

NEW ZEALAND MIGRANTS TO AUSTRALIA: SOCIAL
CONSTRUCTION OF MIGRANT IDENTITY

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Signed Certification of Sources

This thesis is submitted to Bond University in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This thesis represents my own work and contains no material which has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at this University or any other institution, except where due acknowledgement is made.

Signature: Date:

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Summary

New Zealanders' motivations for migrating to Australia and the effect of migration on their cultural and national identity were examined through analysis of interviews and surveys with New Zealand migrants and stayers. Factors influencing the move included economic pull factors, lifestyle factors, family reunification, some dissatisfaction with New Zealand society, the desire for a change, and a sense of adventure. Participants reported a high level of satisfaction with their new lives in Australia, and once resident there, initial motivating reasons merged with factors which reinforced and justified the decision to move. These included the benefits of a warmer climate, the perception that Australia was a more relaxed and tolerant society, and the belief by Maori that living in Australia freed them from negative stereotypes.

New Zealand migrants to Australia revised their identity in light of their new experiences, and yet continued to view New Zealand positively, retaining aspects of their New Zealand identity as part of their ongoing evolving identity. However, while feeling at home in both countries, as time went on many migrants adopted a more Australian identity. Over time, they considered Australia was superior in a number of respects, and adapted and changed in response to Australian influences. Despite this, migrants maintained the boundary between New Zealand and Australian characteristics through a process of constant comparisons and, somewhat ambivalently, retained their strong positive regard for New Zealand. In the main, participants considered they could be happy in either country, but were happier in Australia. Migrants constructed positive reasons to justify their move and viewed themselves as adventurous and determined, while stayers constructed equally positive reasons for staying in New Zealand, seeing themselves as settled and stable.

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