

Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity

Comparison of the measurement of ethnicity in Australia and New Zealand

Main Paper

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BACKGROUND

The last review of New Zealand's ethnicity classification was undertaken in time for the 1996 Census, in response to the data on the 1991 Census ethnicity question. As there has been much change in New Zealand society since then, a comprehensive re-examination of this classification is now due. Statistics New Zealand (SNZ) is currently conducting a review, called the Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity (RME), on the way in which ethnicity is measured. It is the aim of the RME to re-evaluate the concept and use of ethnicity in official social statistics. As part of the background to the RME, several perspectives papers have been written to highlight various aspects of ethnicity and ethnicity classifications. This perspectives paper will contribute to the RME by describing the approaches taken by Australia and New Zealand in their current standard classifications of ethnicity, and by highlighting and commenting on any similarities and/or differences between them. As its purpose is only to highlight these issues, it will not draw any conclusions from such similarities and/or differences.

MAIN FINDINGS

1. There is no international standard classification of ethnicity.
2. Both the definitions of ethnicity in the Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups (ASCCEG) and the New Zealand Standard Classification of Ethnicity (NZSCE) are based on the principle of self-assessed identification with an ethnic group.
3. Although incorporating most of ASCCEG's eight characteristics of an ethnic group, New Zealand's definition of ethnicity does not include the characteristics of being an oppressed minority and/or being racially conspicuous.
4. The NZSCE and ASCCEG state that individuals may identify with more than one ethnic group.
5. In contrast to the ASCCEG's inclusion of an 'Australian' ethnicity, the NZSCE does not allow for the inclusion of a nationalistically oriented 'New Zealander' ethnic group, even though it may be self-perceived.
6. The predominant ethnic groups of some multicultural societies, in this paper 'Australian' and 'New Zealand European', may not meet some of the Borrie Report's eight criteria of an ethnic group, which the ASCCEG endorsed. The Borrie Report was a report to the Australian Statistician by the 1986 Population Census Ethnicity Committee, which focussed on the measurement of ethnicity.
7. The ASCCEG 'Australian' category is classified outside the European categories, while the NZSCE classifies such responses inside the larger European grouping.
8. The Australian classification structures, when compared with New Zealand's, are based on concepts of nationality and ancestry, rather than ethnicity. The reason for this is that it is a classification of **cultural and ethnic** groups, including nationalities.
9. Following on from the previous point, the ASCCEG's narrow groups have been harmonised with the country groupings used in the Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC). SNZ does not attempt to harmonise the NZSCE with any other classifications.
10. Non-indigenous and indigenous peoples from the same country cannot be distinguished from one another until the lowest level of the ASCCEG, while the NZSCE identifies its indigenous people, Māori, at all levels.
11. One of the priorities of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) classification is achieving statistical and physical balance. This is not a priority for SNZ in its ethnicity classification.
12. At levels one and two, a comparison between the NZSCE and ASCCEG is virtually impossible. The level-one categories used in the ASCCEG might not be very useful for surveys because they are very general and geographically-based, while the NZSCE's level-one categories might be more useful.

13. The ASCCEG's level-three and the NZSCE's levels three and four may be compared (see Appendix 1 for differences in classifications procedures).
14. The ASCCEG makes a distinction between residual and supplementary codes, which the NZSCE does not.
15. The ASCCEG does not mention the prioritisation of multiple responses, unlike the NZSCE.
16. The ASCCEG does not give specific questionnaire modules or guidance demonstrating how its classification should be used. It is not ABS policy to include this information in the standard classification document, but in material relating to statistical variables.
17. Unlike the ASCCEG, the NZSCE quite specifically demonstrates the ways in which it can be applied, including questionnaire modules (which are now out of date).
18. Because of these findings, and the fact that the ASCCEG is still a new and untested standard classification, harmonisation between Australia's and New Zealand's classifications of cultural and ethnic groups and ethnicity respectively does not seem possible at the present time.

STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

The paper is divided into six sections. With the exception of the introduction, each section describes the Australian Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups, followed by the New Zealand Standard Classification of Ethnicity. Within the discussion in each section on how the New Zealand standard approaches each aspect, similarities and/or differences with the Australian standard are noted.

The first section introduces the rationale for this comparison. The second section describes in some depth the definitions of ethnicity used in the ASCCEG and NZSCE, and measurement of ethnicity prior to the introduction of the current classifications. Discussion in the third section then turns to the conceptual issues underlying these definitions. This includes the different applications of a similar definition based on self-perceived ethnicity, and a brief examination of the consequences of these different views with respect to the ethnic groups 'Australian' and 'New Zealand European/Pākehā'. The classification criteria and issues arising from the definitions are covered in the fourth section, as well as achieving a statistically balanced classification and the place of indigenous peoples in the classification structure. In the fifth section, the coding structures are compared. Finally, the sixth section covers outputs and quality issues. An appendix looks at the potential compares the Australian and New Zealand standards; highlighting some examples of the classification differences.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As pointed out in the 1996 NZSCE, there is no international standard classification of ethnicity. Comparisons of different countries' approaches must therefore be taken in order to gauge the appropriateness of New Zealand's current standard classification. Amendments may be necessary if it is felt that the NZSCE can adapt elements of another country's classification. For example, as background to the 1996 SNZ standard, very brief comparisons were made with Australia and Canada. It was noted that the three countries were similar in at least two respects:

- All three countries had an ethnic majority descended from European immigrants.
- All three countries had an indigenous ethnic group, and several other important ethnic groups, such as Pacific peoples in New Zealand and Australia.

As discussed below, prior to the development of the ASCCEG, Australia did not measure ethnicity as such. In 1986 and 2001, however, an ancestry question was or will be included, respectively. The ASCCEG was devised in response to community interest in the characteristics and composition of the Australian population, and "is intended to provide a standard to meet a growing statistical, administrative and service delivery need for data relating to these interests" (2000, p.1). Its main focus is on coding and classifying responses to the ancestry question in the 2001 Census. As it is a new classification measuring ethnic and cultural data, it is worth examining it in closer detail.

The RME project team felt that this comparison was warranted for other reasons also. This reflects the increasing emphasis on harmonising classifications and standards between SNZ and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), which is now a key goal. Several major reviews - on Industry (Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification), Products (Australia New Zealand Standard Product Classification) and Occupation (New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation) have taken into account the desire for closer alignment with the ABS. It seems appropriate that the development of a new standard for ethnicity should do the same.

The paper is designed to inform readers about the New Zealand and the Australian classifications of ethnicity, and promote discussion that will contribute to the RME. To do this, the paper will point out the differences and similarities between the two classifications. However, it will not make conclusions or take a position on whether the New Zealand standard classification should adopt the Australian version, or vice versa. It is intended only as a guide to comparing the New Zealand and the Australian classifications of ethnicity.

2.0 DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

2.1 Definitions of ethnicity

Australia

The ASCCEG states that its classification is designed to be used relatively widely. As such, the Australian standard of ethnicity encompasses several ideas. First, it is important to note that, as its title makes clear, it is not a classification of ethnicity, but rather of cultural and ethnic groups. Second, it is designed to apply to a wide range of topics, such as "ancestry, ethnic identity, and cultural diversity" (2000, p.2). (The effect of this is discussed later.)

The ASCCEG is influenced by the report, *The Measurement of Ethnicity in the Australian Census of Population and Housing* (Report to the Australian Statistician by the 1986 Population Census Ethnicity Committee, which was chaired by the late Professor W. D. Borrie, and is therefore known as the Borrie Report.) In its investigations on appropriate definitions of ethnicity, the Ethnicity Committee favoured a definition found in a 1983 United Kingdom Law Lords' statement. According to this definition, the key factor involved in identifying an ethnic group is perception: the group sees itself, and others regard it, as a distinctive community on the basis of several characteristics (not all of which have to apply at once):

- A long shared history, the memory of which is kept alive
- A cultural tradition, including family and social customs, sometimes religiously based
- A common geographic origin
- A common language (but not necessarily limited to that group)
- A common literature (written or oral)
- A common religion
- Being a minority (often with a sense of being oppressed)
- Being racially conspicuous (cited in ASCCEG, 2000, p.3)

The ASCCEG goes on to suggest that there are two ways of viewing ethnicity as a concept (ASCCEG, 2000, p.4):

- As a self-perceived group identification
- As a more historically determined approach, with ethnicity being a product of an individuals' origins or ancestry

The ASCCEG states that it is based on the first of these approaches for three main reasons.

- Self-perceived identification allows an individual to determine for him/herself the affinity he/she feels for a particular ethnic group. In contrast, the historically determined approach may indicate that individuals are part of a particular ethnic group with which they have no affinity.
- Individuals' self-assessed responses to questions are used in the ABS and other organisations, so it seems logical to extend this approach to the ASCCEG.
- The self-perception approach also allows the inclusion of "national cultural identities" (2000, p.4), for example, 'Australian'.

The ASCCEG also states that individuals might identify with more than one cultural and ethnic group (2000, p.15).

In summary:

Considering ethnicity as a multi dimensional [sic] concept based on a number of distinguishing characteristics using a self-perception approach allows for a practical and useful classification attuned to generally accepted notions of what constitutes ethnicity and cultural identity (2000, p.4).

New Zealand

Like Australia, New Zealand's standard also adheres to the self-perception approach. It states that the ideal definition of ethnicity is "the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel

they belong to. Thus, ethnicity is self-perceived" (NZSCE, 1996). A significant difference to note at this early stage is that NZSCE does try to measure ethnicity alone, rather than according to several concepts, which the ASCCEG does, with its emphasis on ethnic and cultural groups, ancestry, cultural diversity and ethnic identity.

Like the Australian version, the NZSCE explicitly states that individuals may identify with several ethnic groups at once: "people can belong to more than one ethnic group" (NZSCE, 1996).

The NZSCE uses only the following four characteristics to clarify what an 'ethnic group' is comprised of, which are not as specific as the ASCCEG's eight potential characteristics. The NZSCE's definition is based on A. Smith's definition of an ethnic group¹. An ethnic group is:

A social group whose members have the following four characteristics:

- Share a sense of common origins
- Claim a common and distinctive history and destiny
- Possess one or more dimensions of collective cultural individuality
- Feel a sense of unique collective solidarity (1981, p.66)

Although these incorporate several of the ASCCEG's characteristics of an ethnic group, the Borrie Report's characteristics of an ethnic group being an oppressed minority and/or being racially conspicuous are not included in the New Zealand definition.

It seems that the NZSCE would be in accordance with the first two reasons cited by the ASCCEG for using self-perception as the key factor in determining ethnic identification. These were, first, measuring an individual's personal affinity for ethnic groups, and second, "self-perception based on a self assessed [sic] response to a direct question" (ASCCEG, 2000, p.4). However, as will be seen later, the third reason, allowing the inclusion of a nationalistically oriented ethnicity such as 'Australian' (or 'New Zealander'), even though it is certainly self-perceived, is problematic in the NZSCE in some cases. In addition, although the ASCCEG favours the self-perception approach, it will be seen later that the ASCCEG's classification structures, when compared with the NZSCE's, actually appear to be based more on concepts of nationality and ancestry, rather than ethnicity as such. This suggests that the ASCCEG's approach might be more historically determined.

2.3 Measurement of ethnicity before the introduction of the current standard

Australia

Before the introduction of the ASCCEG in 2000, there was no direct means (other than through the analysis of other variables) of determining the self-assessed ethnic composition of Australia's population. The first time that Australia asked a question on people's ancestry (which it took to mean ethnic or cultural origin) was relatively recently, in the 1986 Census. It was the result of an investigation by the 1986 Population Census Ethnicity Committee, which found that there was a need for ethnic data other than language, birthplace or birthplace of

¹ This is the definition adopted by the Review Committee on Ethnic Statistics 1988. At the time of writing the book (*The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World*, 1981) from which this definition of ethnic group came, Smith was a lecturer in Sociology at the London School of Economics. He has written several publications on nationalism, ethnicity and ethnic movements and social change.

parents. Testing indicated that measuring people's self-assessed ethnic affiliation was problematic, and that the term 'ethnicity' was confusing. Therefore, an ancestry question was asked in the 1986 Census.

However, the question was not included in the 1991 Census, as there seemed to be much confusion as to what the question meant². In 1996, because of user demands for more specific ethnic data, a Census Consultative Group was established by the ABS, but testing again showed that the same data quality problems were present and the question was not included in the 1996 Census³.

There will be an ancestry question in the 2001 Census, again due to user demand for data on groups that cannot be identified through other census questions. These questions are, for example, on language, religion, birthplace, birthplace of parents, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. An ancestry question, used in conjunction with a question on whether the person's parents were born overseas, will be used to determine the ethnic make-up of Australia's population. The ABS decided to use ancestry rather than ethnicity in this census to retain a comparison with the 1986 question, and also because the problems that were identified in 1986 are perceived to still exist.

New Zealand

New Zealand has changed its approach on ethnicity questions over the last few censuses. It has moved from a solely race/ancestry based question, to an ethnic group approach. There are additional questions on Māori ancestry and Iwi identification also⁴. Different questions have been used in the last five Censuses, making it difficult to compare data over time. For example, in the 1971 Census, people were asked to respond to the following questions: "If born in New Zealand place tick in box" and "If born overseas, state country of birth and years you have resided in New Zealand". These questions were followed by questions asking about ethnic origin: "If of full European descent, no matter where born, place tick in box" and "If not, state whether full N.Z. Māori, Cook Is. Māori, Indian, etc., as the case may be. If of more than one origin, give particulars as $\frac{3}{4}$ European – $\frac{1}{4}$ Māori or $\frac{1}{2}$ N.Z. Māori – $\frac{1}{2}$ Samoan". By 2001, the question had changed dramatically: "Which ethnic groups do you belong to? *Mark the space or spaces which apply to you*".

2.3 Rationales for the standards

Australia

In response to the demand for more specific information on Australia's ethnic composition, the ASCCEG has been developed, primarily for use in the 2001 Census. Its general purpose is

² See

[http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/ABS%40.nsf/525a1b9402141235ca25682000146abc/fdd0e3e51366cd0ca25696c00835b46/\\$FILE/29030_Oct+2000.pdf](http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/ABS%40.nsf/525a1b9402141235ca25682000146abc/fdd0e3e51366cd0ca25696c00835b46/$FILE/29030_Oct+2000.pdf)

³ See

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3110122.NSF/4a255eef008309e44a255eef00061e57/c5b89196013a08224a25645100021133!OpenDocument>

⁴ It is important to note at this stage that there are two additional classifications that relate to Māori: the New Zealand Standard Classification of Iwi, and the Standard Classification of Māori Descent. Because this paper is concerned with the ethnicity classification, these additional classifications are not discussed.

stated in the introduction to the ASCCEG, and it is quite non-specific: it is "intended for use in the collection, aggregation and dissemination of data relating to the *cultural diversity* of the Australian Population" (2000, p.1, emphasis added). Later, it states that the

ASCCEG is designed to be used for the classification of information relating to a number of topics such as ancestry, ethnic identity, and cultural diversity. Although these topics have elements of difference, it is considered that the fundamental concept common to them all, and thus underpinning the classification, is *ethnicity* (2000, p.2).

The primary user of this standard is the ABS, which plans to use ASCCEG in its own statistical work, for example, in the ancestry question in the 2001 Census. It will therefore be interesting to see how the classification works in practice.

There are currently no plans to collect ethnicity or ancestry data in any other collections as the ABS believes that cultural diversity is best measured by other indicators. Until the 1996 Census, and excluding the 1986 Census (when an ancestry question was asked), the following statistical variables were used to measure cultural and ethnic diversity. They included:

- Country of birth
- Country of birth of Mother/Father
- Language variables, e.g., main language other than English spoken at home
- Religious affiliation
- Proficiency in spoken English
- Year of arrival in Australia (2000, p.1)

These variables are associated with other classifications, such as the Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC), the Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL), and the Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups (ASCRG). The ASCCEG has been designed to work in conjunction with these variables (which were called "ethnicity surrogate topics" in the Borrie Report.) The Council of Ministers of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (COMIMA) decided that a range of variables, such as these, was best able to measure aspects of a person's origins. COMIMA recommended that a core set of such variables be implemented in all national, state and territory statistical and administrative collections that require further information on cultural diversity. Ancestry, measured by the ASCCEG, is in a standard set of variables outside the core set. The ABS does not know how they have been implemented by outside agencies, or how the ancestry variable (and therefore the ASCCEG) has been used as the external agencies and organisations are not required to report to the ABS.

The use of the variables may create some confusion. According to ASCCEG, ethnic diversity can be measured by these combined statistical variables, which do not include a specific question on self-perceived identification with an ethnic group. Therefore, it seems that some form of ethnicity data could be produced by these variables without even using the ASCCEG. This type of measurement of ethnicity would seem to be very closely influenced by the historically determined approach (that used information on people's ancestry and origins to determine their ethnic group), which was rejected by the ASCCEG in favour of the self-perceived approach. However, the ASCCEG does point out that often an individual's ethnic and cultural identification would not neatly correspond to these variables, reinforcing the significance of the ASCCEG: "A major advantage of such information [data collected using the ASCCEG] is that it is able to measure an association with ethnic or cultural groups which does not equate

directly to country of birth, language or religion and cannot be identified using these variables" (2000, p.1).

New Zealand

New Zealand offers a more specific account of the use of its NZSCE than Australia does, probably because it has been used by other government agencies since the early 1990s. It states that:

Information on ethnicity is needed by government agencies, policy makers and administrators, researchers and ethnic or cultural associations to study the size, location, characteristics and other aspects of the different groups. The data is used, among other things, in the planning of services directed at the special needs of ethnic groups in areas such as health, education and social welfare; the allocation of funds from government agencies to ethnic groups; and the measurement and assessment of the economic and social well-being of various ethnic groups (1996).

Therefore, the potential users of the standard in Australia and New Zealand are likely to be very similar, although the ASCCEG has not been used yet. As indicated in the quote above, the standard contributes to the collection of data on ethnic groups for the purposes of making information on the various ethnic groups widely available to those who need it for planning and/or policy purposes, for example, external government agencies. A list of such agencies is provided in Part 2 (*Roles and Responsibilities*) of the NZSCE, ranging from Te Puni Kōkiri, to the Ministry of Health, to the Department of Courts, among many others. Users within SNZ include Regional and Environmental Statistics, Human Resources (with Equal Employment Opportunities), Demography, Population and Census and Social Policy. The ASCCEG did not provide this type of detail about its internal and external users.

As with the Australian standard, the NZSCE is relatively wide in scope, being used by different organisations for a variety of purposes. However, as mentioned above, a noticeable difference between the two standards is that NZSCE's implied focus is on classifying and producing data on ethnicity alone, while ASCCEG's standard is explicitly designed to measure a wider range of topics in addition to ethnic identity, such as ancestry and cultural diversity. This is likely to make data comparison between the two very difficult. It also means that in the immediate future, harmonisation between the two standard classifications seems unlikely.

3.0 UNDERLYING CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

From Australia's method of classifying ethnic and cultural groups, it is clear that the terms ethnicity (and ethnic group), nationality and ancestry (or origin) are often used interchangeably. It is also assumed that one could use the ASCCEG to measure all of these different concepts. NZSCE, in comparison, uses quite a narrow meaning of ethnicity for the purposes of measurement. Although these concepts - nationality, ancestry and ethnicity - are certainly linked, they encompass different concepts.

3.1 Ethnicity as a self-perceived status

Australia

After discussing the definition of ethnicity that will be used in its standard classification, the ASCCEG examines how this will be applied in practice. This includes much discussion on the

process of actually identifying cultural and ethnic groups. There are two methods to this process, with the first being to take a country or nationality and assign an ethnic group to it. (These usually have in common the first six of the Borrie Report's ethnic groups criteria). This highlights the geographical/nationality-based criteria of the ASCCEG. For example, **France** will include people with a **French** ethnicity, culture or ancestry; and **Japan** will include people with a **Japanese** ethnicity, culture or ancestry. Equating an ethnic group with the country from which it originates is used for three main reasons (ASCCEG, 2000, pp.4-5):

- As indicated, many countries are comprised of people of the same origin who share some of the Borrie Report's eight characteristics. They therefore describe their ethnicity, culture or ancestry in terms of their country of origin (or nationality).
- In countries where the population is comprised of people of many different origins, a common culture may develop over time. The people from these countries then perceive their ethnicity, cultural identity or ancestry to be the same as the country they are in. For example, many people in Australia may describe themselves as 'Australians', while in New Zealand, some people may also regard themselves as being 'New Zealanders'.
- Many people confuse ethnicity with the country of their birth (and/or nationality). They may answer questions in terms of their country of origin, rather than the ethnic group they identify with in that country.

The second method for identifying an ethnic group concerns those groups that do not readily equate to a country or nationality. The following criteria allow them to qualify as a distinct ethnic group in their own right. As long as they regard themselves as being a distinctive group (and therefore exhibit some of the Borrie Report's eight characteristics), it does not matter that they may not be recognised by other groups around them in the particular country. There are three types of such groups (ASCCEG, 2000, pp.5-6)⁵:

- Ethnic groups that originate from within particular countries and are obviously distinct from other majority and minority groups, for example the Sikhs in India;
- Blocks of ethnic groups that cross geographic borders, for example the Kurds
- Groups that are located in several countries around the world, for example the Jews

Thus, although both the ASCCEG and NZSCE use self-perceived identification with an ethnic group as the primary means of measuring ethnicity, there are some significant differences between the two applications of this concept. For example (as described later), the ASCCEG treats claims of association with a group as valid, as long as self-perception is the key principle behind their identification. For example, with reference to the category 'Australian', it states that "without the category 'Australian' the principle of self-perception does not work" (2000, p.7).

New Zealand

New Zealand shares most of the ASCCEG's two methods on how to identify ethnic groups. With reference to the first method, equating the group with the country from which it originates, the NZSCE, like the ASCCEG, concedes that the term used to describe an individual's ethnic group is often, but not always, the same as the term used to describe their nationality, for example, Chinese, Indian or American. In this respect it shares the ASCCEG's emphasis on geographical location as a means of classifying some ethnic groups. In addition, the NZSCE

⁵ It should be pointed out that those groups given as examples here are generally recognised.

points out that often the term used to describe an ethnic group is derived from the term also used to describe that group on a racial basis, for example, Chinese. Also reinforcing a point made by ASCCEG, NZSCE suggests, however, that because of this, there may still be some confusion between the concepts of nationality and ethnicity (and perhaps also ethnicity and race). In a questionnaire-type scenario, people may then wrongly interpret the meaning of ethnicity, and answer a question in terms of race or nationality. This was the ASCCEG's third means of identifying ethnic and cultural groups. However, the inclusion of nationality-based ethnicities, for example, 'Australian' or 'New Zealander', into a standard classification on the basis that they are given as responses, when they may be given because people's understanding of 'ethnicity' as a term is incorrect, does not seem appropriate. Perhaps more instruction needs to be given on the meaning of ethnicity so that the meaning is very clear.

Although not specifically addressed, it seems generally safe to assume that the NZSCE would be in accordance with the ASCCEG's rationale for classifying ethnic groups that do not readily correspond to a country or nationality. This is in recognition of the self-perceived group identification principle, and in accordance with the NZSCE definition of ethnicity outlined above. However, there are some instances in which it seems that the NZSCE is not adhering to the three criteria on how to identify ethnic groups that do not correspond to a country or nationality. For example, the NZSCE includes the ethnic groups 'Sri Lankan Tamil' (44112) and 'Tamil' (43114, which is in the Indian grouping) instead of the ASCCEG's category 'Tamil' (7116). 'Bengali' (43111) and 'Bangladeshi' (44412) are included in the NZSCE instead of the ASCCEG's category 'Bengali' (7102). The ASCCEG's classifications make more sense as the Sri Lankan Tamil and Tamil, and Bengali and Bangladeshi are ethnically identical, and should not be distinguished into separate groups according to geographic borders. Interestingly, in this case, the ASCCEG has not used the country name to identify the ethnic group.

A significant difference between the two classifications, which will be covered in a section below, is that New Zealand has no classification, corresponding to ASCCEG's concept, of a national 'New Zealander' ethnicity or culture evolving over time from people of different origins. Secondly, the NZSCE mentions ethnic mobility, that is, when an individual's identification with ethnic groups changes, which the ASCCEG does not. This last aspect in particular can affect the accurateness of the analysis of data over time, and it can be difficult to determine whether the trend for ethnic mobility is due to changes in the way ethnicity questions are structured, or other factors.

3.2 'Australian' and 'New Zealander'

The slightly different means of recognising and identifying ethnic groups between the ASCCEG and NZSCE has created a difference in the way in which the majority ethnic group is classified.

Australia

In accordance with its first means of classifying ethnic and cultural groups, the ASCCEG has taken 'Australia' and derived from it an 'Australian' ethnic and cultural group. In practical terms, the ASCCEG includes this category to describe peoples of different origins who have come to see themselves as having a common Australian culture. This is included for several reasons, based primarily on the principle of self-assessed identification (ASCCEG, 2000, pp.6-7).

First, although European immigrants originally settled in Australia, some believe that a distinctive and acknowledged Australian culture has emerged. Second, because many people regard their ethnic and cultural group as being Australian, they will answer questions in this way.

They may include it as a stand-alone response, or may include it with identification with other ethnic groups, for example, 'Irish Australian' or 'Italian Australian'. Third, if there was no such category, many answers giving this response would otherwise be regarded as invalid or inadequately described. The ASCCEG states that "an Australian category is needed to make the classification practical, useful and feasible for collecting, classifying and disseminating statistics on ancestry, ethnicity or cultural diversity as many people will indicate that their ancestry, etc. is 'Australian'" (2000, p.7). Fourth, the ASCCEG again emphasises that its classification is based on self-perception: "the entity being classified is a person's *identification* with a particular cultural and ethnic group *rather than the person*" (2000, p.7, emphasis added). That is, if a person's ethnic and cultural identification is with Australia, this should be accepted, rather than looking deeper into his/her ancestry and/or ethnic origins.

The Australian classification, from the New Zealand perspective, appears to have the potential to be quite problematic. For example, the ASCCEG points out that for multiple responses, the 'Australian' category allows people to identify with a country as well as with other ethnic and cultural groups. However, this again suggests confusion between nationality and ethnicity. They are not the same things: identification with a country is not the same as identification with an ethnic group, something the NZSCE has been careful to emphasise. Closely related to this point is the issue of whether people may actually respond in terms of their ancestry or origin and ignore (deliberately or accidentally) their membership of the 'Australian' ethnic group. Because the ASCCEG seems to be designed to measure ancestry, ethnic identity, or cultural diversity, there would be no way of distinguishing what a person was responding to. This may not give a true indication of people's identification with an ethnic group. Finally, it seems that the 'Australian' ethnic group would not necessarily meet many of the Borrie Report's eight criteria of an ethnic group (although it does meet some), which the ASCCEG endorsed. For example, in addition to 'Australian' not being a minority, or racially conspicuous, ethnic group, it seems that many of the other characteristics would be shared with its European descendants, such as language, religion, literature, and cultural and social customs. This argument also applies to the 'New Zealand European/Pākehā' ethnic group.

New Zealand

A major issue relating to ethnicity in New Zealand is how to classify the majority ethnic group. As was just described, this is not an issue in the ASCCEG, which can derive an ethnic group from a country, for example, 'Australian' from Australia. The NZSCE has a very different approach to that of the ASCCEG, having no encompassing 'New Zealander' category to correspond to the ASCCEG's 'Australian'. Several different terms have been used to describe this group, such as 'European' in the 1986 Census, 'New Zealand European' in the 1991 and 2001 Censuses, and 'NZ European *or* Pākehā' in the 1996 Census. This is in spite of the fact that many people might regard themselves as being a 'New Zealander', for example, in the 1986 Census when 20 313 people wrote their ethnicity as being 'New Zealander'. This had increased to 46 743 responses by the 1996 Census. This type of response, including others such as 'Kiwi', (which attracted 5 483 responses in 1996) has been coded in different ways. In the census, these responses are coded to the category 'New Zealand European/Pākehā' (or one of its variations listed above); in the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) and Household Economic Survey (HES), these responses are coded to the 'other' category.

The ASCCEG's 'Australian' response is classified outside the European categories. This emphasises the 'non-Europeanness' of this category, with many 'Australians' coming from a non-European background. The NZSCE classifies such responses inside the larger European grouping (highlighting the origins of the ethnic group). Such a classification suggests that the

ASCCEG views the Australian culture as distinctive in its own right, while perhaps SNZ, which wrote the NZSCE in 1996, did not believe that such a distinctive culture had emerged in New Zealand. This may have reflected a belief that, because the majority of people were descended from European immigrants, they still retained elements of their original culture's beliefs and practices. In its consultation, the RME may find, however, that this view is no longer appropriate.

The 'New Zealand European/Pākehā' category creates some difficulty in achieving consistency in the NZSCE. It is significant that the NZSCE does include, within the larger European category, categories for 'Australian' (not 'Australian European'), 'American' (not 'American European') and 'Canadian' (not 'Canadian European'), which are presumably nationality-based categories describing the majority ethnic group descended from European immigrants. Because these groups are included, and they have in common a similar history to New Zealand's majority ethnic group, it would seem logical and consistent to include a 'New Zealander' group. Alternatively, these groups could be classified in the same way as 'New Zealand European', and therefore become 'Australian European', 'American European', etc. The RME will need to address this difficult issue in particular when considering the role and measurement of ethnicity in New Zealand.

4.0 CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

The following tables summarise the different classification structures of the ASCCEG and NZSCE:

ASCCEG

No. of level	Level-one	Level-two	Level-three (also known as base level units)
Type of group at each level	Broad groups	Narrow groups	Cultural and ethnic Groups
Brief description	There are 9 broad groups, based on geographic location. They are formed by aggregating geographically close narrow groups. They should therefore be reasonably similar in terms of social and cultural characteristics.	There are 27 narrow groups, formed from similar base level units. Included in these are two residual 'Other' categories, which contain base level units that do not fit into any narrow group contained in the broad groups – Jewish and Irish.	This is the most detailed level of the classification, and includes 189 units (including 23 n.e.c categories, which are not included elsewhere in the classification). This level includes the cultural and ethnic groups described according to the definition mentioned earlier.
Examples	North-West European	British	Scottish
	North African and Middle Eastern	Jewish	Jewish
	South-East Asian	Mainland South-East Asian	Vietnamese

NZSCE

No. of level*	Level-one	Level-two	Level-three	Level-four
Type of group at each level	Broad ethnic groups predominant in New Zealand ⇒ More specific individual ethnic groups			
Brief description	This is made up of the 5 main ethnic groups predominant in New Zealand: European Māori Pacific Island Asian Other Ethnic Groups	This includes 25 categories further broken down according to geographic location or origin, cultural differences and size.	This includes 41 categories, classified according to criteria just described.	This includes 231 ethnic groups disaggregated according to geographic location or origin, cultural differences.
Examples	European	Other European	British and Irish	Scottish (Scots)
	Other Ethnic Groups	Middle Eastern	Middle Eastern	Israeli/Jewish/Hebrew
	Asian	Southeast Asian	Vietnamese	Vietnamese

* There is an additional super-aggregated level, level-zero, above level-one. It is the same as level-one, except that there is no separate category for the 'Asian' category, which falls under 'Other Ethnic Groups'.

4.1 Number and types of categories

From the tables above, it is obvious that the Australian and New Zealand standards have different classification procedures. Some of these have been implicitly suggested in previous discussions, but this section will address them directly.

Australia

The ASCCEG clearly uses geographic criteria to determine at least its level-one categories. For example, its nine broad groups at level-one are: 'Oceanian', 'North-West European', 'Southern and Eastern European', 'North African and Middle Eastern', 'South-East Asian', 'North-East Asian', 'Southern and Central Asian', 'People of the Americas' and 'Sub-Saharan African'. These are further broken down into more geographically based groups, culminating in the third level cultural and ethnic groups. The ASCCEG uses two classification criteria to form these categories (2000, p.8):

- The geographic location in the world where a cultural or an ethnic group first became (that is, was recognised as) a distinct entity
- The similarity of cultural and ethnic groups in terms of social and cultural characteristics, especially languages spoken and religions practised

In practice, the classification is formed in the following way:

The classification criteria and the way they have been applied has produced a classification structure that can be described in conventional terms: cultural and ethnic entities grouped to form narrow groups on the basis of geographic proximity and similarity in terms of cultural and social characteristics; and narrow groups aggregated to form broad groups on the basis of geographic proximity and a degree of similarity in terms of their characteristics (2000, p.10).

Re-emphasising the ASCCEG's geographic approach, it is interesting to notice that the narrow groups have been harmonised with the country groupings used in the Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC). The ASCCEG is also associated with the Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) and Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups (ASCRG). "This allows useful comparisons between country of birth data and ancestry or ethnicity data" (2000, p.8). The influence of the SACC can be seen in the first method of identifying an ethnic group - taking a country and assigning an ethnic group to it. The influence of the ASCRG and ASCL was seen in the list of variables used pre-ASCCEG to determine the ethnic and cultural diversity of the population (see the section "Rationales for the standards"). However, it is also important to point out that this seems to be an unusual approach, since harmonising ethnic data with a country, in particular, would seem to contradict the whole rationale behind measuring ethnic and cultural groups. The classification ought to capture all ethnic groups, including those that are within or across state boundaries, not just those that are nationality-based.

Another aspect worth noticing in the ASCCEG is the way some areas are grouped. For example, there seems to be an Euro-centric geographic grouping in the broad 'Oceanian' grouping, which includes 'Melanesian and Papuan', 'Micronesian' and 'Polynesian' base level groups.

New Zealand

In contrast to Australia, New Zealand's classification has only five first-level ethnic groups. These are derived not from a geographic base, but from the main ethnic groups present in New Zealand, some of which are important for policy purposes. They are 'European', 'New Zealand Māori', 'Pacific Island', 'Asian' and 'Other Ethnic Groups'. Therefore, at level-one (and level-two), comparison between the NZSCE and ASCCEG is virtually impossible, though comparison between the ASCCEG's base level and the NZSCE's third and fourth levels may be possible. At levels two and three, these are broken down into progressively more specific ethnic groups, culminating in the level-four ethnic groups.

The applicability of the ASCCEG's nine categories for users of the data is questionable. First, the nine first-level categories may be rather unclear in some cases. If used in a survey, the choice between nine level-one categories may be too great and/or confusing for respondents, and may also create problems for those involved in administering the survey. While certainly being logically derived from the geographic criteria outlined above, some of the categories do not seem user-friendly, for example, the 'People of the Americas' category. If classifications at level-one are used, a New Zealand inhabitant of any ethnicity, whether New Zealand European, or Māori, could have to choose to classify him/herself as belonging to the 'Oceanian' ethnic group. This seems quite a meaningless category to the average person, who would be unused to such a term.

4.2 The place of indigenous peoples in the classification

Australia

The geographic base of the ASCCEG means that non-indigenous and indigenous peoples from the same country cannot be distinguished from one another until the lowest level of the classification. This means that Australia's indigenous peoples, the Australian Aboriginals, Australian South Sea Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders, are not represented except at the

base level. Therefore, if users wished to produce data targeting these groups, the lowest level of the classification would have to be used, possibly making the process quite cumbersome. It should be pointed out, however, that within the ABS, there is a specific unit devoted to producing statistics relating to Australia's aboriginal population, the National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (NCATSIS).

New Zealand

The indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand have different histories, and different histories of recognition from the dominant ethnic group in those countries. It is therefore very difficult to make a meaningful comparison between the two. However, one significant difference is worth noticing. The NZSCE places much more emphasis on the status of its indigenous people in its classification than the ASCCEG. Recognising the importance of Māori as the *tāngata whenua* (original inhabitants) of New Zealand, the fact that New Zealand is the only place where there is a commitment to the "status, preservation and continuity of Māori cultural traditions" (1996) and to the Treaty of Waitangi, the NZSCE places 'New Zealand Māori' as one of the five main ethnic groups at the highest level. The approach taken by the ASCCEG would be unlikely to attract much support in New Zealand, as Māori are important users and producers of data in New Zealand, and need to be recognised as such statistically for policy and/or planning purposes. There are also two additional classifications concerned with Māori that can supplement the ethnicity classification. These are the Standard Classification of Māori Descent, and the New Zealand Standard Classification of Iwi.

Pacific Island peoples, although not indigenous to New Zealand, are recognised in a similar way to Māori because of their policy-related importance in New Zealand. Except for level-one, some Pacific Island groups are classified at a higher level than they would be in the Australian classification (where they are placed in the broad 'Oceanian' group as the narrow groups 'Polynesian', 'Micronesian' and 'Melanesian and Papuan'). This is in accordance with Recommendation 8 of the New Zealand Review Committee on Ethnic Statistics (1988), which recommended that Pacific Island groups be identified separately in ethnic statistics. The number of Pacific Islanders immigrating to New Zealand is predicted to increase, and so ethnicity statistics will help to measure the impact of emigration on the Pacific Islands, as well as determining New Zealand's responsibility to Pacific peoples.

4.3 Statistical balance and mutual exclusivity

Australia

Very closely related to the previous point, is the Australian desire to achieve a "physically and statistically balanced" (2000, p.11) classification structure:

Statistical balance means that no broad or narrow groups should represent an inordinate number of observations...and that each broad and narrow group should represent significant numbers of observations. Thus, a classification used for the dissemination of statistics should not have categories at the same level in it's [sic] hierarchy which are too disparate in their population size (2000, p.11).

The need to achieve statistical balance has contributed greatly to the grouping of ethnic and cultural groups. For example, those groups that are important for policy and/or planning purposes, and those that have large numbers in Australia, have been included regardless of their worldwide numbers (like the NZSCE does with some of its ethnic groups). Also, those

groups with large worldwide numbers are included, irrespective of their significance in Australia. Some cultural and ethnic groups, which are numerically not very significant in Australia, have therefore been included in residual categories.

It is likely that this need to achieve statistical balance has contributed to the placements of some groups, such as Australia's indigenous peoples, who have been classified at the third level. This has probably been done in order to not 'imbalances' the classification in favour of any group, and to maintain the classification's physically balanced structure, another important consideration for the ASCCEG.

One of the main principles of a classification is that its categories are mutually exclusive. That is, they should be distinct and not overlap. There is a problem of mutual exclusivity in using some nationality-based ethnic groups, which is acknowledged in the ASCCEG. For example, some saw the inclusion of an 'Australian' category as being at odds with other classifications in the narrow group of Australian Peoples, for example, Australian Aboriginal, Australian South Sea and Torres Strait Islander (2000, p.6). "It was felt that because we are all Australians the inclusion of a category 'Australian' creates a mutual exclusivity problem with other categories of this classification" (2000, p.6). There are also other instances of mutual exclusivity problems, for example, the categories 'South African' and 'Indonesian'. The former ought to be a 'not further defined' (n.f.d) category, since 'Afrikaner' is identified separately. Similarly, 'Indonesian' could be a separate n.f.d category, since several Indonesian ethnicities are listed separately.

New Zealand

Unlike Australia, the NZSCE does not strictly adhere to the desire to achieve statistical balance. This is seen, for example, in the placing of 'New Zealand Māori', 'Asian' and 'Pacific Islands' as stand-alone categories at the highest level in the NZSCE. Although these ethnic groups represent only a small proportion of the population, compared with the majority ethnic group 'European', the NZSCE has decided to deliberately 'imbalances' its classification of ethnicity in favour of achieving relevant and useful statistics on these ethnic groups⁶. Physical balance also does not seem to be a priority for the NZSCE either; there are great variations in the size of the categories. For example, 'New Zealand Māori' is a stand-alone category at levels one, two, three and four (and therefore includes only one group at each level), while the third-level categories 'Other European' and 'Other Pacific Islands' contain quite a lengthy list of ethnic groups.

It should be pointed out that statistical balance is not generally deemed important as a criterion for a classification. In their definition of a 'classification', Bowker and Star do not include it: "A classification is a spatial, temporal, or spatio-temporal segmentation of the world. A "classification system" is a set of boxes (metaphorical or literal) into which things can be put to do some kind of work" (1999, p.10). A classification should include the following characteristics:

- There are consistent, unique classificatory principles in operation.
- The categories are mutually exclusive.
- The system is complete (that is, exhaustive). (Bowker and Star, 1999, pp.10-11)

⁶ At the 1996 Census Māori comprised 14.5 percent of the New Zealand population, 'Pacific Islands' groups were almost 6 percent and 'Asian' groups were around 5 percent.

With reference to mutual exclusivity, the NZSCE also has some problems. The category 'New Zealander' has been excluded from the classification in order to maintain mutual exclusivity. Like the reason cited in the ASCCEG, which created some doubt about the mutual exclusivity of the 'Australian' category, it could be argued that because all inhabitants of New Zealand could classify themselves as 'New Zealanders', the mutual exclusivity of this category could not be maintained. Therefore, on the one hand, the NZSCE has avoided the potential mutual exclusivity problem by not including this category, but on the other, it has created a new problem. For example, in some surveys nationality responses ('New Zealander' or 'Kiwi') are coded to 'New Zealand European', thereby reducing the mutual exclusivity of the standard anyway. There are also mutual exclusivity problems elsewhere in the classification, for example, the 'Celtic' category. Several ethnic groups (for example, Gaelic, Irish and Cornish) in the classification at the same level may be described by this term. Therefore, the mutual exclusivity of this term is reduced.

5.0 CLASSIFICATION AND CODING STRUCTURES

5.1 Coding structures and residual codes

Australia

In the classification, one, two and four digit codes are assigned to the first (broad), second (narrow) and third (base) level categories of the classification respectively. For example, code 8 is the 'Peoples of the Americas' category, code 81 is the 'North American' category and code 8103 is the 'Canadian' category. No ethnicity code has the ending '0' or '9', as these are reserved for supplementary and residual codes, respectively (discussed below). These codes are necessary because they allow data that would otherwise be useless to be processed within the four digit, that is, base-level unit.

Residual codes are those that contain responses 'not elsewhere classified' (n.e.c), and they are included in a classification structure only if they are needed (perhaps for statistical accuracy). They are coded with the first two digits of the narrow group, followed by the digits '99'. Ethnic and cultural groups not included by themselves in the classification structure are included in the n.e.c category of the narrow group to which they relate. They have been classified in this way mainly because they are numerically insignificant in Australia. The published classification includes only three examples in each n.e.c residual category, and the rest are found in the numerical coding index. In the broad groups, there are also codes reserved for residual categories at the narrow group level. These are comprised of the broad group code followed by '9' and are used to classify those cultural and ethnic groups that do not fit into the narrow groups.

The ASCCEG also has supplementary codes. These are used to process inadequately described responses, and are as follows:

- Four digit codes ending with two or three zeros
- Four digit codes beginning with three zeros
- Four digit codes beginning with the digits '09'

Those codes ending in zero are 'not further defined' (n.f.d) codes and are used to code responses that cannot be coded to a base-level unit (perhaps because they are not adequately described), but could be coded to a higher-level category. They are assigned a 'not further defined' code comprising the two digit code of the narrow group, followed by '00'. Responses

that cannot be coded to either a base-level unit or a narrow group, but that do fall within the scope of a broad group, can be coded to the group using the single digit code of the broad group, followed by '000'. Codes beginning with '000' indicate that the data cannot be coded at any level. This includes 'inadequately described' responses ('0000') and 'not stated' ('0001'). Those beginning in '09' are used to code responses which do not relate to the specific definition of a cultural and ethnic group, and which cannot be assigned any of the other n.f.d codes, for example, Eurasian, Asian, African or European.

New Zealand

Like the ASCCEG, the NZSCE has a code structure representing each level of the classification. There is a one digit code for the first level, two for the second, three for the third, and five for the fourth level. For example, code 4 is the 'Asian' category, code 41 is Southeast Asian, code 414 is 'Other Southeast Asian', and code 41411 is the Burmese ethnicity. Like the Australian standard, some codes are also reserved as residual codes, with '9' at the start of the code indicating the presence of a specific residual code.

The ASCCEG made a distinction between residual and supplementary codes, with the former describing responses which are 'not elsewhere classified', and the latter describing 'Inadequately described' responses. The NZSCE does not make this distinction, and includes only residual categories to describe particular types of survey responses. The NZSCE's residual categories were amended in 1998 when a standard set of residual codes was added to provide a consistent approach for coding in vitals (births, deaths, marriages, divorces and abortions). This discussion will therefore be based on the amended version of the standard.

The NZSCE's residual categories are also identified by a special grouping of numbers. The first residual category, 'not elsewhere classified' (n.e.c), is like that of the ASCCEG, and is recognised by its code ending of '99'. In the Australian classification, it was used to describe cultural and ethnic groups that were numerically insignificant in Australia and did not warrant inclusion in the classification. In the NZSCE, it is also used to capture responses that clearly belong in a specific category, but do not appear as specific entries on their own. For example, the 'British n.e.c' (12199) may include a person who identifies as being a 'Gibraltarian' or a 'St Helenian'. The second residual code, 'not further defined' (n.f.d), is recognised by its ending of one, two or three zeros, depending on the level at which it is placed. Like the ASCCEG, it is used to classify inadequately described responses at a less detailed degree. There are also three other residual codes:

- **'Response Unidentifiable'** (recognised by one, two or three sevens after the '9') is used to code an illegible, ambiguous or vague response.
- **'Response Outside Scope'** (recognised by one, two or three eights after the '9') is used when the meaning of the response is clear, but when it falls outside the scope of the classification, as described in the standard.
- **'Not Stated'** (recognised by one, two or three nines after the residual '9') is used when a respondent has not given any response to a question.

Unlike the ASCCEG, the NZSCE does not have a category corresponding to inadequately described responses, which do not relate to the specific definition of a cultural and ethnic group, and which cannot be assigned any of the other n.f.d codes, for example, Eurasian, Asian, African or European. These types of response are classified into the appropriate n.f.d. categories.

Residual Category	Level-one	Level-two	Level-three	Level-four
Response unidentifiable	9	97	977	97777
Response outside scope	9	98	988	98888
Not stated	9	99	999	99999
'not elsewhere classified'	N/a	N/a	N/a	X (code of level one group) Y (code of second level group) Z (code of third level group)
'not further defined'	N/a	X (code of the main group) 0	XY (code of the second level group) 00	XY000

It is worth noting that the ASCCEG does not consider supplementary codes to be part of its classification structure (but it does include the residual code n.e.c), and lists them separately as an appendix at the end of the standard classification. SNZ, on the other hand, does include all of its residual codes within the classification. It seems unlikely that SNZ could follow the ABS' example in this respect. The ASCCEG also has only two responses: 'Inadequately Described' and 'Not Stated', to correspond to the NZSCE's three categories describing inadequate responses. Although they may be used relatively infrequently, it would seem important to describe as closely as possible the exact nature of the response given to a question. This may be useful to those administering the survey for analysing how the classification is used and interpreted by respondents. It may, therefore, highlight any areas in the classification that need to be examined. The ASCCEG also omits from its classification structure the n.f.d category, which the NZSCE does include in its classification.

5.2 Coding of multiple responses

Australia

In its 'Coding Procedures' section, the ASCCEG outlines its approach to multiple responses: "If meaningful and useful data is to be collected, stored and disseminated, as many as possible of the cultural and ethnic groups nominated by a person on a statistical or administrative form should be coded" (2000, p.16). If a multiple response is given, it is suggested that a minimum of two groups should be coded in order to improve the accuracy and meaning of the data. This is to cover likely responses that give the ethnicity/ancestry of both parents, as well as responses such as 'Irish Australian'. Four would enable both grandparents to be accounted for. In the 2001 Census, the first two responses written down will be coded. This option has been chosen because it is considered to serve the users of 2001 Census data, it is less costly, and because preliminary testing indicated that few people actually give more than two responses. From this, it appears that prioritisation is not consciously implemented.

There are several rules to determine how responses are coded. For example, when a response exactly matches an entry in the coding index, it is assigned that code. If the response partially matches (because of spelling, the use of acronyms, abbreviations, foreign words, qualifying or extraneous words) it is still coded to that index entry. It is useful to notice that when a response

includes identification with a country or nationality as well as an ethnic and cultural group, both responses should be coded. For example, because 'Irish Australian' does not appear as a single index entry, it should be assigned a code for Irish (2201) and Australian (1101), which appear separately. The exception to this rule is when the words are coded to a single index entry, for example 'Indian Tamil', which should be coded to 'Indian Tamil' (7116) rather than Indian (7106) and Tamil (7116).

New Zealand

Like the ASCCEG, the NZSCE recognises that people may identify with more than one ethnic group. However, because different surveys have different procedures for dealing with multiple responses, it is very difficult to generalise on how multiple responses are coded. For example, in the HLFS and HES, up to three responses can be coded, while in the 2001 Census, up to six responses will be coded. In vitals output currently, all responses are captured for births and deaths (that is, a total response), with three being coded according to a priority system. If more than these amounts are given in response to an ethnicity question, a priority system usually has to be used to determine the order in which the ethnic groups should be coded (see Attachment 2 to the Ethnicity Standard - *Revised Priority Recording System for Ethnicity*). In the NZSCE, this system generally gives priority to Māori and Pacific Island groups, followed by Asian, then the 'Other' category, with European groups being last.

The ASCCEG and NZSCE seem to be quite similar with respect to their approach to multiple responses. It is interesting to notice that although both stress the importance of respondents being able to identify with several different ethnicities at the same time, the way the data is coded (perhaps because of surveys allowing a maximum number of responses, or because of priority coding in the case of New Zealand) may mean that this information may be lost or focussed in a particular way (though it certainly is still captured).

6.0 OUTPUTS AND QUALITY ISSUES

6.1 Outputs

Australia

The ASCCEG does not give specific examples or questionnaire modules demonstrating how it expects or wishes its classification to be used. Apart from some instructions in the introduction (see 'Coding Procedures' and 'Storage and Presentation of Data') to the standard, little guidance is provided for users. This is because it is not ABS policy to include questionnaires in the standard classification document, but rather to do so in information relating to statistical variables. As mentioned in a section above, it is envisioned that the ASCCEG will be used for "collecting, classifying and presenting data related to personal characteristics, such as ethnic identity, ancestry and cultural identity" (2000, p.1). The ABS will also "actively promote" (2000, p.2) the use of the ASCCEG by other government organisations, private organisations, community groups and individuals collecting or analysing data relating to ethnic or cultural groups. Other users are implicitly suggested as well, for example, those involved in statistical, administrative and service related areas, which are concerned with using and producing ethnic and cultural data.

The ASCCEG advises that data be collected at the base level wherever possible, because greater flexibility of data output is possible when the level of classification becomes more detailed. However, it also states that the "hierarchical structure of ASCCEG allows users the

flexibility to output statistics at the level of the classification which best suits their particular purposes" (2000, p.17). This may mean combining the groups and data to produce statistics that target the user's needs. For example, specific cultural and ethnic groups within the narrow group could be targeted as the focus of a study and therefore be presented separately, with the remaining groups being aggregated together to form an 'Other' category. (However, only groups that are in the same narrow group should be aggregated, as otherwise the comparability between data is adversely affected.) This can also be applied at the higher, broad-group level, as long as the same rules are applied. In the example (2000, p.17) of a possible output that follows, only two or three base-level groups have been targeted in the narrow groups, with the rest being grouped in the 'Other' categories:

Oceanian

Australian Peoples

Australian
Australian Aboriginal
Australian South Sea Islander
Torres Strait Islander

New Zealand Peoples

Other

North-West European

British

English
Scottish
Other

Irish

Western European

Dutch
German
Other

Northern European

Southern and Eastern European

Southern European

Italian
Spanish
Other

South Eastern European

Greek
Macedonian
Other

Eastern European

North African and Middle Eastern

Arab
Jewish
Other North African and Middle Eastern

New Zealand

Unlike the ASCCEG, the NZSCE devotes a significant section of its standard to demonstrating the ways in which it can be applied. This includes example questionnaire modules (which are now out of date) and some of the ways the data can be produced and analysed. As seen above, Australia's standard has no such section, and while it does give some guidelines on

where and how it sees its standard being used, it does not give any concrete examples. The NZSCE states that it is important to have a clear understanding of what responses the ethnicity question hopes to produce:

The question should capture the diversity of European ethnic groups in New Zealand as well as other ethnic groups such as Pacific Island and Asian ethnic groups. The question should clearly indicate that more than one answer can be given. It is recommended the question remains essentially the same in order to get a consistent measure of trends over time (1996).

Questionnaires must therefore try to achieve these outcomes: show the diversity of ethnic groups; give people the potential to identify with more than one ethnic group; and be consistent with other surveys in order that comparisons can be made.

There are three types of output that may be produced from a survey:

- **Prioritised output** (discussed earlier.) The advantage of this type of output is that it allows each individual's response to appear only once. Therefore, the total population and percentages tables will sum to 100 percent. However, a significant disadvantage is that it is not in accordance with the main principle of ethnicity, that is, self-identification. It derives a single response, for example, from a multiple response, which may not be the one the individual would have chosen him/herself if given the option of returning only one response.
- **Total response output.** The advantage of this output is that each response that an individual gives is counted, and it is therefore a very accurate representation of responses. However, because individuals can be counted more than once (if they give a multiple response), the sum of the individual groups does not equal that of the population who responded. This could be a problem in some situations, for example, when funding is based on population numbers.
- **Sole/combination output.** This type of output includes sole ethnic group categories for those who report only one ethnic group, and combination categories for those who give more than one ethnic group.

The 2001 Census will use total response output.

The NZSCE contains a relatively large section on the historical context of the ethnicity question in censuses, and the ways in which it has changed. The ASCCEG obviously cannot do this because it has no such history in its censuses, as it has asked about ancestry rather than ethnicity. The 1986 Census included a question on ancestry, in which it asked respondents to identify their origin, rather than which ethnic groups they felt an affiliation with. Because it was felt that people responded with different understandings of what this term meant, the ancestry question was not included in 1991 and 1996.

6.2 Quality

Australia

The ASCCEG briefly and indirectly mentions issues concerned with achieving quality data and standards:

[T]he range of cultural and ethnic groups separately identified in the classification is suitable and appropriate for the presentation of statistics about cultural and ethnic

diversity in Australia and at the same time provides an overview of the world's cultural and ethnic groups within a coherent framework. The coverage, balance and robustness of the classification structure is such that it can also accommodate changes to Australia's cultural and ethnic composition, and can be used to facilitate comparisons with cultural and ethnic data from other countries (2000, p.11).

This statement recognises that changes in the social and political environment, and other influences, contribute to redefining the composition of ethnic and cultural groups. Provision has been made, if necessary, to add or amend cultural and ethnic groups from the classification in the future.

The ASCCEG seems to direct its instruction to the general public who may be using the standard, rather than to those perhaps with statistical experience in the ABS. It is, therefore, not specific about giving details on the lines through which a revision of the standard takes place:

[I]n order that the classification remains a standard, users should not make arbitrary changes to the structure. Rather, they should contact the ABS and identify any apparent problems they encounter in the course of implementation, data collection, or data analysis. The ABS will formally revise the ASCCEG at a suitable time so that all users continue to use the standard classification (2000, p.12).

New Zealand

The NZSCE and ASCCEG are very similar in their approach to future developments in this area. Like the ASCCEG, the NZSCE has taken into account potential changeability of the structure and composition of cultural and ethnic groups. It has, therefore, left gaps in the level-four code sequences that could accommodate the inclusion of new categories if necessary.

An area in which there is some difference is the monitoring of quality standards. This may be because the two standards have a different intended audience. In contrast to the ASCCEG, which was quite general in its approach, the NZSCE, on the other hand, is quite specific on how its monitoring process operates. This may be because it assumes that its users have some knowledge of SNZ. The Classifications and Standards section (C&S) has overall responsibility for maintaining a quality standard. If any problems are encountered during data collection, then these should be reported to C&S. The Subject Matter Area (SMA) monitors the quality of the data output, with the Social Policy Division also consulting users on the appropriateness of the standard. The Statistical Development and Design Division oversees the output variable derivation process. The Standards Classification Committee (SCC) must approve any changes (though C&S can carry out routine maintenance of the standard without approval).

It is interesting to notice that the New Zealand standard includes a quality target for 'non-response' (a residual category which has since been changed to 'Not Stated') of less than three percent.

7.0 Conclusion

It was mentioned in the introduction that the purpose of this paper was to inform and promote discussion, rather than draw conclusions or take a position in the comparison of New Zealand's and Australia's classifications of ethnicity. However, this paper has highlighted some of the significant similarities and differences between the two classifications.

APPENDIX – COMPARISONS BETWEEN ASCCEG AND NZSCE

A.1 Comparison between the same levels of ASCCEG and NZSCE

As is now clear, it would be virtually impossible to compare the ASCCEG's and NZSCE's level one and two classifications as they are based upon different classification criteria. The ASCCEG is:

based on the geographic area in which a group originated or developed and the similarity of cultural and ethnic groups in terms of social and cultural characteristics (2000, p.1).

The NZSCE is almost structured the opposite way around, beginning from the ethnic groups present in New Zealand, and then widening the scope to include others. It is important to notice that geographic criteria are also mentioned, though the influence of this seems less than in the ASCCEG:

Individual ethnic groups are classified into progressively broader ethnic groups according to geographical location or origin, cultural similarities, and size (*in New Zealand*) (1996, emphasis added).

The following table illustrates the number of categories at each level of the ASCCEG's and NZSCE's classification:

	Number of groups at each level of the classification	
	ASCCEG	NZSCE
Level-one	9	5 (or 6 if level-zero is included)
Level-two	27	25
Level-three	189	41
Level-four	N/a	231

In general, the NZSCE is more detailed than the ASCCEG, including a greater number of ethnic groups at level-four that are identified in their own right. On the other hand, the ASCCEG contains relatively large 'not elsewhere classified' (n.e.c) categories (not included in the table) containing many of the ethnicities identified on their own in the NZSCE. With the exception of these n.e.c categories, the ASCCEG's third levels of ethnic and cultural groups are roughly of a similar size. Usually, no more than 15 categories are contained within each level-two narrow group. These narrow groups are based on geographic areas, and the ethnic and cultural groups within these areas are listed at level-three. This may indicate that the users of the ASCCEG do not require as much detail to produce the results they need.

The NZSCE, on the other hand, contains roughly the same amount of level-two categories as the ASCCEG, but by level-four, it has significantly more ethnic and cultural groups. This may be because some of the level-three categories are not very specific, and therefore contain a wider range of groups than the ASCCEG's more specific descriptions. For example, the NZSCE level-three category 'Other European' contains thirty-nine level-four ethnic groups, and 'Other Pacific Island Groups' contains thirty-eight. These make quite overwhelming lists. The ASCCEG by comparison breaks its European categories down into the second level 'British', 'Irish', 'Western European', 'Northern European', 'Southern European', 'South Eastern European' and 'Eastern European', and its Pacific Island categories into 'Melanesian and Papuan', 'Micronesian' and

'Polynesian'. (It is worth noting at this point that the ASCCEG does not include many of the Pacific Island ethnic groups that the NZSCE does. This may indicate the statistical importance of Pacific Island groups in New Zealand). Therefore, although geographically classified, the ASCCEG's level-three categories are more manageable and perhaps also more meaningful than the NZSCE's, as they are generally grouped with other similar cultural and ethnic groups.

By the third level of the ASCCEG, most groups are compatible with the NZSCE's third and fourth level groups. However, there are some exceptions, and these will be discussed in the following sections. The following list highlights some of the main differences between the two classifications, illustrating in particular the use of 'not elsewhere classified' and 'not further defined' categories. Interestingly, there are differences in all level-one groups⁷.

NZSCE category level-four

European

Celtic
 Channel Islander
 Cornish
 Gaelic
 Manx
 Orkney Islander
 Shetland Islander
 Greenlander
 Belgian
 Corsican
 Falkland Islander/Kelper

Dalmatian
 Cypriot Unspecified
 Sardinian
 Slavic/Slav
 European n.e.c
 Spanish (Catalan is a synonym for Spanish in the NZSCE)
 South Slav (formerly Yugoslav) n.e.c

Pacific Island

Kanaka/Kanak

Rarotongan
 Tokelauan
 Easter Islander
 Society Islander (including Tahitian)
 Hawaiian
 Pitcairn Islander
 Tuvalu Islander/Ellice Islander

ASCCEG equivalent at category level-three

North-West European

North-West European n.f.d
 British n.e.c
 English
 North-West European n.f.d
 British n.e.c
 Scottish
 Scottish
 Northern European n.e.c
 Western European n.e.c
 French
 British n.e.c

Southern and Eastern European

Croatian
 South Eastern European n.f.d
 Italian
 Southern European n.f.d
 Basque
 Catalan

Bosnian

Oceanian

Kanaka – Australian South Sea Islander
 Kanak – New Caledonian
 Cook Islander
 Polynesian n.e.c
 Polynesian n.e.c
 Polynesian n.e.c
 Polynesian n.e.c
 Polynesian n.e.c
 Polynesian n.e.c

⁷ In the lists over the next three sections, it is important to note that only ethnicities actually named in the main body of the classification are being compared. That is, nothing from the 'n.e.c' or 'n.f.d' categories will be discussed unless the NZSCE includes something in its classification which the ASCCEG assigns to one of these categories, and vice versa.

Wallis Islander
Rotuman/Rotuman Islander
Bougainvillean
Malaitian
Papuan/New Guinean/Irian Jayan

Caroline Islander
Marianas Islander
Marshall Islander
Ocean Islander/Banaban
Yap Islander

Asian

Hong Kong Chinese
Singaporean Chinese
Chinese n.f.d
Other Asian n.e.c

Indonesian (including Javanese/
Sundanese/Sumatran)

Indonesian (including Javanese/
Sundanese/Sumatran) (Maduran and
Sundanese are synonyms for this category in
the NZSCE, but are listed separated in the
ASCCEG)

Other Southeast Asian n.e.c

Indian n.e.c
Sri Lankan Tamil
Bangladeshi
Fijian Indian/Indo-Fijian
Other Asian n.e.c
Other Asian n.e.c
Other Asian n.e.c

Other Ethnic Groups

Arab (Saudi Arabian is a synonym for Arab in
the NZSCE)

Omani
Yemeni
Middle Eastern n.e.c
Other African n.e.c
Middle Eastern n.e.c

Polynesian n.e.c
Fijian
Melanesian and Papuan n.e.c
Solomon Islander
Papua New Guinean
Irian Jayan
Melanesian and Papuan n.e.c
(these three groups are separately listed,
respectively, with Irian Jayan being included
in the **South-East Asian** category)

Micronesian n.e.c
Micronesian n.e.c
Micronesian n.e.c
Nauruan
Micronesian n.e.c

North-East Asian

Chinese
Chinese
Chinese
Mongolian

South-East Asian

Javanese
Sundanese
Maritime South-East Asian n.e.c (these three
groups are separately listed, respectively)
Madurese
Sundanese

Timorese

Southern and Central Asian

Anglo-Indian
Tamil
Bengali
Indian
Kazakh
Pathan
Uzbek

North African and Middle Eastern

Saudi Arabian

Arab n.e.c
Arab n.e.c
Berber
Sudanese
Kuwaiti

People of the Americas

Inuit/Eskimo	North American n.e.c
Paraguayan	South American n.e.c
South American Indian	South American n.e.c
Costa Rican	Central American n.e.c
Guatemalan	Central American n.e.c
Honduran	Central American n.e.c
Panamanian	Central American n.e.c
Central American Indian	Central American n.e.c
Latin American/Hispanic n.e.c	El Salvadorean
Puerto Rican	Caribbean Islander n.e.c
West Indian/Caribbean	West Indian n.f.d
Latin American/Hispanic n.e.c	Hispanic
Latin American/Hispanic n.f.d (Hispanic is classified under both of these categories)	
Latin American/Hispanic n.e.c	Cuban
Creole(Latin America)	Creole, so described (supplementary code)
Creole (US)	Creole, so described (supplementary code)
	Sub-Saharan African
Other African n.e.c	Akan
Other African n.e.c	Funani
Other African n.e.c	Ghanaian
Other African n.e.c	Angolan
Other African n.e.c	Eritrean
Other African n.e.c	Ethiopian
Other African n.e.c	Malawian
Other African n.e.c	Mozambican
Other African n.e.c	Namibian
Other African n.e.c	Tanzanian
Other African n.e.c	Zambian
Other African n.e.c	Zimbabwean

A.2 Categories not included in NZSCE from ASCCEG (including n.e.c and n.f.d categories)

ASCCEG's categories

Moldovan
Montenegrin
Breton
Walloon

Australian South Sea Islander
New Zealander

Anglo-Indian
Gurkha
Malayalo
Marathi

Yoruba
Oromo

French Canadian
Hispanic (North American)

A.3 Categories not included in ASCCEG from NZSCE (including n.e.c and n.f.d categories)

Admiralty Islander
Aitutaki Islander
Atiu Islander
Gambier Islander
Mangaia Islander
Manihiki Islander
Mauke Islander
Mitiaro Islander
Palmerston Islander
Penrhyn Islander
Pukapuka Islander
Rakahanga Islander
Austral Islander
Belau/Palau Islander
Bismark Archipelagoan
Guadalcanalian
Guam Islander/Chamorro
Manus Islander
Marquesas Islander
New Britain Islander
New Georgian
New Irelander
Phoenix Islander
Santa Cruz Islander
Society Islander (including Tahitian)
Tuamotu Islander
Wake Islander

Kampuchean Chinese
Malaysian Chinese
Vietnamese Chinese
Malvinian (Spanish-speaking Falkland Islander)

A.4 Comparisons between level-one placements

Apart from some of the small differences highlighted in the first table, there are some significant differences between a small number of placements in the ASCCEG and NZSCE. It is interesting to note that many of these involve the placement of the majority ethnic group, originally descended from European immigrants:

Ethnic group to level-four for NZSCE and level-three for ASCCEG)	to level-four for NZSCE placement	ASCCEG placement
Armenian	European	Southern and Central Asian
American (US)	European	People of the Americas
Burgher	European	Southern and Central Asian
Canadian	European	People of the Americas
Australian	European	Oceania
New Zealander/NZ Pākehā	European or	Oceania
New Caledonian	European	Oceania
South African	European	Sub-Saharan Africa
Afrikaner	European	Sub-Saharan Africa
Georgian	European	Southern and Central Asian
Papuan/New Guinean/Irian Javan	Pacific Islands	'Papua New Guinean' placed in Oceania 'Irian Javan' placed in South-East Asian

The differences in the groupings are quite significant. For example 'American', 'Canadian' and 'South African' are under a 'European' grouping in the NZSCE (therefore highlighting where their ethnic groups originated from), but in the ASCCEG, they are classified under the actual geographic location where they are situated.

There are also another three narrow groups which include strongly dissimilar cultural and ethnic groups simply because they developed in the same geographic area. These are the Australian Peoples, New Zealand Peoples and the British. This approach seems to contradict the ASCCEG's rationale for placement, which is outlined in the introduction to the standard. For example, groups such as American and Canadian are geographically proximate to others at the narrow group level (therefore meeting the ASCCEG's first criteria), such as Native North American Indians and others in the North American n.e.c category (such as Inuit, Bermudans and Metis). However, it is difficult to see how they are similar to these groups in terms of the Borrie Report's characteristics (the second criteria of the ASCCEG). In another example, the ASCCEG discusses its rationale for placing 'Jewish' into Broad Group Four, North African and Middle Eastern. It is recognised that although many Jewish people would consider themselves to have more of an identification with European ethnic and cultural groups, they have been placed into the North African and Middle Eastern groups because that is where the Jewish culture originated. If the same rationale had been applied to groups such as American, Canadian and South African, they would presumably not be in the category they are in now.

A.5 Comparisons between terminology

NZSCE	ASCCEG
New Zealand European/Pākehā	New Zealander
Dutch/Netherlands	Dutch
Greek (incl. Greek Cypriot)	Greek
Croat/Croatian	Croatian
Serb/Serbian	Serbian
Slovene/Slovenian	Slovene
Icelander	Icelandic
Byelorussian	Belarusian

Romanian/Rumanian	Romanian
Romany/Gypsy	Roma/Gypsy
South African	Afrikaner or South African
New Zealand Māori	Māori
Vanuatu Islander/New Hebridean	Ni-Vanuatu
Cook Island Māori	Cook Islander
Tokelauan	Tokelauan/Tokelau Islander
Caroline Islander	Carolinian
I-Kiribati/Gilbertese	I-Kiribati
Nauru Islander	Nauruan
Ocean Islander/Banaban	Ocean Islander
Papuan/New Guinean/Irian Jayan	Papua New Guinean
Torres Strait Islander/Thursday Islander	Torres Strait Islander
Tuvalu Islander/Ellice Islander	Tuvalu Islander
Yap Islander	Yapese
Khmer/Kampuchean/Cambodian	Khmer
Lao/Laotian	Lao
Malay/Malayan	Malay
Thai/Tai/Siamese	Thai
Hong Kong Chinese	Chinese
Singaporean Chinese	Chinese
Taiwanese Chinese	Taiwanese
Afghani	Afghan
Assyrian	Assyrian/Chaldean
Iranian/Persian	Iranian
Israeli/Jewish/Hebrew	Jewish
Kurd	Kurdish
Black	Black American
West Indian/Caribbean	West Indian
West Indian/Caribbean	Trinidadian/Tobagonian
North American Indian	Native North American Indian
El Salvadorean	Salvadoran
Mozambique	Mozambican
Seychellois	Seychelles Islander

In general, the differences in descriptors do not seem very significant. However, there are two interesting points worth noticing. First, the NZSCE often uses the older terms with the more current ones as one descriptor. This is in contrast to the ASCCEG, which uses current (mainly political) terms to describe nationality-based ethnic groups, for example, 'Iranian' rather than 'Persian'. For example, the NZSCE uses 'Thai/Tai/Siamese' to describe 'Thai' and 'Khmer/Kampuchean/Cambodian' to describe 'Khmer'. This emphasises the old name(s) for the countries from which the ethnic group emerged, thus ironically reinforcing the link between nationality and ethnic group. This may reflect the fact that many people may still use the older term to describe such ethnic group(s), and it is important that there is still a term in existence for them to be classified under. Alternatively, the grouping of old and new terms may also emphasise the fact that there are no significant differences between them, and that they can be regarded as one ethnic group, rather than several. Secondly, as has been mentioned several

times in this paper, there is a significant difference in the way the majority ethnic group is described in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada. Again, it is highlighted that there are some inconsistencies in the NZSCE, with the equivalent of 'New Zealand European/Pākehā' being 'New Zealander' in the ASCCEG, but its classifications of 'American', 'Canadian' and 'South African' being virtually the same nationality-based groups as in the ASCCEG.

A.6 Comparisons in summary

Although the two standards are founded on different starting points: the ASCCEG on geographic origin and the NZSCE on the main ethnicities currently present in New Zealand, they do have some aspects in common. Levels one and two are not comparable (although New Zealand's standard could be concurred (matched) with Australia's). However, as already mentioned, there are many categories at level-three of the ASCCEG that are comparable to the NZSCE's levels three and four.

In theory, reflecting the self-identification approach, New Zealand's classification should be based on ethnic affiliation and socio-historical characteristics. In practice, however, it appears much more difficult to classify along these lines. It appears that these factors, along with geographic ones, play a part in determining the boundaries of ethnic groups. A purely geographical or purely ethno-cultural classification would be exceptionally difficult for the NZSCE to implement in practice, as nationality-based responses would be difficult to classify. Therefore, in much of its classification (especially at the higher levels), the NZSCE shares the ASCCEG's emphasis on geographical location (and political borders) as a means of classifying. However, it is not generally adhered to as strictly as the ASCCEG in the lower levels. There are exceptions to this. The NZSCE includes the separate ethnic groups 'Sri Lankan Tamil' and 'Tamil' instead of 'Tamil' (the ASCCEG's category), and 'Bengali' and 'Bangladeshi' instead of 'Bengali' (the ASCCEG's category). The ASCCEG's classifications perhaps make more sense, as the Sri Lankan Tamil and Tamil, and Bengali and Bangladeshi are ethnically identical, and should not be distinguished according to political borders.

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