

‘IK BEN EEN AFRIKAANDER’:
REDRAWING AFRIKANER ETHNIC BOUNDARIES IN NEW ZEALAND

Kris Finlayson¹

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the state of Afrikaner identity in a New Zealand diasporic context, exploring perceptions, experiences, how Afrikaners see themselves fitting into their community, and how this community fits into New Zealand society. Through biographic narrative interviews, participants described an implied representation of Afrikaner which was then constructed into an analytic model consisting of four key characteristics: heritage; faith as a cultural value; language; and, a conservative worldview. Participants referred to themselves against this model in order to ascertain how ‘typical’ they are regarding shared community behaviour and perspectives. Although New Zealand and Afrikaner-South African societies are vastly different, New Zealand’s socially liberal worldview allows an easy transition for today’s comparatively diverse Afrikaners. This transitional process and ethnic boundary modification was found to impact Afrikaner identity in varying ways, particularly related to areas of personal security, new friendship formation, manner of speech, and how they perceived what New Zealanders think about Afrikaners.

Keywords: Afrikaners; ethnic identity; ethnography; New Zealand; migrants.

INTRODUCTION

Galloping through the village of Stellenbosch, Hendrik Biebouw raced his horse against his three friends to the local mill, drunk on wine and cursing like a ‘madman’. Arriving in a cloud of dust and haste, the four teens broke into the building and began tossing the village scales to each other, making merry as well as a mess. In their drunkenness, they hadn’t noticed the town’s official, known as a *landdrost*, riding behind them. Finding the boys – and the mill – in disarray, the *landdrost* began beating Biebouw with his cane and ordering them to leave, to which Biebouw responded ‘Ik wil niet lopen, ik ben een Afrikaander,

al slaat die landdrost mijn dood, of al setten hij mijn in den tronk, ik sal, nog wil niet swygen.' (I shall not leave, I am an Afrikaner, even if the landdrost beats me to death or puts me in jail. I shall not, nor will be silent).

This account, based on Hermann Giliomee's (2003, 22) description in his seminal work on the history of Afrikaners, took place in March 1707, after a political victory for the proletariat in early colonial South Africa. It features the first documented use of the term 'Afrikaner' as applied to a European-descended inhabitant of Southern Africa. As Giliomee (2003, 22–23) explains, Biebow's use of the term in self-identification was unusual for the time, having previously only been used for indigenous black² Africans. Biebow was born on the African continent to a German doctor and Dutch mother, and had a half-sister; a 'coloured' from a previous relationship of his father's. Needless to say, the progenitor of the term 'Afrikaner' was born from a plurality of ethnicities. More than 300 years later, over 27,000 Afrikaans-speakers live in New Zealand (Stats NZ 2013³), far from their homeland, and deeply entrenched in a contentious and politicised ethnic identity.

This article, based on a study conducted in 2017, examines the self-perception of Afrikaner-migrants, how they view themselves in the societies in which they live and come from, and the alterations they make to successfully resettle, which impact on their identity. Currently there is little academic writing on Afrikaners in New Zealand and no anthropological work focusing on the construction of their ethnic identity. This article aims to remedy this lacuna and asks how Afrikaners in New Zealand self-identify, in light of their new social environment. The article argues that Afrikaners, although still tied *in spirit* to previously tacit ways of being, use opportunities presented in migration to reinvent these ways *in practice*. For this reason, it is argued that, when researching the Afrikaner community in social science, we should begin to reassess our research methodology.

Since the 1990s, Afrikaners have been leaving South Africa en masse. This exodus began during the breakdown of a major political regime: apartheid. Prior to this, the regime was used by the ruling Nationalist party to impart a sense of unified identity on the Afrikaans-speaking population, thereby retaining power (Giliomee 2003, 489–491). Vestergaard (2000) notes, however, that since the regime effectively defined Afrikaners, the introduction of democracy and absence of apartheid has left them with no centralised identity. He indicates that Afrikaners are now looking for socially acceptable ways of being in post-apartheid South Africa.

Fears for security have since become central to Afrikaner discourse, with concern for family being both the primary reason for leaving South Africa (for the future of one's children) and the primary source of stress among migrants (the separation from relatives who stayed). Regarding causes for migration, scholars have found that South African migrants stated mainly 'push' factors (such as violence, crime and political instability) as reasons for moving to New Zealand (Pernice *et al.* 2009, 282). Such were these push factors that they were reported to have detrimental effects on mental health, continuing into their post-migratory experience.

Based on Afrikaner migrants' particular socio-political background, Bain's (2005) research explains that Afrikaners may qualify as 'anticipatory refugees', citing Kunz's (1973) classic work on refugee movements. That is, they are not forced out of their country by political power or war, yet they feel they are forced through *socio-political* pressure (e.g. unemployment and insecurity). Bain's participants also felt a strong attachment to the nation of South Africa, reflecting the narrative in van der Waal and Robins' (2011) study on Afrikaner patriotism and nostalgia in contemporary Afrikaans music. It seems that most Afrikaners would choose to remain in South Africa if they felt that such a choice was wise with regard to the well-being of their families.

The literature on Afrikaners in New Zealand – scant as it is – offers a sobering picture, with authors illuminating such topics as 'linguistic longing' (Barkhuizen and Knoch 2005) and the meaning of home in a foreign context (Forrest, Johnston, and Poulsen 2013; Meares 2007); it appears that Afrikaner migrants may remain in a prolonged state of culture-shock upon emigrating from South Africa (Winbush and Selby 2015). Researchers have explored factors of Afrikaner lives in New Zealand, but stop short of asking how they see themselves, how they fit into New Zealand's wider society, and how their ethnic identity has modified since arriving.

Globally, the predominant focus has been the issue of apartheid and its relation to Afrikaner identity. According to Alberts (2012), Afrikaners have been in a state of identity crisis since the breakdown of this regime, as it was used by the government as a social unifier for Afrikaners. Verwey and Quayle (2012) support this view, adding that apartheid is still in the minds of Afrikaners, yet no longer based on 'race' but, rather, on contrasting matters such as the way 'they' (black South Africans) are running the country. Blaser (2012), however, argues that to accurately portray Afrikaners today, researchers must cease using traditional discourse, such as apartheid, as the primary marker with which we interpret Afrikaner identity. Prior to embarking on this study, it was

my intention to carry out research with Blaser's sentiment in mind and be open to themes emerging from interviews rather than drawing on potentially outdated ideas.

Identity studies are becoming increasingly important as ethnic identities are more susceptible to change due to globalisation and encounters with the Other (Ariely 2019; Jensen, Arnett and McKenzie 2011). Prior to the mid-twentieth century, anthropology's understanding of ethnic identity was largely defined by the practices and values that a community's members shared – Fredrik Barth, in his text on ethnic boundaries, referred to these values and practices as 'cultural contents' (1969, 14). Barth argued that ethnicity is not determined by cultural contents, but is rather viewed in contrast with other encountered ethnicities.

Nagel's demonstration of the duality of cultural contents and ethnic boundaries through her 'shopping cart' imagery explains this concept particularly well:

We can think of ethnic boundary construction as determining the *shape* of the shopping cart (size, number of wheels, composition, etc.); ethnic culture, then, is composed of the things we put into the cart—art, music, dress, religion, norms, beliefs, symbols, myths, customs [...]. [W]e construct culture by picking and choosing items from the shelves of the past and present. (1994, 162)

Since the mid-twentieth century, we have come to understand identity as fluid, impacted by varying matters, including individual and shared experiences (Brettell and Sargent 2006). Further, the increased potential for contact between peoples opens a plethora of possibilities and iterations to people groups through regular informal examination of ethnic, social, and cultural contrasts (Castles 2002). Being an Afrikaner is one ethnic identity that needs further study. With so many Afrikaners leaving their homeland, their sense of identity is prone to change.

In this paper, I discuss individuals' identities and the different ways in which they are affected by different factors. Despite being individual constructs, these identities are also constructed through community, creating and maintaining similarities and differences among individuals. Thus, these migrants' identities deny forces of neither agency nor structure. That is, participants negotiated between individual needs and preferences as relating to their new home, while still maintaining degrees of community-fostered values. Participant narratives illuminated these themes, exemplified in a model Afrikaner (or a 'typical' Afrikaner, as participants put it). This model was referred to on numerous occasions

and used as a reference point for their self-perceived identity (further explained in the *Ethnic identity prior to migration* section).

Upon moving to New Zealand, Afrikaners encounter a multitude of cultures that differ from their own. These encounters further illuminate Afrikaner migrants' own cultures, highlighting areas of difference and similarity. This exemplifies Barth's (1969) theory: the encounter with other ways of being focuses a group's attention on themselves, thus helping to define their identity through informal comparative analysis.

Common themes that arose during participant narrative included adjustment to New Zealand's social landscape; a change from hyper-consciousness of security to a more relaxed atmosphere; the creation of friendships; a direct manner of speech; and, participant views of New Zealanders. These themes are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

APARTHEID, RACISM, AND AFRIKANER IDENTITY

As mentioned above, it is imperative that we cease interpreting migrant identity through potentially outdated discourse. For Afrikaners, this means not imposing ideas of racism upon their identity. It will become evident to the reader that neither racism nor apartheid is raised as a factor in Afrikaner identity in this paper; this is intentional as participants simply did not raise this as an issue. My intention in this paper is not to ignore the issue of apartheid or claim it does not exist, but, rather, to offer the perspectives of Afrikaners themselves. Interpreting the absence of ideas of racism and apartheid as an intended omission, erasure or as implicitly racist would be irresponsible. Such application of negative ideologies on a people group, particularly when rooted in such a small selection of participants, might be damaging. For such claims to be made in a New Zealand context, further study more directly investigating these aspects is required.

Participants' relative silence on South Africa and New Zealand's colonial history, historically defining nationalism and racist ideology may in themselves, however, be indicators of residual, post-apartheid sentiment. As Deaux explains, individuals may reject aspects of identity, 'shifting the category to a low position in their identity hierarchy and stressing other, less conflictual identities instead' (2000, 9). Verwey and Quayle (2012) found this was the case with their South Africa-based research participants consciously discarding elements of their Afrikaner identity couched in traditional narrative, including endemic racism.

It was also evident – though not explicitly voiced – throughout the interviews that participants’ referral to New Zealand society was primarily a Pākehā New Zealand. The diversity of peoples in New Zealand was also spoken of on many occasions, but references such as ‘shared colonial history’ and ‘same heritage’ (further explained in the following sections) made this aspect clear upon comparisons between South Africa and New Zealand.

Identity construction, and its study, are not straight forward processes. Nagel writes that ethnic identity is constructed through a ‘dialectical process involving internal and external opinions and processes, as well as the individual’s self-identification and outsiders’ ethnic designations – i.e., what *you* think your ethnicity is, versus what *they* think your ethnicity is’ (1994, 154, emphasis in original). Within the social sciences, Afrikaners have thus far had their identity described at length as a primarily external designation, focused on the lingering effects of apartheid (Baines 2013; Blaser 2012; Crapanzano 1986; Davies 2007; McKenzie and Gressier 2017; Steyn 2004; van der Waal and Robins 2011; Verwey and Quayle 2012; Wasserman 2010), emphasized under a state dominated by the African National Congress (ANC). However, their subjective *self*-identification still remains to be explored. It is with this in mind that this project’s methodology was cautiously designed, ensuring minimal opportunity for inflection by the researcher on participant identity.

METHODOLOGY

The study focused on interviewing four couples. Each consisted of a migrant to New Zealand who self-identified as ‘Afrikaner’ and a non-South African-born partner. This dual-demographic interview model was based on personal experience. Being non-South African-born and married to an Afrikaans-speaker, I found the contrast between my wife’s dispositions and perceptions, and my own, helpful in highlighting aspects of her ethnicity.

A standard question-and-answer interview method may have fallen short of the depth I required, as these can tend toward an overly objective result. That is, participants answer questions exclusively on topics that the researcher thinks are important, not necessarily what is important the community which the study concerns. Participant observation was unlikely to work in a practical sense as participants were spread across the North Island of New Zealand. To solve these issues, the interview method used in this study was a modified form of Wengraf’s (2001) Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) which is deliberately based on participant stories rather than predetermined issues imposed by the researcher. This form of interview allows participants

to act as reflexive researchers, identifying topics of importance from their insider positions.

BNIM has the researcher begin with one *macro*-biographic question, requesting the participant's life-story as relating to the research question. While the participant was recounting their story, I noted points of interest which I thought needed further illumination. A second, *micro*-biographic interview was conducted immediately after the first, using these notes as a guide for requesting further information in the form of Particular Incident Narratives (PIN). These PIN questions were solely formulated from the life-story in the first interview and I refrained from asking anything that did not arise during that account.

Finally, once the first sets of interviews had taken place, the data was analysed thematically so that all participants could potentially expand upon it. Specifically, themes relating to how they perform their identity in their community and New Zealand society were pinpointed. A third interview then took place where participants were asked to comment on questions that arose during this analysis phase. This was organised as a traditional, question-and-answer style of interview. The result of this method was deep, nuanced data, specifically relevant to what participants perceived as being important, and reduced intrusion by my own preconceived ideas of what may or may not be important to the study. For example, I had expected some reference to apartheid and other unraised ideas, such as any attachment to South African land. Although I would have been interested in including these, and other, themes in the research, it was more important that issues raised in the study were participant-led.

I felt this form of interview was very conducive in allowing the participants to speak their minds freely. However, in retrospect, the interview method would be best suited as a support for participant observation, as such an arrangement would have allowed me to gain a better understanding of what participants do and what they think they do – these two factors do not always correlate. Further, although the dual-demographic interview model was beneficial in assisting Afrikaner-participants' narratives, it may have unintentionally reduced the participant pool to those who were predisposed to perform their identity in a particular way upon immigration, as will be further discussed.

Four Afrikaner participants were involved in the project. All would likely regard themselves as ethnically 'white', although this was not a requirement for participation. Annalie⁴ (66 years old), the eldest participant, moved to New Zealand in 1994 with her English-speaking South African husband at the time and their three children. The marriage dissolved while in New Zealand and she has since

remarried a New Zealander. Daniël (48 years old), a Baptist pastor, came to New Zealand for work via Russia (where he met his wife, Polina), England and Germany. Daniël left South Africa for the first time in 1993 but returned on many occasions before immigrating to New Zealand in 2013. Sherilee (35 years old), arrived in 2006 at 22 years old with a young daughter and pregnant with her son. She met her husband shortly after beginning work in New Zealand. Finally, Tian (32 years old) attempted immigration on a previous occasion with his former partner, but could not obtain the necessary visas. After returning to South Africa, the relationship dissolved and he re-entered New Zealand alone in 2013, meeting his New Zealand-born partner shortly after.

ETHNIC IDENTITY PRIOR TO MIGRATION

Throughout interviews, participants referred to a representation of Afrikaner as 'typical' and seemed to use this as a foundation for constructing their own identity. The representation entailed four major qualities: a shared biological heritage; practising Protestant Christianity; speaking Afrikaans; and, employing a particular social values system, often described as conservatism.

Biological heritage, specifically from Dutch, German, or French origins, was most clearly indicated by surnames. Names which were more common and of Dutch origin, such as Pretorius⁵, were considered more valuable in determining how 'Afrikaans' one is. This distinction, primarily used to distinguish from British origins, seems to be well-entrenched in South African society – references have been made as far back as the early 19th century (Burchell 1822, 21). Surnames were referred to by all participants, but Daniël, whose surname is not a common Afrikaans one, highlighted the issue most clearly:

Surnames play a huge role in [determining who is Afrikaans], you know, the Pretorius' and Erasmus' and all the Afrikaans surnames. Because that's a clear distinction between someone who is called Smith, [...] between English surnames and Afrikaans surnames.

Daniël went on to indicate that there is a difference between how one can identify against other ethnicities versus how one can identify within the Afrikaner community. That is, Daniël claimed his identity as an Afrikaner in the context of South Africa, yet the degree to which he is Afrikaans in comparison to other Afrikaners is less certain due to the heritage that his surname indicates.

The shared religion that research participants referred to was the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk⁶ (NGK). The NGK is a very conservative Protestant church

which no participants were attending at the time of interviews, although each had at one point in their lives. However, all interviewees were unanimous in describing Afrikaners as NGK attendees.

Daniël and Annalie, the two older participants, indicated that religious affiliation was required on one's CV in South Africa and employment often resulted from it. Sherilee and Annalie both gave accounts of the Afrikaans church being an important social field for the performance of Afrikaner identity. Tian affirmed that a 'typical Afrikaans household' attends the NGK; however, he identifies as both an Afrikaner and an atheist.

To participants, attending the NGK – as with having an Afrikaans surname – *denotes* one's Afrikaans-ness, though Afrikaner identity is not *bound* to it. Rather, these elements indicate the boundary which may be negotiated upon contrasting social fields that Afrikaners encounter. In this instance, instead of religion being an element of cultural contents, it becomes a boundary marker. Religion thus indicates one's difference from the Other in terms of New Zealand society, as well as the Other in terms of the community of which the individual was once a part.

Use of the Afrikaans language was referred to as an 'obvious' indicator of being an Afrikaner, with further reference made distinguishing Afrikaners from English-speaking South Africans. Annalie pointedly explained that Afrikaans-speakers are more 'traditional' than English-speaking South Africans:

[Afrikaans-speakers are] very traditional, very much holding onto their culture [...] now, we all have to learn a second language at school but the Afrikaans [people are] very much more traditional.

Contrary to current literature on Afrikaans in the New Zealand diaspora (Barkhuizen 2006; Barkhuizen and Knoch 2005; Duxfield 2013), most participants seemed indifferent to the actual practical use of Afrikaans in their everyday lives. Aside from a few comments from older participants indicating a longing to use Afrikaans idiomatic imagery, the language was shrugged off as secondary to integration, while firmly maintaining that it is an indicator of one's Afrikaans-ness. Duxfield (2013, 150) notes that compensation for language loss is formed in associating with others in the diaspora. Again, the participants in this study negate this, instead *dis*associating with the community (discussed in the following section).

Finally, social conservatism, particularly with respect to family and gender roles,

was frequently mentioned in interviews with most saying that Afrikaners are 'very conservative'. Some indicated that they had difficulty in New Zealand due to the stark difference between their conservative worldview and New Zealand's more liberal outlook. Conservative practices mentioned include respectful speech and respecting authority, not being outspoken, adequate discipline for children and observation of traditional gender roles. Mostly, however, the practices described remained within the family realm and hinged on being respectful to one's elders and others in authority.

This respect for authority frequently caused discord in younger participants' relationships, with Sherilee and Lachlan, for example, bemoaning Sherilee's inability to say no to her parents or 'speaking out against' them. Tian has severed the relationship with his mother due to the discomfort she caused his partner. This shows the interplay between two worldviews, 'liberal' and 'conservative'. All participants described Afrikaners as conservative and though Sherilee indicates that she, too, is conservative she also exhibited socially liberal behaviour regarding some gender roles, such as expecting her husband to help with housework. These expectations were contrasted against her father's more conservative perceptions of these gender roles, while also indicating that he fills the role of an Afrikaner more typically. This duality shows she has or is moving out of that, if only in some areas, as she navigates between these two competing social worldviews.

This representation of 'Afrikaner', comprised of a particular heritage, belief, language and worldview, would not be an appropriate description for any one of the study's participants. It is, however, the model which they use to maintain and compare their ethnic boundaries and inform their new identities and experiences in New Zealand.

ETHNIC SPLIT

Ethnic boundaries, for this study's Afrikaner participants, are extemporaneously modified in relation to two influences: other Afrikaners and wider New Zealand society. Boundary modification in relation to other Afrikaners depends mainly on the individual's willingness to integrate into New Zealand's diverse society. All participants made active attempts to integrate with other ethnic groups, avoiding interaction with the diaspora.

Through this experience, participants referred to an ethnic split developing in the community, between those who integrate into New Zealand society, disassociating with South African⁷ communities, and those who retained close,

regular contact with other South Africans.⁸ Sherilee, who sees herself as having integrated into New Zealand society, described these 'other' South Africans in clear terms, calling them 'quintessential':

[There are some] living in New Zealand that are South African and they only hang out with South Africans, they only want to live where other South Africans live. They only want to eat South African food... It's not all South Africans but I feel like I've evolved a little bit more out of that narrow-minded outlook that some people seem to have. Some people just won't adapt and it's just terrible. 'Cos [if] you move to someone else's country, you adapt. You kinda, 'fit in'.

Sherilee's ethnic identity shifted to include less typically 'South African' qualities, while viewing other South Africans as having remained defined by traditional characteristics. Willingness to blend into New Zealand's multicultural society means migrants are more likely to integrate with the diversity in New Zealand and be influenced by those interactions. Diversity in identificatory practice among migrants in New Zealand is not uncommon. Pearson (2014), for example, observed that many British migrants noted variation in identity allegiance, with some strongly affirming their heritage and others veering between their two societies, creating plural national identities.

All participants interviewed for this study reported that they integrated with New Zealand society and most disagreed with some of the choices of those who do not. The only participant who had Afrikaans-speaking friends was Annalie, however she explained that she consciously integrated with New Zealanders. As all participants were part of a bi-ethnic relationship during interviews, this may have impacted their prevalence to integrate with New Zealand society. Alternatively, it is possible that this inclination was formed prior to entering into these relationships, instead assisting in forming the relationships themselves and further influencing their level of integration with New Zealand society. A potential cause for the split may be found in individual experiences in fostering adequate friends among New Zealanders, as discussed in the section *Fostering friendships*.

ADJUSTING TO LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND

Contrary to McKenzie and Gressier's (2017) Australian research indicating that migrant Afrikaners felt discriminated against by their host communities, and confirming Meares and Gilbertson's (2013) local study, who found social inclusion of Afrikaners to be predominant, no participant in this study felt

disadvantaged as an Afrikaner in New Zealand. Daniël stressed his ease of adjustment emphatically, saying ‘We have really not felt any animosity or felt ourselves outside of any culture that’s already here. Truly, it’s been amazing’.

This positive experience as a migrant in New Zealand was reiterated across all interviews. It should be noted, however, that discussions in the many South African and Afrikaans-based Facebook groups in New Zealand show a contrasting picture. Comments⁹ in these groups indicate that migrants may remain feeling uncomfortably settled, irrespective of the time spent in New Zealand. Subject-matter across these platforms pointed to a longing for home, varying from issues such as not being able to purchase certain South African products to not having an outlet for speaking Afrikaans. The positive experience felt by participants not being universally encountered across the community may be specific to Afrikaners who choose to more fully integrate into New Zealand society.

Daniël and his wife, Polina, had previously lived in Russia, England and Germany and used these other localities to compare their experience in New Zealand:

We haven’t found things in the New Zealand culture that’s irritating, if I may use that word, as it was in Russia. In Russia, you have corruption and it irritates you... In New Zealand, the most difficult things that we are dealing with... is the extreme liberalism [and] secularism, which is so much part of [the] Kiwi mindset. But that’s something you just have to deal with and you know you’re living in a world that is like that but as a [Baptist] Christian, that’s hard.

Polina then brought up the similarities between South African and New Zealand lifestyles, citing activities such as hiking and camping and saying that it’s easier because of these shared outdoor-based preferences. Daniël agreed with this sentiment and went on to explain that there is a common ‘can-do’ and ‘she’ll be right’ attitude, highlighting this in the common Afrikaans phrase, ‘*n Boer maak ’n plan*’ [‘a Boer makes a plan’]. This was contrasted with Germany where, he explained, ‘Everything is done for you. Everything is so well-organised and smooth’.

Sherilee referred to national similarities from a viewpoint of colonial history, saying ‘We all have similar cultures because we were all part of the Crown at one point’, and going on to explain that New Zealanders are open to South African migrants due to this shared colonial history. Sherilee added their relative

invisibility as migrants as helpful as well, comparing this against Asian migrants who ‘don’t look the same and don’t have the same heritage’.

However, this ease of being a South African in New Zealand due to shared lifestyle and leisure preferences was contrasted by Annalie. She expressed difficulty with her ‘refined’ and non – ‘sports person’ – type son while in South Africa but rather found the social climate of *diversity* in New Zealand to suit her son’s demeanour. She described her son as ‘not a rugby player’, and being inclined to music, culture and the arts, explaining that he identified as gay. While she spoke about her son’s demeanour fondly, she explained that she was initially fearful of how he might fit into a country ‘where rugby is everything’.

Annalie’s reference concerned the social landscapes of both South Africa and New Zealand. Her son appears to have thrived in New Zealand, just as Tian, Sherilee, Daniël and Annalie have, despite the variety of personalities and lifestyle preferences of each. This may be due to New Zealand’s current social climate of acceptance as supportive of post-apartheid Afrikaner identity during the adjustment period described by Vestergaard (2000), discussed earlier in this article. Contrary to other descriptions offered, where ethnic boundaries are highlighted through difference, values in lifestyle arose as a descriptor of Afrikaners through *similarity* with the new society. However, the description became more pronounced against a backdrop of visits to other countries and other migrant populations in New Zealand.

SECURITY

Security in South Africa was talked about in interviews by all participants, on many occasions. It was not, however, the main reason for leaving for every participant. Daniël and Tian both left for work purposes. Daniël was encouraged to apply for his pastorate, and though Tian ‘was earning what seemed to be good money, [he] couldn’t get ahead’ in South Africa. Tian recounted instances where the issues of security became clear:

I was mugged when I was about fourteen. I was mugged by three guys. I got stabbed and they took my phone. And a police van came driving down the road and I stopped him and told him ‘There’s the guys that just stole my phone.’ And he just told me ‘Sorry, you just have to go and make a case at the police station.’ And just drive off.

Although Tian’s primary reason for leaving South Africa was economically driven, he found that ‘freedom’ became a role in moving as well:

... moving somewhere where there's a bit more freedom [was a big appeal] but originally, I didn't know that's what I wanted, you know? 'Cos if you're in South Africa you don't know what freedom is until you come over here and walk around on the streets, you know? Not looking over your shoulder, not constantly having to be aware of your surroundings, just in case someone tried to mug you or take advantage of you. But I would say that was part of what I was after. Less crime.

Although this statement refers to Afrikaner identity in a *South African* context, the issue of South African security only arose in the context of New Zealand's safer environment. The concept of South Africans not understanding freedom was discussed in detail during Tian's interview, including comparison to New Zealanders' inability to comprehend South Africa's extreme security issues:

It took me a while to realise what freedom actually is. What it means to have that privilege of not having to worry about someone going to mug you or someone going to try and take advantage of you in some or other way. It's why it'll be very hard to try to explain or try to convince someone that's in South Africa that's never travelled to a country like this, to New Zealand. Try to explain exactly what they're missing out on, you know? What freedom is. Even if you do tell them, it won't make sense to them.

Sherilee noted her initial realisation that there were no bars on the windows in her home as a significant experience for her, also indicating the impact it has when travelling back and forth between the two countries:

It was weird, it was so weird. I actually distinctly remember the whole process. I think we had [been here for] four days. I was washing dishes and we lived in [named area] which is quite rural, so there's like green, open grass and just absolutely beautiful. And I was washing dishes and I looked up at the window and there was no bars and just had this moment of like 'Where am I and what's going on?' You know? I'm in a different part of the world 'What's happening?' So, yeah, it was really strange. It took a long time to stop locking my car doors and rolling up my windows when I'm driving by myself and being über-wary when you stop at the traffic light. I don't anymore. Now I just kinda carry on. But I found, with my dad as well, whenever we've been back and come back again, it takes a couple of weeks to lose that complete 'focus' the whole time. That someone's around you.

Since immigrating to New Zealand, Sherilee has been back to South Africa twice. Each time, she noticed returning to an intense feeling of security consciousness that remained with her briefly after returning to New Zealand. She particularly talked about needing to know where her children were at all times. This anxiety subsided again a couple of weeks after returning to New Zealand, yet remained a noticeable effect of having been in South Africa. Tian's statement about the inability of non-migrated South Africans to comprehend 'what freedom is' is particularly telling, indicating a pronounced change in his perception of what life and society can be. However, Sherilee's return to heightened states of anxiety shows that, although this relaxation in security awareness can become a part of their everyday lives in New Zealand, it may never leave their being completely. Rather, it reappears as necessary upon entering South Africa and recedes some weeks after returning to New Zealand.

FOSTERING FRIENDSHIPS

The formation of friendships with New Zealanders appeared to be a difficult process for participants and highlighted an aspect of Afrikaans-ness in the form of friendliness and ways of performing hospitality. This was most evident against a description of New Zealanders, which were characterised as 'polite' and 'friendly'. When asked about this aspect of their experiences, *over-politeness* among New Zealanders was described as a cause for unmet expectations regarding relationship-formation. Although it was Polina who brought the topic up, Daniël emphatically agreed with her comment:

I found there's one paradoxical side to Kiwis. They come across as very friendly and open but yet they like to keep their distance. They don't want to let you deep in. You know what I mean? Like, they don't want that deep commitment or deep relationship. They kind of like it on the surface, it's nice and pleasant and not too much effort. You know what I mean? We love Kiwi people, we love being here. But just comparing the cultures, I was really surprised to find that. Everybody is friendly in greeting but it doesn't mean that they're ready to be your friends, for real.

Annalie observed a similar experience, advising that new migrants should take a proactive approach toward integrating with New Zealand society. However, again, there is a difference between the study's older participants and the younger generation. Neither Sherilee nor Tian mentioned anything about this misunderstanding, citing only that New Zealanders are very 'open' people, with particular emphasis on openness to migrants. Daniël, however, also stated that

his position as pastor of a church, as well as his older age and focus on immediate family relationship, may have impacted on his ability to make friends quickly, saying ‘Let’s be honest, because at our age, it is you, your family and your child and your job’.

These findings correlate with a report on discrimination toward immigrants and refugees, carried out by Butcher, Spoonley, and Trlin (2006). Although the study looks at migrants from many nations, an Auckland-based focus group of seven South Africans (thirty per cent of all participants, though specific ethnicity was not stated) is included. In the report, South African migrants vented frustration at their inability to make friends with neighbours and be invited into someone’s home, as is common in South African friendship practice. Butcher, Spoonley, and Trlin explain that, of all four migrant groups interviewed, South Africans were the most concerned about, and spent more time explaining, this unmet expectation of their new life in New Zealand. Unsurprisingly, though different from the participant experience in this study, the interviewees in the report state that this has pushed them to form friendships with other South African migrants, with one saying that he/she had intended to leave South Africa behind completely and only mix with New Zealanders, prior to migration.

DIRECTNESS OF SPEECH, TACTLESSNESS, AND COMPETITION

When asked what they think New Zealanders think of Afrikaners, the older participants referred to the directness of how South Africans communicate, often describing it in relation to the how they view New Zealanders’ style of communication. Daniel saw this directness as something that could be both positive and negative:

I think South Africans, as far as I know, are seen as people who do not beat around the bush, you know? They’re straight talkers. Sometimes they could be perceived as a little bit too narrow-[minded]. I think that’s definitely the case. Many Kiwis told me that’s how South Africans are and I guess they’re right. We are people who want to say things the way we perceive them to be and ‘You deal with the consequences’. But I think the English influence in New Zealand is more the reserved ‘I have my opinion but I’m too polite to hurt you with my opinion.’

Annalie also commented on this identity trait, contextualising it in competitiveness and suggesting that the parameters regarding future employment in South Africa means that direct speech is necessary. She also indicated that this

focus on future work opportunities stems from an awareness of the importance of social class, saying ‘it’s so important what class you are’. One of the younger participants, Sherilee, did not refer to South Africans as tactless, arrogant or even just as ‘straight talkers’, she did, however, describe them as having this class-conscious, society-aware disposition, and referred to them as ‘narrow-minded’. The absence of any mention of directness or ‘straight-talking’ from younger participants may indicate that this too is changing in South Africa. Alternatively, it could also indicate a change in the dominant Afrikaner worldview as younger, more adaptable or easily influenced South Africans are removed from the social field of their prior life in their home country.

In contrast to the directness of South Africans, Annalie also spoke about New Zealanders being reluctant to speak up about important issues, saying ‘I often say to [her New Zealand-born husband] “If the council does something that you don’t like, say! Phone our councillor!” We feel New Zealanders don’t speak up’. Daniël and Polina discussed this from an alternative perspective in terms of implementing ideas at their church. They explained that, when they were living in Germany, they were required to ‘present the whole thesis’ and then ‘defend [it] every step of the way’. They contrasted this with having encountered open-mindedness amongst their New Zealand church attendees, referring to a ‘she’ll be right’ attitude.

As with security awareness, directness of speech arose from comparisons and observations of New Zealanders, creating an awareness of Afrikaners’ ethnic boundary. Both security awareness and directness of speech are matters that are likely derived from a South African context, yet they were only made apparent to Afrikaners upon migration.

ABOUT NEW ZEALANDERS

Throughout interviews, participants made many self-comparisons to New Zealanders. During the final set of interviews, I asked participants to qualify their model for comparison by describing a ‘typical New Zealander’. Although this idea of a typical Kiwi was referred to during some micro-biographic interviews, it appeared to be a difficult question for participants to answer. The reason most often cited was that New Zealanders are a very diverse group of people. When asked, Tian laughed, exclaiming ‘Typical? Typical Kiwi?!’ and then stated ‘It’s hard for me to put people in these boxes, man. ’Cos I don’t like to think of people that way, you know?’ Encouraged by his partner, however, he explained that he found New Zealanders to be very open and accepting people but flanked this by saying that it cannot be applied universally, ‘Cos an

asshole's going to be an asshole, it doesn't matter if he's a Kiwi or South African.'

Daniël, Tian, and Sherilee all described New Zealanders in general as warm, friendly, and fairly diverse. Although a lot of Annalie's description throughout all interviews indicates that she thinks of New Zealanders as quite laid back and unimpressed by formality, her answer to this specific question differed from the others', both in terms of descriptive content and complexity. She also made comparisons back to South Africans, which Daniël, Sherilee, and Tian did not do directly in response to the question. Her comparison made reference to New Zealand's secular society, the Kiwi propensity for travel, and presumed lack of willingness to work on a Saturday. Annalie continued by indicating that New Zealanders don't have such a heavy focus on class-consciousness as South Africans do:

... South Africa is very class-conscious. It's very important where your house is, what car you drive and you could see [new South African immigrants] coming in. And, yes, for them to come to New Zealand, you've got to go a few steps down. 'Cos you start again, financially. And for a New Zealander, it doesn't matter if you've got a house at The Mount¹⁰ or in Taupo. You don't have to boast about that. Or what car you drive, it's not important.

This kind of generalised social comparison is common across migrant groups upon encountering a new social field, and is a major impetus for migrants to assess their own internally perceived being, as well as their external designation for their new neighbours. Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich (2002, 218) asked a similar question among her New Zealand-German migrant interviewees with comparable description. Her participants attributed New Zealanders with notions of being 'easy-going', 'friendly', 'egalitarian', and referred to ideas of lifestyle-awareness and migrants' difficulty in adjusting to their new liberal social environment. However, a major point of difference is evident in the male-dominated gender-related analysis among German migrants. For this study's participants, New Zealanders were referred to using gender-neutral terminology (with one exception, referred in the male form). This was consistent with all participants, irrespective of gender or age and is perhaps telling of a move from a conservative, patrilineal domain to one that is more liberal and egalitarian.

It is also important to be aware of the geographic areas where the descriptions are derived from. Sherilee and Daniël's ideas of a New Zealander have been primarily formed in Albany (North Auckland), and the central business district.

Annalie and Tian's perceptions have initially formed in Wellington City, as well as the Northern suburbs, with Annalie's further informed by Palmerston North. The first two regions, Auckland and Wellington, are among New Zealand's most culturally diverse (Stats NZ 2013).

CONCLUSIONS

Experiences felt and perceived by each of the study's participants varied greatly depending on factors such as age and gender. While it could be said that some of the participants in this study had a relatively easy transition into New Zealand society, they took intentional steps to ensure the goal of a successful transition was made. However, this transition is not without a maintained observation, to varying degrees, of the dominant social movements in New Zealand society and, through comparison, participants retained their distinct ethnic identity as Afrikaners. This is particularly evident both in the description and fervour with which participants referred to Afrikaners as being a conservative, traditional and class-conscious people.

Their adjustment to life in New Zealand appeared to filter through this conservatism, informing their differences and similarities from those around them, further strengthening, and at times diminishing, their identities as Afrikaners. However, overall the Afrikaners in this study appear to have thrived in New Zealand's social landscape with its acceptance of diverse groups of people. In some cases, this was simultaneously a source of discomfort and ease for participants but in all cases accepted as part of living in New Zealand.

This movement from a conservative social field to a more liberal one has created a reported schism among the Afrikaner community, between those who accept the liberal social field and those who resist it. Such a self-adopted ultimatum has wide-reaching implications in respect to the experiences and changes that Afrikaners undergo during their adjustment to life in New Zealand. All the participants in this study actively chose to integrate into New Zealand's wider society and, to some degree, reject their home community, shedding part of their Afrikaans-ness. Thus, Afrikaner migrants adapt to suit new social environments, shedding those characteristics that they view as a liability in New Zealand, nurturing those of personal value and accumulating those which are seen as socially beneficial. The social diversity in New Zealand, as well as freedom from the anxiety of sustained, extreme security issues in South Africa, mean that Afrikaners may freely ease into their ethnic being, becoming 'Afrikaner' in a more intentional way.

In the current body of literature, Afrikaners are portrayed as separative, prejudiced and fixated on their past and continues to factor apartheid as a major influence in their being. This study has revealed that this is not necessarily the case for some, preferring instead to integrate into a society that is not inherently their own. Although Blaser's (2012) study shows that this is particularly the case among young Afrikaners, this paper also shows that it may be relevant for a variety of Afrikaner demographics, with the older participants exhibiting similar behaviour and ideals as the younger. It appears that Afrikaners today are attempting to move on from apartheid, yet continue to be viewed through that lens by outsiders.

Like many ethnicities worldwide, Afrikaners are increasingly encountering different people groups and ideologies by which to self-assess and critique their own identities. Thus, being an Afrikaner today is no longer what it once was. It is now vital that researchers critique existing methodologies, particularly with migrant populations, who are more sensitive to mutable identities.

When asked directly, all participants found articulating their own identities challenging. This was nonetheless expressed in a variety of ways when comparisons were made to Afrikaners who continue to live in South Africa, 'other' South Africans who live in New Zealand but continue to associate most often with fellow South Africans, and New Zealand's diverse society as a whole.

Upon immigrating to New Zealand's comparatively liberal social field, the Afrikaner participants in this study encountered their ethnic identity in a confronting way which appears to have become altered in relation to both their new neighbours and previous compatriots. Although Afrikaner ethnic boundaries were constructed primarily through outside forces, their modification through choices and experiences have become largely a matter of individual agency. Individuals, as part of the Afrikaner community, have not only critiqued their new host culture(s), but also their own, and subsequently moved away from the 'model' Afrikaner while maintaining their individual Afrikaans-ness.

Afrikaner identity could be viewed as merely a product of its history but it is more than that, particularly in a diasporic context. For Afrikaner identity on a New Zealand social field, rather than being in a state of crisis, the outlook seems far more positive. Rather, it appears to be in a state of rebirth in terms of a significant contestation of traditional ethnic boundaries and navigation of new ones. Each participant in this study continued to identify with the Afrikaner community, some with great pride but none with condemnation. Rather, they have taken the opportunity, in their new host country, to reinvent their being.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Robyn Andrews, Dr. Graeme MacRae, the two peer reviewers and the editor of this special section of *SITES* for their assistance, guidance and critique.

NOTES

- 1 Kris Finlayson is a PhD candidate in social anthropology at Massey University. His research investigates Afrikaner ethnic identity between New Zealand and South Africa with a particular focus on the braai and Afrikaans church social spaces.
Email: finlayson.kris@outlook.com
- 2 The terms 'black', 'white' and 'coloured' are regularly used in everyday language in South Africa by all peoples and is consistent with post-apartheid government terminology, much like 'Māori' and 'Pākehā' are used in New Zealand. I have therefore used these terms in accordingly – their use in this paper should not be construed as a reification of these social categories.
- 3 A new census has since been undertaken in New Zealand in 2018. Unfortunately the release of these results was delayed and not able to be included.
- 4 All participants in this study have been given pseudonyms.
- 5 'Pretorius' is the most common Afrikaans surname in South Africa (Name Statistics South Africa n.d.).
- 6 The 'Dutch Reformed Church'.
- 7 Although Sherilee used the term 'South African', context indicated she was referring specifically to Afrikaner South Africans. This convergent terminology was common throughout all interviews.
- 8 Due to all participants preferring integration, an exploration of this ethnic split among Afrikaners was out of the scope of this study but should certainly be explored in future research.
- 9 Many of these comments took place in closed Facebook groups and often included information of a personal nature, so I have not included examples here.
- 10 A shortened form for Mount Maunganui.

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