

Review of the Measurement of Ethnicity

The definition and measurement of ethnicity. A Pacific perspective.

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The Definition and Measurement of Ethnicity

A Pacific Perspective

**A discussion paper
prepared for
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**by
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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of Statistics New Zealand.

1. Introduction

Statistics New Zealand is reviewing the way ethnicity is recorded in official social statistics. People's perceptions of ethnicity change over time and it is important to make sure that the way ethnicity is recorded is acceptable to the people who supply the information and relevant to the people who use it.

The way ethnicity is recorded was last reviewed in 1988. The current review will have a fresh look at the concepts and measurements of ethnicity and update them if required.

As part of its review, the review team will consult with a wide range of groups, including Pacific peoples for whom ethnic identity is an important matter. This paper discusses some of the issues relating to the way ethnicity is collected for Pacific peoples in New Zealand. It describes the New Zealand Pacific population and raises a number of questions that Pacific peoples may like to consider as part of the consultation.

A definition

Ethnicity is defined in the current Statistics New Zealand standard as:

The ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. Thus, ethnicity is self-perceived and people can affiliate with more than one ethnic group.

Ethnicity is not the same as nationality, ancestry or race. Nationality is the country to which a person belongs by birth or citizenship. Ancestry is a person's family descent. Race classifies people into groups according to physical characteristics. These three characteristics can play an important part in determining which ethnic group or groups people feel they belong to, but people can choose an ethnic group on other grounds if they wish.

Ethnicity is not fixed through a person's life. People can make a different choice at any time and can identify more or less strongly with several ethnicities.

Who this paper covers

The statistical category that covers Pacific peoples encompasses many different groups. These include the six largest Pacific communities in New Zealand:

Cook Island Maori, including each island group, Fijians except Fiji Indians, Niueans, Samoans, Tokelauans and Tongans.

The category also includes groups with relatively small numbers in New Zealand:

Australian Aboriginals, Austral Islanders, Belau/Palau Islanders, Bouganvilleans, Caroline Islanders, Easter Islanders, Gambier Islanders, Guam Islanders, Hawaiians, I-Kiribati, Kanaka, Marquesas Islanders, Marshall Islanders, Nauru Islanders, Papua New Guineans including all island groups, Phoenix Islanders, Pitcairn Islanders, Society Islanders, Solomon Islanders including each island group, Tuamotu Islanders, Tuvaluans, Vanuatuans, Wallis Islanders and Yap Islanders.

2. Literature review

Pacific peoples have always inhabited a world that is more extensive than their island homes (Hau'ofa 1993). Hau'ofa notes that the rapid expansion of the world economy since World War II has had a particularly liberating effect on the lives of people in Oceania.

The new economic reality made nonsense of artificial boundaries, enabling the people to shake off their confinement and they have since moved, by the tens of thousands, doing what their ancestors had done before them: enlarging their world as they go, but on a scale not possible before. Everywhere they go, to Australia, New Zealand, Hawai'i, mainland USA, Canada and even Europe, they strike roots in new resource areas, securing employment and overseas family property, expanding kinship networks through which they circulate themselves, their relatives, their material goods, and their stories all across the ocean, and the ocean is theirs because it has always been their home. (Hau'ofa 1993:10)

The expansion of Pacific peoples into other communities has had a number of consequences. Children are born and raised away from their traditional homeland, intermarriage between Pacific groups and between Pacific and non-Pacific people increases, children and adults have access to different educational and employment opportunities than they would at home and are exposed to different value systems. The ability to maintain cultural traditions may be reduced. All these factors can affect the way Pacific peoples in New Zealand see themselves and how they define their ethnic identity.

Diverse cultures

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the terms 'Pacific Islanders' and 'the Pacific Islands community' were in general and official use in New Zealand (Macpherson 1996:127). The concept of a Pacific community has been widely challenged because of its implications of Pacific unity and homogeneity. The idea that there has ever been such a person as a 'Pacific Islander' has been questioned. Tuimaleali'ifano (1990), for example, argued that:

Even if some community can exist in very general terms at a high level for political purposes, the daily reality for most is a sense of identity which links people to family, village and nation before the Pacific region in any way. Even in relocated and resettled communities with direct experience of a *Pacific Way* in the sense of common elements that permeate all Pacific cultures, there is an attempt to construct and/or maintain a distinct ethnic identity. (Tuimaleali'ifano 1990:157)

Macpherson agrees, suggesting that Pacific migrants have always been aware of their differences, but have to some extent been forced to adopt a 'national' or 'supra national' identity in response to colonisation and migration. Many, like the Niuean cited in Macpherson (1996:130), experienced the term 'Pacific Islander' as derogatory and insulting:

I'm a Niuean first and last. But sometimes you had to get used to being a 'Pacific Islander' because bodies like the Government and the City Council only gave resources to 'Pacific Islanders'. (Macpherson 1996:130)

In the face of this attitude, most Pacific communities worked hard to maintain their cultural distinctiveness. This in itself posed some problems. As Tuimaleali'ifano pointed out, for many migrants, personal identity and interests were defined in terms of family, village, religious affiliation and national origin in that order. Few saw themselves as members of a coherent Pacific Islands community and most were well aware of social distinctions both within and between the various migrant groups (Macpherson 1999). The concepts of ethnicity contained in official statistics provided little scope for recording these subtleties. Instead, statistics themselves, such as those collected in the census, contributed "in an important way to the process of identity creation in New Zealand" (Bedford and Didham 2001).

In the New Zealand census, individuals are able to choose their ethnic identity. They can select more than one of the categories listed or write in an identity not listed on the form. They are also free to change their ethnic identification from one census to another. The categories they choose presumably have some meaning for them, but as Macpherson (1999) suggests, the categories themselves may need to be revised from time to time.

People in the 'Samoan' category, for instance, have consciously opted, on the basis of their own knowledge of their social world, to identify themselves as Samoan in an official document. But even these categories may not be wholly satisfactory as building blocks for national identity for they are themselves social constructions that come, over time, to mask increasing divergence within. (Macpherson 1999:51)

Ethnic identities are typically flexible and overlapping. Because of the complexities of their lives and the importance of kinship and other networks, people may choose one identity in one situation and a different one in another. In the Cook Islands, for example, *enua* membership, that is, belonging to a group of people from the same village, district or island who meet regularly for social, recreational and cultural functions, is the focus of ethnic organisation and identity. Cook Islands people living in New Zealand, however, may identify as Cook Islanders rather than as members of a particular *enua* because of the need to promote a broader community identity (Loomis 1990).

Samoans too are linked by language and by familiarity with *le aganu'u fa'a Samoa*, which links individuals to *aiga* and village and defines and explains social organisation and relationships. According to Macpherson (1999), many migrants continued to identify with people from their families and villages with whom they shared common experiences and interests, rather than as Samoans.

From time to time, in response to calls from the villages at home, people met as members of villages to raise funds for their villages as they attempted to develop and redevelop schools, churches and access roads. But rarely, if ever, did Samoans come together as *Samoans*, and either articulate or give practical form to a *Samoan identity*. (Macpherson 1999:54).

Components of identity

A number of Pacific writers have tried to identify the key components of Pacific peoples' culture and identity. Others believe that this cannot be done. They argue that a cultural identity no longer rests on "a more or less homogeneous set of shared social experiences in a single location" (Macpherson, Spoonley and Anae 2001:13). While there may be no agreed set of essential elements, several themes do reoccur in the literature and these are summarised below.

Mulitalo-Lauto (2001:261) describes the key components of cultural identity as:

- social structures, including the family, church, clubs and groups
- strategies to ensure survival
- ceremony and rituals
- protocols and values
- spirituality.

Hekau (1995) also takes a holistic approach, describing a Niuean as:

One who has a deep appreciation for the people and their customs, one who can speak the language fluently with no pretence or trace of accent and has ability to understand the unspoken and unwritten as well as the obvious message. One who enjoys the simple life style of fishing and planting and cultivating his land. One who expects to give to needs of others and to receive whether needed or not, and feels obligated to participate in community affairs. Basically a Niuean is religious and places importance on worshipping and the church. One who feels strongly tied to Niue and will always return home, knowing the hard way of life, the complexities of family obligations and the possibility of no job. (Hekau 1995:12)

Balme (1998) is among those who sees the revival of cultural performance not only as a response to colonisation but also as a way for cultural groups to establish cultural boundaries and create and maintain cultural identities.

Mitaera (1999) refers to the importance of one's papa'anga or genealogy, which is the basis of personal identity and provides understanding of leadership, status, obligations and responsibilities and even career choices.

Others, such as Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001:201) and Mailei (1999), argue strongly that the ability to speak one's Pacific language should be a key measure of one's Pacific identity. Mailei (1999) used his own experience to argue for the importance of language:

While I was in New Zealand I followed my parents' predominantly European beliefs and also as a result did not really strive to understand my Samoan side. On the contrary, when our family moved back to Samoa then the Samoan side became very much emphasised, or in other words, our parents started to try and also teach us about this side and now also tell us that it was very important indeed. Living in both Samoa and New Zealand has not put me in the sort of identity confusion that others have, most probably because of my confidence in my language, but also my overall identity as a Samoan. (Mailei 1999:8)

Hunkin-Tuiletufuga (2001:202) points out that in the 1960s and 1970s many Pacific migrants believed that learning their Pacific language got in the way of learning English.

The routine use of Pacific languages was discouraged in many homes, with the result that many New Zealand-born Pacific children grew up knowing little or nothing of their language. Some have chosen to learn their language as adults in order claim their ethnic identity.

Airini (1999) concludes that living with cultural identity is a process that varies between individuals and groups and is interpreted, and at times, imposed by society.

Cultural identity is not exotic ethnographic samples; it is not about race, but relatedness. (Airini 1999:3)

The components of identity are clearly open to debate. Personal history and experience will determine the relative importance that individuals place on various different aspects of their lives.

The New Zealand experience

As Hau'ofa (1993) notes, Pacific peoples have always been mobile, travelling from one island to another to trade and marry, visit relatives and explore. Wherever they live, they maintain reciprocal economic links with their kin in the home islands and keep in close contact by telephone and visits. Some choose to return to their home island after settling abroad. Others move back and forth between their two homes. There has not been much research on return migration in Oceania (Bedford 1997), or on its effects on identity, but Connell (1994) believes that:

Migration is rarely absolute, unambivalent or final; it is not a cause and consequence of a definite break with a cultural life that is part of history, but a partial and conditional state, characterised by ambiguity and indeterminacy. A fixed status presupposes that the future can be foretold. Uncertainty defines the experience of migration, even in second generations. (Connell 1994:277 cited in Bedford 1997)

Writing about Pacific ethnicity in New Zealand concentrates very much on the New Zealand experience, particularly that of the growing New Zealand-born population. New Zealand-born Pacific peoples and long-term residents may identify strongly with a particular ethnic group, but they will take their New Zealand experience into account in considering their cultural identity (Fleras and Spoonley 1999:209).

There is a growing imbalance between New Zealand-born Pacific communities and island communities (Bedford 1997). With the decline in numbers coming from the Pacific, the proportions of Pacific peoples born in New Zealand will continue to grow, while the island-born populations decline. Already there are far more Niueans and Cook Islands people living in Auckland than in those islands. Bedford asks how cultural identification will be affected by this shift in the weight of population distribution. He notes that while there is little disagreement among members of the island and rim communities that the cores of Tongan and Samoan culture are located in the islands, this may not be the case for Niuean or Cook Islands culture. This is an important issue, especially for the second and third generation descendants of Pacific migrants in New Zealand. While some make regular visits to the islands, others have no language and little direct contact with traditional culture and customs (Bedford 1997:21). Mailei (1999) sees New Zealand-born Samoans and Samoans who came to New Zealand as infants as particularly vulnerable:

This group, if they have never lived in Samoa at any stage of their lives, will generally be either non-Samoan language speakers or will have a very limited grasp of the language and will also have lost strong links with the culture but also customs as a result. This is the group most likely to feel alienated but also to have a weak Samoan identity. (Mailei 1999:10)

Fleras and Spoonley (1999:190) agree, pointing out that the nature of New Zealand-based Pacific communities has changed considerably as New Zealand-born Pacific peoples have begun to have a much greater influence.

Whatever else they are – whether Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islander, Niuean, Tokelauan, Fijian – they are also a product of their New Zealand location, and a key question is how they combine their cultural heritage and ethnic identity with these New Zealand experiences. New ethnicities are developing in terms of an evolving ethnic identity that derives from being Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island Maori, Niuean or Tokelauan in New Zealand. (Fleras and Spoonley 1999:190)

Commentators recognise different categories of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. These include:

- those who were born and raised in island nations and who immigrated to New Zealand in their adult years;
- those who were born in island nations but raised from childhood in New Zealand;
- those who were born and raised in New Zealand. (Mulitalo-Lauto 2001:249)

While there are some important differences in the age distribution, educational qualifications and employment experiences of New Zealand-born and islands-born populations, other factors also affect the development of identity. One is the environment in which Pacific people live.

Macpherson (1984) has identified three different environments that coexist within Pacific communities. His paper refers to Samoans, but his ideas are applicable to other Pacific communities. The first environment is strongly traditional and produces young people whose primary orientation is to Samoan values and institutions. In the second, Samoan culture exists alongside a non-Samoan culture and children move between the two. These young people share a common belief that they are in some way Samoan and that it is a valued identity. In the third, life is oriented to and dominated by non-Samoan language, values, activities and personnel and the children brought up in this environment typically reflect this.

Mailei (1999), Macpherson (1999) and Anae (2001) have all considered the process by which New Zealand-born Pacific peoples establish their identity. All refer to Samoans, but again, their views have wider resonance. Mailei sees the development of a new urban Pacific identity among New Zealand-born Pacific peoples:

New Zealand-born Samoans and even Samoan-born Samoans who have lived practically all their lives here since a very young age, are now in what we call an identity crisis or an identity dilemma. They are though, as I see it, forging for themselves a new 'urban Pacific' type of identity which can be good and also bad in the long run. (Mailei 1999:8)

Music groups are in the forefront of those promoting a pan-Pacific identity. In a discussion of rap groups, Zemke-White (2001:237) argues that although they acknowledge specific national identities, groups like *Losttribe* and *Urban Pasifika*:

Primarily assert an urbanised pan-Pacific identity that is connected by location (Aotearoa, South Auckland), by experience (colonisation, immigration, prejudice), by socio-economic status and situation, and by friendships based on social and musical bonds. (Zemke-White 2001:237)

Rap groups have a strong following among young Pacific peoples. Tiatia (1998:32) believes that the process of developing an identity can be difficult, particularly for young New Zealand-born Pacific peoples. She notes that by stepping out into the wider society, New Zealand-born youth can at times reflect the thoughts, values and behaviours of the dominant culture. In so doing, they are often criticised by others in their own ethnic group as *fia palagi*, trying to be a European. They are left to find an identity of their own while trying to fit into both cultural situations.

Fleras and Spoonley (1999:211-212) believe that the end result of these demographic, cultural and social changes is that *fa'a Samoa* itself is subject to change. The new variants are sometimes referred to as *'fa'a Aukilani'* or *'fa'a Niu Sila'* (Macpherson 1997:93), and those born and raised in New Zealand sometimes refer to themselves as 'PIs' or 'Polys' or 'New Zealand-borns'.

Macpherson (1999) is among those who see the emergence of 'New Zealand-born' as a legitimate identity for Pacific peoples. In studying the Samoan community, he found that young migrants' exposure to other views and ways of life challenged the validity of the culture and the identity constructed from it. Were you still a Samoan when you doubted central premises of what you knew to be Samoan culture? New Zealand-born Samoans often had more in common with other New Zealand-born Pacific peoples than they did with Samoan-born Samoans and particularly those of their parents' generation, leading young people to identify themselves as 'New Zealand-borns'.

Hekau (1995:12) raises a similar point in relation to Niueans:

I wonder how many Niueans in New Zealand qualify to be identified as Niueans when the majority have been born and brought up in New Zealand and think like New Zealanders, yet they have had to accept the label –Niue. (Hekau 1995:12)

Anae (2001) disagrees, arguing that New Zealand-born Samoans (and presumably, members of other Pacific communities) can and do make the journey towards a secure identity as Samoans (or as members of other ethnic groups). In her study, many participants said they had experienced identity confusion, describing themselves as neither Samoan enough, nor New Zealander enough. Changing personal social networks and language loss exacerbated this confusion. Many took on a 'PI' persona, particularly during their teenage years. Because a PI identity was broader and less specific than a single ethnicity, those who were not fluent in the languages or fully versed in the cultures of one or both of their parents found it an easier identity to adopt. As the younger people matured, most replaced the generic 'PI' identity with the ethnic identity most satisfying to them. This culminated in a Samoan self-identity, which persisted despite ethnic intermarriage, upward mobility and geographic dispersal.

Multiple ethnicities

The growing proportion of Pacific peoples with multiple ethnicities adds to the complexity of the situation. In 1996, six out of ten Fijians and four out of ten Cook Islands people had affiliations with other ethnic groups, while almost one in three Samoans was married to a non-Samoan. In those families with a non-Pacific parent, both the Pacific parent and their part-Pacific children were being intimately exposed to new cultures and world views.

Little has been written about the way in which people view the relative strength of their identity with different ethnicities, although it is recognised that the importance placed on one ethnicity compared with another may depend on the circumstances (Fleras and Spoonley 1999:211). For example, an individual might identify as Samoan in one circumstance, and as a member of one or more other ethnic groups – say Scottish, Maori or Tongan – in a different circumstance.

In her study, Anae (2001:112) found that when parents were of different ethnicities, ethnic identity was perpetuated through the mother's line. Samoan identity was passed on to the younger generations in the stories and instructions given to them by their mothers or grandmothers who typically dominated early socialisation, or by fathers who had been influenced by their own mothers.

Characteristics of the New Zealand-born population

It is widely acknowledged that the issues of cultural identity for New Zealand-born Pacific peoples are most apparent for younger age groups, particularly as they, in turn, have their own children (Fleras and Spoonley 1999:202). As noted below, the Pacific populations born in New Zealand have much more youthful age-sex structures than the populations of Pacific peoples born overseas (Bedford 1994).

New Zealand-born and educated Pacific peoples also tend to be educated to a higher level than those born overseas, but the amount of education young people have is not the only relevant factor. New Zealand-born Pacific peoples are educated in a system that stresses the language and values of palagi society. They are also exposed to mass media which, as with media everywhere, tends to reflect the world view and lifestyle of the dominant culture (Macpherson 1997:94). In the New Zealand case, this is heavily influenced by American culture. As a consequence, fluency in their Pacific language and knowledge of their island's social structure varies for the New Zealand-born and raised generations. In referring to New Zealand-born Samoans, Macpherson comments:

While these young children consider themselves Samoans, and identify publicly as Samoan, the content and style of their 'Samoanness' varies within the group and differs in quite significant ways from their parents' 'Samoanness'. (Macpherson 1997:94)

Social mobility can also cause conflict and a weakening of cultural identity. Anae (2001:115-6) describes the pressures felt by her 'middle class' sample, most of whom were successful professionals. Many felt that they were 'invisible' and not considered as true 'Samoans'.

Their experiences as New Zealand-born were not considered to be 'legitimate' experiences of the *fa'a Samoa*. Rather it is the island-born experience of growing

up in the homeland that is reified as the 'true' island culture or 'Pacific' experience. New Zealand-born are thus invisible and continually bypassed as Pacific representatives on advisory bodies and committees. These positions are most often reserved for island-born elders and leaders. (Anae 2001:115)

Differences in income also distinguish New Zealand-born and educated Pacific peoples from those born overseas. On average, the New Zealand-born group has higher incomes. The strong commitment of both New Zealand-born and overseas-born Pacific peoples to supporting their island-based communities is evidenced by the high level of remittances. It has been suggested that the sense of personal and financial commitment to those still living in the islands is particularly strong among the overseas-born group. This can exacerbate the income gap between the two groups. Macpherson, Bedford and Spoonley (2000:72) believe this situation is even more pronounced for women, who are expected to be more committed remitters.

Pacific peoples in New Zealand are much more likely than any other group to belong to a religious group and much less likely to say they have no religion or to object to answering the question on religious affiliation in the census (Bedford and Didham 2001:39). The strength of religious affiliation is an important aspect of Pacific culture but its relationship to ethnic identity is unclear, because this is not measured in the census.

As with the population at large, younger people have lower levels of religious affiliation than older people. Taule'ale'ausami (2001:193) attributes this to the educational and work experiences of New Zealand-born Pacific peoples, dissatisfaction with the social restrictiveness of the church and the financial demands Pacific churches make on their members. She notes that some New Zealand-born Pacific peoples have begun exploring other forms of worship outside the Pacific churches, with a particular increase in interest in evangelical churches.

Conclusion

A variety of factors influence an individual's choice of ethnicity. These include nationality, birthplace, length of residence, return migration, intermarriage and exposure to different lifestyles and values. Cultures themselves are not static, but change to accommodate new influences (Anae 2001:118). People's perceptions of their ethnic identity will also change as communities in New Zealand and the Pacific develop. In other words, what it means to be Samoan or Tongan or Niuean may change over time and vary from place to place.

The terms used to record ethnicity are themselves open to question. They may be too constraining or too limited to reflect the choices people would like to make. New concepts may need to be developed to reflect the lives of Pacific peoples who have more than one ethnicity, or who have stronger or weaker links with their island communities and family networks.

The issues that have emerged as the various groups struggle to come to terms with their identity are being more widely discussed than ever before. The current review of the way ethnicity is recorded is a timely addition to the debate.

3. The Pacific population in New Zealand

This section presents some statistics that describe the Pacific population in New Zealand. [The material in this section is drawn from a number of sources including Bedford and Didham (2001), Cook et al (1999).] Most of the tables compare different ethnic groups and distinguish between New Zealand-born and overseas-born Pacific peoples. They describe the age and family structure and geographic distribution of Pacific peoples as well as their educational levels, language ability and religious affiliation. All these factors have an impact on ethnic identification.

Pacific communities in New Zealand

In the 1996 Census, 202,233 people described themselves as Samoan, Cook Islands Maori, Tongan, Niuean, Tokelauan or from other Pacific Islands groups. Statistics New Zealand collectively described them as 'Pacific Islands people', and together they made up nearly six percent of the total resident population.

Around half of all those who identify as Pacific peoples are Samoan. Cook Islands people make up the second largest group with almost a quarter of the total, followed by Tongans, Niueans, Fijians and Tokelauans.

Table 1 Pacific Peoples by Ethnicity in New Zealand, 1996 Census

Ethnicity	Population
Samoan	101,754
Cook Islands	47,019
Tongan	31,398
Niuean	18,474
Fijian	7,895
Tokelauan	4,917
Total Pacific population living in New Zealand	202,233*

*Note: figures add to more than the total as people were able to identify with more than one ethnic group
Source: 1996 Census

A growing population

The Pacific population in New Zealand is growing 11 times faster than any other population group and is expected to double by 2031 to 13 percent of the population.

The growth in the population is expected to come largely from New Zealand-born people. As Table 2 below shows, the pool of potential migration from the 'home' islands is limited, particularly for the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. Since 1980, there has been a net gain from the Pacific of less than 1,200 people per year.

Table 2 Pacific Peoples by Ethnicity in New Zealand and Estimated 1997 'Home' Island Population

Ethnicity	1996 Census	'Home' population
Samoan	101,754	171,000
Cook Islands	47,019	19,000
Tongan	31,389	97,800
Niuean	18,474	2,080
Fijian	7,895	796,000
Tokelauan	4,917	1,000
Total Pacific population living in New Zealand, 1996 Census	202,233*	1,086,880

*Note: figures add to more than the total as people were able to identify with more than one ethnic group
Source: 1996 Census, ESCAP 1998 Yearbook Page 5, Table 1

The Pacific population in New Zealand has relatively low rates of mortality and high rates of fertility. Natural increase, or the excess of births over deaths, is currently adding almost 7,000 to New Zealand's Pacific population each year. In the year ended 1997, three-quarters of newborn babies with at least one parent of a Pacific ethnicity had a Pacific mother, while the other quarter derived their Pacific ethnicity solely from their father.

More than one ethnicity

In the 1996 Census, two-thirds of all people who recorded a Pacific ethnicity ticked only Pacific ethnicities and most of them, 61 percent, ticked only one ethnic group. In most cases, this was likely to be their home island or the place in the Pacific that their parents or grandparents came from. However, it is also possible that they responded in terms of ancestry rather than affiliation, because the census question may have prompted them to think of their ancestry.

As Table 3 shows, Tongans and Samoans were more likely to have a single ethnicity than people from other Pacific groups. Twenty-seven percent of Tongans and 31 percent of Samoans had NZ Māori, Asian, European or other ethnic affiliations. In contrast, 61 percent of Fijians and 43 percent of Cook Islands people had affiliations with other ethnic groups.

Cook Islands people and Niueans had the highest level of affiliation with NZ Māori at 23 percent and 20 percent respectively.

Fijians had the highest level of affiliation with Europeans at 41 percent, while Tongans had the lowest level at 17 percent. In all other groups, the levels were around a quarter (23 percent to 27 percent).

Table 3 Characteristics of the Ethnic Composition of Pacific Peoples, 1996 - as Percentages and Population Summaries

Ethnic Identity	Samoaan	Cook Island	Tongan	Niuean	Fijian	Other Pacific	Pacific Peoples
<i>Indigenous Pacific</i>							
Single ethnicity	63.3	51.2	64.5	47.3	32.9	44.5	61.4
Mixed Pacific	5.3	6.1	8.7	17.9	6.4	20.4	4.0
Sub-total	68.6	57.3	73.2	65.2	39.4	64.9	65.4
<i>With NZ Māori</i>							
Pacific + NZ Māori	5.5	14.1	8.4	13.0	6.4	6.6	8.0
Other combinations with Asian	4.9	9.2	3.9	7.4	6.9	5.1	6.4
Sub-total	10.5	23.3	12.3	20.3	13.2	11.7	14.4
<i>With Asian</i>							
Pacific + Asian	2.7	0.8	0.9	1.6	12.5	2.2	2.1
Other combinations with Asian	1.8	0.8	0.4	0.6	3.6	0.8	1.4
Sub-total	4.5	1.6	1.3	2.1	16.1	3.0	3.5
<i>With European/Other nec*</i>							
Pacific + European/Other nec*	17.0	18.3	13.3	15.9	32.2	20.6	17.3
Other combinations with Euro/Other nec*	5.6	9.0	3.9	7.3	8.8	5.5	6.6
Sub-total	22.6	27.3	17.3	23.2	41.1	26.1	24.0
Total (Numbers)	101,754	47,019	31,390	17,907	7,695	10,062	202,233

* Not elsewhere classified

Note: Except for the bottom row the columns contain data expressed as percentages

Figures may not add to the total due to rounding

Source: Bedford and Didham, 2001, 26

Another way of looking at multiple ethnicity is to review birth registrations. In 1997, birth registrations showed that over half (54 percent) of newborn children of Pacific ethnicities had more than one ethnicity, with 42 percent having at least one non-Pacific ethnicity. This is somewhat higher than the 35 percent recorded in the 1996 Census for Pacific peoples. Again, as with the census, the wording may have led to answering in terms of ancestry.

A youthful population

The Pacific population in New Zealand is relatively youthful. Over half of all Pacific peoples in New Zealand are under 25 years of age, compared with 38 percent of the total New Zealand population.

In 1996, Pacific peoples were twice as likely as the population as a whole to be aged under 15. Four out of ten Pacific males (41 percent) and females (38 percent) were under 15 compared with 24 percent and 20 percent in the overall population.

In 1996, the median age (the point at which half the population is below and above this age) for the Pacific population in New Zealand was 20.4 years. The total New Zealand population had a median age of 32.9 years.

As Table 4 below shows, the Cook Islands and Tongan populations had a higher proportion of under 15-year-olds than other groups, and the lowest median age for males and females overall.

Table 4 Age Structure for Selected Pacific Ethnicities, 1996 Census

Ethnicity	Number of People		Total for		Each		Sex Median Age		Total
	Male	Female	(Percent)		Male	Female	(Years)		
			Under 15	Over 65			Male	Female	
Samoan	50,019	51,735	41.0	37.5	2.1	3.0	19.3	21.2	20.2
Cook Islands	23,298	23,721	44.1	40.6	2.8	3.0	17.6	19.8	18.7
Tongan	15,699	15,690	43.5	41.6	2.4	3.2	18.4	19.3	18.9
Niuean	9,183	9,291	42.5	39.1	2.7	4.1	18.6	20.6	19.6
Tokelauan	2,433	2,484	42.3	39.1	2.7	3.0	18.3	20.2	19.3
Fijian	3,786	3,909	32.6	30.4	2.4	3.8	22.8	24.5	23.6
Total Pacific	99,837	102,399	40.9	37.6	2.5	3.3	19.5	21.3	20.4
NZ Māori	258,000	265,374	39.0	36.1	2.7	3.3	20.5	22.2	21.4
Total New Zealand	1,777,464	1,840,842	24.1	22.0	10.2	13.1	32.2	33.7	32.9

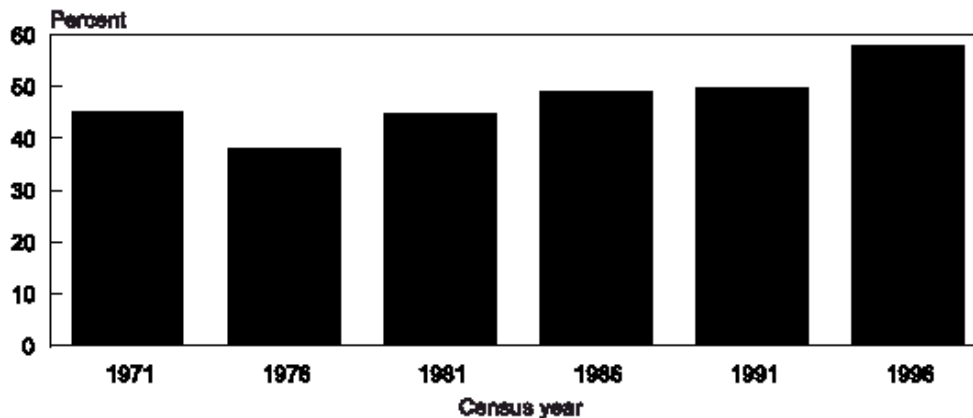
Source: Cook, Didham and Khawaja, 2001, 52

New Zealand-born or overseas-born

As Figure 1 shows, by 1996 over half (58 percent) of Pacific peoples in New Zealand were New Zealand-born.

Figure 1

Pacific Population in New Zealand: Proportion New Zealand born, 1971-1996



Source: Cook, Didham and Khawaja, 1999

The great majority of those born overseas, 84 percent, had been living in New Zealand for five years or more. Recent immigrants make up only 7 percent of the total Pacific population.

The New Zealand-born Pacific population is much younger than the overseas-born population. In 1996, 60 percent of those who were born in New Zealand were under 15 years compared with only 10 percent of those born overseas. In contrast, only 11 percent of New Zealand-born Pacific peoples were aged 30 or older, compared with 64 percent of those born overseas.

The New Zealand-born group were far more likely than those born overseas to be affiliated with more than one ethnic group. Among those born overseas, 88 percent were in the 'Pacific only' category compared with only 49 percent of the New Zealand-born.

Table 5 Age composition, New Zealand-born and Overseas-born Pacific Peoples, 1996 - as Percentages

Ethnic Identity	Age Group									
	Under 15 (Percent)		15-29 (Percent)		30-49 (Percent)		50+ (Percent)		Total (Numbers)	
	NZB	OSB	NZB	OSB	NZB	OSB	NZB	OSB	NZB	OSB
Pacific only	62.6	9.4	29.4	25.7	7.4	43.8	0.6	21.1	56,358	73,794
Pacific + European/Other nec*	51.9	16.2	31.2	24.2	14.9	33.0	2.0	26.6	28,098	6,393
Pacific + NZ Māori	62.9	29.2	25.0	19.3	9.4	34.8	2.7	17.2	15,171	699
Pacific + Asian	56.9	12.3	33.4	32.5	7.9	18.2	0.4	16.4	2,004	2,172
Pacific + NZ Māori + European/Other nec*	66.4	44.4	22.4	19.1	9.4	25.3	1.8	11.7	11,292	486
Pacific + Asian + European/Other nec*	53.2	14.3	32.9	38.3	12.8	31.6	1.1	15.0	1,359	399
Pacific + NZ Māori + Asian	61.7	46.7	26.0	13.3	10.6	33.3	1.9	13.3	933	45
Total (Percent)	60.2	10.4	28.7	25.7	9.8	42.6	1.3	21.3	100.0	100.0
Total (Numbers)	69,354	8,751	33,045	21,588	11,280	35,766	1,533	17,880	115,215	83,985

* Not elsewhere classified

Figures may not add to the total due to rounding

Footnote: Excludes people who did not specify their birthdate

Source: Bedford and Didham, 2001, 33

Cook Islands people and Niueans were most likely to be New Zealand-born, while Fijians and Tongans were most likely to be born overseas. That pattern may well change in the future given the high birth rate among Tongans.

Tongans had the highest proportion of under 15-year-olds born in New Zealand, 72 percent, followed by Samoans, 61 percent and Niueans, 58 percent. At 15 percent, the Cook Islands group had the highest proportion of New Zealand-born people aged 30 and over.

Table 6 Birthplaces and Age Characteristics of Major Pacific Ethnic Groups, Percentages and Total Population, 1996

Ethnic Group	Birthplace* (Percent)		Under 15 (Percent)		15-29 (Percent)		30+ (Percent)		Total (Numbers) Pop**
	NZB	OSB	NZB	OSB	NZB	OSB	NZB	OSB	
Samoan	56.0	42.6	61.0	10.5	29.8	25.1	9.2	64.3	101,754
Cook Island Maori	68.5	30.1	56.7	9.5	28.2	22.2	15.0	68.3	47,019
Tongan	51.3	47.3	71.6	11.2	21.9	30.0	6.5	58.7	31,390
Niuean	66.3	31.1	58.5	7.4	29.1	23.3	12.4	69.3	17,907
Fijian	46.1	52.5	54.3	11.6	31.3	28.1	14.5	60.3	7,695
Other Pacific	52.8	45.8	55.4	14.4	34.2	30.7	10.3	54.9	10,062
Total	115,215	83,985	69,354	8,751	33,045	21,588	12,816	53,646	202,233

* Percentages of total in the category who specified their birthplace

** Includes people who did not specify their birthplace

Figures may not add up to the totals due to rounding

Source: Bedford and Didham, 2001, 34

Where Pacific peoples live

For practical and emotional reasons, new immigrants typically settle close to other members of their community. Immigrant communities tend to develop round the main points of entry, with the result that 97 percent of Pacific peoples live in an urban area. Two-thirds live in Auckland, compared with only 29 percent of the population as a whole. As Table 7 below shows, the Tongan and Niuean communities are particularly strong in Auckland, while the Tokelauan community lives predominantly in Wellington. The Cook Islands and Fijian communities also tend to be more dispersed than other groups.

Table 7 Geographic Distribution for Selected Pacific Ethnicities, 1996 Census

Ethnicity	Auckland Region	Rest of North Island	South Island
		Percent	
Samoan	65.8	27.2	7.0
Cook Islands	57.3	36.3	6.3
Tongan	79.2	16.4	4.4
Niuean	78.6	16.9	4.5
Tokelauan	22.8	73.9	3.2
Fijian	59.5	32.2	8.3
Total Pacific	65.2	28.4	6.4
NZ Maori	24.2	63.4	12.4
Total New Zealand	29.5	45.6	24.9

Source: Cook, Didham and Khawaja, 1999

Living in a sizable community can strengthen Pacific peoples' identity with their ethnic group. When Pacific peoples move to smaller towns to find work or for other reasons, they have fewer opportunities to affirm their culture. Other factors, such as intermarriage outside the Pacific community, are also important. Tables 3 and 4 above show just how extensive those links to other ethnic groups are.

Extended families

Pacific peoples in New Zealand are almost four times more likely than New Zealanders as a whole to live in extended families, that is, in families where related parents, grandparents and children or siblings live together. In 1996, a third of Samoans, Tongans, Niueans and Tokelauan were living in such families.

The most common extended family type for all groups was a family of three or more generations, with the proportions ranging from 57 percent for Tongans to 68 percent for Niueans.

Table 8 Pacific Peoples Living in Extended Families, 1996 Census

Ethnic group	Percent
Samoan	36
Cook Islands	31
Tongan	38
Niuean	35
Fijian	21
Tokelauan	40
All Pacific peoples	34
New Zealand population	9

Source: 1996 Census, Pacific Islands People, Summary measures for selected ethnic group

It can be difficult to establish the ethnic identity of individuals living in extended families or shared households. The ethnic identity chosen by the person completing household data may not match those of all the individuals within it.

Education

Education can also have a significant impact on peoples' ethnic identification. Not only do educational qualifications provide access to a range of employment opportunities and their associated benefits, but time spent in the education system can challenge traditional values and lifestyles.

Overall, Pacific peoples tend to have lower educational qualifications than the population as a whole. In 1996, one in six (18 percent) Pacific peoples had a tertiary qualification compared with one in three (32 percent) in the total New Zealand population. Pacific peoples were more likely than the overall population to have no qualification at all, that is, 46 percent compared to 32 percent.

Table 9 Highest Qualification Attained by Pacific Peoples Compared with Total Population, 1996 Census Aged 15 Years and Over.

Highest qualification	Pacific peoples ethnic group (Percent)	New Zealand (Percent)
Degree	2	8
Other tertiary qualification	16	24
School qualification	32	31
No qualification	46	32
Not Specified	4	5
Total	100	100

Source: 1996 Census

The commitment of Pacific peoples to education as a way of getting ahead is obvious in the proportion of young Pacific peoples studying or attending a training course. As Table 10 below shows, in 1996, a higher proportion of Pacific peoples under 25 was studying full or part-time than in the population as a whole. While the proportion studying full-time was lower than the national average, the proportion studying part-time remained high. If this trend continues, the gap between the Pacific population and the total population will reduce.

Table 10 Study/Training Course Attendance for the Pacific and Total New Zealand Populations Aged 15 Years and Over, 1996 Census

Population	Study Course Attendance (Percent)		
	Full-time	Part-time	Not Attending
People of Pacific Ethnicities			
Under 25 years	36.70	5.15	58.15
25 years and over	2.33	5.25	92.42
New Zealand Total			
Under 25 years	30.56	4.12	65.32
25 years and over	4.50	4.26	91.24

Source: Cook, Didham and Khawaja, 2001, 60

New Zealand-born Pacific peoples tend to have higher educational qualifications than Pacific peoples born overseas. In 1996, in every ethnic group, those born in New

Zealand were more likely to have a school or post school qualification. New Zealand-born and overseas-born Fijians were most likely to have a qualification of some kind, followed by New Zealand-born Samoans and New Zealand-born Tongans. Whether New Zealand-born or overseas-born, the Cook Islands group were least likely to have a school or post school qualification.

Table 11 Highest Qualification Gained by Selected Ethnic Groups, Aged 15 Years and Over, Comparing New Zealand-born and Overseas-born

Highest qualification	New Zealand born (Percent)	Overseas-born (Percent)	Total for ethnic group (Percent)	Total Pacific population (Percent)
Samoan				
School	47	29	36	33
Post school	22	18	20	19
No qualifications	31	53	45	47
Total	100	100	100	100
Cook Islands				
School	35	19	28	33
Post school	20	16	18	19
No qualifications	45	65	55	47
Total	100	100	100	100
Tongan				
School	44	31	34	33
Post school	21	16	17	19
No qualifications	35	53	49	47
Total	100	100	100	100
Niuean				
School	39	21	29	33
Post school	21	18	19	19
No qualifications	40	61	51	47
Total	100	100	100	100
Fijian				
School	47	40	42	33
Post school	28	31	30	19
No qualifications	26	30	28	47
Total	100	100	100	100
Tokelauan				
School	41	21	29	33
Post school	18	18	18	19
No qualifications	40	60	52	47
Total	100	100	100	100

Figures may not add to the totals due to rounding

Source: Pacific Islands Profiles-produced from the results of the 1996 Census of Population and Dwellings, Samoa-People in New Zealand, Cook Islands-People in New Zealand, Tonga-People in New Zealand, Niue-People in New Zealand, Fiji-People in New Zealand & Tokelau-People in New Zealand

Languages spoken

Pacific peoples are far ahead of most other New Zealanders in their language skills, with nearly 60 percent being able to speak more than one language. The comparable figure for Europeans is 5.2 percent.

As noted above, several commentators and many Pacific peoples believe that the ability to speak a Pacific language is a key element in identity. In 1996, just over half of Pacific respondents to the census said they could speak a Pacific language well enough to hold a conversation about everyday life.

The majority (72 percent) of those who identified with a single Pacific ethnic group could speak a Pacific language. This was true of only 23 percent of Pacific peoples with a mixed ethnic background.

Table 12 Languages Spoken by Pacific Peoples, 1996

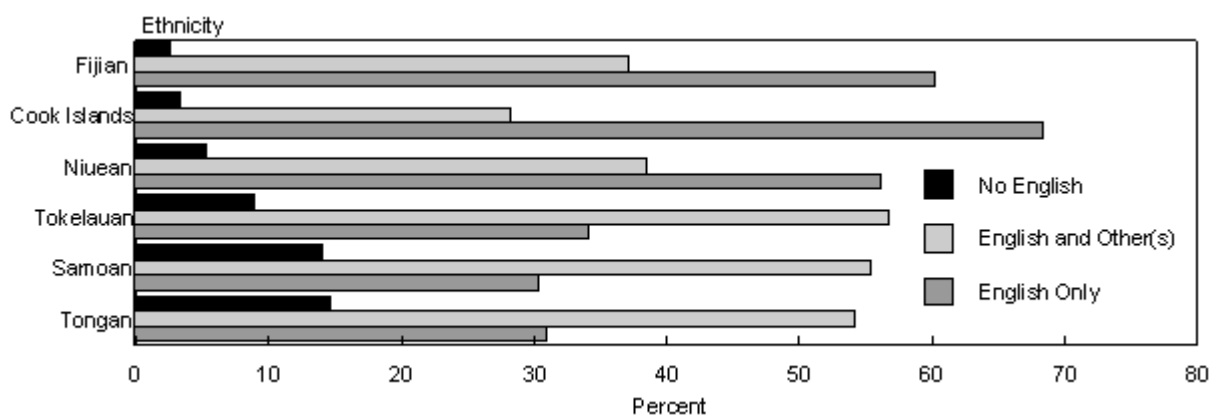
Language Capability	Pacific people		Total (Percent)
	Single ethnicity (Percent)	Mixed ethnicity (Percent)	
At least one Pacific language	71.7	23.2	53.3
English only	26.1	67.4	41.8
English	83.9	97.7	89.1

Figures may not add up to the totals due to rounding

Source: Statistics New Zealand (1998h, 239) and special tabulations prepared by Robert Didham, Statistics New Zealand

As the figure below shows, the proportion of Pacific peoples who can speak only English is particularly high among Cook Islands people, Fijians and Niueans. It is lowest among Samoans, Tongans and Tokelauans. Most of those Pacific peoples who speak only English (71 percent) were born in New Zealand. This is a cause for concern among some Pacific communities, given the growing proportion of Pacific peoples born in New Zealand.

Figure 2 Languages spoken by Pacific peoples by ethnicity, 1996 Census



Source: Cook, Didham and Khawaja, 1999

Religion

Pacific peoples have much higher levels of affiliation with one of the Christian religions than others in the New Zealand population. In 1996, 89 percent of Pacific peoples said that they belonged to a religious group compared with 72 percent of the total population. Tongans and Samoans have particularly high levels of affiliation.

Overseas-born Pacific peoples have much higher levels of religious affiliation than the New Zealand-born, especially among mixed ethnic groups and younger age groups. Comparatively high proportions of New Zealand-born Pacific peoples chose not to answer the question about religion, which may signal a reduction in the importance of the church in the lives of the New Zealand-born population.

Table 13 Affiliation to Religious Groups, Pacific Peoples by Ethnic Identity, Birthplace and Age, 1996

Ethnic Identity	20-29 years of age (Percent)			40-49 years of age (Percent)			Total populations (Numbers) (NZB+OSB)	
	A religion	No religion	NS/Object	A religion	No religion	NS/Object	20-29	40-49
Pacific only								
Overseas born	87.6	3.6	8.8	91.7	2.0	6.3	14,580	14,208
New Zealand born	81.3	9.9	8.8	77.6	9.5	12.9	9,165	723
Pacific plus one other ethnic group								
Overseas born	82.1	10.0	7.9	87.8	6.3	5.9	1,623	1,527
New Zealand born	61.5	27.0	11.6	68.5	18.6	12.8	7,374	1,497
Pacific plus two other ethnic group								
Overseas born	72.9	18.8	8.3	88.6	2.9	8.6	144	105
New Zealand born	56.9	28.4	14.7	71.2	12.3	16.4	1,650	438
Total Pacific people								
Overseas born	86.9	4.4	8.7	91.3	2.4	6.3	16,347	15,840
New Zealand born	71.1	18.5	10.4	71.4	15.1	13.4	18,189	2,658
Birth place not stated	71.2	10.4	18.4	77.7	3.6	18.8	489	336
Total	78.4	11.8	9.7	88.2	4.3	7.5	35,025	18,834

Figures may not add to totals due to rounding

Source: Bedford and Didham, 2001, 41

4. Perspectives on ethnicity

It is clear from the literature review and the description of the Pacific population that different sub-groups within the Pacific community are likely to have different perspectives on ethnicity.

The key groups include:

- New Zealand-born and overseas-born people
- New Zealand or overseas educated people
- Younger people compared with older people
- Native language speakers compared with those who speak only English or who have learnt a Pacific language in later life
- Ethnic groups where the majority of the population is New Zealand-based compared with groups where the majority is based in the islands
- Recent migrants compared with earlier migrants, perhaps those who have been here less than 10 years compared with those who have been here 20 or more years
- People and families who have an affiliation with more than one ethnic group.

Groups that are not discussed in the literature section but may be important include:

- Those living in extended households and those living in nuclear families
- Multi-family households
- Those with New Zealand citizenship, those with permanent residence and those on visitors' permits
- Men and women.

These groups will have their own views on matters relating to ethnic identity. Some of the questions that each of these groups may wish to discuss include:

- What should the basis be for recording ethnicity in official statistics? For example, should ethnicity continue to be based on self-identification or should it include other elements such as ancestry?
- How important is the distinction between being a New Zealand-born and an overseas-born Pacific person?
- If they have more than one ethnicity, do people feel able to rank the strength of each of these identities in specific situations? What kinds of factors influence the choices people make or the preferences they have?
- How should official statistics record the ethnicities of people with affiliations to more than one ethnic group? Are there any guidelines that would help in the collection of information on ethnicity.
- How important is language as a component of identity?
- What are the differences between the way younger and older people view ethnicity?
- What relationship, if any, does religious affiliation have to ethnic identity?

Summary and conclusion

This paper has reviewed the literature on ethnic identity among Pacific peoples in New Zealand. It also provides a brief description of the Pacific population, mainly using 1996 Census data. It identifies differences between New Zealand-born and overseas-born Pacific peoples, but recognises that these differences are themselves arbitrary, given the movement of people between the islands and New Zealand. It also acknowledges that ethnic identification can change over time as peoples' situations change. It draws attention to the increasing prevalence of multiple ethnicities among the Pacific community.

The paper finds no agreement on the essential elements of ethnicity, with different groups giving different weight to factors such as language, religion, familiarity with traditions and active involvement in the community.

The various groups identified in the paper will bring their own knowledge and ideas to this debate, adding to the ideas already raised. Their contribution will significantly enhance the discussion.

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