continuous self, foreign background and all. But also, an immigrant is not fully accepted as a New Zealander either. This is an unsettled, somewhat precarious position. Consider Alice's answer when I asked her if she feels like a New Zealander:

No, I don't. I really don't. I mean I mix well with them... But I'm still, you know, I'm from the outside, really. I feel that after all this time. I don't know why, 'cause as I say I've got good friends and they make you feel welcome and we laugh... But, just sometimes you go to say something and you think, "No, I'd better not. It's not up to me" even though I maybe have more right than anybody else to say it... We were very political at home. My grandfather he was an MP. So there was always politics and you always spoke up for the underdog, you know? And sometimes you hear in the group [*of New Zealand friends*] snide remarks about, maybe not your nationality but other nationalities, and you know it's very unfair what they're saying. And you feel like you should say-. But then, they're gonna turn around and say "well, what's it got to do with you?" (Alice)

Alice's feeling that she cannot speak her opinion in this situation is not based on the fact that her opinion might be different from her friends, but is based directly on the fact that she is an immigrant and thus part of her past and many of her opinions must be kept to herself. Not being able to express her opinion is akin to denying a bit of her past and herself

as a member of a politically opinionated family; she cannot be that person here in this situation and time.

Huberta and Elena also describe watching what they say:

...In those days especially, you could not say, even if it was raining, “Oh that rain!” Because then somebody would say, “Oh doesn’t it rain in Holland?” And, you’d have to be very careful. I soon learned that. And always building up. You’d have to build up. Because you could never say anything that even just had the tiniest bit of criticism in it. ...Always being aware that you could not talk about your past. You could never say something, “Oh but in Holland we did it that way” because, uh, they wouldn’t say it to you directly, but they would say, “Well why don’t you go back?” (Huberta)

People have never been rude to me. It’s something I can say, but you just, I just felt like I was a foreigner sometimes. Like: Don’t criticize anything. I can criticize my country, I criticize my country a lot, so many things. But I could never criticize anything of New Zealand because it’s like, “Hm, why are you here then?” You see? And you have to be very careful... You have to be aware of who you talk with, how they are going to take it. Sometimes you have to wait for the person to talk and then you can say what you think. (Elena)

An immigrant has two viewpoints from which they see the world. But they can often express only one of them, and they are well practiced in this restraint. Interestingly, I occasionally noticed a participant on the verge of saying something critical about New Zealand or their time here, or a memory of something they miss and prefer about their homeland. He or she would cut themselves off before continuing. As mentioned earlier, I found that if I said something small at that point, to remind interviewees that I myself am also an immigrant, it opened the door and cleared the path - they expanded on the point instantly, in further detail, even seeming to enjoy the opportunity. Between two immigrants, this kind of conversation is acceptable, but with New Zealanders, they have learned to watch their tongues.

This self-editing can be a challenge to the creation or maintenance of a continuous self. Particularly in the early days of migration, a migrant has “a strong need to pass on information about oneself” (Bönisch-Brednich 2002: 178). This can bridge the huge rift that has been created in terms of location (here versus there) time (then versus now) and identity (who I was then and there versus who I am now and here). For an immigrant who observes the practice of *not* speaking about their homeland, their past, or their migration, the continuity of identity across time and place can begin to feel split-apart. They described how this split across time, space and identity sometimes takes shape:

I think New Zealanders have this thing about New Zealand and childhood and how essential that is to you and how it sort of forms you and who you are and things. In my experience, they find it very difficult, some of them, to accept that actually that's also your experience of being a child elsewhere; that it's something very tight locked up inside you and it's a key to who you are for the rest of your life. One learns to be careful about that and just to be respectful of the ground that other people are standing on. If people show interest, I sometimes sort of talk about it, but on the whole, I don't a great deal... What happens is also that [your] childhood becomes like a foreign country. The actual experience of childhood – not only did you live it in a foreign country but it's almost like it itself becomes a foreign country of its own. (Gwynneth)

So in the 60's when I was really involved with church groups ... we'd have coffee and I'd do my Dutch baking and potluck teas or potluck dinners I'd bring Dutch dishes... One day somebody said to me, "Oh yes, but you're one of us." And I saw it as a great compliment but at the same time I thought, "You have no idea what my past has been like. How can I be one of you? If you would know how, what's gone on before..." That's the point I was going to make, that all my past had to stay behind me... being so much aware that it was an identity that I had before but when I came here that was chopped, more or less. You were an immigrant. (Huberta)

Though it is a practice that these immigrants accept as necessary and almost take for granted, it is actually an act of great control and diligence to mention so little about such a huge part of one's life and identity: a place one lived for twenty or thirty years of life, a shaping culture, an outlook and perspective gained by the enormous life-altering experience of migration, the daily subtleties of living in a host country. This self-editing seems to have been a potent presence and a persistent practice among most immigrants in this study for the entire duration of their forty to sixty years in New Zealand.

Assimilation as a chosen strategy

Immigrants in this study have certainly been strongly impacted upon by, but are not victims of, New Zealand's assimilationist atmosphere. In no way did I ever hear or sense a feeling of disadvantage or victimization among the participants of this study. The immigrants in this study chose various methods of negotiating their identities and place in New Zealand, judged the outcome, and made adjustments. They must not be considered void of agency: While assimilation was the primary strategy offered to them by New Zealand society, it was also the strategy chosen by the immigrants themselves. This choice was made in response to the pressure to assimilate, yes, but for other reasons as well, including harsh situations that many came from and the resulting appreciation of New Zealand's opportunities.

This study does not focus on the countries or conditions that these immigrants came from, but it is important to mention that many participants have very clear memories of hardship and uncertainty in their country of origin whether this was from World War II, other political or violent conflicts, or simply from poor living conditions.

[My] parents were too scared to go to church because the Russians didn't believe religion. Parents were too scared to listen to overseas news... People like to listen what's happening overseas, the free world, they called it. But if anybody find out you listen, you could be finished up in jail... In New Zealand, when I come here the people respected the police... When I come from Hungary, the people were scared of the police... I want to escape from Europe quick as possible because a lot of people at that stage thought there might be a third world war... We just never know what's going to be happen... When I arrive to Auckland, the Red Cross gave me a tooth brush, a toothpaste, a pyjamas and bob's your uncle, that's it, start your life. (Simon).

Everybody had to do national service in England when you're 18... I went overseas to Kenya. And you get a taste, "there's a different life out there." I was in an office back home and we were yacking away... and all at once they were talking about retirement. They were about 65 and I was about 25. And I thought, "God, that's 40 years behind this desk." And within a month I was on the boat to New Zealand. I thought, "God there's got to be something better than this."... In 1966... they did a survey in England for the cleanest town and the dirtiest town. And guess which was the dirtiest in England? [*Eric's town.*] ... Every factory was virtually a chemical factory... The gases go at 6 in the morning, and they go rolling down the streets. All these gases, you've got phosphorous gas, every kind of gas going. And you never saw a man over 65. Nobody lived past 65 in that town... I can honestly say if I'd had stayed in England, I'd be dead now. 'Cause I always had a chest and I used to get some terrible colds and flu's and things and that would've killed me off. 'Cause you have a very long winter there. Would have seen me off, for sure. So I'm pleased that I'm sitting here... I've always mixed in. Yeah, cuz we left England not liking England. (Eric)

These memories of hardship have often resulted in appreciation for the safety and opportunity in New Zealand.

I think actually our first thought when we came over here, it was lovely, we didn't have to worry when we open the radio. There was no risk of war out here. We were so far away from everything. You're not so far away these days, but we were... When we met and Erik later thought of New Zealand, he said, it was when the Hungarians was in trouble, and Erik said "you realize that if we get a war, I'm one of the first to get called in, because I'm just out of the army." I said, "It's time to go." He said, "Yes, I think so." And that's how it was, we were always concerned because we had the Germans during the war and that was not a nice experience. We weren't starving but we were frightened... And we felt, it was so relaxing, you didn't have to worry about anything over here. Just get on with life and that's how we loved it. Yes. (Inger)

Many participants describe how and why they actively chose to try to blend into New Zealand society. Learning the New Zealand way seemed to offer the best chances of success and utilization of precious opportunities.

I knew the day I came here, I realize that if I want to stay here, I've got to mix with New Zealand people. I come here, I couldn't speak... couldn't read, couldn't write, couldn't communicate, couldn't do anything. Well, I stayed in a refugee camp... I think after a fortnight, three weeks, I went out to live with the New Zealand people. To make sure that I pick up the custom, pick up the language. Some of the custom I don't agree with it, but you know. I stay there for quite a while, and from there I went from a boarding house again mixing with other boys... again New Zealand boys... And then after that I got married, we got married and lived ever since afterwards, isn't it. (Simon)

Immigrants in this study learned English and spoke English overwhelmingly, even within their own families or with fellow immigrants. They learned New Zealand customs and integrated New Zealand values. They learned to keep much of their 'difference' private – their foreign background and homeland, their experience of migration, their perspective of New Zealand itself. They did not 'throw away' their former identity associated with their homeland and childhood and formative culture, but they did learn to keep outward expression of this side of themselves to a minimum.

Cohen writes that conventional European social theory mostly points to determinism of some kind, not taking account of the individual's capacity to reflect on his or her own behaviour and the context around them (Cohen 1994: 9-10). This, he says, is inadequate. Here, I suggest that as these immigrants were, by far, mainly interacting with New Zealanders, they reflexively monitored not only their own identities, but also their interaction with New Zealanders and New Zealand society in order to choose the most appropriate management of their identities in the New Zealand context. In deciding how to appropriately manage identities in a given situation, often one identity subverts another (Sokefeld 1999: 423). Many immigrants have chosen to actively subvert the identity that is foreign to New Zealanders. This was often due to the pressure placed upon them to do just this and it has made the healthy maintenance of a continuous identity difficult at times. But adopting or moulding an identity that allowed a harmonious existence in post-World War II New Zealand was also, and still is, a choice made in pursuit of positive life experiences in their host country.

Changes in New Zealand's attitude

The saying, "Tall Poppy Syndrome" is used frequently in and about New Zealand society. It describes a "levelling social attitude" in which "an assumption of a higher economic, social or political position is criticized as being presumptuous, attention seeking, or without merit. Alternatively, it is seen as a societal phenomenon in which people of genuine merit are criticized or resented because their talents or achievements elevate them above or distinguish them from their peers" (The Free Dictionary 2009). New Zealand continues to be most comfortable with the idea of equality among all its citizens and relatively uncomfortable with difference. But change is noticeable.

In recent years, immigrants in this study describe being able to be more open about their past, homeland and migration and they attribute this to two factors. First, time has allowed for the forming of close friendships and immigrants feel they can speak more freely to New Zealand friends they have known for a very long time.

And it's only in the last maybe five or ten years, I'm 70 now, so that I feel I can say something... With good friends I have been able now to bring out things from my past. (Huberta)

Another reason interviewees felt they could be more open is New Zealand's changing attitude toward difference. Bönisch-Brednich writes that as New Zealand has come to see itself more as an independent state in the South Pacific, and less as a British colony, legislation and informal attitudes have become more liberal (Bönisch-Brednich 2002: 161). Well into the 1970's, Bönisch-Brednich says, the dominant expectation of immigrants was that they should assimilate as quickly as possible. Although there is still resistance, particularly to many Asian immigrant groups, the realization that New Zealand has profited and benefitted from various cultures is growing (Bönisch-Brednich 2002: 161). These observations are consistent with the findings of a 2004 survey of 500 New Zealand households (Ward in Ward & Lin 2005: 163). Eighty-eight percent of respondents agreed that diversity in race, religion and culture is a good thing in a society and eighty-three percent agreed that immigrants should maintain their culture while adopting New Zealand culture. (However, it is still true that New Zealanders have more favourable perceptions of immigrants from Britain, Australia and South Africa (Ward & Lin 2005: 164)).

Three immigrants in this study mentioned that when they first arrived in New Zealand, they felt most at ease around New Zealand's former World War II soldiers. The

soldiers had been to Europe and were far more aware of European nations and cultures than the average New Zealander. (Bönisch-Brednich's (2002) participants also mentioned this.)

In the beginning the only time we could talk properly to people were the men who were in the army and had been overseas. They were so much easier to talk to... Absolutely... But now this generation is totally different. They go overseas. A lot of Kiwis now, they go overseas for holidays. But the older generation, of my age, they never been out of New Zealand, so they are different. (Ann)

For Ann, it was not only the soldier's knowledge and experience of her country that helped her speak openly with them, but also, because they were there during the war, they knew more about the war's effect on her country and why she might choose to leave it in pursuit of a better life. It was an understanding she did not feel with other New Zealanders.

Many immigrants discuss increased acceptance and openness, particularly in contrast to what they have described as "suspicion" or "narrow-mindedness" when they first arrived.

In general, in the 60's, there was a bit of an edge, but I think people today are a lot more better with foreigners and everything, like. The 60's could be pretty tough... But I think people are better educated now and um, more open. Yeah, they're more open. They're not as narrow-minded as they were either... It was a very narrow minded society. (Eric)

As New Zealand has become a more diverse and well-travelled nation with additional exposure to the rest of the world through daily technology, immigrants describe no longer having to be quite so cautious or restrained with their conversation, cultural observations or outward expressions of their homeland and culture.

The changes are terrific and just quite good... People travel more now in New Zealand... they understand more about other cultures... But now, with at least diversity, it has changed, it is so more liveliness here. Now there's so many people who could understand our thinking. It's like, I don't know, "we've got so many cultures now that we are getting to understand"... But as I say, at the beginning because people didn't travel, they were afraid of other races, they were afraid of mixing with other races. But now they understand, we're all humans, we're all families. (Elena)

For Elena, the experience of food also illustrates this cultural shift in New Zealand.

And even in the kitchen you know, "You going to cook?" "Oh yes, I'm going to cook this style, the other style." You've got restaurants. You've got all these different cultures that enrich everybody. I go to work and I hear people say, "Oh yes,

I cook this, this and this and that last night. And oh, it was quite good.” Hm. In the 60’s, 70’s and even 80’s, they said, “Oh yes, I found some garlic. Yuck. Ew, garlic. Olive oil, ick!... It’s only because of all these different people coming from different cultures that New Zealand is getting richer culturally. It’s getting richer. (Elena)

These described experiences are a manifestation of the demographic and attitudinal shifts which have occurred in New Zealand in recent years. The diversity of the host-population, Akhtar & Choi says, is one of several variables involved in that host country’s reaction to a new-comer. If the host group is already made up of a large number or variety of immigrants, fitting in becomes substantially easier (Akhtar & Choi 2004: 23).

Immigrants make cultural comparisons throughout life; they are like ethnographers (Bönisch-Brednich, 2002: 208). Immigrants can view the changes within their host society from an objective point of view, easily able to describe cultural changes over time with the consciousness of an outside researcher, even while living within. Interviewees describe a New Zealand that, in the last fifteen years or so, has become increasingly diverse, appreciative of ethnic foods and arts, aware of other countries and cultures through travel. This increasing acceptance of difference goes hand in hand with New Zealand’s new found self-confidence. Walk down the streets of Dunedin, New Zealand today and you will see young-adult New Zealanders wearing T-shirts shouting out, “Aotearoa New Zealand” or proclaiming “Born Here” next to an outline of New Zealand. Though there may still be quite a way to go towards tolerance, pride in New Zealand individuality and confidence in New Zealand’s ability to offer something unique on a world scale, have in turn made New Zealand more open to variation and novelty. The context of New Zealand is changing, and so the immigrants in this study can, and do, make adjustments in the management of their identities. As these cultural changes have come to New Zealand, the participants can now reveal a bit more about themselves and their lives through their past or other culture. After forty or more years, there is now a little more space to be the full person that they are.

In conclusion, migration brings identity into consciousness as immigrants negotiate who they are in relation to where they come from, where they have come to, and the journey itself. Identity is plural, fluid and processual. The self manages these changing identities according to changing circumstances, and provides some coherence over time. This all takes place within the influence of a cultural, political and historical context. The immigrants in this study have been strongly influenced by New Zealand’s bicultural history and by post-

World War II New Zealand's emphasis on conformity and assimilation. Within this they have demonstrated the self's agency in seeking to manage their identity in the ways that allowed them the best life-experiences possible in New Zealand.

Along with New Zealand, another context has proven to be an integral part of these immigrant's identity negotiations: Their homelands. Identity negotiations are tied to experiences of home. Identity evolves, over the life-span in parallel with experiences of people and place, particularly those associated with home. Even when home is left, the memory of the homeland acts as a profound reminder of self-identity. Simultaneously, as the adopted country becomes home in some ways, an immigrant begins to identify more as a member of the local culture and society. After all, after forty or more years in New Zealand, there are many experiences, relationships and memories here too. These immigrants' experiences of home over time, as shaped both by their homeland and New Zealand, are the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Negotiations of Home

Home is a time and a place that is personally significant. It's a landscape that holds dear memories, and probably at least a handful of bad ones too. Memory is an important part of the experience of home. "Without memory, we are everywhere or nowhere... Without memory, all places are equal and alien" (Rubinstein 2005: 112). Home is a place where we know our position and the rules of the game. Home is a place where one belongs, or used to, or wishes to. Home is a time and place that evokes an emotional response of some sort, where neutrality is impossible though routine and familiarity might make things natural, instinctual. Home is a "locus of security and a point of centring and orientation" (Chaudhury & Rowles 2005: 3). It is a perspective, or rather, a time and a place that has shaped perspective – a pair of glasses that filters new places as either 'the same' or 'different' from home. As such, home is often noticed most when it is left.

I left my homeland to come to New Zealand about this time, Christmas time, four years ago. Yesterday, a box from my mother arrived in the mail containing a few small gifts for me and my husband. The gifts were protected within the box by bunched-up newspaper ads. I removed these one by one, straightened them, smoothed them flat against my thigh. I stared at the recognized grocery store logo, the familiar products and predictable special sales: "Oreo cookies 2 for \$5!" I don't even like Oreo cookies anymore. Were I to go to that store tomorrow, I wouldn't buy them. But I cried. It's the memory of making 'mud cake' with vanilla ice cream and crushed up Oreos for birthday parties with teenage girlfriends. It's my mom and her kitchen that I miss – her company while we crushed the cookies and licked ice cream off our cold fingertips, the plastic green bowl we used to mix things in, the wall-paper patterned with tiny flowers. I still know the recipe. I could advise the reader to make it a day in advance so the cake thoroughly solidifies overnight in the freezer. Looking at these ads and noticing the power of my emotional response to something so mundane, I know that 'home' is the time and place you travel into, instantly, with all senses, at the site of a familiar brand of cookies in a newspaper ad. But would I go trotting down Memory Lane if I were still there, passing the Oreo cookies on the local store shelf? Probably not. Home is appreciated consciously because I am not there.

When I began this study, I was able to ask older, wiser, more experienced immigrants to New Zealand a question I myself was just beginning to grapple with: “What, or where, is home to you?” My so-called personal confusion was mirrored in their immediate response to the question, “You mean this home or back home?” “Do you mean here or overseas?” Exactly. Given permission to address the question however they saw fit, their answers came full of complexities, “Well this, but also that.” “Here but also there.” “Sometimes...” A few answers came readily and quickly: a finger pointed down at the floor, a hand tapping the table, “Right here,” or “This is home now.” But when pressed to describe what makes it home, participants responded with long, thoughtful pauses, stories, examples and comparisons between two countries, two cultures, two times.

Huberta migrated from Holland to New Zealand forty-eight years ago. I asked Huberta, over a cup of sugared coffee in the cosy house her husband built on a suburban hill, “What, or where is home to you?” Though she sat in a comfortable chair across from me, she was transported:

When I go to Holland, I just sit on the market place, just in this gorgeous-. The old churches they have there, you have the market place and there’s a market on. And the markets in Holland are just absolutely brilliant. And because... I’m on holiday, I have a salted herring on the market. I have that and the carillons are playing the bells and they play old Dutch songs that I used to sing as a child. And you know that this is, this is just, I’m just so, so happy.

As she continues, she returns to room we are sitting in, where the sun is streaming in the window in spite of it being a cold winter’s day:

But again, after a while, I think of this room and how comfortable I feel here, and the sun streaming in. And that is home. And the friends we’ve made here, that makes it really home... This, New Zealand is home now... I know every time I’m in Holland I just feel I’m home again... I know now, my feet are in both countries.

Anthropologists have conventionally understood home as tantamount to being environmentally fixed, or at least as an unmoving centre (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 21). Now, anthropologists, reflecting on a current world-of-movement, speak about the insufficiency or conceiving a nation, a culture, or home as a bounded entity. In recent discussions, these concepts have been allowed to gain new depth and complexity and are therefore more true to the experiences and ideas of home as expressed by participants in this study. Home is ‘geographically elastic’ (McHugh & Mings in Rowles & Chaudhury 2005: 380). Discussions about home are less about compartmentalizing space and time and more

about movement through them (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 7). Rowles & Chaudhury ask, in their book on home in later life, “How does home evolve over the life span in parallel with an individual’s changing personal capabilities and identity and environmental circumstances?” (Rowles & Chaudhury 2005: 383). This chapter aims to address this question for New Zealand’s post-World War II, long-term migrants.

On using the word ‘Home’

For the participants of this study, the word ‘home’ was used easily and frequently. Even if defining it was hard, it was obviously redolent with meaning. From an analytical perspective the concept of home is hardly a clear one, and the term’s biggest critic is perhaps Amos Rapoport. Rapoport says ‘home’ is a word that is so ill-defined, over-used and ambiguous that it has been rendered useless. The very utterance of the word ‘home’ can produce a huge variety of conceptual images, unique to perhaps every individual and often filled with a mixture of tangibles and intangibles all at once. ‘Home’ is provocative, grabbing at the imagination and heart strings as well as the mind. All the more reason, Rapoport says, to cast it from academic vocabulary. The public’s use of the word ‘home’ as everyday language is ‘folk’ use, he says. Until it is dismantled and operationalised, it is not appropriate scientific research terminology. He suggests, instead, that using terms such as ‘habitation,’ ‘residential setting,’ or ‘residential environment’ provoke less ambiguous emotion and are more clearly understood (Rapoport 2005: 346).

However, Kim Dovey warns that “danger lies in reducing the topic to its researchable aspects and then finding that we have missed the point” (Dovey 2005: 362). The authenticity of ‘home,’ she says, “lies precisely in its ambiguities” (Dovey 2005: 362). Home is too intriguing, too personal, too significant to avoid even though we are far from solving the enticing puzzle that it presents. ‘Home’ *is* a viable term, Rapport and Dawson argue because traditional analytical terms don’t convey the universal power of home. An ambiguous notion, yes, but it is “apposite for a charting of the ambiguities and fluidities, the migrancies and paradoxes, of identity in the world today” (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 8). ‘Home’ allows for the numerous situations and paradoxes, intertwined with memory, narrative, identity, fantasy and migrancy that are inherently a part of its experience. So while pinning down a distinct definition of home is not possible, it is also not necessary in order to discuss these immigrant’s experiences of it. Rather, their potent negotiations of home, over forty or more

years as an immigrant, are invaluable and irrefutable additions to the continuing development of a rich understanding of home.

Migrants show us great insight into considerations of home because they have done the thing that brings it forth from taken-for-granted to realized: They have left home. Like identities, home is formulated largely in relation to what it is not and thus becomes more clearly defined and filled with meaning when we are away from it (Rowles & Chaudhury 2005). Initially an immigrant learns more about his or her original home by being outside of it than he or she learns about the new, adopted home. Comparisons between ‘here and there’ continue through a migrant’s life cycle as each place, and the immigrant him or herself, develop and transform over time. Two homes continue to exist in the hearts and minds of immigrants but the roles of those two evolve and change in relation to each other and to the immigrant.

Homeland as Home, New Zealand as Home

“Many of an individual’s most powerful memories revolve around place” (Marcus 1992: 87). It is not just about the place itself; it is about remembering an experience of a place. There is a set of feelings about a location that emotionally bind a person to that place (Rubinstein 2005: 139). Places are, therefore, repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community and cultural relationships occur. It is those relationships, not just the place, to which people are attached (Low & Altman 1992: 7). This short story from Elena illustrates how attachment to her homeland of Spain is about memories of interactions and emotions that took place there and were experienced by Elena as she was at that moment in time. I asked her if it is important to her at this point in her life to maintain a connection to Spain.

Yes, because it’s the family and it is a good place. I mean it’s your country! There is something inside you that you cannot really take out that easily... I got bad memories as well because I was very very little when the civil war started there... but at the same time, it was a very happy time. One of the best things I remember is being six children in the family and our parents being eight. It’s just to see that round table with all these people around, all these lovely people. Loving people. My father would get up from the table and say, “Right, I’m going to bed, goodnight” and get all these kisses. Kiss all his children... It’s my best memory of the family around the table having dinner, you know and talking and my father look at all of us and say, “You’re not well today are you, I can see it in your eyes you’re not well.” And he wouldn’t start eating until everybody was served. It’s just the family union. That is what my best memories are, really, for me. (Elena)

The emotion experienced and the setting inhabited become deeply intertwined – recollection of place triggers memories of feelings and vice versa (Marcus 1992: 92). We are not just spectators in what we remember; we are engaged as actors in what happened then and there (Sokolowski 2000: 70). Remembering a place is tied together with the emotions or moods it once evoked.

Attachment to a place is also a way of recognizing and maintaining a significant part of ourselves. Remembering a place, at a particular time, is a way of expressing important, formative periods in our lives (Rubinstein 2005: 142). In later life in particular, this helps to maintain a sense of continuity and identity (Rubinstein 2005: 140). Our sense of identity develops and changes throughout life as a result of relationships with people and places (Marcus 1992: 88). Our memories of settings, then, are profoundly important reminders of self-identity. “These acts of anchoring ourselves to times, people and places in our personal past are critical to our emotional well-being” (Marcus 1992: 88). The place we are from, with its good and its bad points, has everything to do with the continual evolution of becoming the persons that we are. Particularly when our past and present have become separated (as through migration) memory is especially important to maintain a consistent sense of identity and to facilitate looking forward with a feeling of continuity (Rubinstein & Parmalee 1992). Gwynneth says this in her own words:

In some small part of me, in some small corner of my soul, the flame that is African and that is connected to that soil - that unique point of origin - is alive and well in me. Maybe believing that is the most important thing... believing it and honouring what it is. (Gwynneth).

All the immigrants in this study have been in New Zealand for at least twice as long as they were in their country of origin, yet few immigrants would downplay the significance of their homeland. Childhood and all the experiences and memories that go with it - parents, friends, freedoms, restrictions, traditions, fears, securities, the language learned without knowing one was learning it – are an essential component to an individual’s sense of self. People change, and an immigrant will change in profound ways, but to the degree that those formative first few decades of life represent ‘home,’ then the country of origin is, and always will be, ‘home.’ As Eric says, “It’s still home and you never forget your origins... you never lose your childhood memories, they’re with you forever.” For immigrants who have undergone an extreme change in time, place and identity, these memories are particularly

important. As Huberta said, “I lost my identity... then that was slowly built again.” Remembering places that have been ‘home’ “preserves self-identity and provides the critical thread for continuity into the future” (Chaudhury & Rowles 2005: 13).

Chaudhury & Rowles suggest that ‘home’ is also a sort of fulcrum or a physical, cognitive and emotional vantage point from which a person sees life (Chaudhury & Rowles 2005, 12). A person stands high on a metaphorical hill in his or her country of origin and forever sees things partly from and through this perspective. When that same person arrives as an immigrant in a new country, it is as if he or she is viewing everything from the perspective of the top of that hill back in their homeland. Everything is relative: the landscape, the culture, the opportunities and the limitations – these are *different* from what the immigrant knows and has experienced before. However, with time, familiarity is gained, adaptations are made, certain aspects of life in the new country become appreciated and even preferred and many life milestones are passed in the host country. Over the years, New Zealand also comes to hold many precious memories: the arrival as a young adult with one piece of luggage, the first house, the old car that needed to be refilled with oil before every trip over the hill, the children’s school plays, then their marriages, the career achievements, the friends who helped when the pipes froze and burst or who left flowers on your table when you came back from the hospital.

One thing is obvious from the stories of the participants in this study: That it took time for New Zealand to feel like home. Many immigrants described an initial relationship with New Zealand that was rather tenuous, whether it was based on arriving as a refugee who had little say in the selection of this destination, or following a husband or boyfriend. Immigrants describe the language barrier, loneliness, feeling unsettled by the expanses of open space, calculating how many pay checks would be needed to buy the fare back home. Only one participant had been to New Zealand before migrating here. It was, really, an astounding risk and act of courage for these young immigrants to come to these islands in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean. Their sense of adventure and pursuit of opportunity and a better life was so strong that they left home not knowing if or when they would ever see their family or homeland again. And yet, it is as if the fact that they did stay here, and have now lived here for forty years or more, has come as a bit of a surprise. This is particularly true for many women, though not exclusively, because they, in their own words, ‘followed’ boyfriends, fiancés or husbands to New Zealand.

Adventure when you are young. It's adventure. But I did say to my boyfriend, "Well, I come." Because my mother thought it was time I leave anyway, the house... I said to him, "I'll come down for a couple of years, that'd be quite nice." Of course it is so stupid because you don't know what you are saying. 'Cause he took everything with him, you know, he wasn't going to be here for two years. Then later on, we wanted to go back a couple of times, but we never did. (Ann)

Immigrants describe it taking anywhere from three to forty years to feel 'at home' in New Zealand. Starting to feel at home was often tied to a more concrete event such as the purchase of a first home, marriage, or in relation to the first visit back to the homeland. Rene describes himself as having been a bit of a 'fence-sitter' for forty years before feeling settled. In Alice's case, it was the birth of her grandson that really settled her into New Zealand after thirty-five years here.

I was surprised when a few immigrants still described similarities between their original home and New Zealand as being important. As Beatrice said, replace the tussocks on the green hills with heather and you have a Scottish landscape! Dunedin is home to New Zealand's first university and so was Elena's town home to Spain's first university, "so we've got something in common" - that feel of an old university at the heart of the city. But many differences were also obvious and with time, many contrasting characteristics of New Zealand have become preferred, like clear, clean rivers for fishing and private houses with gardens instead of apartments.

In some ways New Zealand slowly became home as if of its own accord, almost unnoticed and without effort. In other ways, immigrants actively created home here by tying in traditions or objects from their homeland, starting their own brand new traditions, or integrating New Zealand customs into their family lives. Greg Noble has looked at how mundane objects typical of a nation or a national experience can help form a backdrop of comfort in an individual's creation of a house as a home. He suggests that in furnishing our houses to make them homes, we integrate objects of personal and familial existence, which also often carry a national experience, into our everyday lives. Ornaments, photos, artifacts, etc. construct a nation in the backdrop of our homes, "not so much as a project of active affiliation and identification, but as the furniture of everyday life" (Noble 2002: 56).

All but two of the total twenty-one interviews were held in the participant's homes and all of those had artwork, crafts or memorabilia from their homeland on their walls and shelves, such as traditional Dutch dolls, Danish china plates, Hungarian emblems or an Irish flag. Alice's home was filled with Celtic crosses, shamrocks, Irish prayer cards and Belleek

china. But what caught my attention the most was the pile of pictures and letters, old and new, that sat on the mantelpiece, within reach of what seemed to be her favourite chair. Several times during the interview, she reached over and picked up this pile of photos and papers, some soft with age, sifted through them and handed me a photograph or letter to accompany a story. Many immigrants took me to look closely at various photographs of home on their walls. Perhaps the most striking and unique display of bringing an older home into the current one was Gwyneth's fabric sculptures.

When I arrived at Gwyneth's house, I was immediately and powerfully touched by her artwork. An artist who grew up in Southern Rhodesia and Zambia, and who works primarily with fabrics and textiles, Gwyneth has several pieces on display in her living room. The only way that I can best describe these fabric sculptures is to say that they *look like Africa* – rich in reds and browns, a variety of earthy, engrossing textures. One is a woollen blanket, died deep maroon, shredded and pulled apart then knotted back together. It was troubled, primal and rendered useless yet almost playful, certainly vibrant, inviting and engrossing. I have never been to Africa, but this gave me a sense of it. Later in the interview, Gwyneth mentions that her African childhood has a huge presence in her creative work. It brings her home of Africa into her lounge and her everyday home in New Zealand, literally and figuratively.

In the relative privacy of one's house, routines can be performed that allow a sense of control and create a secure base for identity construction (Noble 2002: 57). Many women in particular discussed small ways that they have made a home here in New Zealand, by carrying on some old, holiday routines or baking, but also starting new ones.

So, what, five years after I had been here, I just thought, "Oh! All very well to sort of moan and think about Holland all the time, I start my own traditions now." So then came Christmas time, I made all the Dutch baking... still do that, with the Dutch recipes that make Christmas in my memory. I always tried to sort of do nice things to the house... make sure that there was time to have a routine... And the children knew that, say, on Sunday mornings I'd get the good cups out and have a coffee in cups and make a cake on the Saturday. So that was, that was tradition. (Huberta)

Food was a small but consistent theme in the creation of home in New Zealand, both through maintaining traditional cooking routines and recipes or by adopting New Zealand food and food habits. Elena told me how she used to have to buy her olive oil, a basic ingredient for Spanish food, at the pharmacy. In New Zealand in the 1950's, olive oil was viewed mainly as a tonic or medicine and was not used for cooking. Elena has always

maintained Spanish cooking styles in her home, even if she had to go to some length to get the ingredients. In recent years, she tells me with relief, these ingredients (such as garlic, capsicum or peppers, garbanzo beans) have become common in New Zealand as well. Fred told me about how he still loves black pudding and has ‘taught’ his New Zealand wife to enjoy it as well. Inger and Eric are proud of their mixture of Danish and New Zealand cooking habits. For women in particular, creating and adapting a way to cook whatever type of food was important to them – from their homeland, from New Zealand, or both – was an important step in forming home in New Zealand.

In addition to daily routines, over and over again, both men and women mentioned the role that family plays in making New Zealand home. Their children, they tell me with pride, are New Zealanders: they were born and raised in New Zealand, they don’t have an accent. Children played a practical role in the creation of New Zealand as home by bringing their immigrant parents into New Zealand society and customs. As Eric said of his children, he grew up in New Zealand, right along with them. He learned to be a New Zealander with them; for him it was more a conscious development, for his children, this was the culture they were learning without knowing it.

For the women, many of whom did not work outside the home for many years while raising a family, children played a vital role of getting them out into the community, meeting people and learning the language. Simply keeping busy with kids often helped to abate the homesickness many women felt for years after arriving here: “Well you’ve got to take them out, you look after them, you’re busy. You mind the kitchen, you don’t think about Holland at all when you’re busy” (Ann). It wasn’t always easy being on an even playing field with your young child when learning how the school system worked, or being unable to help with their school lessons due to the language difference. It was difficult, at times, being told the appropriate thing to wear to a certain occasion by a nine year old, or being overly saddened and worried when your teenager is out late at night because the teenagers in your homeland never stayed out late, or embarrassing your child by not knowing the rules in a situation.

I can remember when I first took my children to see the dental nurse and at the end of the appointment, I embarrassed everybody, including the very young child, by offering to pay. Because where I had been raised, our parents paid... for all our dental treatment... And I went there and I had this little toddler and I expected to pay. I know that it caused great embarrassment and I know that the child was embarrassed, “Why did you do that, mum?” (Gwyneth)

But Gwyneth and many other immigrants also told vividly happy stories about experiencing what New Zealand had to offer to children right alongside with them:

Nobody enjoyed the beach as much as I did when I had children to take to the beach, because I had not had a beach as part of my childhood. So just being by the sea and sand castles and the luxury and the pleasure of it... So that was like an opening of how to be a Kiwi, how to be a New Zealander, to travel it with them. (Gwyneth)

Nowadays, it seems that the memories that have been created by raising children on New Zealand soil, combined with the fact that many of those children still live here, nearby, play a huge role in any feeling that New Zealand is home. The transformation of a space, in this case New Zealand, into a meaningful place occurs over time through socialization and personal engagement (Chaudhury & Rowles 2005). This often occurred with and through children and grandchildren. When I asked Rene “what or where is home to you?” he looked at me and said, “Now, I knew you were going to ask me that.” He asked me to follow him into a separate, small room. He built this house. He and his wife and five children had lived in a variety of difficult circumstances while he worked all day and built the house all night and every weekend. It is in a lovely neighbourhood now, though when they started to build the house the roads in this area had not even been paved. There’s a good view of the small city and green hills beyond. The furnishings are simple, nearly sparse in a way I have come to recognize as traditionally Dutch: clean, simple and comfortable. The walls are painted a pure white: Dutch White.

Inside the little room, he said, “this is our photo album,” and points to the wall at the back. There are at least a couple dozen photographs hanging on the wall and Rene spends several minutes telling me about each of his five children and then of his numerous grandchildren, pointing out the window in the direction of where some of them now live. When I contrast this with the story of how he, his parents and siblings lost their home, were put on trains, taken to the countryside and separated during World War II, virtually never reuniting, I understand the power and emotion of his words: “It’s the people who make it home... it’s the family.”

The interplay between two homes

In the course of doing these interviews, I realized that many participants described one home, and what made it so, in relation to their other home. Particularly when I asked

about New Zealand as home, numerous responses started with a story about their homeland, either as it was when they left, or as experienced on return visits. Either way, it became evident that it was through these evolving comparisons with the homeland that New Zealand was continually defined and re-defined as home.

Fascinating then, is the impact of return visits to their homeland on their negotiations of home. This is made even more interesting because these visits to the homeland came later in their migration experience, typically anywhere from ten to thirty-eight years after their emigration. The opportunity to make one or several visits back came years later when new travel technology made it faster and more affordable. Transnationalism and globalization have brought the opportunity for physical travel between two places and frequent, fast communication that have revolutionized the world and directly impacted the experiences of individual migrants.

Coined by academics, 'transnationalism' is probably not a term that springs to the minds of the participants of this study. However, their stories of aging far from their birthplace plainly relate to the development of this phenomenon. Glick-Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton write that transnationalism emphasizes the processes in which migrants establish and maintain social fields across geographic, cultural and political borders, linking together the migrant's country of origin and country of settlement. Transnationalism is riding the wave of the spread of modern capitalist economy, vast technological developments, accessible, quick transport and other components of globalization (Glick-Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton 1992). But even as transnational activities criss-cross borders, they still point to the significance of those nation states and transnational migrants form identities that both "draw upon and contest national identities" (Yeoh, Lai, Charney & Tong, 2003: 3).

The revolution of globalization and transnationalism has brought about a "conceptual shift" in anthropology as "there are no traditionally fixed, spatially and temporally bounded cultural worlds from which to depart and to which to return (Rapport & Dawson 1998: 23). Home is being increasingly recognized as complex and ambiguous rather than a bounded entity. Writing about a transnational, contemporary concept of home, Fouron says it is "made possible by the revolutionary transformations in mass transport and communication, pushed forward by the forces of economic globalization, spurred by massive migratory processes" (Fouron 2003: 239). Home is taking on new meaning in a "world of expanding horizons and dissolving boundaries" (Morley & Robbins 1996: 457). No longer demarcated or fixed, home is permeable and cognitive rather than physical and localized.

A brief illustration of my life as a contemporary, transnational migrant will help clarify the extraordinary impact of globalization and transnationalism on my experience of migration within the world as it is today in contrast to the experience of the immigrants in this study over the last forty to sixty years. On the 4th of November, 2008, America elected Barack Obama as the first African-American president in the nation's history. All day I sat in my modest New Zealand house, renovated and redecorated to make it not "my husband's house" but "our house" since I had come so far to join him here. I had New Zealand's coverage of this event on the TV in the background, but I longed to hear the story as told by familiar American commentators. And so I watched history unfolding in America via American coverage through the internet, on my computer screen. With a very politically active mother, I grew up with these voices recounting each day's events while she prepared dinner.

My family and I have become avid users of Skype – free, internet based video phone conferencing. On Election Day, my mom skyped me as the polls were just starting to close in America. We could see and hear each other on our computers in real time, instantly. Then, my oldest, dear friend Carrie skyped me from Paris. We grew up together through our adolescent years in a suburban neighbourhood in Missouri. Now we are both expats. She skyped me from a party in Paris, as she watched the results of the election come in during the middle of the night, Paris time. Here we were, two old friends, one in France and one in New Zealand, watching the American election together. Using Skype's conference feature, we included my mom, in Arizona, in on the call. Later, my sister and I watched the final results roll in "together" – with her internet camera, I was able to actually view her TV in Arizona to watch what she watched, as we chatted away.

My street in Dunedin, New Zealand was popular with post-World War II immigrants from the Netherlands. There are about eight of them still living around our little cul-de-sac. They are now in their 70's and 80's and my husband and I are on a first name basis with a few of them. Looking out the window while having this extraordinary virtual experience of the American election with friends and family in two different countries, I watched them come and go from their houses, driving off somewhere or just walking to the street to get the mail. I am an immigrant, as they are. We have this experience in common and can have easy and interesting conversations. But we have made this huge life-change in two completely different worlds. My experience as a modern, transnational migrant would have been

completely unimaginable to them when they left home. They have, however, been touched and altered by globalization too.

In fact, the generation of immigrants researched in this study provides a ‘before and after’ photograph of transnationalism and globalization, an illustration of the ramifications on the personal life of migrants. After emigrating, most participants did not return to their country of origin for ten, twenty, even thirty years. All but three of the twenty-one participating immigrants travelled to New Zealand by boat. The journey from Europe, for example, took about five weeks. Phone calls were rare, brief and extraordinarily emotional. As one immigrant told me, “We spent most of the three minutes for the phone call crying at the sound of each other’s voice.” International foods and newspapers were cravings left unsatisfied. Telegrams were sent to announce births, deaths and sometimes marriages, but otherwise, written letters were the norm. Stories of life, handwritten and sealed in an envelope, took two weeks to travel the distance from one country to the other, and two more weeks for the reply to reach the sender’s mailbox.

In those days, a letter used to take about 2 weeks, sometimes 10 days... You’d write a letter now, take ten days to get there, if [they] write back straight away, takes another 10 days, that’s 20. Ok, waiting for a letter for 20 days, that’s the minimum. Sometimes it was about 6 weeks and oh you’re so nervous to open this letter because you don’t know what happened in all these weeks, “I wonder what happened.”... Open the letter, “Oh, they’re ok. Oh thank God, they’re all right. No, I don’t know!... That was two weeks ago when they wrote this letter so I wonder how they are now?”
(Elena)

The world changed drastically not long after they left their homeland and transnationalism and globalization took the stage. After not going to visit her home of Ireland for twenty-four years after coming to New Zealand, Alice has been back about six times in the last twenty-six years. Her letters have largely been replaced by clear and inexpensive phone calls to numerous relatives. Some immigrants use email themselves, many are assisted by their children to correspond with overseas relatives and send precious photographs back and forth instantly through cyberspace. Elena uses Skype to talk with and see her relatives in Spain. Many watch TV shows from home via satellite TV.³ These immigrants’ migration experiences span not only a move from one country to another, but

³ It is important to note that this lived experience of transnationalism is not true for all migrants, particularly those without the finances or resources to partake in the crossing of borders literally or virtually.

also span the change from a world of great distances and irreversible journeys to a world of fast, cheap travel and constant communication.

All but one of my participants have been back to his or her homeland, most have been back several times. Physical experiences of the homeland through return visits have had a huge impact on their negotiations of home. In some ways, it helps to sustain the homeland as ‘home,’ and experience those feelings of being ‘at home’ in a way that can only be felt there, in that place, that atmosphere. Consider this description of how Beatrice feels when she visits her homeland:

I have a deep sense of belonging in Scotland, a deep sense of HUGE familiarity when I go back. It’s the atmosphere, it’s in the air, it’s in the accents. It’s in the buildings, fields, space that is used, the time that is taken. It’s just enormously familiar. And it’s like going into a warm bath in some ways. (Beatrice)

From a phenomenological perspective, home is like a “visceral sense of being in place”; it is more experienced than observable (Rowles & Chaudhury 2002: 380). It is a physical, bodily sensation of home. Alice’s story about being recognized on a visit back to Ireland is a good example of a physical experience of home while there, in spirit *and* body:

It was twenty-four years before I got my first trip [back to Ireland]. And I had to save hard to get that... It was quite funny, it was with my sister Kathleen at what’s called a home bakery, ya know, a wee specialty shop. And we were in there waiting to get served and this girl that I knew from way back before, she comes in and she says, “Oh hello.” She says, “I haven’t seen you for a while.” And my sister says, “No wonder, she’s been in New Zealand for twenty-four years.”...So that gave me a sort of good feeling that they still recognize me.

In some cases, return visits home kept the immigrants up to date on the changes: the new supermarket and high school, the new generation of nephews and nieces. Being up to date, not only through word of mouth but by being there, helps many immigrants feel it is still a place that they know and understand, they are still a part of its development and in this way it can still be home in a routine sense. But perhaps more often, the changes witnessed and physically experienced really hit these immigrants hard.

Since it is difficult for the mind to grasp a time period in the abstract, we tend to connect a time in our life with a place. Returning to that place can be a “highly charged experience, more so if we find that place has changed” (Marcus 1992: 89). The first visit back was usually described as being particularly eye-opening and influential in their

negotiation of what and where home is: after ten, twenty or thirty years away the changes are often phenomenal. So much is now unfamiliar, your parents are gone, your old family home is inhabited by strangers, and you are a visitor sleeping in the spare room of a nephew you had never met until now. There are even some new social norms and changed gender roles. This isn't home anymore.

When we were home, I went to see where I had lived... it was like four streets were joined together... it was all apartments and there [had been] all these children playing in the back yard. So I went and had a look, opened the gate and I nearly died. I thought, "how can this be possible?" There was a great big place where there was lawn, where the clothes would be hung outside, there was a beautiful garden and so on. That wasn't there anymore, it was all garages. On either side of the garages was steps and up the top they could hang their clothes if they wanted to. And I thought, "gee where are the kids playing?" So I came back here, there was a Dane we had a lot to do with, he was from Copenhagen, and I said, "Where does the kids play?... There must have been 300, 400 kids in the backyard!" He said, "there's no kids... they are in crèche, kindergarten, school. Mom and dad work, there's nobody." And that's of course what it is. So things is changed over there too. (Inger)

Time has been passing, the seconds, minutes, hours, days and years. Time has been passing in that country, but the immigrant is passing her seconds, minutes, hours, days and years somewhere else. When she goes back to visit, it is as if there has been a gap in time and the inconsistency is unsettling. She left 1958 Denmark, and then returned to 1986 Denmark.

But experiencing, first hand, all the changes back home, some of which leave an immigrant feeling disappointed or unsettled, has an interesting consequence. Many immigrants told me that New Zealand began to feel significantly more like home after the first return visit to their homeland. I asked Sam when New Zealand begin to feel like home and he answered, "I think the first visit back to the UK in my job, I decided, 'No this isn't home anymore' ... It's not like you remember it was like." It's almost as if experiencing the changes 'back home,' and for some, feeling quite unsettled by these changes, gives the immigrant permission to call New Zealand home too.

I left my twin sisters when they were eight. When I came back they were married and had children. That was incredible... They laughing when I came off the plane, "Oh, you got long hair!"... But they were laughing because they thought I was different... And my mother, she shifted to an old people's home... so my home was gone. I couldn't go back home. It was all very strange. I stayed with my sister, she had small children... It did not feel like home at all anymore. And I was glad to get back, I was glad to get back to New Zealand. Was really strange. I had all those kids, I didn't want to stay that long, I said, "No, I want to go home and look after the kids." I felt quite happy to come back. I thought, "Isn't it crazy, when you are here you want to

go home and when you are in Holland you want to go back!” But that was a good thing, probably, because I settled down quite well after that, really. Because I thought, I didn’t have a home anymore and the world’s carried on and my sisters, goodness gracious they were married. So I was glad to get back here. I had my husband here and my kids. (Ann)

If home is noticed most when it is left, then the opportunity to leave New Zealand and visit their homelands acted as a manifestation of how New Zealand, too, has become home. Being away from New Zealand clearly demonstrated the ways in which New Zealand had become home.

Daily New Zealand, *Heimat* Homeland

Again and again in the interviews, I heard the sentence, “I couldn’t live there anymore.” This sentence often followed stories like the one above, but, more surprisingly, sometimes it followed lovely stories about positive, heart-felt return-visits home.

The first time I went back, it was after thirty-eight years... I’ve got one brother and four sisters, and it was just so amazing to go back... I was sort of like afraid to find out the changes in so many years... My brother was single when I left and when I went back he was grandfather four times. You see? So my nephews and nieces, they were not even born, they were already parents when I went to visit them. But it was just like I never left, people were the same. The funny thing is that people recognize me. I don’t really look like I’m 28 years old, that’s what I was when I left. And yes, people recognized me in the street. Probably because if I was with one of my sisters they realized who I was. But in one case, we were just walking along the street... and there was a couple walking down and it was one of my neighbour’s son, Jesus... I said, “He won’t know me.” So I walk behind him and I called him... He looked, he said, “Elena!” He was only a little boy when I left! ... And he recognized me and I thought, “That’s wonderful!” (Elena)

Elena went on to describe the gorgeous old architecture, the Spanish music, the Spanish language spoken everywhere around her, the novelty of the bookstores having books all in Spanish! Sitting in New Zealand with me, she sniffed the Spanish air filled with the scents of familiar, delicious foods. She showed me a photograph of a fresh sausage store. She told me, “I love Spain. I love my country, I love everything about it.”

And yet, even Elena said, like many of the immigrants I spoke with, “I don’t think I could go back and live there again.” What a profound experience to realize the inability to live in the ‘home’ that has been remembered and cherished through all the years away! But

immigrants have many reasons for feeling like they cannot live there anymore. For Elena, her children and grandchildren are pivotal to her life in New Zealand. And she realized that she has come to appreciate the personal space and privacy allowed in the New Zealand lifestyle, as well as having a private home with a yard and garden (in Spain she thinks she would have only an apartment and no land.)

Rene's story is a particularly good example of feeling like he cannot live in his homeland anymore because, after forty years in New Zealand, he still thought he might like to go back to live there and he decided to give it a try.

I said to the wife, "I've still got a few years health," I said, "What about if we go and spend the winter there to find out"... We had one house [rented in Holland] so we had to go and get our groceries, we paid the electricity bill; we did everything like we were living there... I wanted to find out, "Do I want to go back like this?"... Everyday the lights never went out because it was so grey... it was depressing... And we've changed. They've changed. Their attitude, their lifestyle. We are much more liberal... our thinking is out of the square... They just carried on still in that little path, well, because that is how they made their living. So I think I came back and decided now that this is not for me. It settled me down. (Rene)

Some participants of this study said they could not go back and live in their homeland anymore for practical reasons. Gwyneth has never been back to visit her homeland and never can. Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, has undergone huge political and cultural changes and does not exist as a country now as it was when her family lived there. Even if she were to go back, she would have no way of finding the people she once knew there. Beatrice mentioned that the weakness of the New Zealand dollar means that they could not return to Scotland and live at the same comfortable standard that they have here. Several mentioned that they would not want to leave their children and grandchildren.

But in addition to these reasons, for many immigrants there are more intangible reasons: Something has changed. Is it them? Is it the country? Is it the shock of everyone suddenly looking eighteen or twenty-five years older? Is it the absence, so strongly felt, of those who have died in the intervening years? Is it the conscious effort now required to speak the original language? Or is it being asked, by a local, where he or she, the returned immigrant, is from? The old house has been torn down, the diesel fumes and traffic are unpleasant, the land is so flat and oh how I miss the green hills of New Zealand! When New Zealand has taken on the role of daily life, routine, even family, what role of home, then, does the country of origin have?

Here it is interesting to consider the concept of *Heimat*. *Heimat*, the term, has undergone an evolution of meanings and has been closely associated with the Sudeten Germans expelled from Sudeten, forced to return to Germany, after World War II. *Heimat* has at times been strongly associated with Nazi Germany, and while this historical context is important, the term has been de-nazified in popular use today (Svasek 2002: 496). *Heimat* is, in part, an idealization of the old homeland with inherent glorification and focus placed on positive associations and memories. The very nature of *Heimat* is a place where one feels ‘at home;’ all distress and disruption is based outside (Svasek 2002: 498). *Heimat*, then, is nearly a utopia and as such is unachievable. In Marshall Berman’s words: “a look toward home is a look back... our past, whatever it was, was a past in the process of disintegration; we yearn to grasp it, but it is baseless and elusive...” (cited in Morley & Robbins 2004: 333).

The distant home sometimes yearned for by immigrants, and often remembered, is somewhat unrelated to the reality of the place, particularly as it is now at this point in time. Huberta knows this to be true:

I taped something on the BBC in the night. This was about Van Gogh and they showed the Van Gogh museum in Amsterdam. I thought, “We were there!” And (*gasps*) “Wouldn’t it be lovely just to go a bit more often!” But then, I’m too level headed. I realize we’d be in Holland, we probably wouldn’t be that close to that... It would be quite an effort to go and see. Because there it is such a busy-, the roads are full, the trains are full. In Holland, I know a lot of things would be conditional. So to realize that takes away the longing. (Huberta)

The original home carried by immigrants is not a literal place, but a piece of identity grounded in, and associated with, intangibles they have described as “enormously familiar,” “a warm bath,” “recognition,” “a sense of history,” “a connection,” or “the songs I know how to sing.” The homeland these immigrants remember is not immune to the ticking of the clock; it has changed. Time is central to cultural attachments (Riley 1992: 21). We are attached to a place as it was, and as we were, at a particular time. Witnessing the changes first-hand, through visits made after lengthy-absences, has often been a profound experience. However, though that place has changed and we have changed, the importance of that ‘home’ is not remotely negated or diminished. “There is an indivisible link between place and person... We are defined in part by the environments through which we have passed” (Rubinstein 2005: 115). Even when we move on, the relationship with an important place is always with us (Norberg-Schulz in Rubinstein 2005: 127).

“Is it possible that the greater power of place lies not in inhabiting it but in remembering it?” (Riley 1992: 20). In the case of an immigrant’s homeland, yes. While most of them would not consider living there anymore, the significance of the place as home, as remembered, is essential. It’s the experience of the setting where significant life events unfolded, where key interactions took place and where these events and interactions triggered emotions and the development of identity. Feeling a bond with a place is not an event, it is a process that continues throughout life.

Old bonds continue as new ones are formed (Rubinstein & Parmalee 1992: 143). Over time, immigrants in this study seem to have maintained an attachment to their homeland and also developed an attachment to New Zealand as the setting of their lives and memories for over forty years. Attachment to places, both current and remembered, is needed to maintain a coherent sense of self (Rubinstein & Parmalee: 139). Both homes are negotiated and needed to form an immigrant’s complete conceptualization of home.

In conclusion, in many ways an immigrant’s homeland will always be home. Memories of that time and place are valuable and important not because of the place itself but because of the formative experiences lived out in that setting and their impact on identity and perception. After many years or several decades with no return visits, immigrants in this study illustrate the massive effects of transnationalism and globalization. With these developments, immigrants who left home before easy travel or fast communication have been able to return to their homeland, often several times. Through physical visits to the homeland, the immigrant experienced the passage of time in the place-remembered, witnessing first-hand a changed homeland and at the same time, realizing a changed self. This had a profound effect on the role of the homeland-as-home. Because the homeland and the adopted home evolve in relation to each other, the experience of New Zealand-as-home was altered by the experience as well. Time has shown the homeland to become an essential *Heimat* and New Zealand to become the home of the everyday, including routine, family and of course, the creation of at least forty years worth of memories on its soil.

At this point in their lives, with daily life firmly grounded in New Zealand, how do they continue to integrate their homeland into their experience of New Zealand? This question is particularly interesting when considering that there may not be many, if any, further trips back to their homelands. How do they experience New Zealand as home now, in later life? Are there any unique concerns about older age in their chosen host country?

We have seen that the immigrants in this study have created continuity in their identities and experiences of home throughout their time in New Zealand. How do they continue to do that now, in later life? I propose that they continue to combine two countries and two times into their New Zealand daily life in small ways. For this discussion, we turn to the next chapter on living later-life as an immigrant in a host country.

Chapter Four

Later Life and Continuity in a Host Country

The need for more research of ageing immigrants is a common theme in the limited literature that does exist about immigration and old age. Specifically, there is a calling for more multi-disciplinary understandings of and approaches to older immigrants. Warnes, *et al.* suggests that there are at least two distinct types of older immigrants each with their own characteristics and research categories. These are: older migrants who have “aged in place” and those who have migrated in later life (Warnes, *et al.* 2004). Those who have “aged in place” typically migrated as young adults, such as post-WWII labour migrants, and have subsequently grown older in their host country over many years or decades. Those who have migrated in later life include migrants who moved to join children who immigrated earlier or those participating in the new phenomenon of International Retirement Migration (IRM).

Of the research on immigrants who have aged in place, several studies consider the experience of a specific immigrant group that has now reached old age in their specific host country, such as Japanese women or Italians in England, Estonians in America, Iranians in Sweden, Irish in London and Germans in New Zealand (see Izuhara & Shibata (2001), Ganga (2006), Tammeveski (2003), Torres (2001), Leavey (2006) and Bönisch-Brednich (2002) respectively). These studies addressed topics relevant to this thesis such as the myth of return, the role of family in turning a host country into home and changing definitions of successful aging depending on context. These studies also addressed problems faced by older immigrants from a social services perspective such as social isolation or the loss of a second language in old-old age. Some research on IRM is also relevant. Although migrants in this category do not immigrate until after retirement, some live for twenty years or more in their host country. Studies of IRM have added components of transnationalism to considerations of older immigrants such as transnational identity formation and mental constructions of home (Bozic 2006: 1415). International Retirement Migrants themselves also offer a look into new, modern and positive approaches to aging (Warnes, *et al.* 2004: 310). More prevalent, but less relevant to my research, is research on those who migrate in old age. This research primarily focuses on the challenges and problems faced by these immigrants and their families. Within this genre, Becker’s research on older Cambodian and Filipino

immigrants in America contributed to my own observations regarding the creation of continuity (Becker 2002). Becker has written extensively on the creation of continuity among migrants and others who experience any kind of disruption (Becker 2003, 2002 & 1997).

What else, what different lessons can we learn from looking at immigrants' long-term stories over several decades, and their experience of being an older adult in the country they set off for so many years ago? In this chapter, I aim to help fill this gap with a discussion on the experience of being an immigrant over many decades up to and into old age. I include some specific challenges that many older immigrants face. I also consider how they subtly, but actively, create continuity in their lives across two countries and over many years. Atchley's Continuity Theory of Normal Aging suggests that adults employ concepts of their past as a structure to conceive of their future. There is some consistency of values, behaviour and decision-making that links together an individual's past, present and future (Atchley 2000: 50). Similarly, anthropologist Sharon Kaufman writes that aging is a "continual creation of the self through the on-going interpretation of past experience, structural factors, values and current context" (Kaufman 1998: 150). My participants illustrate that meaning is created through a life-time of experiences, including their homeland, migration and host-country, reflection on those experiences, and incorporating them into an on-going self. In contrast to the idea that older immigrants increase their ties to their past roots, or that they seek out more social opportunities associated with their original culture, I argue that they have always maintained ties to the past and to their homelands in small, consistent ways and they continue to do so.

Concerns about aging: similar to New Zealanders

Looking at Age Concern New Zealand's user-friendly and informative website today, there are six main categories listed: Health, Money, Happiness, Safety, My Home, and Out and About. These closely reflect the first five chapters of the 2001 Status Report, "Positive Ageing," by the Ministry of Social Development: Income, Health, Housing, Transport, and Ageing in Place. Both of these agencies' lists are consistent with many concerns described by the participants in this study. Concerns regarding money and finances were mentioned frequently by my participants. The homepage for Age Concern New Zealand reflects this concern with a running poll in the top right-hand corner, highlighted in orange, questioning

the adequacy of New Zealand's Superannuation scheme. It asks: "Should NZ Super be increased to the level of the minimum wage?" After listing less-than-favourable facts and statistics about the income of older New Zealanders, Age Concern's website posts this Comment: "Age Concern calls for Super to be increased to the maximum allowed by existing legislation. This would raise it to 72.5% of the average wage - around an additional \$30 per week after tax."

While I did not ask for any details about participant's financial situation, such as whether or not they had additional financial resources beyond the allotted superannuation (all would be eligible for the Superannuation scheme), participants did tell me about financial concerns. Eric and his New Zealand wife had just moved into subsidized housing. In order to do this, they had to give their dog away. Their cats became disoriented and both disappeared after the move. Though they don't directly speak of it as such, it was obvious that this move has meant experiencing some loss. Though they say they are comfortable and want for nothing, and their new home is lovely, there is still an obvious financial challenge for them.

We didn't save enough money. How can you say how much you are going to need when you retire? You don't know. See, I started on six pence an hour, was working a forty hour week for one pound six pence [in New Zealand.]... That was in 1962, which isn't that long, only forty years. How can you save? (Eric)

Eric says that financial restrictions are a major factor in not making any further visits to his homeland of England. Huberta also lists 'poverty' among her concerns about ageing, jokingly expressing this frustration in wanting to get her chairs recovered but not being able to afford it: "I'm so sick of it, but I can't do anything." Financial restrictions mean that Huberta, too, does not see a possibility of any further visits back to Holland, though she "longs" to go again.

Another topic discussed by several of my participants was the quality of care for older people. A few interviewees expressed a general concern that the level of care in New Zealand is not as good as it should be. Sam feels great concern for older people who rely on the public health care in New Zealand, particularly when it comes to waiting lists: "The older people [are] waiting to go into hospital. And they wait and wait and then they die. That's the problem with growing old here. There's no services for the people to look after them." Inger also briefly mentioned that she and Erik have private health insurance if the wait times with the public system are too long.

Inger also expressed some frustration in dealing with a particular health problem of her own through the New Zealand system, but then said that she didn't know that it would be any better in Denmark, according to what she had heard from others. This sort of quick comparison to what it might be like in one's homeland was common and seemed to help the participants judge the situation here in New Zealand: as no worse than the country they come from or in other countries that they know of. As Beatrice said, she does have concerns about growing older in New Zealand, "but it's not much different from growing older anywhere else in the industrialized world." Some participants, like Rene, compared the apparent pros and cons of aging in his homeland or in New Zealand and saw New Zealand as having some beneficial 'trade-offs:'

Generally speaking, if it comes to a point of illnesses or services that they require, then New Zealand is in a bad state. Definitely is... I try to compare with my two friends [in Holland] who have gotten to an age where they need medical attention... They do get, yes, they do get good services. But, generally speaking, when you take in other parts of life, I don't want to live like that. I think the space in New Zealand, the freedom... I can't see any point in leaving. (Rene)

Beatrice compared and contrasted the systems in place for older people in New Zealand to those she experienced, through her mother, in Scotland. In New Zealand, she is concerned about the rising percentage of older people in relation to the number of care workers. There is a shortage of home-helpers, nurses and other professions as related to the care of older people and this shortage could get much worse. The percentage of older people in the New Zealand population is increasing: people aged 65 and over made up 12% of the population in 2001 and this will rise to 18% in 2021. By about 2050, older people will make up 26% of all New Zealand residents (Ministry of Social Development 2001: 7). The rate of growth of the older population is increasing dramatically "as the oldest members of the post-war baby boom generation begin turning sixty-five" (Ministry of Social Development: 2001: 7). Statistics New Zealand predicts the older population will number 566,000 in 2011, will reach one million in 2030, and level off at 1.2 million around 2050 (Ministry of Social Development, 2001: 7). Gwyneth is aware of her position within this segment of the population: "I'm knocking on my 60th birthday... The reality of that is that I'm really in that huge tail end, big thumping thing, that is the baby boomers of the war years."

Other concerns discussed by the immigrants in this study also seem to reflect those among New Zealanders at-large. Eric and Inger worry about the day they can no longer drive and how they will cope with minimal transportation options. Inger notes that this concern is

relative to the ease and prevalence of public transport in Denmark. Sam notes that cold houses are a problem for older people, and though the government offers an interest free loan for installing insulation, those relying only on the pension still cannot afford to do that. Gwyneth worries about some social isolation as younger generations become more technological and less present in the moment, less able to engage in meaningful, personal interactions.

Concerns about aging: Unique to immigrants

There are, however, a few concerns or aspects about ageing that are unique to being an immigrant in an adopted country, even when one has been a resident for forty or more years. Like Bönisch-Brednich's in depth study of German immigrants in New Zealand and Roggeveen's report on older Dutch immigrants in the Auckland area, this thesis includes consideration of how contemporary older, *European* immigrants feel about older age in New Zealand. Age Concern's 1990 report entitled "The Life-Style and Well-Being of New Zealanders Over Sixty" divides participants in their study into two main 'ethnic' groups: European/Pākehā (93%) and Other (7%). A footnote tells us that "Other" includes Māori, Pacific Islanders and a variety of other ethnic groups (Age Concern 1990: 20). Similarly, the Ministry of Social Development's "Positive Ageing" 2001 report discusses ethnic diversity in the older population in terms of Māori, Pacific Islanders and Asians. This is in spite of acknowledging that in 1996, over 15% of people aged 65 and over said they were born in the United Kingdom or Ireland. (Ministry of Social Development 2001: 3).

As attention is paid mainly to "ethnic groups" and white European or British immigrants are lumped into the "New Zealand European" ethnic group, little attention is paid to how these immigrants' ageing experience might be different from that of native-born New Zealanders, Māori, or other immigrant groups. Emphasis on Māori, Pacific people and Asians is understandable seeing as the percent of older Māori people is expected to rise from 4% to 6% in the twenty years between 1996 and 2016, and Pacific people will double to 2.6%. The number of Asian people aged 65 and over is likely to increase to 4.2% by 2016. However, the lack of differentiation between native-born Pākehā New Zealanders and white, European immigrants lends further evidence to my earlier argument that these white immigrants, who do not fall into a separate ethnic category, were expected to assimilate into

Pākehā New Zealand. It pays no attention to the fact that there are several unique aspects to their ageing experience in New Zealand. I will address some of these now.

Research and literature suggest the one major challenge faced by some older immigrants is that of language. With the onset of very-old age, a second language learned in adulthood can begin to fade. Some immigrants revert entirely to their native language even if they were fluent in their adopted language for decades. Izuhara and Shibata (2001) found that some Japanese women, who had been in England for decades, lost their ability to speak English after a stroke or with the onset of dementia. Having raised their children to speak only English, some were unable to communicate even with their own children. Roggeveen (1996) found the same situation with some Dutch immigrants in New Zealand.

Only one of my participants expressed this directly as a big worry. Huberta said that she was “terrified” of this happening to her. Simon’s wife, a New Zealander, hinted that she is nervous that this will happen to Simon in his old age. Several participants expressed that they are aware that this does happen to some older immigrants, but they either choose not to worry about it or have reasons why they think it will not happen to them. Elena said, “No, it doesn’t worry me at all because I’m using both languages all the time, and also because I read in both languages. I like to do that, I like to practice both.” Obviously, so far none of my participants have lost their proficiency in English. However, it certainly could be an added dimension of ageing for them when they enter old-old age. Whether this will occur for them remains to be seen but awareness of the issue is important.

Another possible challenge unique to ageing in an adopted country is that of having few people, if any, to reminisce with about childhood or one’s original home. Akhtar & Choi suggest that in old age there is a tendency to become more nostalgic and that reminiscing comes not only in the form of remembering happy, youthful times, “but also of the physical locale of that era” (Akhtar & Choi 2004: 187). Izuhara and Shibata suggest that it can be socially isolating for an immigrant to enter a rest home in an adopted country where “it would be painful and undesirable to listen to repeated talks by fellow older people to which they would be unlikely to relate” (Izuhara & Shibata 2001: 12). Huberta has realized that “you don’t have the shared memories of the past. And that is something that is scary.” Having friends from a similar background (culture *and* era) can be quite an asset in older age.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, however, many of the immigrants in this study have had little contact with others from the same country. They do not live in ethnic enclaves. Arriving in relative isolation and spread throughout New Zealand geographically and

socially, two participants had no contact with others from home, and a few more had only their spouse. But most immigrants in this study, while it was minimal, did, and do, have some contact with other immigrants from home. This is often in the form of clubs such as the Scandinavian or Hungarian Clubs. The frequency of meetings seems to be about every second month. While far different from living in an ethnic enclave, or even from having daily or weekly contact with other immigrants from the homeland, this moderate, occasional contact was and is important. On-going contact with 'peers' (in this case immigrants of a similar age and background) reinforces a sense of self and identity and offers reassurance that the culture one is separated from continues and is embodied in the self (Becker 2002: S92).

However, these 'peers' have a bitter-sweet role in an immigrant's life in old age. Many participants mentioned the dwindling numbers of fellow immigrants from the same country and of a similar age. Simon's wife mentioned that they have seen too many of Simon's fellow Hungarian male immigrants die lately. Eric and Inger have belonged to the local Scandinavian club for decades. I met them when I was invited to come along to one of the club meetings. In an old church hall, about twenty-five people gathered and shared various Scandinavian dishes. By far, most were retired people, though there were a handful of younger adults. A guest presenter, a young New Zealand woman, spoke to the group about her experience working in Finland for a few years. She had brought a Finnish boyfriend back to New Zealand and he sat in the corner speaking with an older Finnish woman whom I later interviewed for this research. Eric and Inger told me afterwards that the man I sat next to during the speech was one of the founders of the Scandinavian club back when he was working as a young radiologist. Now he is ninety-six and came to the meeting with a cane, oxygen and a smile. Eric and Inger worry that the number of people in the club is dwindling, particularly those who are themselves immigrants.

If an immigrant does have such friends or relatives in the adopted country, the loss of that friend can be particularly intense: "The pain of losing one's fellow immigrant friends, in whose hearts were preserved many shared memories of the 'good old days,' is soul-wrenching" (Akhtar & Choi 2004: 188). Where I was most struck by the unique and intense nature of an immigrant's grief upon the loss of a fellow immigrant peer was the loss of an immigrant-spouse. Both Elena and Ann spoke about the impact of their husbands' deaths on their migration experience during this phase of later life. Ann spoke of her feeling of isolation after what was a true team-effort to make a life in New Zealand:

So being by yourself, it's not everything you know... Because once your husband dies, you're on your own and that's not funny because when you are in Holland and your husband dies, you always have your sisters or your brother or so. I miss that... The last time I went [to Holland]... I thought, "I can live here now." Because I had no kids with me, they were all married or gone. And my husband died. I thought, "I wouldn't mind living here now." (Ann)

For many reasons, Ann has not moved back to Holland and does not plan to do so, but her husband's death has obviously made her consider why she is still in New Zealand: the person who shared her memories of Holland and the years of making a life in New Zealand is now gone. In other parts of the interview, Ann mentions feeling a bit separated from the others in her retirement village who, because they are all New Zealanders, do not share in these memories and cannot understand her transnational life-story.

I asked Elena if she felt an absence of other people to reminisce with about Spain and her youth. For years and years, hers was the only Spanish family in the area but she has felt the absence of someone to reminisce with only in the aftermath of her husband's death. He was from the same town and they had known each other as teenagers.

So I came here and I always have him. And we have the same memories and we have the same people. But when he passed away, that's what I missed a lot. I couldn't really say, "Remember this?" "Remember we went here or there?" "Remember this person?" "Who did this person marry to?" That was cut off completely because my daughters didn't know anybody there. And that, yes, I do miss that. (Elena)

Both Elena and Ann's husbands may have symbolized place, tradition and continuity. With the absence of family, or in this case their husbands, Becker says people might shift their gaze back to the homeland (Becker 2002: S92). Elena said that cheap and easy communication technology has helped her cope with this, as now she can just pick up the phone and talk to her siblings in Spain.

Elena also mentioned enjoying the recently increasing numbers of younger immigrants from similar cultures. While they may not share her memories they can understand her way of thinking. This made me wonder if meeting younger immigrants from the same country or culture is valuable for older immigrants, particularly when their own generation of fellow immigrants is becoming smaller and smaller. Simon told me that he recently enjoyed meeting a young Hungarian man who came to spend one year in New Zealand. Simon's neighbours, by complete coincidence, are also Hungarian, having arrived in New Zealand a few years ago. Simon seems to enjoy knowing this new, younger

generation of Hungarian immigrants in addition to the older generation he has known since he arrived in New Zealand over fifty years ago. But they come from very different situations.

Now we have another generation Hungarian, the new generation Hungarian coming. They only been in the country for three, four, five years. You talk to them too. They are different all together than us, because they come here, they knew what is the country, they knew why they coming here... They have a different outlook on life. It's 1957, we come here as refugees. We had no money, no nothing. The new generation got money, got everything... they knew what they want, and they succeed what they doing. And jolly good luck for them, they are very very nice people, but they have a different outlook in life than like I did... I mean, I come here with a wee sport bag... This people come in a different story all together, you know? (Simon)

Becker has pointed out that “immigrants have prospects and resources, whereas refugees tend to have neither of these critical commodities” (Becker 2002: S80). Simon came as a refugee; the new Hungarian arrivals are coming as immigrants. This is substantial difference.

Rene also said some similar things about young Dutch people in his current Scrabble group. He enjoys their presence and the atmosphere of gathering with others interested in Holland or practicing the Dutch language. But when the younger ones speak of Holland and their families, he sees that they are from a completely different country and situation than the war-torn Holland and subsequently separated family that he experienced. The ability to reminisce, then, is tied in with not only the country and culture shared by other immigrants, but the economic and political era as well. In this sense, the presence of immigrant friends or spouses, from the same place *and* time, is most valuable and their loss is most profound.

Another unique issue of aging in an adopted country is the eventual loss of the ability to make return visits home. Thus, a post-World War II immigrant's situation comes somewhat full circle: When they left home, travel was expensive and lengthy, not undertaken easily or frequently, if at all. Globalization and transnationalism, as I have previously mentioned, changed all that for a time, allowing anywhere from one to ten visits back to the homelands of all immigrants in this study except one. Now, however, factors such as declining health or limited finances again limit travel. Declining contacts and changes that have taken place ‘back home’ also begin to discourage visits back as discussed in the previous chapter on home. At the time of the interviews, many immigrants knew they had already made their last visit back to their country of origin and some knew that they would only be making one more to “say goodbye.”

Financial constraints and concerns were the main reason that many immigrants knew they would not be going back again. Several joked that if they were to win Lotto, they would

make another visit to their homeland. In other words, they would like to visit again, but it is not too likely. I asked Erik and Inger if they thought they would visit Denmark again.

E: No. Only if we for some reason won a lot of money. Then we would most probably... But no, I don't think so.

I: We could go home now but there's so many of our relatives that's gone. And we feel it's a lot of money to spend... we feel more secure knowing we have money so if anything goes wrong we can look after ourselves. (Erik and Inger)

With limited funds and few familiar faces and places to visit, Eric told me, with tears in his eyes, that he has made his last visit back to England.

This last trip in 2006, it was my goodbye trip. We don't think we'll be going again unless we win Lotto. I just went for a good look around, actually. The old district, that was all. All the old things we used to see. Just went to say goodbye to the place... I think it was the right thing to do. It was a wee bit hard but it was good. (Eric)

Elena says that she will make one more trip back to Spain for reasons similar to Eric's: To say goodbye. For Elena, her focus is on saying goodbye to her family.

I might go back next year for the last time... because well, we're all getting old and it is very sad. It is very sad to go now and see my eldest sister's going to be eighty. I'm seventy-two. So we are getting old, we're not going to be around for too long... It's just the family union, that is what my best memories are, really, for me. We're still so close. I have to go back and say goodbye to them. It's going to be really hard because I won't be going back again, just once more. (Elena)

I asked Huberta what it was like knowing that she would not be going back to Holland anymore. "It's terrible... I just long sometimes. I have this longing. And longing is part of belonging, isn't it?... I belong here, but I'm still longing."

With no further visits back to their homeland already, or soon becoming, a reality, the question must then be asked, "Do you think about where you would like to die or be buried when the time comes?" "The complicated business of living in two worlds is made still more complex by the need to choose in which to die" (Becker 2002: S91). Becker writes that little is known about how immigrants and refugees contemplate their own deaths in late life and how they view the likelihood of dying away from the homeland. This is particularly important because in old age, meanings attached to life and death are closely associated with a homeland as well as with the here and now (Becker 2002: S79). Becker's study on Filipino Americans contemplating death found that many wanted to return home to die or to be

buried. She points out that these immigrants, however, immigrated to the United States late in life and viewed their stay as temporary. They had few family members in the United States (Becker 2002).

This forms a relevant contrast to the immigrants in my study who came to New Zealand as young adults and at some point came to consider their stay here as long-term. Most have raised their families here and thus have relatives here. With these factors in mind, it makes sense, then, that they largely plan to stay in New Zealand upon death and burial as opposed to Becker's Filipino Americans who wish to return. This is also consistent with Becker's finding that those Filipinos who do not wish to return home to die or be buried are those with more family in the United States. According to Akhtar and Choi, when it comes to burial, many individuals seem to have two main desires about where their remains will be kept: to be close to their children and to their ancestors. This presents an obvious difficulty when there is a case of great distance between one's children and one's ancestors. It is difficult for immigrants to plan for their funeral and burial in a way that maintains ties to both (Akhtar & Choi 2004: 189).

I approached this topic carefully in my interviews, only adding it as a routine question after the first few interviewees brought it up themselves and a discussion took place naturally. None of the participants seemed to be caught off guard by the question at all, rather, it was obvious they had put a good deal of thought into it already and all but one or two had clear plans or preferences for what they would like done upon their deaths and were able to describe their personal justifications for such decisions. All the interviewees had come up with a plan or idea that they feel comfortable with, though this did inherently involve some compromise or sacrifice in most cases.

Most of the immigrants I spoke to in this research want to and plan to be buried or have their ashes scattered in New Zealand. Alice was the only one who felt it was very important to her to be buried in her homeland of Ireland. She has a nephew who comes and goes between New Zealand and Ireland and she has asked him to take her ashes back to Ireland and bury them in a specific place. Alice has a great sense of humour and manages to laugh and portray the significance of this all at once.

So I told him, I says, "I don't want to be buried here." And he says "Well I'll bring your ashes home"... There's definitely no room in the family grave at home, so, I says "don't be dropping me over the side of the boat because I can't swim." Oh dear. He says, "It's good you can laugh about it." I says, "Well, no use crying about it."
(Alice)

Commenting on the irony of her nephew's Irish wife wanting to be buried in New Zealand upon her death, Alice said,

“Well I’ll wave at you on the way past,” I says, “cuz I’m definitely going home.”
[My son] says, “You have to put that in your will, mum.” I says, “it’s in my will.”
So I’ll end up there one way or the other. No, that’s a wee bit morbid isn’t it? (Alice)

For the majority of participants, who do want to die and be buried or cremated in New Zealand, the absence of family graves and a history of ancestors mean that many have come up with creative solutions. Erik and Inger tell me that in Denmark, you can only have a burial plot for so long due to limited space. So since their parents’ graves are no longer there, and they have no family gravesites in New Zealand, they have opted to have their ashes scattered on the family’s favourite lake in New Zealand.

I: I’m against cremation but we will do it. Because we’ve never known that, it was always bury. But I can see it is more practical to be cremated and then we thought for the girls’ sake, family all over the place... that’s one problem solved.

Ann has tried to come up with a similar solution. The ashes of her husband were scattered in the botanic gardens and a bench is there in his name. She imagines the same will be done for her, and she is fine with that, though there is a sense of loss when she talks about it. She said, “We haven’t got family graves or nothing like that here so it doesn’t really matter.” She goes on to say that her six sons have all married New Zealand women, implying that they might all be buried with their wives’ families. There is a sense that Ann feels a bit alone in this situation. Simon wants to be buried in New Zealand, but with a headstone that says “Rest in Peace” in Hungarian. He has already written it down for his New Zealand wife to reference. Considering death, Becker says, provokes a desire to integrate the various aspects of one’s life” and create some continuity for oneself (Becker 2002: S92). With this simple plan, Simon seems pleased with the combination of his two countries upon his death: buried in New Zealand with a Hungarian headstone.

Continuity and creating a continuous self

It’s not just in considering death that people strive to integrate the different parts of their lives. “Continuity,” “cohesion” and “a continuous self” are words splashed through social research on identity, migration, aging and more. Continuity, says Becker, “is

apparently a human need and a universal expectation across cultures... It organizes people's plans for and expectations about life, as well as the ways in which they understand who they are and what they do" (Becker 2002: S81). Atchley writes about how continuity can be applied to aging with the Continuity Theory of Normal Aging (Atchley 2000). He uses a dynamic view of continuity, one that starts out with a basic structure that persists over time but does allow for change within the structure. Continuity, then, does not mean homogeneity or lack of change, but rather coherence and consistency of patterns over time (Atchley 2000: 49). A central premise in Continuity Theory is that in making adaptive choices, middle aged and older adults attempt to preserve existing internal and external structures. Drawn by the weight of their past experience, older adults use continuity as a primary adaptive strategy to deal with change (Atchley 2000: 47). Continuity Theory of Normal Aging proposes that there is a persistence of ideas, temperament, experiences, preferences and skills. Change and evolution in an individual or in his or her life are perceived of against a backdrop of considerable connection to one's past (Atchley 2000: 49). This continuity is tied to the individual's past and related to a sense of self built on the accumulation of experience and self-reflection.

Kaufman found through her ethnographic study of aging and identity that older people draw meaning from the past. They formulate and reformulate symbols of this past to create a meaningful, coherent sense of self. In creating an ongoing and continuous self, a viable present and future are also created in spite of any physical or social limitations associated with aging that they may be experiencing (Kaufman 1986: 14). In this way, successful adaptation to change takes place when individuals can, and do, symbolically connect meaningful past experiences with current circumstances (Kaufman 1986: 162). Atchley similarly proposes that positive outcomes of normal aging occur when people use continuity to adapt to the changes associated with normal aging (Atchley 2000: 48). He argues that internal continuity provides a foundation for day-to-day decision-making with persistent cognitive knowledge. This, in turn, offers some predictability to everyday life. Internal continuity also helps to create self-esteem, combining experiences of successes, failures and expectations. Akhtar writes about Erikson's concept of enduring self-history and its importance in identity formation and maintenance. Akhtar himself sees the capacity to maintain personal continuity amid change over time as an essential characteristic of an individual with a consolidated identity. Individuals who have a sense of "self-history" and

continuity can “retain genuine ties with their past, comfortably locate themselves in their current realities, and can envision the future” (Akhtar 1999: 64).

A few of the participants in my study spoke directly about the importance of continuity as backdrop to coping with change, knowing themselves and making sense of their lives, including the significant process of migration and its many long-lasting ramifications. Gwynneth spoke directly of the importance of integrating all experiences into a sense of continuity:

You have to then make an amalgamation of all and put it all together. And that is healthy, isn't it? It's what every human being needs to do is to integrate all of their experience into a meaningful whole... If you'd come to me 20 years ago and asked me these questions, I couldn't have talked about some of the things I've talked about today because they weren't in my thinking or experience. So I think it's like everything else, it's evolutionary... If you can believe yourself to be forming a whole - for yourself if for nobody else because other people can look on your life and think it's utter chaos - but if you yourself, bobbing along in that, if it makes sense to you and you make sense of it and your experience, then you can traverse anything. (Gwynneth)

Looking back at what they have learned or achieved as immigrants was a repeated theme amongst my interviewees. These lessons or achievements offer meaning to their lives today. For example, participants in this study repeatedly described having developed the personal characteristic of “independence” after years of coping on their own, or with a spouse, far away from all other family and resources associated with their homeland. This independence was sometimes ‘forced upon’ them while having to cope with difficult circumstances with minimal support from loved ones during their first two or three decades in New Zealand. Ann recalls learning to trust her instinct when looking for jobs upon her arrival and not having anyone to discuss her options with or to reassure her. Elena talks about the years when her three girls were adolescents, about fifteen years after she and her husband moved here:

There was nobody to communicate with and any problem seemed huge problem because you didn't have your family to talk, like saying, “Oh my daughter is coming home late and I wonder what she is doing, I'm really worried.” Your brother, your sister, your parents: “Could you just get a grip? She's ok, she's with friends, they are all doing the same things. Remember when you were young and you did this and that?” ...So the problem diminished... Well we couldn't really share anything with anyone because we didn't really know anyone... It was very difficult. (Elena)

However, independence is also described as greatly appreciated privacy and space. Immigrants described the enjoyment and excitement of being able to act on instinct and to make decisions for themselves and their family without any other input or having to explain their choices to their family: “‘Well this is what I’m gonna do. I’m gonna go and do it.’ End of story” (Erik). While missing family support terribly at times, like many things, there is another side to the story: They have also enjoyed not having to be constantly involved in family obligations or problems.

Over the years then, independence has been both an asset and a hardship. In many cases, the isolation that started out as a difficulty slowly became a cherished form of independence and confidence. All who mentioned it describe it as being a characteristic they are proud of and find satisfying and helpful at this point in their lives. Ann was telling me about the adjustments involved in moving to a retirement village. When I suggested that it must be hard not knowing anyone, she said, “But you see I go from Holland to a country where I don’t know anybody. So you come through all of that, you see.” Her experience of migrating from Holland to New Zealand was an experience she looked back on and gained strength from to help her in this current transition. It gave her perspective and reminded her she had done this before! Eric and Inger believe their learned independence has given them the strength and fulfilment that they carry with them now:

E: ... You learn to look after yourself, there’s nobody.

I: If the roof falls off or anything, we can fix it, sort of thing.

E: ... Out here, we do things together and if anything happens, well you’ve got to fix it. You got into trouble and there’s only one person to get you out of it. I think that’s something that has made our life –

I: Strengthened it.

E: Strengthened it and fulfilled it.

There is a sense that what these immigrants have been through with their migration experiences has given them a few personal qualities and even skills that they can utilize upon entering or travelling through older age. There is a definite sense of capability and satisfaction that they convey in having achieved what they have here in New Zealand after starting out with literally nothing but ambition. It lends meaning to their present and their future: it is not aging that matters – the important task becomes bringing your past experiences with you to create meaning. Speaking specifically about dealing with a terribly difficult current family health situation, Gwynneth could look back and call upon her migration experience to lend her some guidance and fit this new challenge into something

more familiar. The youngest participant at 59 years old, Gwynneth viewed her approach to older age, and dealing with this particular family health problem, like another transition in a life full of so many transitions - like travelling, again, to another country:

So what I think about aging is this: I think that again I'm entering into another country, and into another territory. And all that has enabled me to travel the countries and the territories that I have travelled up until now in my life will enable me to travel into this new territory...I feel at sea, I feel as lost as that seventeen year old who arrived in New Zealand at Auckland airport. But I'm not, I'm not that age and I have all these skills and I have all these experiences that I am travelling with in what is now a new and unknown country. (Gwynneth)

The writing on continuity which I have been citing, suggest in particular that continuity becomes important in old age as people look to link together all the parts of themselves and their lives. Some researchers mention a 'return to roots' attitude and/or action that takes place in some older immigrants. Akhtar argues that a greater interest in the history of one's cultural group often characterizes middle and older age for an immigrant, particularly in relation to one's children leaving home and starting their own families (Akhtar 2004). Roggeveen's study of Dutch immigrants in the Auckland area, found this to be true saying that many only sought out Dutch social opportunities in old age. He suggests that this is in part due to decreasing social contacts in other areas and increasing free time once any children are out of the home and retirement has taken place (Roggeveen 1996). Tammeveski had similar findings in his study of older Estonian immigrants aging in place in America. He also found that later life can increase a long-term immigrant's sense of national and/or ethnic identity. Tammeveski goes further to say that a strong ethnic identity (which he defines as a sense of membership in a group with a shared culture, language and/or religion) can actually act as an asset in old age providing a sense of purpose and uniqueness and offering protection against the invisibility and problematisation that older people are often subjected to in American society (Tammeveski 2003: 411). Tammeveski found that older Estonian immigrants had a new role in older age: to maintain and pass on Estonian traditions to the first and second American-born Estonians in their ethnic community (Tammeveski 2003).

In my own research, I did not see an increase in the seeking-out of others of a similar background nor did I observe a strong return-to-roots mentality. I also did not find that the immigrants in my study took a role of 'cultural ambassador' of their homeland with extended family or within an ethnic community. There were perhaps small examples of these tendencies like Rene, for example, who said he simply has a lot more time now to think about

Holland or participate in the occasional Dutch-oriented social gathering. Ann mentioned now that her children have moved out and her (Dutch) husband has died, she thinks of her sisters and her village in Holland much more frequently and perhaps with new longing. Outside of similar small and intermittent illustrations of a possible return-to-roots mentality, what I found instead was that my participant's contact with other, similar immigrants seems to be consistent to that described in their earlier years in New Zealand.

Immigrants in my study have not been part of an extended ethnic community or enclave. As I have mentioned before, most arrived in relative isolation, possibly with a spouse or a friend, and have had only a handful of consistent immigrant friends and many more New Zealand friends. Applying the Continuity Theory of Normal Aging, Atchley says that roles and relationships show a high degree of continuity from middle age onwards for most people: those with whom one has close ties tend to remain relatively consistent over time (Atchley 2000: 57). Similarly, Izuhara and Shibata found that older, long-term Japanese female migrants in Great Britain preferred to carry on with their established friends and support networks of mainly British origins in old age, citing that having the same cultural background is not necessarily grounds for new guaranteed friendships anyway (Izuhara & Shibata 2001: 13). While contact with other, similar immigrants is highly valued by my participants, these friendships have been few in number within a highly assimilated life-style.

The participants in my own study show a consistent level of interacting with other immigrants in older age and a continuation of what has been a subtle but significant process of creating continuity. In the context of post World War II New Zealand, there were few opportunities for the immigrants in this study to create continuity frequently, publicly or on a large scale. As discussed in Chapter Two, in New Zealand the context was one in which a social value of homogeneity and a political emphasis on assimilation as New Zealand sought to define itself and its changing bicultural dynamic. New Zealand was also more geographically isolated in a pre-transnational and globalized world. In this atmosphere, the experiences and practices of continuity among long-term immigrants have been seemingly small. Even so, this task of creating continuity, I would argue, has been carried out consistently through-out their time as immigrants and continues to be a work-in-progress now. For immigrants who arrived in relative isolation, rather than settling into enclaves with similar others, continuity was experienced in mainly private, subtle, personal occurrences. These immigrants built small bridges, but significant bridges, linking there and here, then and now, in their lives, minds and hearts.

Small Bridges

I have described some of these ‘small bridges’ – these manifestations of continuity - in the chapter on ‘home,’ particularly recalling the objects on display around their New Zealand dwellings or the preservation of cultural traditions relating to food or the holidays. Many other small moments of continuity or cohesiveness were mentioned in each person’s interview. For example, in Rene’s earlier years in New Zealand he used to find himself at the harbor, sometimes he still does: “Because I was born in a harbor, you see, and of course all of my family are still sailors, so that sort of is the attraction. Still is.” Sam returned to the house where he grew up and took a photo of the window. He has a photo of himself as a toddler sitting in that window. “That’s nostalgia,” he says, “isn’t it.” When Simon brought his parents to visit, it was to show them the life that he had made in a country his parents had never set foot in:

The reason I brought my mum and dad out was because I wanted them to see what sort of country I choose, what I achieved with my family. And when we did all that, they went back home... I think in Dunedin my parents were very very happy to see what their... son turned out to be and I was quite happy. I could show my parents what I’ve achieved. It’s human nature, I believe it’s human nature. (Simon)

Even when exchanged visits aren’t desired or possible, on a daily basis, in small but pivotal ways, the immigrants in this study have created, and still do, private moments that somehow pay tribute to the years that came before New Zealand and the person who has bridged the journey from there to here. Some have taken to writing about their experiences, some express it in art, a few take on small translation jobs, and one hangs a special Christmas star. Alice notices the family names at her church that are the same family names as many she knew back home. This reassures her: We all come from somewhere else; it is just a matter of timing. Inger mentions her cherished phone calls to a girlfriend back home who lived, and still does, across the street from where Inger grew up. Inger tells me the latest news she has heard from this girlfriend about the restructuring of the hospital in her village, a village she has set foot in twice in fifty years. “I think when you are in another country,” Inger says, “you’ve got to have some connection with your own country.” Knowing about the hospital may seem trivial, but getting the local news through an old friend is a life-line to another time and place that remains integral to Inger’s sense of who she is. For Elena, creating a space that combines New Zealand and Spain through music on Sunday afternoons is her favourite part of every week:

When I went [*back to Spain*], about this time last year, I bought quite a few cd's... I just love it. On a Sunday afternoon, I sit in my conservatory. Usually it's very sunny... I get a good book to read and I listen to [*Spanish*] classical music, *zarzuela*. And that is the best of the whole week, Sunday afternoon. So peaceful, just listening to music and reading a good book, it's just wonderful. (Elena)

There are exceptions, when a special event brings continuity into a public space and others share in honouring your background or homeland, like an event described by Simon and his New Zealand wife, Joanne. At the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian uprising, Simon and a few other Hungarian immigrants approached the city mayor:

When we out and told him that us Hungarians would like that the city acknowledge the 50 year Hungarian Uprising. He bent [over] backwards. He said, "What do you want?" And we thought about a bench at the Woodhaugh Gardens... We said, "We're prepared to meet you half way of the costs." "No cost, everything will be done"... We had a church service in the morning, [the mayor] was there. Then we went to the Woodhaugh Gardens... they donated us the bench... Then the Catholic priest was there who actually blessed the bench and then we all went out for dinner. We had... the MP of South Dunedin as guest speaker. We really worked hard. (Simon)

Joanne took me into the hallway to show me a photograph of the event with their grandchildren in traditional Hungarian dress. She also showed me the newspaper article about the event, "Dunedin Marks Hungarian Uprising." It was obvious that this event was very special to Simon and Joanne both, and to the rest of the Hungarian immigrants who had been in the area for fifty years.

Simon gave me a detailed description of where the bench sits in a park near my house. As I told him I would, I went to have a look at the bench, one I had walked past many times before without noticing the plaque commemorating the Hungarian Uprising and acknowledging Dunedin's Hungarian immigrants. Over and over again, stories like this added meaning to some part of Dunedin for me personally, aiding me along in my effort to form a relationship with this place, my newly adopted city. Now when I walk past that bench in the park, I think of all the other people who have migrated to this location and have quietly lived here for many, many years. Thinking of their past and their creation of continuity in their own lives helps me to find meaningful continuity in my life here. Sometimes, more often than not, I go out of my way just to walk past that bench. It's often the small, private moments that bridge the gaps between different times and places in our lives and helps us to form a whole and continuous self.

To move toward some concluding thoughts on aging, I return now to Kaufman's work as there are some clear notes of agreement between her work and this thesis. In her ethnographic study on aging and identity, she found that her older interviewees did not speak directly about 'old age' as a category of experience or life. Her participants did not speak of feeling old, though they knew that they were old and were experiencing some of the physical, social and mental manifestations of aging. Some described knowing they were old based on the way other people treated them, but not based on feeling old themselves. She found that "old people do not perceive meaning in aging itself so much as they perceive meaning in being themselves in old age" (Kaufman 1986: 13.) Thus, when older people talk about themselves, they express an enduring sense of self that is ageless, an identity that is continuous. Contrary to popular conceptions of old age as a distinct period in life, older people themselves emphasize continuity of self across the life span.

This could explain, in part, why my participants often did not have much to say when I asked directly about aging. Aged between fifty-nine and eighty years old, some participants might have seen old age as still to come and some might have seen themselves in the midst of old-age. Either way, direct questions about aging yielded much less fruitful discussions than my other questions about home and identity. And yet, within the context of other topics, all participants spoke at length about experiences and ideas that relate to aging. This is in line with Kaufman's finding that people create themes in their own life-stories, tying the past to the present. These individual life-themes allow people to consider change through a familiar and enduring lens rather than through a new and arbitrary category like, 'old'. Older people call on past experiences and a consistent sense of self to exist in the present, cope with change, and imagine a future. They are the same person through it all.

In her study, Kaufman asks, "How does one maintain a sense of self that integrates seventy years or more of diverse experience?" She found that people symbolically preserve and integrate meaningful components of their past and use these as a framework for understanding and being in the present (Kaufman 1986: 20). People account for their lives – they make them logical and coherent and instill them with a sense of naturalness and rightness. People select, define and organize experience in order to not only express the reality of their lives, but to permeate that reality with meaning (Kaufman 1986: 24). Kaufman writes that by creating a coherent picture of the past, older people can then integrate that past into the present and imbue it with meaning and purpose (Kaufman 1986: 54). As I

have mentioned, rather than finding meaning in aging itself, as a process or a specific phase of life, people find meaning in being themselves, continuously, into and through old age.

Immigrants in this study largely had the same concerns about aging as New Zealanders at-large seem to have, with finances and health being near the top of the list. Immigrants in this study also have some additional challenges or unique aspects of later-life based specifically on being an immigrant, such as the inability to make any more visits home, lack of others to reminisce with or consideration of satisfying plans for death and burial. With life-histories and identities based in two different locations, cultures and eras, there are some additional obstacles for an older immigrant to navigate through while undertaking the natural and important maintenance of a coherent sense of self in later-life. Rather than breaking away from the familiar methods previously used to form a cohesive sense of self through change, they continue to tie together all the parts of their lives and identities the way that they always have: with small, private, pivotal bridges. In routine and simple ways, they continue to construct a coherent and unified sense of self. My participants have navigated complicated waters and have built these small bridges, connecting two (or more) distinct places and times of their lives, helping to keep the internal self more cohesive and continuous, as daily life unfolds grounded in New Zealand. They have, Akhtar says, quietly spun (and continue to spin, for it is never-ending) the thread that joins all the beads of the necklace of identity together (Akhtar 1999: 64).

Chapter Five

Conclusion

We do not normally experience time's passage with our senses, it occurs too subtly for us to perceive it directly. The passage of time is thus often unacknowledged but it is fundamental to life's experiences and its ramifications are inescapable. Over time, people are always changing and growing. Lives are full of change – sometimes it is sudden and drastic, but most of the time change is slow, consistent and nearly imperceptible. So too is context always changing - our immediate surroundings, our culture and nation, even the world we live in.

The immigrants in this study migrated to New Zealand at a particular point in historical time. This contextual, historical time has played a substantial, shaping role in their migration experience. Uncomfortable with difference, geographically isolated in an era before globalization, and in the early throes of forging its own national identity, New Zealand emphasized assimilation and urged conformity. The pressure to assimilate was strengthened by the lack of other similar immigrants in close proximity. In response to the emphasis on assimilation, but also out of their own active pursuit to make the most out of their new country and its opportunities, immigrants learned to keep their differences primarily in the background and largely blend in.

Over many decades of life unfolding on New Zealand soil, almost all the participants said that they feel like New Zealanders now. Particularly when they compare themselves to others who have not left their homeland, they see that they have changed, that they have become New Zealanders. However, at the same time, most feel that they will always be their original nationality. Rather than having traded in their previous national identity and emotional connection to their homeland, they have simply gained another cultural and national identity associated with New Zealand. They illustrate the plurality and flexibility of identity that is so often discussed in anthropology today, particularly with the development of globalization and transnationalism.

Contributing to the formation of a New Zealand-based identity has been the passage of personal and family time on its soil. So many things have happened here: Weddings (their own, then their children's and even grandchildren's) learning to cook new recipes with novel

ingredients, washing babies in the laundry sink while the bathroom in the new house was being built, learning to talk about gardening with the New Zealanders on the bus into town, losing a dear friend, surviving cancer. All of these things have happened in New Zealand for forty to sixty years and have made it, for most, home. But just like their national identities, this is not a trade-off. The home of their provenance is irreplaceable.

For decades most did not experience the passage of time in their homelands directly or physically, but were aware of it through letters and imaginings, through grief when parents died, through homesickness at Christmas. But time was passing on a global scale too and with it came change in the form of globalization and transnationalism. These developments meant that many were now able to experience the passage of time in their homelands in new and unexpected ways. Through increasingly fast and accessible communication, they could keep in touch more easily and frequently. When telephone calls replaced handwritten letters, they could discuss daily life, not just special events; they knew about the goal their nephew had scored in a football match earlier *that day*. But the change with the most impact was the ability to travel back, to visit.

Visits to the homeland, not possible for most participants for their first two or three decades in New Zealand, enabled physical experience of time's passage in their homelands. Initially like a gap-in-time crossed instantly with an airplane, dropping them back onto their original soil – changes seemed drastic and sudden because they had not seen the process. New roads had been built, old buildings were replaced, familiar faces had aged twenty-five years in an instant, the family house was now inhabited by strangers and a sister, twelve years old when you left, now had a twelve year old daughter of her own. Home had become unfamiliar in some ways and the losses, like the painful and conspicuous absence of loved ones now dead and gone, were experienced most harshly without the benefit of seeing the process of gradual change over time. But some things do not change with the passage of time and these proved to be sources of comfort: the general feeling of home – that intangible sense of atmosphere and personal history, the comfortable language, the familiar tastes, smells and sounds, the neighbours recognizing you instantly in the local bakery.

The context of a world that has developed affordable, quick travel and communication technology has impacted upon the experience of both places as home and the identities associated with each. Now, however, many of the immigrants in this study have come full circle, back to a time when visits home are no longer easy or even possible. Sometimes the likelihood of further visits home has deteriorated with financial restrictions after retirement or

physical limitations associated with aging. In other cases, there is a more abstract reason for no longer making visits back to the homeland: as time has passed, many of their generation have died and the younger generations are unfamiliar. Returning to a time when visits home are not possible does not mean that the homeland becomes less valuable. The memory of the homeland and the time spent there is still crucial to an older immigrant's sense of self and complete conceptualization of home.

In later life, the well-rehearsed habit of building small, private bridges, quietly linking here to there and then to now, continues. In all areas, negotiation has been, and still is, the name of the game – combining, balancing, considering, adapting. If a person is aware of all the different parts of him or herself and of his or her life, then continuity actually lies within that awareness and the process of tying it all together in a uniquely individual way. For a migrant, there is a continual readjustment over time of identities and experiences that span two countries and cultures and many decades. It's a continual negotiation of gain and loss. Akhtar writes that

Immigration from one country to another is a complex psychosocial process with significant lasting effects on an individual's identity. Leaving one's country involves profound losses. Often one has to give up familiar food, native music, unquestioned social customs, even one's language. The new country offers strange-tasting food, new songs, different political concerns, unfamiliar language, pale festivals, unknown heroes, psychically unearned history, and a visually unfamiliar landscape. However, alongside these losses is a renewed opportunity for psychic growth and alteration. New channels of self-expression become available (Akhtar 1999: 5).

Gwynneth describes this process of recognizing and negotiating gain and loss as she sees it now, and as it continues, forty years after leaving Africa and coming to New Zealand:

Africa's a very raw place... This is a very safe place. There's a loss of that raw energy... There's a loss of an immense sense of self-sufficiency. It's the loss of the big, wet season and the thunder and the lightening. And the hot, dry season and the drought... Being able to experience yourself as someone of multiple languages allows you to experience the world in a different way. And that lies very dormant... I feel very firmly in a part of myself that I wish to honour the fact that New Zealand took my family of origin in. And allowed us the opportunity to settle here and make a home. I think we've done that well. I'd like to, in how I live my life, and in my values, I would like to show that I was mindful of the opportunity that [New Zealand] gave me to be in life. At the same time, being mindful that having this meant other losses. And that's life. It's about coming to some place of harmony about it all. (Gwynneth)

There is a linear aspect to time: it is irreversible and unidirectional. “You cannot un-know or un-do things... the arrow of time reigns supreme,” (Adam 1995: 18). In many popular representations of the life-course, the passing of time is rendered only in this way: through a series of sequential, age-based identities which, it is implied, each individual will ‘naturally’ take on (Hockey & James 2003: 82). There is a temptation to assume that an immigrant goes through a few phases of adjustment and that with time, decades of continued residence imply an ‘assimilation’ of cultural identity. It would be easy to assume that the arrow of time moves only in this one direction and that at some point the process of migration can be placed in a file that is labelled and stamped, ‘Completed.’

However, there are different, cyclical experiences of time that exist within or alongside the linear aspect of temporality. Thoughts travel through time, backward and forward, with no effort at all (Adam 1995: 13). During each present moment, the past we have already lived and the future we still expect to live play a central role in the way we experience things, make plans and take action (Adam 1995: 23). As life changes, and the context within which life is being lived also changes, people reflect, remember, adapt, adjust. They reconsider.

It must be said, indeed heavily stressed, that almost all participants describe the gains of immigrating to New Zealand as far outweighing the losses. They describe a life in New Zealand that they are grateful for, satisfied with and fulfilled by. In my interactions with them, there was no sense of disadvantage nor would they ever speak of their circumstances as unfortunate or describe themselves as discontented. Certainly they do not see themselves as victims in any way. Most can say that they have confidence in their choice, made so many years ago, to migrate. And, for most, the decision to stay in New Zealand was made long ago.

However, the stories and thoughts expressed by the immigrants in this study show a process of negotiation over time, of ups and downs like just about anything in life. And time is still passing. Each present moment brings some contextual change or new knowledge. To say that at some point these immigrants are no longer engaged in the continual process of interpreting and integrating both the past and the future in light of the ever-changing present, is to say they are not human. To think that this process is over is to suggest that people in later-life are no longer affected by the passage of time and so no longer participate in the dynamic processes of identity development and management or the personal negotiation of loss and gain over time.

Imagine a wedding with almost no one there, only a few recent acquaintances of the bride or groom, who has arrived alone from somewhere far away. But then you smile, in love and full of hope, looking forward to a new house built or bought immediately, ready for your new young family. A family home, all of your own, with a garden - that would never have been possible back home. Imagine raising kids with no family participation or support, no little cousins for them to play with, even though you have several brothers, sisters, cousins and parents. Imagine wanting their input about a matter, writing it in a letter, and then waiting three weeks for the response (by which time the advice is irrelevant.) Realize that your children and parents may never meet. But then consider the freedom to decide what is best for your family and act on it, with no input or opinions from extended family to tip-toe around. You learn to trust and enjoy your own decisions. Your nuclear family is strong, self-sufficient and proud of making a go of it all on their own, with only each other. Imagine realizing, after years and years of working in an adopted country, that if you had stayed home, you could have done even better. Though you left when the country was in shambles, the economy bounced back stronger than ever and your friends, brothers and sisters have nicer homes and clothes than you do. They go on more holidays, drive newer cars. But then remember that you have clean air and mountains and your family loves fishing in the pristine rivers that cascade down from glaciers, through forests and onto the plains. Your family back home has more money and easier comforts that you long for sometimes. But you have stunning, natural, uninhabited spaces to play in. Imagine, in later life, missing your family intensely again, especially now that your children have moved out and your spouse has passed on. The deaths of family and friends back in your homeland hurt even more because you missed so much time with them over these last fifty years. Imagine realizing you have no one in your day-to-day life here who can reminisce with you about your old holiday traditions, the clothes your mother used to wear, the lessons taught in school. You have friends here but their childhoods were different. But then watch your grandkids with pride because they are real Kiwis and they will grow up with a bright, open future. You made that happen. Your life has integrated two cultures, two countries and it has been interesting and rich. You came with next to nothing over forty years ago and life here has turned into so much, right here on this soil. There is doubt at times; there is both happiness and sadness. You cannot really imagine it any other way.

“There is no single time, only a multitude of times which interpenetrate and permeate our daily lives” (Adam 1995: 12). Since immigrating to New Zealand forty or more years

ago, these immigrants have been experiencing the passage of a multitude of times on many levels, and so it continues. Time has been passing for them personally, for their families, for their homeland and their host country, and time has been passing in the world at large. Through it all, though little has remained the same, these immigrants have a strong sense of themselves as the same person who was born sixty, seventy, eighty years ago, the same person who grew up in a country and culture that was taken for granted until it was left, the same person who bravely decided to board a ship or a plane and head to a new, unknown land, the same person who will grow old, still integrating and making sense of it all. Over time they have managed their identities in changing contexts and circumstances. Over time they have grieved loss and celebrated gain. Over time, they have reconsidered, remembered and anticipated with each changing moment of the present. Going about their lives today - perhaps in their houses old and new, or out running an errand, or doing a hobby, or watching the grandkids, or visiting a friend - among the hills of New Zealand, they still do.

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