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Identity matters: Racial-ethnic representations among adolescents attending multi-ethnic high schools

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Abstract

Racial-ethnic identity is a fundamental aspect of an early adolescent's identity because it includes the attitudes and feelings associated with ethnic and racial group membership. Literature shows racial-ethnic identity to be an important aspect of adolescents' developmental and psychological well-being. This is important in light of the increasingly diverse racial-ethnic demographic for New Zealand, particularly in our large cities. The present study is based around the broad research question 'What influences early adolescent racial-ethnic identity development?' This includes a fundamental question of 'How do early adolescents enact racial-ethnic identity in high school contexts?' and then, 'How does racial-ethnic identity impact on the way early adolescents engage at high school?'

This study examines the importance of racial-ethnic identity among young adolescents who attend large, multi-ethnic, urban high schools in New Zealand. The project is comprised of one study with three parts. The analysis in this study focuses on a comparison of Year nine students (13-14 years old) in New Zealand from four racial-ethnic groupings: New Zealand European/Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese. Study 1a and 1b ($n = 695$) examined the self-identifications, feelings of connectedness, meanings and perceived consequences of adolescents' racial-ethnic identities using a questionnaire. In line with the literature, the findings from these two parts show that racial-ethnic identities are important for adolescents from all four ethnic groups; it frames who they are, where they belong, and what they are trying to achieve. Study 1c used semi-structured interviews to examine the relationship of racial-ethnic identity to educational engagement among high-achieving adolescents from the four ethnic groups ($n = 31$). Findings here indicated that enacting multiple social identities protected the adolescents from the negative pressures of stereotype threat, but their racial-ethnic identity influenced the ways they enacted their academic and other social identities in the school context; they were constantly, and consciously, contesting contradictory racial-ethnic stereotypes in each context. The research concludes that although racism is prevalent and powerful in the lives of adolescents, a strong racial-ethnic identity may provide adolescents with the capacity to not allow negative pressures to interfere with their educational engagement.

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Chapter One: Introduction

New Zealand is more racially, ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse than ever before. As such, many early adolescents are grappling with the questions ‘who am I?’ and ‘how do I belong?’ in a cultural context that is distinctly different from past generations. Whilst New Zealand history used to be able to tell us who we were, where we came from and where we should be going, it no longer defines a trajectory which helps us to construct the essence of our collective identity. Moreover, Liu (2007) has commented that whilst New Zealand might be demographically multicultural and formally bicultural, we are, with few exceptions, still institutionally monocultural. To what effect? Given that racial-ethnic identity development has been proven to be an important aspect of adolescents’ developmental and psychological well-being, it is surprising how little we know about this phenomenon in New Zealand.

Whether or not the various peoples who have come to call New Zealand home will ever arrive at an agreement on a common definition of their collective identity, what is clear is that the process of racial-ethnic identity-making here is dynamic. Presently, New Zealand society is made up of many diverse racial-ethnic groups; it is mainly comprised of a mix of Māori, who are indigenous to New Zealand, New Zealand Pākehā/European, who are generally of predominantly European/British ancestry (hereafter referred to as Pākehā) Asian, Middle Eastern and Pasifika people who have immigrated from the Pacific region. People of Pākehā and Māori ethnicity make up 67.7% and 14.6% of the population respectively. Excluding those of Pākehā or Māori origin, the next largest ethnic groups are, in order of size: Chinese, Samoan, Indian, Cook Island Māori, Tongan and Korean (Ministry of Education, 2011). In 2011, New Zealanders are a combination of a wide range of different racial-ethnic groups, social groupings and cultural heritages.

It is extremely important that individuals seek answers to the questions ‘who am I?’ and ‘how do I belong?’ A racial-ethnic group’s representation of its collective identity will condition its sense of what it was, is, can, and should be, and these factors help to shape the construction of its identity, norms and values. As a result, racial-ethnic identity matters to many. It matters for individuals, for groups and for the nation. It matters in terms of shaping individual identity, understanding inequalities and targeting policy across a wide range of areas such as health and education. As stipulated by Jenkins

(2008), “we must take seriously the fact that ethnicity means something to individuals, and that when it matters, it can *really* matter.” (p. 172, emphasis in original). Despite significant demographic changes and ethnic disparities, little work has been done on examining and measuring racial-ethnic identity development and its influence on educational outcomes in New Zealand, and as such it remains a perplexing and relatively unknown construct.

While the overall focus of this thesis is on racial-ethnic identities, each of us has many identities. Some of these are individual, whilst others may be related to membership of a social group. For some people, factors such as disability, gender, sexual orientation, gang or service club membership, occupation, marital status or maybe religion will strongly influence their identity; for others, these types of identity may have little meaning in their everyday lives. Some aspects of who we are will be chosen, whereas some components of our identity will be beyond our control. For some people, identities will be relatively fixed, while for others they will be fluid. Some of the fluidity can be influenced by context, for example where we are located, including which country we might be living in. Various identities might have official meanings, whereas others will be private, and these official and private meanings may or may not overlap. Some identities may, in fact, never be acknowledged in public settings. Racial-ethnic identities, like other identities, can be *one* element of self for some people. For some it acts as a central part of defining who they are.

The use of the term racial-ethnic identity in this study

Ethnic identity appears to be the more appropriate construct to study when researchers are interested in how individuals see themselves relative to their cultural beliefs, values, and behaviours. However, when researchers are more interested in how individuals construct their identities in response to an oppressive and highly racialised society, racial identity may be the more appropriate construct to study (Cokley, 2007). While discussion within social-psychology is ongoing regarding intersections of racial and ethnic identity, recent research documents many parallels between these constructs, including developing a sense of belonging, learning about one’s group memberships, and responding to discrimination (Phinney & Ong, 2007). There is conceptual overlap in the use of these terms, and some contemporary researchers propose the use of the hybrid term ‘racial-

ethnic' to acknowledge the socially constructed and interlaced nature of both terms (Cross & Cross, 2008; Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes, 2007).

Moreover, it has been suggested that socio-cultural identities be referred to as racial-ethnic-cultural identities because the phenomenological experience of minority populations does not support the artificial differentiation of race, ethnicity, or culture as separate identities. Cross and Cross (2008) purport that discourses on racial, ethnic and cultural identities “overlap at the level of the lived experience to the point that there is little reason to associate each construct with a distinct identity constellation” (p. 156). Cross and Cross observe that in lived experience identity factors related to one’s objectification as a racial object are fused with one’s equally powerful sense of self as an ethnic and cultural being.

Previous research has evidenced five different, but interrelated, identity competencies utilised to manage race, ethnicity and culture: (1) *buffering* – the management of encounters with racism and discrimination; (2) *code-switching* – the ability to move in and out of mainstream situations or move back and forth from one’s primary racial-ethnic culture; (3) *bridging* – the desire and competencies related to establishing and sustaining close friendships across racial and cultural divides; (4) *bonding* – activities, experiences and affiliations within one’s group and culture that nourish attachment to the group; and (5) *individuality* – the management of both personal identity and related interests the person cherishes beyond the scope of race and minority culture (Strauss & Cross, 2005). These researchers argued that these various components interact, rather than exist in isolation. They also argue that children’s cultural knowledge is directly related to their awareness of the existence of racism, prejudice, and discrimination. As such they argue for the use of a term that encompasses both racial and ethnic identities.

Racial-ethnic identity is fundamental aspect of an adolescent's identity because it includes the attitudes and feelings associated with one’s ethnic and/or racial group membership. Du Bois (1989) described this as a process of “double consciousness” – a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (p. 3). When the expectations are of laziness, irresponsibility, low intelligence, and even violence, the outcomes can be toxic because they can impact our psychosocial functioning and the ways we behave in the world. When the reflections are received in a number of mirrors, including the media,

the classroom, and the street, the outcome can be devastating. To this end, this thesis supports the contention that adolescents develop both racial *and* ethnic identities simultaneously, and therefore uses the term *racial-ethnic identity*.

This thesis argues that many adolescents from significant ethnic groups in New Zealand, such as Samoans and Chinese, Pākehā as a majority, and Māori as a majority-minority, metaphorically and sometimes literally, wear their identities on their face every day. Consequently, this means that they must negotiate responses to, or build internal barriers against, the multiple ethnic and racial stereotypes associated with their group that confront their everyday interactions. In New Zealand, media-perpetuated stereotypes are often contradictory and might allude to: Samoans as religious, but ultimately violent; Chinese as hardworking, but insular; and Māori as culturally rich, but morally bankrupt (Ip & Pang, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000; Wall, 2008). It therefore seems conceivable that members of these groups might envisage themselves as both ethnic and racial beings, shaped by personal notions relative to their cultural beliefs, values, and behaviours (ethnicity), but also shaped by externally imposed notions of racial stereotype (race). Thus, in this thesis the term racial-ethnic identity is used to reflect the interconnectedness of these concepts for the racial-ethnic groups being studied.

Why study racial-ethnic identity?

This study theorises that an examination of racial-ethnic identity amongst early adolescents is important for five reasons: racial-ethnic identity is critical to social and psychological well-being; the significance of racial-ethnic identity can change across multiple contexts; racial-ethnic identity is impacted by experiences with racism; racial-ethnic identity can help students to be educationally resilient; and, racial-ethnic identity beliefs can impact school engagement and success. The following discussion will briefly ascertain why these links are important; however, they will be discussed in further depth in Chapter three.

Racial-ethnic identity is critical to social and psychological well-being

Defining oneself positively in terms of racial-ethnic identity is psychologically important for most adolescents and research continues to reinforce the long-standing positions proposed by Helms (1990) and Cross (1991) that there exists a positive relationship between racial-ethnic identity and self-esteem. Racial-ethnic identity has been shown to

influence an individual's level of self-esteem, as well as the direction and magnitude of change in self-esteem during the early adolescent years (DuBois, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, Tevendale, & Hardesty, 2002; Hirsch & DuBois, 1991). A strong sense of racial-ethnic identity has also been suggested to provide adolescents with a larger repertoire of social identities that allows them to successfully negotiate difficult situations such as being faced with negative stereotypes and unfair treatment. As such, it has been suggested that high levels of secure and positive racial-ethnic identity can help adolescents to buffer the impact of discrimination and/or racism on their psychological well-being. Adolescents who have explored and made a clear and positive commitment to their racial-ethnic identities score higher on measures of self-esteem, self-evaluation, sense of mastery, and social and peer interactions than do those who have not made such a commitment (Phinney, 1989; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990).

Racial-ethnic identity can be a lens through which everyday experiences are filtered. So, whilst a group of diverse individuals might all come into contact with exactly the same race-based encounter, each individual may have differential interpretations of the content, impact and cause of the event, based on the psychological, social, and political meanings they attach to their racial-ethnic identity, and the racial-ethnic identity of the person responsible for the encounter. As such, the significance of racial-ethnic identity is complex and dependent upon the personal characteristics of the person, the immediate situation, as well as macro-level features such as the racial-ethnic composition of the context, and the social and political status of one's racial-ethnic group. While societal definitions of a racial-ethnic group may influence identification, they clearly do not fully define personal experience – and vice versa.

The significance of racial-ethnic identity can change across multiple contexts

It is clear that in an increasingly diverse society, racial-ethnic identity can be an important social referent for many adolescents. This is because racial-ethnic identity is socially and psychologically constructed. It enables individuals to both distinguish themselves from others and identify with a broader collective group and, as such, racial-ethnic identity is continually being renegotiated and redefined. The temporal nature of racial-ethnic identity can be characterised as a response to contextual demands whereby individuals are trying to maintain existing identities while concurrently adapting to their changing environments. Knowledge of one's group memberships and the value and emotional

significance attached to them compose part of an individual's self-concept, and for some visible and marginalised minority populations in New Zealand, racial, ethnic and cultural identities are constructed, enacted and manifested in very conscious ways. This means that racial-ethnic identification is both a political and social act, "providing individuals with a unified system by which to understand and experience society" (Williams, 1996, p. 192). Racial-ethnic identity can therefore be regarded as a political and social resource that can be used by members of both dominant and minority groups for the purpose of enhancing the position of their social identities, and pursuing their own interests.

The extent to which an individual embraces a racial or ethnic label is also dependent on time and context. The idea that context can alter individuals' sense of racial-ethnic identity, personality, or even one's communication styles has been consistently established across diverse areas of research (Deaux & Ethier, 1998; Lawson & Sachdev, 2000; Swann, Bosson, & Pelham, 2002). Racial-ethnic identity is a dynamic and interactive aspect of self-concept that is responsive to situational differences and has "different meanings in different social settings for different individuals" (Matute-Bianchi, 1991, p. 237). Compelling research has found that adolescents feel more connected to their racial-ethnic identity in specific contexts and these feelings of racial-ethnic identification can influence behaviour at the level of the situation (Callan & Gallois, 1983; D. Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985).

Much of the existing research on the situational variation and contextual salience of racial-ethnic identity has found that individuals from minority racial-ethnic groups often find themselves negotiating and having to shift identities between their ethnic and mainstream contexts (Saylor & Aries, 1999; Umana-Taylor, 2004). Researchers have also come to recognise the importance of examining the role of behaviour as it relates to racial-ethnic group identification, particularly engagement in behaviours that are unique to a particular racial-ethnic group (Deaux & Ethier, 1998; Isajiw, 1990; Oyserman & Harrison, 1998). Racial-ethnic behaviours are either specific to, or have unique symbolic meaning for a particular group based on the cultural values and beliefs of that racial-ethnic group. These activities may include racial-ethnic language use; racial-ethnic group friendships; and participation in racial-ethnic functions, media, and traditions.

Racial-ethnic identity is impacted by racism

A significant influence on adolescents' racial-ethnic self-identification and the meanings they might attach to group membership are their experiences with discrimination. Discrimination is a complex phenomenon and although the definition may be simple – negative behaviours towards someone because of their group membership (Aboud & Amata, 2001), actual discrimination is seldom so simple. Discrimination can be both subtle and ambiguous, or explicit and overt and can include a wide range of acts “ranging from a long stare in a store to exclusion from a social group to physical assault” (Brown, 2008, p. 133).

Existing research has shown that racial discrimination can lead to a range of positive and negative outcomes. For example, attributing negative feedback to racial discrimination instead of internal causes (such as one's inferior ability) appears to be an important strategy for maintaining motivation and self-esteem, and for effectively coping with negative outcomes (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991; Steele, 1997a). Other research suggests that perceiving discrimination may help adolescents develop strong, positive racial-ethnic identity (Pahl & Way, 2006), which subsequently helps them to buffer threats, life stressors and future discrimination (Yip & Fuligni, 2002). However, there are also costs to perceiving discrimination in that it is also associated with more racial distrust, problem behaviour (Brody et al., 2006; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003) and reduced academic motivation (Ogbu, 1990; Steele, 1997b), greater anger and depressive symptoms. As such, perceptions of discrimination can have significant impact on the value, meaning and salience of adolescents' racial-ethnic identity.

Perceptions of racial discrimination have also been found to be related to academic achievement. Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, and Sellers (2006) conducted a study with African American students and found that racial discrimination experiences were associated with a decrease in academic curiosity, academic persistence, and students' self-reported grades. In other words, the results of their study suggest that racial discrimination is associated with not only academic outcomes but also with beliefs and attitudes about learning. Of note, these findings are consistent with the results obtained by Taylor, Casten, Flickinger, Roberts, and Fulmore (1994) indicating that the more aware of racial discrimination students were, the less important they perceived academic achievement to be, and the less engaged they were in their school work.

Racial-ethnic identity can help students to be educationally resilient

Resilience refers to the process of developing positive well-being despite exposure to significant risk or adversity (Masten & Powell, 2003). The study of resilience is especially concerned with the identification of processes that protect development from negative circumstances. In other words, resilience theory, as Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) have pointed out, “is focused on strengths rather than deficits” (p. 399). Given the existence of substantial academic achievement gaps between Māori, Pasifika and other ethnic groups in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2007; 2009a), it is of particular importance to uncover factors that shield minority racial-ethnic children from the risks that threaten their academic success. In particular, resilience factors that counteract the negative influence of discrimination would help level the playing field by contributing to improve the performance of Māori and Pasifika adolescents while leaving the performance of other children unchanged.

There is accumulating research evidence suggesting that racial-ethnic identity may function as a protective factor that compensates for, or buffers, the potentially negative impact of racial discrimination. For example, Wong et al. (2003) found that a strong connection to one's racial-ethnic group reduced the magnitude of the association of discrimination with declines in academic self-concept, school achievement, and perception of friends' positive characteristics. They also found that racial-ethnic identity reduces the magnitude of the association of discrimination with increases in problem behaviours. In two studies conducted with African American adolescents by Eccles and her colleagues (Eccles, Wong, & Peck, 2006; Wong, et al., 2003), a positive connection to one's racial-ethnic group was positively related to changes in school achievement. In addition, there were interaction effects between connection to racial-ethnic group and perceived discrimination on change in self-competency beliefs and school achievement. In other words, as connection to their racial-ethnic group increased, greater discrimination was associated with smaller decreases in self-concept, of ability, and with smaller decreases in school achievement.

Racial-ethnic identity beliefs can impact school engagement and success

From a socio-cultural perspective, educational engagement is, in part, dependent on the skills, background knowledge, and resources available to students. It is also a function of the student's sense of self and how they are identified, and identify, as belonging to, or in,

educational settings. It is also dependent on how the educational setting makes spaces and provides supports for students to engage and persist. This sense of belonging and invitation to an educational space is significant in shaping students' engagement with and willingness to persist in a particular educational setting. In that sense, educational engagement could be said to be a function of developing a school based social identity or an academic identity. And yet, other important social identities such as racial-ethnic identity do not disappear when students enter schools. Consequently, an important question revolves around how academic or school identities necessary for educational engagement intersect with racial-ethnic identity to support or constrain educational engagement, persistence and achievement.

Racial-ethnic identity is associated with educational engagement, and some adolescents maximise, or minimise, certain aspects of their racial-ethnic identity to self-manage their school experiences. As such, racial-ethnic identity has the potential to facilitate, or pose a barrier, to academic motivation and achievement. Racial-ethnic minority adolescents with salient racial-ethnic identities, positive attitudes toward their group, and an awareness of racism, are more likely to have better academic outcomes (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006; Chavous et al., 2003; Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006).

The conceptualisation of race and ethnicity in New Zealand

In New Zealand, the conceptualisation, measurement and meanings attached to the terms 'ethnicity' and 'race' are undergoing considerable change. There are many drivers; one is the increasingly complex politics of representation and recognition. But this complexity is also fuelled by a range of other inter-related factors including high rates of immigration, a vibrant indigenous peoples' (Māori) rights movement, the growing incidence and recognition of ethnic intermarriage, increasing racism and discrimination, and, connected with this, a debate around how to support and, in some situations, integrate increasingly diverse populations into the wider community. In line with Berry (2006) this thesis argues that "Diversity is a fact of life; whether it is the 'spice of life' or a significant irritant to people, it is the fundamental psychological, social, cultural and political issue of our times" (p. 1).

In recent decades the categorisation of ethnic groups in New Zealand has undergone a dramatic transformation (Statistics New Zealand, 2004). The biggest change has been a shift from a system that required people to report their race or ethnic origins in fractions

(e.g., “3/4 Māori and 1/4 European”) for election roll purposes prior to 1975, to one based on self-identification with an ethnic group or groups. The *Statistical Standard for Ethnicity* defines an ethnic group as people who have some or all of the following characteristics: a common proper name; one or more elements of common culture, which need not be specified, but may include religion, customs or language; a unique community of interests, feelings and actions; a shared sense of common origins or ancestry; and, a common geographic origin (Didham, Potter & Allan, 2005).

While only a small country, New Zealand has added to the international literature, and is often seen as a ‘leader’ in the early adoption of the concept of self-identified ethnicity (Callister, Didham, & Kivi, 2008). Through an official acceptance of the idea that ethnicity is culturally constructed New Zealand is at the forefront of thinking when officially recording this important aspect of people’s identity. Yet it is also recognised that there are a variety of factors that influence how people construct their ethnic identity, many of them having some biological basis. These influences can be through ancestry and/or perhaps through expression of particular visual characteristics such as skin colour or eye shapes that are determined by genes. In addition to this, it is widely accepted that experiences of racism, and/or race-based discrimination, can impact an individual’s perception of their racial-ethnic identity. Despite this, the term ‘race’ is rarely, if ever, used in New Zealand literature.

An individual’s racial-ethnic identity is part of a wider social process and is influenced by their own perceptions of race and ethnicity. Often it is assumed (if only as a simplification) that race and ethnicity are fixed over time and that racial-ethnic boundaries are well defined. In reality an individual might identify with more than one racial-ethnic group and/or may change their racial-ethnic identity over time or in different environments (Callister et al., 2008). Indeed, affiliation with more than one ethnic group is relatively common: in the 2006 census 7.8% of respondents aged 15 years and older reported multiple ethnic groups (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). And as a result of a review of ethnicity statistics, Statistics New Zealand (2004) listed a number of factors that may contribute to, or influence, a person’s self-selected ethnicity. As they note, many of these factors are interrelated. Their list includes name, ancestry, culture, where a person lives and the social context, race, country of birth and/or nationality, citizenship, religion and language, all of which suggests that a diverse set of influences could guide how

individuals self-identify. Although ethnicity is conceptualised as a self-defined cultural construct in many official reports, many New Zealanders see ancestry as having the strongest influence on ethnicity (Kukutai, 2004).

The dominant racial-ethnic group in New Zealand is comprised of mostly European and/or British colonial history descendants (now commonly known as European New Zealanders or Pākehā New Zealanders) whose first language is English. Currently, there is no consensual label for this super-group and it is still common to find many Pākehā New Zealanders who refuse all ethnic labels and instead try to use the super-ordinate labels of 'kiwi' or 'New Zealander' (Liu & Hilton, 2005). To some extent this strategy corresponds to what Branscombe, Ellemers, Doosje and Spears (1999) have called identity threat, the threat of being categorised against one's will. Liu and Hilton (2005) have stated that Pākehā perceive the term as a value threat because the morality of the group is called into question because of historical misdeeds associated with the term. The commonly understood term (a Māori word) – Pākehā - is used throughout this thesis to refer to this group because according King (1991) and Spoonley, Pearson and Macpherson (1991) it is the preferred ethnic label for self-description among an increasing number of New Zealanders. This preference brings to the fore a historical and political relationship that is unique to our context.

New Zealand is home to many racial-ethnic groups. Rapid immigration of peoples from Asian nations like China, India, Korea, and the Phillipines, in recent years has created a highly visible presence of new groups and cultures within New Zealand (Ip & Pang, 2005). As a consequence, the school system must effectively address the cultural diversity within the population. Teachers and students in schools are therefore charged with constructing, and reconstructing, new relationships continuously.

A steady rise of consciousness about cultural, ethnic, and/or racial groups' unique heritages has led to greater awareness about racial and ethnic differences in norms, values and behaviours (Spoonley, Pearson, & Macpherson, 2004). Alongside indigenous peoples' claims for biculturalism, the diversification of New Zealand and the growing endorsement of a multicultural society accompanying it, have led to a tendency for people to maintain and emphasise their cultural heritages and practices, as well as their racial-ethnic self-identifications. Alongside these rapid changes in the racial-ethnic composition of our nation, the need to better understand racial-ethnic identity development has gained

increasing theoretical, empirical, and practical salience. The differences within racial-ethnic groups in acculturation, generation of immigration, social class, and regional influences, mean that there is a wide variation in the cultural norms and values maintained by members of a racial-ethnic group. Group members may differ also in the degree to which they have joined the New Zealand ‘mainstream’ or remained in racial-ethnic enclaves. Thus, the need to better understand the salience of constructs such as racial-ethnic identity and cultural orientation has grown.

New Zealand’s multi-ethnic educational landscape

One of the greater demographic changes between the 1991 and 2006 censuses was the increasing ethnic diversification of the New Zealand population. While the Pākehā racial-ethnic group still composes the largest share of the total population, the number of people identifying as Pākehā increased by only 8 percent in the 15 years between 1991 and 2006. Over the same period, the number who identified as Māori increased by 30 percent, the Pasifika racial-ethnic group increased by 59 percent, and the number of ‘Asian’ people increased by 255 percent (Ministry of Social Development, 2006). While people of all other ethnicities still make up less than 1 per cent of the population, they grew by 440% during this period, faster than any of the major racial-ethnic groups (Ministry of Social Development, 2006).

Alongside this rapid change in population demographics, New Zealand has a distinct historical and political heritage, an enduring legacy which continues to shape the educational system and its relationship with society. Schools, teachers, and communities are faced with complex challenges, including how to acknowledge, affirm and be inclusive of racial-ethnic diversity, in the school and in the classroom. The increasing racial-ethnic diversity and heterogeneity of the New Zealand school population, particularly in large urban areas, has resulted in the need for schools to actively manage issues of race, culture, and ethnicity. Failure to acknowledge and address racial-ethnic diversity, and the impact it has on students, threatens schools’ ability to successfully meet the needs of their students (Donn & Schick, 1995).

Given the multi-ethnic nature of New Zealand society, racial-ethnic identity can have significant implications for early adolescents, in particular those attending multi-ethnic high schools, to the extent that racial-ethnic identity becomes salient in one’s everyday social, academic and personal activities. It is therefore critical to gain an understanding of

the role racial-ethnic identity plays in the lives of adolescents by capturing the variability in the ways individuals define themselves and their group membership. As such, the need to better understand the salience of racial-ethnic identity constructs and cultural orientation has grown. Salience is the mechanism through which identity becomes relevant in daily life (Yip & Fuligni, 2002) and it has become increasingly clear that aspects of adolescents' cognitive and social-emotional development varies by race, ethnicity, and cultural background (Chao, 2000, 2001; Harwood, Miller, & Irizarry, 1995; Rogoff, 2003).

Perceptions of racial-ethnic identity may also impact educational engagement by facilitating or constraining academic motivation and achievement. According to the Ministry of Education (2009c) Pākehā (57%), Māori (22%), and less specifically, Pasifika (10%) and Asian (9%) groups are the largest racial-ethnic cohorts in New Zealand schools nationally. It is important to examine the factors that impact these four groups for different reasons. The Pasifika (inclusive of Samoan students) and Asian (inclusive of Chinese) students represent the largest growing racial-ethnic groups in wider Auckland society. In addition, alongside Māori students, Pasifika students continue to disengage from school in alarming numbers and thus are underrepresented in higher education. In fact, Māori and Pasifika students have significantly lower secondary school completion rates than Pākehā and Asian students, with only 28% of all Pasifika and 16.3% of Māori school leavers achieving a university entrance standard (Ministry of Education, 2009a). This compares with 49% of Pākehā students and 65% of Asian students (Ministry of Education, 2011). Moreover, the educational attainment gap between Māori and Pasifika, and the Pākehā and Asian racial-ethnic groups, continues to widen.

Students who become disengaged from school often begin to do so before the age of 12, but disengagement accelerates at high school, particularly for Māori and Pasifika boys (Gibbs & Poskitt, 2010). Students can experience a significant decrease in positive attitudes to subjects and engagement in learning from Years 8-10, when they are between 12-15 years of age, and their rate of achievement falls accordingly. The biggest 'danger period' for students to experience negative attitudes seems to be during the second half of Year nine, when they are around 14 years old (Gibbs & Poskitt, 2010). While the retention rate for Māori is slowly increasing, many Māori students become disengaged with schooling quite early on. In many cases, this is strongly linked to poor

relationships with teachers and low achievement (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2009).

Māori and Pasifika adolescents are also more likely to drop out of high school than their Pākehā and Asian peers (Ministry of Education, 2009b). Additionally, these adolescents are overrepresented in incidences of truancy and school discipline. New Zealand research also shows that Māori student rates of school participation and engagement are below those of non-Māori. The statistics suggest high levels of disengagement by Māori students at senior levels of schooling, with associated low achievement compared to that of their fellow non-Māori peers. In addition, Māori students had the lowest estimated proportions of students remaining at school to age 17, with 57.5%. This compares with an estimated retention rate of 80.1% for Pasifika and 76.6% for Pākehā (Ministry of Education, 2008b). In addition, the Ngā Haeata Mātauranga: Annual Report of Māori Education (2009a), commented that although the gap between the school attainment rates of Māori and non-Māori have narrowed in Year 12, Māori students remain the group most likely to disengage from the education system before the age of 16.

As can be seen from the educational statistics, disproportionate numbers of students who experience disengagement from school are Māori students. In New Zealand, Māori students still have disproportionately high rates of early disengagement compared with other ethnic groups. In 2007, the number of Māori students leaving school early (73 per 1,000 15 year-old students) was 2.2 times higher than the rate for Pasifika (33 per 1,000 15 year-old students), and 3.2 times as high as that for Pākehā (23 per 1,000 15 year-old students). In contrast, there were almost no Asian students getting early leaving exemptions with a rate of only 1 per 1,000 15 year-old students (Ministry of Education, 2007). Additionally, according to Madjar, McKinley, Jensen, and Van Der Merwe (2009) Māori and Pasifika students are more likely than most to choose courses or be directed by teachers, deans, or guidance counsellors into courses that do not lead to higher-level study options.

Given the visible racial-ethnic disparities in high school retention and achievement rates, racial-ethnic identity salience is likely in New Zealand's multi-ethnic schools. Alongside other institutional discontinuities, like the change in school size, departmentalisation, new teachers, increased autonomy and the subsequent anxiety involved in establishing new friendships, participation and engagement at high-school requires students to develop an

ability to negotiate the multiple demands associated with self-conceptual change, including racial-ethnic identity development. In addition, entrenched societal racial-ethnic stereotypes are likely to be both reinforced and contested by adolescents attending multi-ethnic high schools. Everyday adolescent interactions at school can serve as key 'encounters' that stimulate the development of adolescents' perceptions of their racial-ethnic identity. An examination of international research reveals that the extent of impact depends largely on four key factors: the adolescents' commitment and connectedness to their racial-ethnic group; their exploration of what it means to be a member of this group; their awareness of racism; and their beliefs about the academic potential of their racial-ethnic group (Altschul, et al., 2006; Phinney & Ong, 2007).

International and national evidence implies that the importance of racial-ethnic identity is underestimated, and it has become increasingly clear that we still know very little about how people construct their racial-ethnic identities in New Zealand. We need to better understand how the construction of racial-ethnic identity may be changing over time, or in differing contexts, and what the nature of the relationship between these changes may be. This thesis aims to add to the New Zealand literature, by examining the construction, enactment and consequences of racial-ethnic identity for early adolescents at high school.

The main theoretical frameworks underpinning this thesis

Theories of ethnic and/or racial identity development are essentially at the intersection of developmental and social psychology. Developmental psychology's interest in identity development stems from Erikson's (1968) early work, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, in which Erikson located the search for and development of one's identity as the critical psychosocial task of adolescence. According to Erikson's theory the identity crisis of adolescence is resolved by reconciling the identities imposed upon oneself by one's family and society with one's need to assert control and seek out an identity that brings one satisfaction, feelings of industry, and competence. Forming a healthy, developed identity through the process of exploration and commitment was proposed as essential to the mental health of an individual.

Another conceptual perspective often used to frame the study of racial and ethnic identity, and the main theoretical framework underpinning this study, is Henri Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory. According to Tajfel, the social groups to which we belong, help define who we are and thus constitute an essential part of the self. One fundamental

assumption of social identity theory is that people strive to maintain or increase their self-esteem. Since self-esteem rests not only on individual attributes, but also on the attributes of the groups with which one identifies (Mackie & Smith, 1998), an important question is how people cope when they belong to a group that is negatively valued and discriminated against, such as a stigmatised minority group. In particular, much of the research on racial and ethnic identity has attempted to elucidate whether, or to what extent, membership in a low-status group negatively impacts self-concept.

According to Tajfel (1981), individuals' self-concepts and identity enactments derive from knowing (and believing) that they are members of particular social groups. In schools, early adolescents may attempt to establish and maintain positive social identities, but the social groups of which they are members may be associated with positive or negative values and those associations may cause the adolescents to rethink the value of their membership in the group. Tajfel (1981) hypothesised that social identities are formed as a consequence of social categorisation, comparison and desire for distinctiveness. Nationality, language, race and ethnicity, skin colour, or any other social or physical characteristics that are meaningful in particular social contexts, can be the basis for social categorisation. Social comparison, which is also a component of social identity theory, involves comparing the characteristics, such as status, of an individual group with another group. Tajfel (1981) assumes that all people desire to achieve a positive sense of individual distinctiveness, even as they identify with a social group.

Complicating categorisation, comparison and differentiated-self processes is the fact that most people are members of multiple social groups and thus carry with them many possible social identities. How people think about their social identities and act on the basis of them depends on how they make sense of and integrate their commitments to different groups as they engage in a particular activity within a given context. From this framework, racial-ethnic identities – of particular interest in this study – are only one type of social identity, and the salience of racial-ethnic identity will depend on the context, relationships, and other group identities in which one is immersed. Therefore, the salience of racial-ethnic identity is not an either/or condition, and racial-ethnic identity may be only one of the dimensions of one's social identity among other psychologically equivalent ones (for example, gender, social class, sexual orientation). However, whilst racial-ethnic identity is only one of the many components that comprise a sense of self, it

is the “...single component [that] is consistently positively related to an individual’s self esteem” (Umaña-Taylor, 2004, p. 139).

Racial-ethnic identity can be considered a social identity in that racial-ethnic groups can be seen as social groups. Therefore, racial-ethnic identity can be one type of group identity that will influence the self-concept of its members. Phinney’s (1989) conceptualisation and measurement of ethnic identity was based on the description of social identity by Tajfel and Turner (1986) and the development of identity by Erikson (1968). Empirical work utilising Phinney’s (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) has found two distinct but related factors within adolescent ethnic identity. One factor, Affirmation (later known as Commitment), is composed of positive attitudes toward one’s ethnic group, a sense of belonging, and commitment to the group. This factor represents the social identity aspect of ethnic identity, which involves feelings of attachment, belonging, and the attitudes associated with this belonging (Roberts et al., 1999). The second factor, Exploration, involves examination of one’s ethnic background, such as reading about, talking to people about, thinking about one’s ethnicity, and participating in cultural practices and behaviours. The second factor represents the process by which individuals explore, learn, and become involved in their ethnic group. This factor is based on the developmental theory of Erikson (1968) which stipulates that identity formation is achieved through a process of exploration.

In accord with both factors there is evidence that racial-ethnic identity becomes most salient for individuals during adolescence, as individuals begin to focus on developing their self-identity (Erikson, 1968). Phinney and Alipuria (1990) propose that individuals begin with a lack of awareness of their racial-ethnic identity in the pre-encounter stage. Once issues of race and/or ethnicity are made salient, adolescents engage in exploration to learn more about their group in the immersion/moratorium stage; this is reflected in factor two, Exploration. This process concludes with an achieved racial-ethnic identity that involves a commitment to one’s racial-ethnic identity and a secure sense of identity and group membership which is reflected in factor one, Affirmation (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Roberts et al., 1999). It seems clear from previous research that racial-ethnic identity is a meaningful concept to adolescents.

Racial-ethnic identity is also conceptualised in this study as relational and enacted, rather than a stable construct that is innate within an individual. Racial-ethnic identity is a

socially mediated enactment of self that is shaped by the intersection of time, space and relationships. Racial-ethnic identity is also considered as the lens through which everyday encounters are filtered and experienced, that is, racial-ethnic identity can impact on the ways one acts in a context, and the ways one interprets the acts of others. In the present study the word ‘enacted’ is used to signal that racial-ethnic identity is lived.

To enact racial-ethnic identity people draw upon their “histories of participation” (Rogers, 2003, p. 139), their experiences, practices, and recollections. Racial-ethnic identity enactments also leave a residue; they make a mark on the participant. In that sense, racial-ethnic identity draws from and constitutes ‘histories of participation’ in other spaces, at other times, and with other people. Indeed, what makes racial-ethnic identity so complex, and more than just group membership, is that people bring their histories of participation to bear on each new act or moment of participating.

Emphasising that racial-ethnic identity can be enacted in particular contexts, but always situated in histories of participation, speaks to the concern that racial-ethnic identity is neither completely fluid nor cast in stone. Racial-ethnic identity is acted out in spaces (such as school), within relationships (with teachers, peers, other racial-ethnic group members or family), and in particular time periods (at high school, during adolescence, in local communities). Consequently, they are more than just stories we tell about ourselves, because they are enacted, changeable, lived out in real time and thus open to public scrutiny. The public nature of racial-ethnic identity draws attention to the concept of positioning, or recognition. Even as people are enacting identities in different contexts and from different histories, they are also being positioned, or ‘recognised’ (Gee, 2000/2001) by others. In sum, racial-ethnic identity – especially when conceptualised as a lived social identity – is laden with power relations. Enactments of self always produce power and are always produced in relations of power (Moje & Martinez, 2007).

The current study

This thesis researches the meaning of racial-ethnic identity for early adolescents within an urban New Zealand context. The thesis is based around the broad research question ‘What influences early adolescent racial-ethnic identity development?’ This includes a fundamental question of ‘How do early adolescents enact racial-ethnic identity in high school contexts?’ and then, ‘How does racial-ethnic identity impact on the way early adolescents engage at high school?’

This study conceptualises racial-ethnic identity as a sense of self as a group member, which develops over time through an active process of investigation, learning, and commitment. Racial-ethnic identity is therefore defined as a situated identity, one whose consequences are activated by social situations that require an individual to play a role based on his or her perceptions of the meaning of their own race or ethnicity. The objective of this study was to expand our knowledge and understanding of the nature of racial-ethnic identity, its content and importance for four different groups of adolescents at high school. It was expected that there would be wide variation in the importance attributed to one's racial-ethnic identity across individuals and groups, with minority group members attributing greater importance to their racial-ethnic identity than members of the dominant majority. Both theoretical and empirical evidence suggested that racial-ethnic identity is a multi-faceted construct that includes a number of dimensions (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Romero & Roberts, 2003). Among them, and most relevant to this study, were the components of racial-ethnic identity – Self-Identification, Commitment, Exploration, Connectedness, Awareness of Racism and Embedded Achievement.

As a consequence, this study examined the self-identifications, feelings of connectedness, meanings and perceived consequences of adolescents' racial-ethnic identities. Using Phinney and Ong's (2007) *Revised Multi-dimensional Ethnic Identity Model* (MEIM-R); and Oyserman, Gant, and Ager's (1995) *Tripartite Interactive Model* (TIM) as an underpinning framework for a questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire items and individual semi-structured interviews, this study surveyed the racial-ethnic self-identifications and content of 695 Year nine students from five multi-ethnic urban high-schools in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. This age group (13-14years old) was chosen because early adolescence is a critical time when adolescents must figure out their place among the social groupings and racial-ethnic categories that exist in society and, more importantly for them, at school. The analysis in this study focuses on a comparison between four racial-ethnic groupings – New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese.

Specifically, the goals of this research are the following:

- A. To investigate and compare the racial-ethnic identity content – in particular, levels of Commitment, Exploration, Connectedness, Awareness of Racism and Embedded Achievement – among New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese adolescents;
- B. To investigate the racial-ethnic identity informed behaviours, beliefs, stereotype perceptions and meaning adolescents attach to their racial-ethnic identity;
- C. To examine the relationship of racial-ethnic identity to educational engagement and the educational resiliency strategies enacted by high-achieving New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese adolescents.

It must be made clear that the purpose of this study is not to essentialise or reify, nor to establish any form of criteria around, racial-ethnic membership. Rather, the focus of this study is to explore the multiple ways adolescents construct, enact and experience racial-ethnic identity, because the actions and choices of individuals are essential to the process of racial-ethnic identity formation. As Davis (2000) purports, “to ask what is ‘ethnic’ [or racial] in literature will elicit as many answers as there are writers and texts” (p.xiv). The simple act of asking about racial-ethnic identity, in selecting and rejecting material for inclusion in this thesis, and by arguing for the hybridisation of the terms ethnicity and race, I am challenging many traditional answers, posing new questions and including new voices in the conversation about how racial-ethnic identity impacts adolescents – the voices of adolescents themselves.

To conclude, schools are a key context where adolescents learn what it means to be a member of a particular racial-ethnic group. Self-identification, and in some instances identification by others, can have consequences on who the adolescent makes friends with, how they behave, how efficacious they feel about academics and how well they engage, and persist, at school. Peer group norms and expectations about the meaning of racial-ethnic group membership can have a significant influence on the adolescents sense of belonging and resilience at school.

How the thesis is structured

The thesis has seven chapters. Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature pertaining to the notions of race, ethnicity and racism. It illustrates the changeable nature of these concepts and provides an overview of the impact of racism on adolescents' social functioning. The chapter argues that historical conceptualisations of race and/or ethnicity continue to impact the ways one's racial-ethnic identity is experienced in contemporary times, particularly for those racial-ethnic groups who are negatively stigmatised.

Chapter Three presents a review of the literature with regards to the influence social environments have on adolescent racial-ethnic identity construction and social-psychological functioning, in particular their familial, peer and school contexts. This chapter argues that adolescents' lives are embedded in multiple contexts and, as such, these contexts may work together to influence, and shape, their experiences and the meanings they attach to their racial-ethnic identities.

In Chapter Four the research design is presented. A justification for the use of a mixed methods or pragmatic approach is made, the particular 'mix' of quantitative and qualitative methods utilised are described, the choice of measures are outlined and the research process explained. A clear justification for the use of Phinney and Ong's (2007) *Revised Multi-dimensional Ethnic Identity Model* (MEIM-R); and Oyserman, Gant, and Ager's (1995) *Tripartite Interactive Model* (TIM) will be presented in this chapter.

In Chapter Five the results from the study are reported. In this chapter the results are reported in three parts: study 1a presents the quantitative results of the study questionnaire and study 1b presents the findings of an analysis of the open-ended questionnaire items. The findings from study 1c, the 31 semi-structured interviews, are then reported.

In Chapter Six the findings of studies 1a, b and c are synthesised into five broad themes for discussion. These broad themes show that racial-ethnic identities are important for adolescents in New Zealand high schools because the associated cultural exploration helps them to feel connected to other members of their racial-ethnic groups. In addition, family racial-ethnic socialisation is shown to be important because it helps students to develop a sense of racial-ethnic group belonging and can also act as a protective factor when students encounter experiences with racism.

The final chapter, Chapter Seven, presents the conclusions that can be drawn from this study in relation to the research questions: it explores the significance of the study for students, educators, parents and schools, presents the study's limitations and contribution to the racial-ethnic identity literature, and makes suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Concepts

Race, ethnicity, culture and racism

This chapter will critically review the existing literature, research and theoretical standpoints used to understand how adolescents' racial-ethnic identity development and their social world are influenced by 1) race and racial identity, 2) ethnicity, ethnic identity and culture, and 3) racism and stereotype threat. In the United States in particular, these three, connected but distinct, concepts have a long tradition in educational research. This research has yielded important findings, many of which challenge the ever-present stereotypes attached to particular racial-ethnic groups. The examination of the notions of race, ethnicity and racism are important to this thesis as their effects continue to be highly consequential to societies, to intergroup contexts within societies, and to individual members of society.

First, I will discuss the ways the terms race and ethnicity are conceptualised in this study. Implicit in any discussion of race and/or ethnicity is the notion of culture. Culture can be seen to be the ways we engage with our racial-ethnic group through a shared understanding of traditions, value systems and, in some cases, demonstrable acts representing cultural affiliation. These cultural acts might include ceremonies concerning the consumption or preparation of food, cultural dress, use of ethnic language and/or cultural performance.

Second, I will analyse the ways the terms race and ethnicity are used in the New Zealand research context. Third, I will explain the lived 'overlap' between race, ethnicity and culture and further argue the study's use of the term racial-ethnic identity. Finally, I will illustrate the significant impact racism and stereotype threat can have on racial-ethnic identity development in adolescence.

Concepts of race and ethnicity

Conducting a research study into the racial-ethnic identity attitudes and beliefs of adolescents from multiple groups requires a substantive understanding of issues related to race and ethnicity. The following discussion attempts to provide the reader with a general background about how these terms are conceptualised in this study.

Historically, race has been employed as a biological classification of humans on the basis of genetic makeup, manifest in physical traits transmitted through reproduction (e.g. eye shape). As such, traditional interpretations of race typically allude to genetic, physical or biological characteristics that distinguish one group from another (Ponterotto & Pedersen, 1993). In some studies of race, particularly during the 19th and early 20th century, people were classified on the basis of different phenotypes determined by physical attributes such as skin colour, cranial size and shape, and hair type. According to Robb (1998) the concept of ‘race’ related to any group of people who displayed “inherent, heritable, persistent or predictive characteristics, and which thus had a biological or quasi-biological basis” (p. 1). Whether race ever accurately drew boundaries between genetically similar groups or not, the *idea* of race as a biological dividing line between people was commonly held, and powerful in its consequences.

However, most contemporary scholars across disciplines now reject the notion that race is a biological marker useful in accounting for significant human variation. For example, in its 1998 statement on race, the American Anthropological Association argued that “with the vast expansion of scientific knowledge in this century ... it has become clear that human populations are not unambiguous, clearly demarcated, biologically distinct groups” (American Anthropological Association., 1998, p. 712). Such thinking signals a shift in conceptualisations about race and the view that race and ethnicity are socially and politically constructed markers of difference rather than objective traits of human beings has subsequently become commonplace in the social sciences (Omi & Winant, 1994). As such, most contemporary researchers emphasise the role of cultural forces in constructing conceptions of race. In this view, notions of race are created and perpetuated to serve socially contingent needs.

In some forums, however, the belief in the idea of distinct races endures – testament to its powerful rendering through legal, bureaucratic and ‘scientific’ designations, racial ideologies, and everyday interactions (Callister & Didham, 2009). Even though the biological meaning of race has largely been discredited, the term ‘race’ is still used as a label to classify people on the basis of phenotype and to guide the formation of attitudes and stereotypes about groups. Thus, it is society that attaches significance to race, that orders people according to race, and that, in the process of creating and maintaining that racial order, makes race a powerful signifier of social status. Race is therefore a social

construct, in that it exists only because people implicitly agree to act as if it exists (Pinker, 2000). Consequently, being socialised in a society as a member of a racial or ethnic group has psychological, educational, and political consequences that have largely fuelled the continued scholarly interest in race and racial identity. This thesis conceptualises race as a category of human invention which has assumed, due to persistent human effort, enormous legal, political, economic, and social significance.

Morning (2008) notes that in social science research throughout the world terms such as race, ethnic origin, nationality, ancestry, indigenous, tribal and aboriginal are used to categorise groups. Morning also states that what might be called 'race' in one country might be seen as 'ethnicity' in another, while 'nationality' can mean ancestry in some contexts and citizenship in others. Morning points out that within the same country, one term can take on several meanings, or several terms may be used interchangeably. This appears to be the situation in New Zealand. While social science researchers and official agencies in New Zealand now almost always use the expression ethnicity rather than race, there is an understanding that the public often think in terms of 'racial' groupings and may be defining themselves, and defining others, on this basis. In this way one's racial identity is often a surface level manifestation of self, based on the self-belief that we are perceived a particular way because we are identified to be a member of a certain racial group by others.

Ethnicity, on the other hand, has traditionally been defined in terms of demographic characteristics, such as common language, culture, and national origin (Quintana, 2007). Ethnicity can also refer to ethnic affiliation, or the "cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people that set them apart from others" (Giddens, 1997, p. 210). Members of a particular ethnic group see themselves as culturally distinct from other groups of people in a society or culture and have different characteristics which serve as a way of distinguishing them, including language, history or ancestry (Giddens, 1997). As such, ethnicity can essentially be viewed as an identity that reflects the cultural experiences and feelings of a particular group.

Spoonley (1988) suggests that the term is used, generally, to refer to "the positive feelings of belonging to a cultural group" (p. 40). There are, however, a range of perspectives about ethnicity. For example, drawing on research carried out in Wales, Jenkins (2008, p. 169) discusses a 'basic anthropological' model, stating that:

- Ethnicity is a matter of ‘cultural’ differentiation (bearing in mind that identity is always a dialectic between similarity and difference);
- Ethnicity is a matter of shared meanings – ‘culture’ – but it is also produced and reproduced during interaction;
- Ethnicity is no more fixed than the way of life of which it is part, or the situations in which it is produced and reproduced; and
- Ethnicity is both collective and individual, externalised in social interaction and the categorisation of others, and internalised in self-identification.

As evidenced in Jenkins model, the notion of ethnicity is changeable and can alter according to variations in the situations and audiences encountered on a daily basis. The variable nature of ethnicity has also been captured well by Nagel (1994) who makes the point that ethnic identity is “the result of 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” (p. 154). This point is important because the adolescents in this study perceived their racial-ethnic identity to be a composite of their own view of self as well as the views held by others.

While use of the word ethnicity moves the discussions even further away from biological characteristics and more firmly into the area of social construction, Collins (2001) has argued that there is no deep and analytically important distinction between race and ethnicity. Collins (2001) states that conventionally, races have been regarded as physically distinctive (e.g., skin colour), while ethnic groups are merely culturally distinct. However, Collins argues that ethnic groups also have “somatotypical differences (hair, skin colour, facial structures, and the like), and these differences are one of the chief markers that people commonly seize on in situations where consciousness of ethnic divisions is high” (p. 18). Collins goes on to suggest that any “sociological distinction between ethnicity and race is analytically pernicious, because it obscures the social processes determining the extent to which divisions are made in the continuum of somatotypical graduations” (p. 18).

Jenkins (2008) sees a more important distinction. He suggested that identifications of 'race' were typically "rooted in categorization rather than group identification, in ascription and imposition rather than subscription, in the external rather the internal moment of identification" (p. 170). He goes on to propose that "[p]ower in this context is the capacity to determine for Others, not just the consequences of identity, but also their nominal identification itself" (p. 170). Yet categorisation remains important for ethnicity, with Jenkins arguing that one cannot have ethnic groups, or any other sort of group, without some form of categorisation. However, he does note that "...ethnicity must mean something to individuals before it can be said to 'exist' in the social world. The collective cannot be 'real' without the individual" (p. 170). This argument is particularly important because the adolescents in this study stated that by socialising with others of similar backgrounds, they (as in the members of their racial-ethnic group) acted collectively to maintain their racial-ethnic identities. This socialisation process promoted in-group cohesiveness and contributed to their thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behaviours related to racial-ethnic identity.

Race and ethnicity in New Zealand

New Zealand stands out in its broad use of self-defined culturally-based ethnicity in social science and policy making. A significant number of other countries use the term ethnic group in census questions but underlying concepts and output categories often still reflect a race-based classification (Morning, 2008). In common with other countries, race, based on ancestry, was the foundation of most early New Zealand statistical collections and, although use of descriptors such as 'Black' and 'White' have not been used, notions of blood quantity have been applied in the past (Statistics New Zealand, 2004). For example, the 1936 NZ Census question introduced complexity by allowing respondents to record fractions such as 3/4 European – 1/4 Māori. The term 'race' was used until 1951, but then there was a switch made to 'descent' related terms. However, the term 'race' has not entirely disappeared in New Zealand. As one example, the official agency set up to investigate cases of racial/ethnic discrimination is still called the Race Relations Office.

The concept of ethnicity, or more specifically 'ethnic origin', was first introduced to official New Zealand census documents in the 1970s. The term 'ethnic origin' then became 'ethnic group' in the early 1990s. At this time there was also a separate question added on Māori ancestry in the five yearly census of population and this has been

repeated in subsequent censuses (Callister, et al., 2008). Given the often complex backgrounds of people, self-identified ethnicity in response to official surveys is often not a straightforward process and, as such, much has been written about how ethnicity is, or should be measured, in New Zealand. Among those who work with ethnicity data in New Zealand there is a broad consensus that allowing people to choose more than one group is desirable to best reflect the nation's ethnic milieu (Didham, et al., 2005; Kukutai, 2004; Statistics New Zealand, 2004).

The construction of ethnicity for individuals is a complex process and there is much debate in New Zealand research circles about how this process takes place. In a broad review of the New Zealand literature it can be seen that there are a number of factors that are put forward as contributing to, or influencing, a person's ethnicity (Callister, et al., 2008). Many of these are interrelated, including name, ancestry, culture, where a person lives and the social context, country of birth and/or nationality, citizenship, and religion and language. Statistics New Zealand (2006) have commented that ethnicity should be considered as a measure of cultural affiliation, collective identification and belonging, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. As a result, the category of 'ethnicity' is widely, and rather loosely, conceptualised in New Zealand to refer to multiple ways people might describe themselves and other members of their ethnic group. Moreover, information about ethnicity is commonly obtained by self-report and is meant to reflect one aspect of the self and social identity of a person. However, other meanings associated with ethnicity in New Zealand (e.g., a sense of identity or belonging to a specific group, cultural background, racial categorisation or descent, and/or a sense of shared destiny) mean that one's self-identification could be influenced by multiple factors (Thomas & Nikora, 1996). Such open-endedness complicates the study of ethnicity data because researchers cannot assume respondents hold a common understanding of the term, its composite elements or the political and social ramifications of their ethnic self-identification. However, New Zealand researcher Kukutai (2004) reflects the general feeling of social scientists in New Zealand when she asserts that ethnicity is still a more appropriate concept to use than culture or race.

In a background paper to the 2001/02 Statistics New Zealand Review of Ethnicity Statistics, Allen (2001, pp. 5-6) listed a set of factors that may influence the construction

of an individual's ethnicity. Many of these terms are interrelated and the differences between ancestry and race, in particular, are somewhat clouded. The list is comprised of:

- *ancestry*: ancestors are described as people from whom a person is descended; a forefather; a person regarded as the forerunner of another.
- *culture*: broadly speaking, a person's way of life, which may include music, literature, dance, sport, cuisine, style of clothing, values and beliefs, patterns of work, marriage customs, family life, religious ceremonies, celebration days/events which have particular cultural significance, e.g. Chinese New Year.
- *where a person lives and the social context*: are they rural, village dwellers, landowners or city inhabitants?
- *race*: defined as the descendants of a common ancestor especially those who inherit a common set of characteristics; such as set of descendants, narrower than a species; a breed; ancestry; lineage, stock; a class or group, defined otherwise than by descent. This often refers to physical characteristics such as skin colour, treated by members of a community as ethnically significant. There are no clear-cut characteristics by means of which human beings can be allocated to different races.
- *country of birth and nationality*: nationality can be defined as membership of, or the fact or state of belonging to, a particular nation; a group or set having the character of a nation.
- *citizenship*: the status of being a citizen and the membership of a community, or having the rights and duties of a citizen.

While the factors above flexibly demonstrate what ethnicity can mean to an individual, culturally specific paradigms do not always overlap with official definitions. Māori scholar Mason Durie (2005) differentiates between the terms race and ethnicity, stating that while race still has connotations of biological variation and genetic determinism, ethnicity emphasises social and cultural distinctiveness and places greater importance on world views, lifestyles and societal interaction. For example, Māori scholar Broughton (1993) has identified three key elements for defining Māori ethnic identity:

whanaungatanga (the family and kinship ties); te whenua (the land); and, te reo (the language). Other Māori writers include biological, self-identification and descent influences in their attempts to categorise Māori (Kilgour & Keefe, 1992; Kukutai, 2004). It would seem that any definition, conceptualisation and/or measurement of ethnicity is unavoidably culturally constructed. Therefore, a commonly understood, and agreed upon, use of the term ‘ethnicity’ is rare.

In the New Zealand context the question of who is Māori has been the subject of considerable debate. Some early attempts to measure Māori identity, included Ritchie’s ‘degree of Māoriness’ scale (1963) and Metge’s (1964) schema of ‘Māoritanga’. More recently, Cunningham et al. (2002) have proposed a single measure of Māori cultural identity, which prioritises Māori language, involvement with the extended family, knowledge of ancestry, and self-identification. At the heart of the problem is the lack of definitive criteria. In this case, just what is it that makes a person Māori? Kukutai (2004) has queried,

Is it a preponderance of Māori ancestors – something akin to the notion of being a “full blood”? Is it knowledge of cultural practices and engagement in Māori networks? Is it having a Māori ancestor, no matter how far back? Or, is being Māori merely a state of mind? (p. 89)

What is clear is that any criteria invoked will not be objective, but instead will be products of the motivations and cultural assumptions of those doing the classifying and/or identifying. However, the prevailing view amongst most Māori researchers is that whakapapa (descent) remains the key criteria (Broughton, 1993; Houkamau & Sibley, 2010; Rangihau, 1975; Walker, 1989).

In the New Zealand context, the implications of a legal element to measuring ethnicity cannot be overlooked – especially given the prominence of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 and is New Zealand’s founding document. It is a broad statement of principles on which the British and Māori made a political compact to found a nation state and build a government in New Zealand. In contemporary times, the government's commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, in education specifically, are reflected in the emphasis to significantly improve the educational status of Māori. In the New Zealand education system schools record up to three (or more)

ethnicities for each student at the time of enrolment, but the collector of official education statistics, the Ministry of Education, reports ethnicity based on only one ethnic group per student, following a system of ethnic prioritisation. Prioritisation is a classification system, which assigns the ethnicity of a person who has given multiple responses to just one ethnicity. This process ensures that the total number of responses equals the total population. In doing so, prioritisation conceals diversity within, and overlap between, ethnic groups by eliminating multiple ethnicities from data (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). In this system, Māori ethnicity is prioritised.

Under this system, at the broadest level, students who identify in the ‘Pasifika’ (Pacific peoples) category come second to ‘Māori’ and a student who identifies as Pasifika/Māori will be reported only in the Māori category. So although schools may have a complete count of all students who include Pasifika as an ethnicity, reported national education statistics do not. The Ministry of Education recommends that schools should allow for collection of up to three self-identified ethnicities per student; however, they are instructed to count only one of these for the formal roll return (Leather, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2008a), following prescribed priorities. These priorities are, in order: Māori, Pasifika, Asian, Other and European/Pākehā. Leather (2009) states that the prioritising of data leads to significant understatements in the reporting of proportions enrolled in our schools, particularly for Pasifika and Asian students. In 2006, Statistics New Zealand recommended that this form of expressing ethnic data be discontinued, arguing that,

While prioritisation may have been a useful analytical tool in the past, it is no longer considered viable in reflecting the changing face of ethnic diversity in New Zealand. Valid analysis of a group depends on the consideration of all its members, taking into account differences within and between groups. (p. 2)

However the practice continues. Leather (2009) contends that, “ethnicity information based on this system is undoubtedly (albeit unintentionally) inadequate for those undertaking research and policy development” (p. 87).

Throughout the world notions of ethnicity are undergoing continuous transformation and contestation. Finding a universally accepted definition and/or measure of ethnicity is increasingly complex. This is due, in part, to the recognition of the key role of ethnic and racial data in political decision-making. Moreover, ethnic group boundary definition and

delineation is an intensely political process that is tied to resources and who can access them. Ethnic data is routinely used to inform policy formulation, resource allocation, and the determination of electoral boundaries. These matters are important because the early adolescents involved in this study, despite their young age, were noticeably aware of the political, social and educational ramifications of ethnicity and self-identification.

Racial-ethnic identity

There are many inconsistencies in how race, ethnicity, racial identity, and ethnic identity have been used in research and much of the inconsistency stems from the multiple influences on the definitions. There are, of course, explicit as well as implicit definitions of race and ethnicity and like other terms in lay and technical language, these terms evolve and change in the context of their use. This thesis takes the stance that positioning ethnicity and race as fundamentally different ignores the historical and socio-cultural evolution of these category types. Moreover, perceptions of race can impact the way one enacts ethnicity and, as such, there is a 'lived overlap' between these two constructs.

Mapping the determinants of racial identities has been a central aim of racial identity theorists for the past three decades (Shelton & Sellers, 2000). Scholars have attempted to outline the significance of racial identity for human development and have characterised racial identity as the result of complex interactions among a broad range of biological, psychological, and social factors (Cross, 1971; 1978; Parham & Helms, 1985; Shelton & Sellers, 2000). Racial identity seems most often to be a frame in which individuals categorise others; these characteristics can be both positive or negative and are often based on inherited characteristics that are seemingly associated with race. As a consequence, the contemporary study of racial identity is generally focused on racism, and many racial identity measures are developed to assess the impact of experiences related to internalised racism. According to researchers racial identity focuses on the social and political impact of visible group membership on an individual's psychological functioning (Helms, 1990; McMahan & Watts, 2002). As such, most racial-identity models examine the intersection between racial perceptions of others (racism) and perception of self (racial identity). Underpinning explorations of racial identity is the notion that race and racial distinctions are important for understanding development, outcomes and behaviour. Typically ascribed to individuals belonging to historically marginalised racial groups, racial identity development is thought to be influenced by

several factors, including individuals' emotional status (Cross, 1971), socio-political norms (Helms, 1995), and the degree to which individuals internalise social prejudices and racism (Jones, 1997; Kohatsu & Richardson, 1996).

Racial identity development is impacted by experiences with racism (French, Seidman, LaRue, & Aber, 2006). However, discrimination against a group is often labeled as racism because it is directed at a particular racial group rather than because the discrimination was specifically racially biased. Historically, *old fashioned racism* was clearly racial in nature given that it involved categorical rejection of a group of people on the basis of racial status (McConahay, 1986). However, *modern racism* (e.g., "I don't dislike all Māori, only those that act 'Māori'" or "I don't dislike all Chinese people, only those that refuse to learn English") often appears to take an ethnic or cultural focus, rather than racial focus, per se (Quintana, 2007). What is interesting in these examples is the implicit emphasis people place on the racial group component of the statement in assessing it as racism. In the first example, a link is made between 'being Māori' (a biological/racial categorisation) and 'acting Māori' (a social/ethnic categorisation). In the second statement again a link is made between 'being Chinese' and 'not speaking English' (an ethnic/cultural attribute). If we were being more precise about labelling this experience, rather than arbitrarily privileging one aspect of it, these examples could just as easily be labelled ethnic or cultural discrimination. Experiences of discrimination are often simultaneously racial, ethnic and cultural in nature.

While ethnicity involves an individual's subjective belief in common descent and shared history, ethnic identity is said to be an individual's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the degree to which his or her thinking, feelings and behaviours are associated with that membership (Lay & Verkuyten, 1999; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). In this way, ethnic identity provides "a definition, an interpretation of the self that establishes what and where the person is in both social and psychological terms" (Guibernau, 1996, p. 72). On the one hand it helps the individual to produce order in his or her own individual life. On the other hand it helps to place the individual within a group or involves identification with a collective. Despite the obvious correlations, these two aspects of ethnic identity can also vary independently of each other. As Anthony Cohen (1994) put it, "ethnicity has come to be regarded as a mode of action and of representation: it refers to a decision people make to depict themselves or others

symbolically as the bearers of a certain cultural identity” (p. 119); but “the apparently monolithic or generalised character of ethnicity at the collective level [...] does not preempt the continual reconstruction of ethnicity at the personal level” (p. 120).

Ethnic identity has also been conceptualised as the subjective sense of group membership that involves self-labelling, preference for the group, positive evaluation of the ethnic group, ethnic knowledge, and involvement in ethnic group activities (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; 1996). Through an ethnic socialisation process that begins in childhood, individuals acquire the behaviours, values, and attitudes of an ethnic group and begin to see themselves and others as members of that group and as such, ethnic identity is a critical component of an individual’s self-concept. Ethnic identity salience therefore partially depends on the importance an individual attributes to his or her ethnic background (Alba, 1990). The idea of salience is important here because the minority adolescents in this study reported increased racial and ethnic salience when involved in activities that enabled them to self-identify, claim group membership (by explaining descent and/or genealogy links) and/or demonstrate cultural/ethnic aspects of their group (by speaking one’s ethnic language or being involved in cultural dance performances). In exploring what it meant to be a member of their racial-ethnic group, the adolescents indicated that the subjective experience of their racial and ethnic identities overlapped at the level of the lived experience.

Ethnic identity may not be salient in homogenous societies, because it is the ability to distinguish between groups that serves as the impetus for ethnic identity development (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990). That is, when an individual does not have contact with members of other groups, they may not be able to differentiate between the constituents of their ethnic group and that of others. This would make it challenging to develop a meaningful association with his or her specific ethnic group(s). The same could be said for one’s racial group. Consequently, individuals’ understandings of their racial and ethnic identities are linked to both the social locations of their particular groups in society and the social contexts in which they are raised (Williams, 1996). Individuals can vary in their self-representations based on their understanding of how factors such as race, ethnicity and culture organise and influence their social worlds (Williams, 1996). Nevertheless, while the identities of racial-ethnic minorities from homogenous environments may not be as salient as those exposed to more heterogeneous

environments, their identity will always be contextualised within the broader framework of their minority status.

While focusing on individuals who are constructing their own racial-ethnic identity, it is important to keep in mind that various ‘others’, such as employers, landlords, teachers and the police, will also be constructing a person’s identity. Xie and Goyette (1997) note that, for members of racial-ethnic minority groups, ‘choice’ about ethnicity is limited by the “labels imposed by other members of society or by custom” (p. 550). Waters (1990; 1996) also puts forward the view that minority groups have less flexibility in determining their ethnicity. Often this construction of ethnicity will be constrained or influenced by notions of race such as skin colour or, at times, surnames (Mason, 2001; Rockquemore & Brunnsma, 2002).

Making sense of the lived experiences related to people’s racial and ethnic identities entails a broader conceptualisation of identity per se. As Weeks (1990) has noted,

Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic, it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality. But it is also about your social relationships, your complex involvement with others. (p. 88)

As the above quote illustrates, the ability of groups to claim or recreate their own self-images and identities, against the backdrop of ethnic and racial labeling by the dominant society, is not only important in terms of self-determination; it can also have important implications for people’s self-esteem and sense of well-being. However, the ability to exercise, or even enjoy, a racial or ethnic identity of one’s choosing is not simply a personal matter – it is a highly politicised activity that cannot be taken for granted. In these, and other ways, notions of race and ethnicity overlap. They overlap at the conceptual level, in the ways they are defined across multiple disciplines and in the ways they are experienced. Therefore, this thesis uses the term racial-ethnic identity purposely.

Racism and stereotype threat

Racism is highly consequential to societies, to intergroup contexts within societies, and to individual members of society. Racism is a complex phenomenon whose markers – stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination – are distinct but interwoven. Negative beliefs

(stereotypes) and attitudes (prejudices) toward other racial-ethnic groups can eventuate in discriminatory behaviour, defined as “actions or practices carried out by members of dominant racial or ethnic groups that have a differential negative impact on members of subordinate racial or ethnic groups” (Feagin, 1991, p. 102). Racism can include explicit, overt actions (for example, verbal antagonism, physical aggression) and more subtle, covert actions (for example, being ignored when queuing, being overlooked for a promotion). However, as Feagin’s (1991) definition indicates, racism can transcend individual-level actions or personally mediated racism and encompasses institutional practices that result in racial disparities in access to goods, services and opportunities.

As such, racism can be experienced by adolescents in multiple ways, including directly, from peers in the form of name-calling or social exclusion and/or from adults through stereotyping, hostility, rejection or acts that reinforce negative expectations. However, an individual need not be personally involved in racism to be negatively affected – adolescents may be affected by vicariously experiencing racism that is directed towards their peers, relatives, parents and others. Hence, vicarious racism is another pathway of influence. In addition, adolescents need not be present in order for racism to be influential. For example, parents’ experience of racism in schools when they were young may have an intergenerational effect and/or the socialisation strategies used by parents, in some cases, to promote mistrust against others may reflect the exposure to racism that parents experienced themselves. And finally, racism is also a “system of advantage based on race” that includes institutional practices and policies, cultural messages, as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals (Tatum, 1997, p. 7). Accounting for the persistence of racism requires consideration of its structural nature and the systematic advantages and disadvantages that it confers (Wellman, 1977).

The negative impact of racism on children’s development has been recognised in the psychological research since at least from the Clark and Clark (1950) doll study which focused on stereotypes and children’s self-perception in relation to their race. The results of the above study were used to prove that school segregation in the United States was distorting the minds of young Black American children, causing them to internalise stereotypes and racism, to the point of making them hate themselves. Clark and Clark found that the Black children often chose to play with the white dolls more than the black ones. When the children were asked to fill in a human figure with the colour of their own

skin, they frequently chose a lighter shade than their actual skin colour. The children also gave the colour 'White' positive attributes like 'good' and 'pretty'. On the contrary, 'Black' was attributed to being 'bad' and 'ugly'. The results of this study were interpreted as reliable evidence that Black children had internalised racism caused by being discriminated against and stigmatised by segregation.

More recently, racism has come under increased scrutiny as a force that shapes children's development and psychological functioning (Fisher, Jackson, & Villaruel, 1998; García Coll et al., 1996). It has been found that children as young as 6 years old have the ability to make attributions to racism, and by early adolescence, have a sophisticated understanding of both individual level and institutional level racism (Brown & Bigler, 2005; McKown, 2004). McKown and Weinstein (2003) found that the proportion of children that are aware of others' racism increases between ages 6 and 10, such that by age 10, 80 percent of African American children and 63 percent of White and Asian children manifest awareness of racism. Research also documents that older adolescents perceive more experiences with racism than children in early adolescence (Brown & Bigler, 2005; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006). Underlying these developmental changes are changes in children's social contexts and growth in abstract thought, cognitive processing skills, social perspective taking abilities, and the ability to integrate one's own experiences and the experiences of others (Steinberg & Silk, 2002).

Although cognitive growth during adolescence may endow youth with more cognitive resources to deal with experiences of racism, it may also result in increased vulnerability to these experiences and circumstances. In particular, with the expansion in cognitive processing skills that occurs during this period, adolescents are not only more cognisant of the prevalence of racism, but also have the ability to integrate individual and group level experiences with racism into their self-perceptions and world views (Tarrant et al., 2001), and the implications of this integration can be far reaching. These considerations, taken together, underscore the importance of this study and better understanding how racism influences adolescent racial-ethnic identity development.

In addition to perceptions of racism, children's awareness of intellectual stereotypes about their social group appears to emerge during middle childhood (McKown & Strambler, 2009; McKown & Weinstein, 2003) and, by early adolescence, some children may personally endorse this stereotype (Rowley, Kurtz Costes, Mistry, & Feagans, 2007).

Both awareness and endorsement of stereotypes about intellectual competence may have implications for motivation and achievement. Moreover, endorsement of negative racial stereotypes by significant others, including teachers, may indirectly influence academic outcomes for members of this group. This phenomenon has become known as ‘stereotype threat’, and has been one of the most widely studied topics in social psychology research of the last decade.

Research on stereotype threat has provided important insights into the negative motivational consequences of racial stereotypes about intelligence. Stereotype threat is the awareness that individuals have about negative stereotypes associated with their group (Steele, 1997a). Although considered to be a general psychological state applicable to any negative group stereotype, the construct originated in the achievement domain and has been applied to the study of minority students’ awareness of the cultural stereotypes associating their race with intellectual inferiority. That awareness can be quite debilitating, especially for those minority students who are invested in doing well in school. Furthermore, it is not necessary that a student endorse the stereotype; mere awareness of its existence is sufficient to activate threat.

There appear to be both adaptive and maladaptive motivational consequences of the anxiety associated with thinking about race and intelligence in highly evaluative achievement contexts. On the adaptive side, like reactions to discrimination for particular students, stereotype threat might be a motivational enhancer. Some minority students may choose to work especially hard as a way of disconfirming the stereotype. Of course, high effort in the face of increasing academic challenge may be difficult to sustain and may even lead a student to question his or her abilities.

Regarding maladaptive motivational consequences, it has been suggested that stereotype threat promotes performance-avoidant goals, or concerns about public displays of low ability (Ryan & Ryan, 2005; Smith, 2004). Stereotype threat can also influence achievement values, causing students to minimise effort and downplay the importance of doing well in school. Steele (1997a) coined the term ‘academic dis-identification’ to describe students who no longer view academic achievement as a domain that is important either to them or to their self-definition. Dis-identification has been operationalised as the absence of a relationship between academic performance and self-esteem and has been associated with declining achievement between middle school and

high school (Osborne, 1997). A similar process, labelled ‘academic disengagement’, occurs when students begin to discount the feedback they receive about their performance or to devalue achievement altogether (Major & Schmader, 2001). Although there appears to be more empirical support for dis-identification than disengagement among studies involving African American adolescents (Morgan & Mehta, 2004), it is evident that each process is something of a double-edged sword. Both disidentification and disengagement may be self-protecting mechanisms for coping with negative racial stereotypes; however, in the long run, their detrimental effects on achievement motivation would probably outweigh any short-term self-enhancing effects.

Resilience

The studies and theory described thus far indicate that racism can undermine minority adolescents’ self concept, well-being and academic achievement motivation. However, other research indicates that this conclusion may be overly simplistic. Although this thesis certainly does not argue that racism is ever desirable or adaptive, there may be some circumstances under which adolescents transform discriminatory experiences so that the experience of racism becomes an impetus for increased effort in school. American researchers, Eccles et al. (2006) asked middle-school African American students whether they believed that being African American would make it difficult for them to be successful in their future educational and occupational pursuits. Analyses showed that students who anticipated future educational and/or occupational race-based discrimination displayed higher levels of academic motivation, as indicated by valuing of school and academic self-concept, than those who did not. These authors speculated that some students who expect future discrimination may respond to this perceived barrier “agentically by increasing their commitment to education” (p. 416).

Similarly, Sander’s (1997) qualitative findings have shown that awareness of racism, and more generally, feelings of belonging to an oppressed social group, may serve as a catalyst for increased effort in school. Rather than focusing on day-to-day discrimination experiences as much of the literature on this topic has done, this study captures students’ beliefs about structural/institutional racial barriers to upward mobility. Some students conceptualised such barriers as a challenge that could be overcome through academic excellence. A 14-year-old girl in this study articulated this perspective when asked about the effects of racism on African Americans’ ability to achieve in the United States. She

stated “I want to come to school so that I can get an education, and make the White man know that just because he says that Black people are not going to succeed, doesn’t make it so. I want to show him different” (Sanders, 1997, p. 90). Sanders also reported that a majority of her high-achieving study participants displayed an acute awareness of racial barriers.

O’Connor’s (1997) research examined the relationship between racial barrier awareness and academic orientation among low-income African American adolescents. O’Connor identified a subset of youth who were deeply aware of race and class-based constraints to upward mobility, but who were also very optimistic that high educational and occupational goals were within their reach. Importantly, these youth also reported experiences known to promote positive academic outcomes for African American youth, including direct contact with successful African American role models, contact with individuals who connected them with concrete strategies for achieving their goals, and a history of strong academic performance. As suggested by O’Connor’s (1997) work, social context factors such as high-achieving same-race role models and adults who help youth to devise tangible strategies for academic success may increase resilience in the face of racism. Strong racial-ethnic group identification may also weaken the harmful impact of racism on motivation by increasing positive affective ties to networks of individuals who have had similar experiences. The notion of racial-ethnic identity as a protective factor is of particular interest to this study.

Summary

Ethnicity and race are both socially constructed concepts whose definitions and meanings have changed over time. Neither term has a clear, objective, generally agreed upon definition. Although both terms are inherently ambiguous concepts, ethnicity is particularly challenging because it is usually more variable and more subject to change based on changes in political climate and ethnic consciousness. Conversely, the concept of race represents a product of historical formulations that has involved the socio-political designations of difference assigned on the basis of phenotypic characteristics such as head shape, hair colour and skin colour. However, it has been argued in this chapter that there is a ‘overlap’ in the ways these two constructs intersect in the lives of individuals. Therefore, racial-ethnic identity has been suggested as a more appropriate term for use in this study. Racial-ethnic identity is conceptualised as a multifaceted construct, influenced

by the norms, expectations and behaviours relevant to in-group membership and the social and contextual feedback they receive about their group membership from others.

In the next chapter the existing literature and research used to understand how racial-ethnic identity development is experienced, constructed and enacted by adolescents will be presented. Particular attention will be paid to contextual influences including peer, family and school factors.

Chapter Three: A review of the research

The key influences on adolescent racial-ethnic identity development

In terms of examining social contexts and their influence on adolescent racial-ethnic identity development, it is important to consider that adolescents' lives are embedded in multiple contexts and, as such, these contexts work together to influence and shape their experiences. Parents are key socialisation agents of racial-ethnic identity, however, during adolescence peers and school factors begin to play a more central role in racial-ethnic identity formation. This chapter will critically review the existing literature to understand how racial-ethnic identity development is experienced, constructed and enacted by adolescents.

The first part of this chapter will summarise the research concerned with racial-ethnic identity development in adolescence. The second part will then examine the role and influence of context on adolescents' racial-ethnic identity development, in particular 1) self factors, 2) familial socialisation practices, 3) peer influences, and 4) school factors. The last part of this chapter will discuss the ways racial-ethnic identity can impact academic engagement, and subsequently achievement, at school.

Adolescent racial-ethnic identity development

International research concerned with increasingly ethnically and racially diverse populations has recently shifted toward the examination of the peer, family and school influences on racial-ethnic identity development. Researchers from the United States have discovered that communication about ethnicity and race is of major importance to members of minority groups (Hughes et al., 2006). As a result, the study of adolescent racial-ethnic socialisation (i.e., the mechanisms through which parents, peers, and schools transmit information, values, and perspectives about ethnicity and race) and racial-ethnic identity development (i.e., the development of a sense of belonging and commitment to a specific racial-ethnic group) have become priorities within research in this area.

The question, 'Who am I?' is especially pertinent during adolescence. The combination of physical, cognitive, and social changes that occur during that time spur what Erik Erikson

(1968) famously called an *identity crisis*. He used the term, ‘crisis’ to mean a turning point rather than a period of profound or debilitating uncertainty. Erikson acknowledged that identity issues could arise throughout life’s journey, but saw identity formation as the critical developmental task of adolescence. Erikson stressed that children and adolescents are active, curious explorers who are rational, adaptive in nature and impacted by social and cultural influences. Erikson posits that identity development occurs through a process of exploration and commitment to important identity domains, such as one’s gender, ethnicity or race. Thus, an achieved identity is a result of the individual’s commitment to these various component identities of the broader social self. Where Erikson’s theory falls short is in the assumption that the culmination of such a period of exploration will lead the individual “to reconcile his conception of himself and his community’s recognition of him” (Erikson, 1968, p. 120). While Erikson’s work has provided a basis for the explanation of racial-ethnic identity, it is important to note that it does not in and of itself adequately explain the experiences of minority groups in New Zealand. The reconciliation of minority groups conceptions of self with community recognition prove difficult if there is negative social stigma attached to their group (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2003).

Other researchers have expanded on Erikson’s postulations by theorising that identity formation includes both the need for inclusion and recognition by the community, and the need for distinctiveness or uniqueness (Brewer, 1991; Harter, 1990). Adolescents desire to be differentiated from their parents and families and, at the same time, desire to be integrated into a larger social network where they feel included. Thus, integration into a racial or ethnic community, while simultaneously wanting to be unique from it, often leads adolescents into a period of exploration that may or may not result in commitment to a particular identity. For some adolescents, group membership can provide a sense of uniqueness in and of itself (Waters, 1990). Yet, for racial-ethnic minorities, there is a possible disjuncture between societal portrayals of group membership and in-group group representations. The contradictory nature of this progression is difficult and creates complexity during the process of identity formation (Harter, 1990). Therefore, adolescents from minority racial-ethnic groups, such as African Americans or Māori adolescents, must reconcile the general physiological changes of puberty and the social changes of adolescence, and at the same time deal with the inherent tension of defining their racial-ethnic identity within the context of being a minority group member. Hence, adolescent racial-ethnic identity formation is contemporaneously influenced by an

individual's past and current experiences, based in part on the attitudes of significant others such as parents, friends and teachers, and affected by societal representations of the groups to which one belongs (Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002).

A central part of identity development, especially for those who live in multi-ethnic contexts, is racial-ethnic identity. The process of racial-ethnic identity development, according to researchers (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Oyserman et al., 2007; Quintana, 2007), in some respects follows the process of identity development in general – in short, an unquestioning view of oneself is altered during a period of 'crisis'. Many parents clearly attempt to teach children about their ethnic identity both explicitly - by telling them about it – and more subtly, by exposing them to various experiences. However, adolescents often see themselves differently when they are with their parents and teachers, than they do when they are with their peers. Early to middle adolescence (approximately ages 10-16), in particular, is often marked by behaviour that varies depending on where they are and whom they are with, for example, being outgoing with friends, but shy at home (Steinberg & Morris, 2001).

Research from the United States suggests that racial-ethnic identity development for majority ethnic group members involves moving from a stage of naiveté about racial issues to a more reflective sense of self in a multicultural society (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009). McDermott and Samson (2005) have proposed two constructs which influence racial-ethnic identity for these adolescents – exposure and marginalisation. While exposure focuses on opportunities to interact with people different from oneself, marginalisation relates to the ways in which a person has experienced a non-dominant identity. Research has shown that White (a term commonly used in the United States to refer to white-skinned Americans) adolescents become especially conscious of their race-ethnicity in situations when they are in a numerical minority and/or in an ethnically diverse setting (Helms, 1995). Such a situation juxtaposes the impact of being a majority race in larger society, but a numerical minority in specific contexts. In sum, the application of exposure and marginalisation to the study of racial-ethnic identity for the majority group in New Zealand (Pākehā) suggests that contexts can play a meaningful role in shaping how Pākehā adolescents perceive the importance of their racial-ethnic identities.

In the New Zealand context, whilst Māori, the Indigenous peoples, comprise only 14-15% of the total population they are inordinately overrepresented in a range of negative social, educational and economic statistics (Ministry of Social Development, 2010). Previous research examining Māori cultural wellbeing has suggested that developing cultural competency, cultural efficacy and racial-ethnic group pride could ameliorate such negative outcomes. As such, Māori racial-ethnic identity has been defined in terms of factors like: high levels of self-identification as Māori, understanding of Māori language and culture, involvement in Māori social and cultural activities, and having a close association with familial kinship groups (Durie, 1998; Mead, 2003). Central to this view is the notion that ‘culture is the cure’, and Houkamau & Sibley (2011) have suggested that the link between Māori cultural efficacy and increased personal wellbeing likely occurs because cultural efficacy increases a sense of belonging and social support among Māori peers generally.

International research on the relationship between culture and identity also supports a ‘culture as-cure’ perspective for Indigenous peoples by consistently demonstrating that a positive view of one’s own culture is associated with a range of favorable social, psychological and health outcomes. Crafting a strong racial-ethnic identity is a particularly important for Indigenous people because the best social-psychological outcomes are experienced by those adolescents who have a working knowledge of their racial-ethnic heritage, a clear idea of the meaning of the group membership, and a commitment to their racial-ethnic identity and the role it plays in their lives (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, Washienko, Walter and Dyer (1996) found that Native Americans who scored highly on measures of identification with native culture, involvement in cultural activities and knowledge of cultural practices, reported having stronger familial ties and were less likely to engage in drug-taking behaviours which threatened their personal wellbeing or the wellbeing of their family members. Other studies have found robust correlations between positive affiliation and engagement with their culture and Indigenous adolescents well-being and resilience (Reimer, 1996; Wexler, 2009). In general, a positive racial-ethnic identity seems to provide Indigenous adolescents with self-esteem gained through coping skills that make them more likely to use active strategies to confront experiences with racism and negative stereotypes (Wexler, 2009).

Other research indicates a different process again for minority immigrants termed acculturation (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006). Early research assumed that immigrants would inevitably be absorbed into the receiving society in a unilinear, unidirectional process (Gordon, 1964). More recent research has proposed that there are two independent dimensions underlying the process of acculturation: individuals' links to their cultures of origin and to their societies of settlement (Berry et al., 2006). These links can be manifested in a number of ways, including preferences for involvement in the two cultures, and in the behaviours that they engage in, for example, language knowledge and use, and social relationships. The concept of acculturation is relevant to the present study given the Samoan and Chinese cohorts in the study are 'immigrant-minority' groups.

In Berry's (1997) acculturation model there were four possibilities presented for integrating racial-ethnic identity into one's larger sense of self. In this framework, two issues are raised: the degree to which people wish to maintain their heritage culture and identity; and secondly the degree to which people seek involvement with the larger society. When these two issues are resolved, an acculturation space is created with four sectors within which individuals may express how they are seeking to acculturate. First, *assimilation* refers to trying to adopt the majority culture's norms and standards at the expense of those in one's own group. Secondly, *marginalisation* means living within the majority culture but feeling estranged. Thirdly, *separation* refers to associating primarily with members of one's own culture and rejecting the majority culture. Finally, *biculturalism* means maintaining ties both to the majority culture and one's own culture (Berry, 1997). Phinney and Alipuria (1990) believe that biculturalism is an especially adaptive approach for many adolescents, because it involves retaining the norms of both the majority and minority cultures and selecting between them, depending on the circumstances. According to Phinney and Alipuria (1990) adolescents who have explored and made a clear commitment to their racial-ethnic identities score higher on measures of self-esteem, self-evaluation, sense of mastery, and social and peer interactions than do those who have not made such a commitment. However, throughout adolescence individuals can simultaneously hold values and beliefs associated with the various sectors and may progress repeatedly through the sectors throughout their lives (Parham & Helms, 1985).

As such, the development of racial-ethnic identity is a critical facet of adolescence, particularly for early adolescents growing up in multi-ethnic contexts. During early adolescence, racial-ethnic identity has the potential to become psychologically salient in everyday life as young adolescents start to develop a personal identity and to form their own opinions, separate from their parents. Moreover, young adolescents use social interactions with peers to inform their understanding of themselves and of who they are in relation to others (Selman, 1980). Consistent with this characterisation, Quintana (1998) found that, between 10 and 14 years of age, children become increasingly aware of the role of racial-ethnic identity in the formation of friendships and they start to notice the disparity in socioeconomic status among racial-ethnic groups. They are also able to recognise and describe instances of discrimination targeted against them. Early adolescents' increasing awareness of discriminatory events comes at a time when their coping skills are still evolving, which makes them particularly vulnerable to the potentially deleterious impact of perceiving discrimination.

As such, the continued examination of adolescent racial-ethnic identity construction is important for several reasons. Racial-ethnic identity is dynamic, changeable over time and context, and is achieved by moving through a process of exploration. Racial-ethnic exploration can result in a period of identity conflict which requires adolescents to manage the disconnection between societal portrayals of their racial-ethnic group and in-group representations. In the face of threats that tell them that they hold an inferior status, many minority group members simultaneously develop racial-ethnic pride that connects them to other group members, reinforces a collective dignity, and produces a more positive reflection of their group.

The role of context in racial-ethnic identity development

While the strength of racial-ethnic identity may vary across individuals, the definition and salience of racial-ethnic identity may also vary across contexts. Situational cues allow individuals to determine which identity framework will provide them with the best outcome. Salience can be defined as the context-specific relevance of racial-ethnic identity at any particular moment in time (Seaton & Yip, 2009). In other words, salience is how psychologically relevant or prominent racial-ethnic identity is for an individual in any given context. Individuals who make racial-ethnic identity a defining aspect of their identity may be more likely to experience salience across a variety of situations simply

because they are more likely to think about their racial-ethnic identity. On the other hand, there may be situations or events which are sufficient to trigger racial-ethnic identity salience for all individuals irrespective of how important their racial-ethnic identity is in general. Context is pivotal to the meaning racial-ethnic identity plays in adolescents' lives.

Contexts are those aspects of society, family, peers, school, and work environments in which an individual's sense of identity is constructed (Grotevant, 1987). Some theorists argue that individuals will choose to identify with the identity that is most resonant with a particular context (Saylor & Aries, 1999). Yet, the ease and degree of flexibility to which individuals may be able to do this, depends largely on their group's status in the dominant culture. Thus, context is an imperative consideration when examining racial-ethnic identity because correlations between the individual's racial-ethnic identification and their environment will greatly influence racial-ethnic identity development.

The role, and salience, of racial-ethnic identity, while varying across contexts also concurrently influence the affective experience of racial-ethnic self-identification (Lay & Verkuyten, 1999). Life experiences within a particular context and socio-political climate have implications for the process of adolescent racial-ethnic identity formation because of their potential influence on the relationship between a personal sense of racial-ethnic identity and identification with a greater collective – the racial-ethnic group. As such, minority students may concurrently be marginalised because of their racial-ethnic backgrounds, in addition to being multicultural and capable of functioning both within their racial-ethnic community and the dominant culture (Spencer, Swanson, & Cunningham, 1991). Adolescents consequently may develop a double consciousness, or multiple identities, in order to cope with the requirements of both the native culture with which they identify and the broader society in which they live.

The self in context

While one of the main tasks in adolescence is the formation of a coherent identity, it is imperative to recognise that an individual's social self is multifaceted and may involve numerous social identities. If one is continuously ascribed by others as belonging to a particular racial-ethnic group, his or her experiences will usually take place within the framework of that racial-ethnic group membership (Pittinsky, Shih, & Ambady, 1999). Furthermore, a particular social context may make a social identity salient for an

individual and may influence the person's behaviours, whether or not the individual is conscious of the impact of that particular identification. For example, in a study of Mexican-origin students, Umana-Taylor (2004) found that those adolescents attending a school with a significant Latino population reported lower racial-ethnic identity scores than those adolescents in two other schools where Latinos comprised fewer than fifty percent of the population. Consequently, one can surmise that even within a specific ethnic group (e.g., Mexicans), the salience of racial-ethnic identity can vary based on other contextual factors. Nevertheless, individuals are not simply passive recipients of the influences of a particular context.

Individuals will seek to maintain the salience of a particular identity, if it is central to their sense of self, even if the identity is devalued in the new context. In their study at a predominantly White American college, Saylor and Aries (1999) showed that minority students do not necessarily adapt their behaviours and attitudes to resemble more closely those of the dominant group, and nor did they automatically withdraw from the dominant culture. To the contrary, the participants in their study showed an increase in strength of racial-ethnic identity and involvement in racial-ethnic group cultural practices over the course of the year. Those minority students with the stronger racial-ethnic identity tended to join significantly more non-ethnic groups than did students with weaker racial-ethnic identities. Therefore, although the self is relatively stable, the meaning and importance of identities can shift as context changes (Markus & Wurf, 1987). If a particular identity is central to a person's conception of self and, thus, necessary to maintaining self-consistency, an individual moving to a new context will probably search for a new basis for supporting that identity, even if it is devalued by many in the new context (Ethier & Deaux, 1994).

When addressing issues of identity formation with adolescents, examining the relationship between racial-ethnic identity and an individual's overall self-concept is imperative for all groups (Lay & Verkuyten, 1999). While it appears to be obvious that racial-ethnic identity should be examined with minority groups, it is equally important to examine the nature of racial-ethnic identity for Immigrant and 'White' groups too – in order to understand the ways issues of race and ethnicity may be relevant across groups. There are two related theories in particular that can be useful in understanding how the interaction of a person with his or her environment influences their sense of self, and the

extent to which social identities become salient at a particular moment in time: Self-Complexity Theory (Linville, 1987) and Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991).

Self-Complexity Theory posits that each individual will adopt a multitude of social identities (e.g., gender, religion, profession, race) to form a unified sense of self. Of these multiple identities specific ones are “activated depending on such factors as the context and associated thoughts, their relation to current activated self-aspects, and their recency and frequency of activation” (Linville, 1987, p. 664). Self-Complexity Theory enables us to think about how individuals carry a repertoire of social identities (some individuals may have larger repertoires than others) and how the specific features of any given setting will determine which of those aspects of the self are activated or made salient. Moreover, Stryker and Serpe (1994) additionally proposed that these identities are organised hierarchically.

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory builds upon Self-Complexity Theory by emphasising both the characteristics of the person and the situation for determining which aspect of self will be salient at a given point in time (Brewer, 1991). According to this theory, depending upon the specific characteristic of setting, individuals will pick the identity that provides *both* a sense of belonging *and* differentiation from others in the setting. That is, as part of social interactions, individuals seek to feel connected to, yet unique from, participants of a setting. Moreover, Brewer (1991) suggests that individuals will choose an identity that also emphasises a sense of belonging. Hence, Optimal Distinctiveness Theory portrays individuals as complex information processors who can choose to emphasise or de-emphasise a particular social identity to the extent that it best suits an individual in any given situation. As with Self-Complexity Theory, Optimal Distinctiveness Theory points to the importance of contextual features for determining which aspect of self is salient at a specific point in time.

The next section will illustrate the influence family socialisation plays in the development of racial-ethnic identity.

Family as a context for racial-ethnic identity development

It is within the context of the family, and through familial relationships, that individuals initially develop their cultural and socio-political beliefs (Keefe, 1992; Neblett, Smalls, Ford, Nguyen, & Sellers, 2009). The family is the first social group into which an

individual becomes incorporated and family systems provide adolescents with opportunities to develop a sense of self in relational context (Groevant, 1987). Parental practices regarding racial-ethnic socialisation are shaped by individual and group characteristics and by characteristics of the contexts in which parents and children operate. A parent's sense of racial-ethnic identification and attachment to their racial-ethnic group will influence the adolescent's racial-ethnic identity formation because it is within their families that adolescents first learn that their cultural traditions and racial-ethnic heritage are important. This point is particularly important to this study because racial-ethnic group members who are not a part of the dominant group may not readily be exposed to social representations that place value on their racial-ethnic group.

Parents try to inculcate in their children the skills that they themselves have needed to function effectively across contexts (Kohn & Schooler, 1978). Accordingly, one might expect that parents who have experienced discrimination will be more likely than others to anticipate that their children will also experience it, and consequently provide their children with tools for coping with it (Umana-Taylor, 2004). Findings from several studies are consistent with this expectation. Hughes and Chen (1997) found that African American parents' messages to their children regarding discrimination (preparation for bias) were significantly associated with their perceptions of interpersonal prejudice at work. In this study, parents' cautions and warnings about White Americans (promotion of mistrust) were mostly associated with their perceptions of institutional-level discrimination in their own workplaces. Moreover, Phinney and Chavira's (1995) study of adolescents and their parents found that parents across groups were similar in their socialisation patterns in that they taught their adolescents about their culture, emphasised achievement, and expressed concern for prejudice and discrimination.

Language and dialect are easily identifiable markers of racial-ethnic identity and a common way of speaking can symbolise a shared history and exemplify a shared culture. Parents who are concerned about transmitting their racial-ethnic culture will often use the native language as a means to teach their children about their racial-ethnic identity. Parents that have a positive racial-ethnic identity will socialise their children in a manner corresponding to their attitudes toward their racial-ethnic group. One of the ways this is done is through language and dialect. Since language and dialect are both boundary-maintaining tools, knowledge of a language or dialect other than common English makes

children more aware of racial-ethnic differences between groups and may prompt the exploration period for adolescents. Additionally, a common language or dialect provides the basis for assumed similarity among members of a particular group. To illustrate, Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo, and Cota (1990) found that young children growing up in Spanish speaking environments were more likely to identify with the Mexican American culture and know more about it than those who did not. Thus, one can theorise that those Māori children growing up in Māori speaking environments will be more likely to explore their racial-ethnic backgrounds, since awareness of group differences is a precursor for racial-ethnic identity exploration and achievement.

In the New Zealand context, a study of intergenerational transmission of ethnicity, within the context of Māori-Pākehā intermarriage, was done by considering the role that Pākehā parents play in decisions about how to label their multi-ethnic children (Kukutai, 2007). A key finding to emerge from this study was the apparent willingness of Pākehā mothers to assign Māori ethnicity to their child, even if it meant denying their own 'race' or ethnicity. It is argued that Pākehā mothers develop an awareness of Māori identity and culture from sources within the Māori family (e.g., interaction with their child's and partner's Māori relatives), structural aspects of the environment (e.g., living in a predominantly Māori neighbourhood), as well as vicarious experiences with race-based discrimination (e.g., being declined rental accommodation based on the appearance of their Māori partner). These findings challenge the assumption that minority parents are the only transmitters of minority racial-ethnic identity. They also show that racial-ethnic identity is not necessarily transmitted across generations in a predictable, linear fashion.

Beyond families, racial-ethnic awareness may be heightened by exposure to prejudice and discrimination aimed at identifiable racial and ethnic markers. In spite of 'ethnic renewal' (Nagel, 1994), Māori remain an economically disadvantaged and lower status racial-ethnic group (Dannette, Fergusson, & Boden, 2008; Kukutai, 2004). In a recent book on intermarriage, one Pākehā mother expressed frustration at constantly bearing witness to anti-Māori sentiment, "When I hear snide remarks, it sometimes gets a bit too much and I will say, 'Actually I am married to a Māori,' and they will say, 'I don't mean every Māori. There are always good ones'" (Archie, 2005, p. 234). In addition, if a child has predominantly Māori physical attributes, the juxtaposition between the Pākehā mother and brown-skinned child might also heighten racial-ethnic awareness and encourage the

attribution of Māori ethnicity. Although persons of Māori parentage vary greatly with respect to skin colour and facial features, subtle distinctions may still be invoked to underscore difference (Callister, et al., 2008; Thomas & Nikora, 1996).

The majority of studies examining agents of racial-ethnic socialisation have identified parents as significant contributors to the process. Often considered “children’s first and primary teachers” (Hughes, 2003, p. 15), parents play a key role in the racial-ethnic identity development of minority youth. Contextual, demographic, and individual parental factors such as socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and life experience, as well as race-related attitudes and values, influence the ways in which parents transmit messages regarding racial-ethnic heritage and history, and cultural or racial-ethnic pride. Additionally, studies have suggested that parents who transmit messages positively emphasising one’s culture, history, and heritage have children and adolescents who are more knowledgeable about their group, have more positive in-group attitudes and enhanced self-concept (Knight, Bernal, Garza, Cota, & Ocampo, 1993). Phinney and Devich-Navarro’s (1997) study of Mexican adolescents found that adolescents who reported high parental involvement in socialisation, also reported high levels of exploration, commitment, and affirmation regarding their racial-ethnic identity. Umana-Taylor and Fine’s (2001) study broadened the socialisation agent network to include other family members besides parents (i.e., grandparents, other next of kin) and found similar positive associations between familial racial-ethnic socialisation and racial-ethnic identity development as previous studies that focused on parents.

In summary, adolescents’ racial-ethnic identity has been the most commonly investigated outcome of parents’ socialisation. This is likely attributable to the fact that many racial-ethnic socialisation practices are targeted directly toward instilling a sense of pride and group knowledge in children. Aspects of the most common area of familial racial-ethnic identity socialisation – cultural socialisation – emphasises racial-ethnic pride and language use, exposing children to positive aspects of their history and heritage, embedding children in cultural settings and events, and having racial-ethnic objects in the home. Cultural socialisation has also been associated with identity exploration, more advanced stages of identity development, more positive group attitudes, and more group-oriented racial-ethnic behaviours among African American and Mexican adolescents and adults (Umana-Taylor & Fine, 2004). Preparation for bias has also been associated with

adolescents' racial-ethnic identity development. For instance, adolescents who believe more strongly in the importance of teaching about racism are more likely than their counterparts to evidence more advanced stages of racial-ethnic identity development (Stevenson, 1995). It is clear that families play an important role in the development of racial-ethnic identity in adolescents.

Peer influences on racial-ethnic identity development

While the family is the initial source of racial-ethnic identification, by adolescence, it is imperative to consider the influence of peer group socialisation on racial-ethnic identity development. By adolescence, children are spending significantly more time with peers and may be more strongly influenced by their peer group than by their families (Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990). During this developmental period, peers not only shape how adolescents define their worlds but also how they act (Davidson, 1996). Adolescents and their peers co-construct the meaning of a collective group identity. Often times, for racial-ethnic minorities in particular, that identity incorporates race and/or ethnicity.

Globalisation has led to an increasingly uniform youth culture; one in which popular culture, such as American music, fashion and television, has a significant influence on adolescent racial-ethnic identity construction and enactment. Popular culture can be understood as a 'text' that is received by adolescents and acted on (Dolby, 2003). It can also be both a social 'glue' and a social divider: collective identities can solidify around a shared enjoyment of a particular type of music, for example, hip-hop, and being outside what is considered popular can lead to social isolation. In these ways, popular culture has become a central force in the lives of New Zealand adolescents reaching into their homes, cars, and classrooms, impacting who they hang out with, and influencing what they buy, wear, listen to, watch, and think about. Popular culture can also have a powerful affect on the speech patterns and language of adolescents. Particular words have new meanings and can in some cases distinguish group members from non-members. For example, the Pākehā students in this study often referred to themselves as 'White', and the Māori students thought that they were perceived as 'gangsta'. Neither of these terms are common in the New Zealand lexicon, but they were used by many of the adolescents as a means of articulating their racial-ethnic identities. It is important to understand the ways the meanings of these terms have shifted, so we can better understand their impact on the lives, and identities, of adolescents.

Despite these types of cultural uniformity, adolescents and their peer groups also continue to represent their racial-ethnic distinctiveness and maintain their uniqueness. What the adolescents do with race or ethnicity in their private lives, how they reify it, remake it, or question its borders, is influenced by their interactions with significant others, popular culture and their experiences of racism, or racial-ethnic stereotyping. As such, the meanings adolescents attach to their racial-ethnic identities can both shape and be shaped by different contexts. Therefore, it is imperative to examine not only the behaviours and visible markers of adolescent culture, such as dress and music, but to delve more deeply into their group specific meanings.

Peers are an important influence in shaping adolescents' racial-ethnic identity and how these identities are enacted within the school context. Davidson (1996) has shown how adolescents' peers and school contexts influence the development of racial-ethnic identity in ways that are either supportive or oppositional to school success. Positive peer interaction has been associated with the development of social skills and competence, pro-social behaviours, morality and cognitive skills (Burgess, Wojslawowicz, Rubin, Rose Krasnor, & Booth LaForce, 2006). In contrast, difficulty with peer relations has been related to adolescent maladjustments such as dropping out of school, depression and loneliness (Parker & Asher, 1987). Valenzuela (1999) found that the composition of Mexican adolescents peer groups influences both how they experience racial-ethnic identity and their school success. She found that immigrant adolescents value their educational opportunities, support each other in educational endeavours and collectively attempt to retain their distinctiveness from the dominant American culture. Conversely, the American-born adolescents promote social identities that do not embrace a pro-educational ethos, not because they do not value educational opportunities, but because they resist the content of their schooling. Valenzuela (1999) purports that this resistance is often displayed through a collective social identity that is inextricably tied to, and understood within, the context of racial-ethnic identity. In both circumstances, peers serve as an important factor in how adolescents constructed a school identity that was grounded in racial-ethnic identity and significantly shaped school experiences. Consequently, peer social networks shape the ways in which adolescents construct the meaning of their racial-ethnic identity and how they experience it at school.

Peer relationships are an important context for the development of racial attitudes. Intergroup contact – the opportunity to have contact with members of a different racial-ethnic group – has been theorised to be effective at reducing racial prejudice under particular conditions, with cross-race/ethnic friendships being an especially effective form of contact (Allport, 1954; Tropp & Prenovost, 2008). Thus, relationships with peers of different racial-ethnic groups can be beneficial to adolescents by promoting positive intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). Positive intergroup attitudes include beliefs about fair and equal treatment of individuals from different racial-ethnic groups, and a rejection or inhibition of stereotypes about others based on group membership (Killen, Sinno, & Margie, 2007).

Research with children and adolescents from racial-ethnic minority backgrounds has highlighted the importance of racial-ethnic identity in relationship forming during adolescence (Quintana, 1998; Quintana & Vera, 1999). According to Quintana (1998), adolescence ushers in a more complex understanding of prejudice, one in which the social aspects of race, ethnicity and prejudice are better perceived. Adolescents are more aware of the subtle acts and outcomes of prejudice and are more mindful of how racial-ethnic identity affects interpersonal relationships. These findings provide an explanation for the decline in cross-race friendship nominations by racial-ethnic minority children in early adolescence (Graham & Cohen, 1997; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987). The increased sensitivity to prejudice in adolescence may enhance the desirability of in-group friendships in order to buffer the negative effects of bias (Crocker & Major, 1989). Quintana's (1998) study found that Mexican American 11-12 years olds believed that racial-ethnic similarity helped friendship formation and development. Additionally, these same children reported that same in-group peers cooperate better and feel more comfortable with each other than mixed racial-ethnic groups. As such, the decline of intergroup relationships with age is related to changes in identification with, and reasoning about, groups and their norms in adolescence for both majority and minority children.

In summary, research that has examined friendships in adolescence has suggested that adolescents become increasingly dependent on friends and less dependent on parents for emotional support during their high school years. Moreover, friends from the same racial-ethnic group may engage in similar behaviour as parents do with regards to racial-ethnic

socialisation (i.e., promoting pride, cultural knowledge, and cultural traditions, promoting awareness of discrimination and helping their friends cope with it), but may have more of an impact on the adolescent than parents, since adolescents spend most of their time with friends. Additionally, at school, adolescents are continuously engaging in a process of racial-ethnic identity-construction. This process is a response to societal messages about who they can and/or cannot be as a member of their racial-ethnic group. As such, adolescents are in a constant state of identity-flux simultaneously seeking acceptance and belonging amongst their peer group, but also seeking opportunities to maintain their racial-ethnic distinctiveness.

Racial-ethnic identity development in school contexts

Educational research has documented the pervasive influence of schools' racial-ethnic composition on the academic and social lives of students. Although this body of empirical work is large and contains its share of inconsistencies, studies have generally found that inter-ethnic contact in schools promotes more positive racial attitudes (Ellison & Powers, 1994) and greater inter-ethnic sociability and friendship (Johnson & Marini, 1998). These positive effects are not limited to adolescence. Interestingly, attending school with majority group members has also been found to enhance the ability of minorities to function with majority group members in social, academic, and work environments across the life course (Braddock & Henry, 1985).

Despite these beneficial outcomes, attending school with greater proportions of students from other racial-ethnic groups may also pose additional challenges to students, making it more difficult to feel a part of the school community and discouraging their engagement behaviours. Like adults, adolescents show strong in-group preferences in social interaction and the formation of friendships (Hallinan & Williams, 1990; Johnson & Marini, 1998; Schofield, 1980). Race and ethnicity are highly salient aspects of both social and personal identity, and similarity with one's classmates along such dimensions is no doubt important in generating a sense of belonging and membership in a school.

School racial-ethnic composition may influence engagement behaviours in a number of ways. Being surrounded by students of one's own group may prevent disengagement indirectly through school attachment. When students do not feel comfortable at school or socially integrated with other students, they may withdraw – wagging (skipping) classes more frequently and investing less in academic activities. Student composition may also

affect engagement more directly. If an adolescent feels different from his or her fellow students, he or she may avoid interactions with others by wagging class. As the minority population increases, so, too, does the probability of minority students finding same-race models, such as highly motivated or achieving minority students, for engagement.

Understanding the process through which early adolescents come to see themselves as belonging to particular racial-ethnic groups is important because it can have a tremendous bearing on their school engagement and subsequent academic achievement (Phinney, 1989). For adolescents in multi-ethnic high schools, racial-ethnic identity frequently takes on new significance with respect to peer interactions, friendship groups, and dating. It is not uncommon in multi-ethnic school settings for early adolescents to interact and form friendships easily across racial boundaries – if their parents or other adults allow them to do so (Killen, McGlothlin, & Lee-Kim, 2002). However, in adolescence such racial-ethnic boundaries become more problematic as adolescents become increasingly aware of the significance associated with group difference. In other words, early adolescents generally become more concerned with how their peers react to their participation in interracial relationships and, as a result, they may begin to self-segregate according to race and/or ethnicity (Schofield & Francis, 1982). Also, adolescents are more aware of the politics associated with race, and more cognisant of racial hierarchies and prejudice (Way, Cowal, Gingold, Pahl, & Bissessar, 2001).

Schools are a site where adolescents receive and begin to understand messages from society about their identity. Minority and indigenous adolescents in particular are subject to negative expectations that have profound implications for their academic performance (Weinstein, 2002). Cross-cultural data focused on a variety of minorities in a number of contexts all over the world suggest that exposure to a negative ‘social mirror’ (Doucet & Suarez-Orozco, 2006, p. 168) adversely affects academic engagement. De Vos and Suarez-Orozco (1990) have demonstrated that the cultural messages minority students receive in school contexts are saturated with psychological disparagement and racist stereotypes. De Vos and Suarez-Orozco argue that this experience can have profound implications for the healthy racial-ethnic identity formation of minority and indigenous students as well as for their schooling experiences. As a result, these researchers contend that these students can effectively be locked out of the opportunity structure, by way of reduced access to desirable schools or to higher income work opportunities. Moreover,

stereotypes about minorities and indigenous peoples – that they are inferior intellectually, lazy workers, a threat to public safety – are used to justify the sense that they are less deserving of partaking in the dominant society’s opportunity structure.

Educational engagement in school contexts is dependent on a number of factors: the skills, background knowledge, and resources available to students; the students’ sense of themselves and how they are identified and identify as belonging to, or in, educational settings; how the educational setting makes space, and provides support, for students to engage and persist. This sense of belonging and invitation to an educational space shapes students’ engagement with, and willingness to, persist in a particular educational setting. In that sense, educational engagement could be said to be a function of developing a school-based social identity or an academic identity. And yet, other important social identities such as racial-ethnic identity do not disappear when students enter schools. An important question then revolves around how academic or school identities, necessary for educational engagement, intersect with racial-ethnic identity to support or constrain educational engagement, persistence and achievement.

Research has established that some minority students believe that they must choose between a positive racial-ethnic identity and a strong academic identity to be successful at school (Nasir & Saxe, 2003). The research literature offers many compelling examples of such ‘forced choices’ in the lives of adolescents, especially the lives of African American students (Davidson, 1996; Ferguson, 2001; Ogbu, 1997). Fordham and Ogbu (Fordham, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu) argued that students bring racial-ethnic identities into the classroom and have documented how some academically successful Black students feel the need to become ‘raceless’ in school in order to facilitate their success. Davidson (1996) also documented how some students work hard to do well in school by masking their racial-ethnic selves in the classroom, while others resist such conformity by maintaining racial-ethnic affiliations and disengaging from school activities. Such tensions represent an interesting phenomenon, because historically African Americans, as with other minority groups around the world, have placed great value on education (Siddle-Walker, 1996). The complexity of these issues highlight the importance of better understanding how minority students structure and manage emerging tensions as they construct and negotiate racial-ethnic and academic identities in the course of their everyday activities.

Schools are contexts where we make each other racial (Olsen, 1997). Not only are schools central places for forming racial-ethnic identities, but the way teachers and students talk, interact and act in school, both reflects and helps shape developing understandings about racial-ethnic hierarchy. This hierarchy in schools is exacerbated through the unequal distribution of funding, through the differentiated expectations that teachers hold regarding the abilities of different ethnic groups and through an institutional choreography of everyday actions incessantly funnelling opportunities to some students and not others (Fine, 1997). As such, adolescents' experiences during their years of high-school can influence how they choose to racially or ethnically self-categorise, how boundaries between their racial-ethnic groups are formed, negotiated and interpreted, and how the processes of racialisation and boundary-forming affect students' interactions and opportunities. In this way schools can be considered racially-coded spaces (Lewis, 2003). Schools are spaces where racial-ethnic politics function to racialise and are significant in the production and reproduction of racial-ethnic identities and racial-ethnic inequality.

The relationship of racial-ethnic identity to school academic engagement and achievement

How might racial-ethnic identity influence academic achievement? As documented by the literature on stereotype threat and stereotype lift (Steele, 2004), simply being reminded of one's membership in a group that is stereotyped in terms of academic performance influences one's subsequent academic performance. This study suggests that racial-ethnic identity may either promote or undermine academic achievement depending on whether the content of racial-ethnic identity is positive or negative with regard to achievement. When a positive stereotype exists, for example, the stereotype of Asian academic ability, then making the group membership salient has a positive influence on academic performance (Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999). When a negative stereotype exists, such as the case for working class (Croizet & Claire, 1998), gender, and minority groups (Rubie-Davies, Hattie, & Hamilton, 2006; Steele, 1997b) making group membership salient has a negative influence on academic performance.

A number of scholars have written about the identity mismatch that can occur when young people move from homes and communities into formal educational institutions (Moje & Martinez, 2007; Heath, 1983), typically highlighting mismatches between racial-ethnic identity and/or culture, and the dominant cultural discourse demanded for

achievement at school (Fordham, 1996; Flores-Gonzalez, 2002; Ogbu, 1997). However, other scholars have argued that certain family, community and peer groups have their own organic skills, knowledge and strategies that support high achievement in formal education institutions, even as they simultaneously support and maintain racial-ethnic identity in their children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Foley, 1990; O'Connor, 1997). Several studies have demonstrated how certain practices, deemed resistant or oppositional to school success, (e.g., maintaining a strong racial-ethnic identity and/or continuing to speak one's ethnic language and participate in cultural activities) can actually serve as a buffer against psychological struggles fostered by school settings that fail to acknowledge, or that even devalue, students' backgrounds (Davidson, 1996; Flores-Gonzalez, 2002). Additionally, O'Connor (1997) has found that amongst black students in America, the most resilient and persistent students were those who had a well developed awareness of the role that racism and discrimination could play in their educational lives. They also had strong role models (usually parents) for taking action against oppression.

Douglas Foley (1990) had similar findings amongst Mexican youth born and schooled in Texas, in that, educational persistence and achievement was associated with two factors: recognition that racism would play a role in their lives and a heightened awareness of the value of collective social action modelled by elders. Australian studies have also shown that positive racial-ethnic identity combined with positive academic identity increases the chances of successful school outcomes such as attendance, grades and retention, especially for Indigenous Australian adolescents (Purdie, Tripcony, Boulton-Lewis, Gunstone & Fanshawe, 2000). Therefore, there is strong evidence that having a strong, positive sense of racial-ethnic identity may protect minority adolescents from the negative psychological and academic impacts of perceiving racial-ethnic group barriers or experiencing interpersonal discrimination based on their ethnic group.

Educational Resilience

Some adolescents are successful at school despite having to overcome adverse personal, contextual and racial-ethnic factors. Educational or academic resilience has been defined as "the heightened likelihood of educational success despite personal adversities brought about by environmental conditions and experiences" (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997, p. 45). Educational resilience can also be thought of as a continuous interaction between

an individual and characteristics of his or her environment. Resilience consists of two components: the presence of significant adversity, and the achievement of a positive outcome despite the threat or risk (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). In order for an adolescent to be considered resilient, he or she must be experiencing some type of risk or adversity and be doing well despite the risk(s).

Many researchers have suggested that adolescents' racial-ethnic identity has a significant influence on how they deal with adverse circumstances (e.g., Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Yasui & Dishion, 2007). Moreover, there has been an increasing international interest in the subject of resilience, including resilient behaviour in the classroom and the role of resilience in achievement of minority students (Waxman, Padron & Gray, 2004; Morales & Trotman, 2004; Sternberg & Subotnik, 2006). It seems that students from similar backgrounds and environmental situations can have drastically different academic outcomes which may be due to student characteristics of resilience (Waxman et al., 2004; Sternberg & Subotnik, 2006). Interest in this area has developed as educators seek to understand the factors that affect student motivation and achievement. Researchers (Waxman et al., 2004; Morales & Trotman, 2004; Sternberg & Subotnik, 2006) have begun to consider how students demonstrate educational resilience in the face of adversity. Sue and Sue (2003) noted that people's world views, largely influenced by their cultural background, can have a powerful influence on their ability to successfully adapt to the environment. According to Sue and Sue (2003) "our world views are composed of our attitudes, values, opinions, and concepts, and affect how we think, define events, make decisions, and behave" (p. 268). Members of minority groups often perceive and experience their lives differently based in part on their cultural upbringing and different world views.

School failure is thought to be caused in part by the presence of risk factors that contribute to emotional difficulties and poor functioning. These risks can originate from the individual or from his or her environmental context (Werner, 1993). Risk factors do not predict a negative outcome with certainty; rather, they expose adolescents to circumstances associated with a greater likelihood of a maladaptive or unhealthy outcome (Lerner & Galambos, 1998). Students who have more protective factors tend to be more educationally resilient, since these factors protect or insulate students from the effects of risk factors (Werner, 2000). Werner's conclusions were based on an analysis of data from

a 30-year longitudinal study of 698 students from racial-ethnic minorities in Kaua'i, Hawaii. According to Werner, individual protective factors observed repeatedly in resilient adolescents include an internal locus of control, positive self-concept and temperament, and greater social maturity.

Resilient students also have individual resources that are associated with academic success, such as cognitive abilities, motivation, and self-efficacy (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). Although many students may possess these individual characteristics, resilient students rely on these capabilities to help them overcome adverse circumstances in their environment. Besides the individual protective factors listed above, Werner (2000) reported a number of external protective factors that occurred within the family, school, and community which increased the odds of a positive developmental outcome. Within the family, these included a strong maternal bond or affectionate tie to an alternate caregiver, grandparents, and siblings. From the school, teachers and mentors were repeatedly found to exert a positive influence on youth. In the community, pro-social relationships with friends and caring adults provided a protective effect. Now that resilience theory has been described briefly, an explanation of one specific type of resilience, namely, educational resilience, is needed.

Although there are substantial differences between racial-ethnic groups, research supports the idea that students with a strong identification with their racial-ethnic group tend to do better in the school environment (Lerner & Galambos, 1998; Yasui & Dishion, 2007). Many students with strong cultural ties utilise their group as a support structure, calling on family members and their cultural beliefs/traditions when facing adverse circumstances in the environment. For minority students, research has suggested that a strong racial-ethnic identity can serve as a buffer to protect them from negative environmental conditions (Altschul, Oyserman & Bybee, 2006; Durie, 2005). Majority group members also frequently rely on their strong cultural ties when in need of support to get them through tough times (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009). Although majority group members may generally tend to downplay the importance of race and ethnicity when they are in the majority, some researchers have found that, when they are in the numerical minority, they have an increased need for group solidarity too (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997).

Cultural upbringing and racial-ethnic identity have been shown to be powerful influences on the way adolescents view their world and make meaning of it, and as such, racial-ethnic identity can be considered a protective factor in times of adversity. Protective factors are considered to be on the opposite end of the behavioural spectrum and to be precursors to resilient outcomes among adolescents (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner, 1993). It is thought that protective factors moderate a person's reaction to stress or adversity and interact with the sources of risk to reduce the probability of negative outcomes. According to Rutter (1979), protection from risk does not mean risk is completely avoided; rather, a resilient individual engages with risk and copes with it. Protective factors emanate from three sources: the individual, the family, and the environment or social context. Students who lack individual competencies, or family and community protective factors, have a greater likelihood of maladaptive outcomes in adulthood (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Werner, 2000). Additionally, students who fail in school tend to have lower cognitive ability, less motivation, and lower self-esteem (Lerner & Galambos, 1998).

Adolescents need to develop 'cultural flexibility', particularly those individuals who attend multi-ethnic high schools (Carter, 2010). Over the course of their social development, students must learn the skills to effectively navigate diverse social environs such as schools, communities, and neighbourhoods. Ultimately, culturally flexible students are resilient, and possess the ability to interact in, participate in, and navigate different social and cultural settings. They know how to embrace multiple forms of cultural knowledge and make efforts to expand their own understanding of self. Moreover, culturally flexible students hold inclusive perspectives about others who differ in myriad social aspects or identities (Carter, 2010). Cultural flexibility encompasses an individual's ability to cross different social boundaries and may be determined by a host of factors ranging from individual or psychological, including one's attitudes, beliefs and values (LaFramboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993), to social or contextual factors, such as their social organisation among peers and friends (Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987). As social agents, students can either consciously or unconsciously choose to be culturally flexible in their identities.

Risk and resiliency research has generally found racial-ethnic identity to be a beneficial factor, that is, it has been related positively to measures of psychological well-being such

as coping ability, mastery, self-esteem, and optimism, and negatively to measures of loneliness and depression (Roberts et al., 1999) and quality of life indices (Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002). Sellers and colleagues (Sellers, Copeland Linder, Martin & Lewis, 2006; Shelton & Sellers, 2000) also found that both racial centrality and public regard buffered the effects of perceived discrimination on the psychological distress of African Americans.

More recently, in a study with Latino students attending multi-ethnic schools, French and Chavez (2010) found that although having a strong Latino self-image was protective, the negative impact of the fear of confirming stereotypes overrode the protective nature of racial-ethnic identity. Unfortunately, this suggests that promoting greater racial-ethnic identity alone is not a solution to overcoming the fear of confirming stereotypes. Rather, any intervention designed to promote the well-being of racial-ethnic minorities must promote racial-ethnic identity and either address the conditions that facilitate stereotype threat or help ethnic group members deal with and minimise concern over stereotype confirmation. Another particularly interesting result of French and Chavez's (2010) study was that there was a clear disconnect for students facing a great deal of pressure to conform from members of their own racial-ethnic group. These students were comfortable with other racial-ethnic groups, yet they felt that they were being pulled in the other direction by their racial-ethnic peers who pressured them to be 'more Latino', including hanging out with or dating only other Latinos. This conflict between their personal desires and their racial-ethnic peer group's desires led to a sense of loss of control. French and Chavez (2010) assert that, in this case, the students would benefit from a stronger bicultural orientation to protect their well-being. Ideally, if they could still embrace other groups without rejecting their own, they may be more likely to feel a sense of control over their own lives. Previous research (Berry et al., 2006) has indeed shown that a bicultural orientation, not full assimilation or separation from the mainstream, is more adaptive and associated with positive psychological health.

Summary

As this review of the research has demonstrated, nowhere in the life span, other than infancy, is the interplay of individual and collective factors in the composition of a human life more pronounced than during adolescence. During these years (ages 12-18), adolescents experience biological, cognitive, and social-emotional changes amid maturing

relationships with parents, deepening peer relationships, and the transition to a new school. How well adolescents organise their developing biological and psychological capacities in conjunction with the evolving social, cultural, and historical circumstances of their lives is one essential factor in determining whether they stay engaged and perform well in school, develop positive peer relationships, and feel positive about themselves and their future. It is clear that the experiences of adolescents are shaped in a complex multicultural context, and thus their racial-ethnic related experiences will be defined by their interactions not only with members of other racial-ethnic groups, but also members of their own group. Learning to nullify the pressure to conform and overcoming the fear of confirming stereotypes will be critical to the protection of their well-being, particularly in school contexts.

In the next chapter the research design is described.

Chapter Four:

Research design

The construction, meaning and perceived consequences of racial-ethnic identity for early adolescents within an urban New Zealand context was the focus of the present investigation. The research questions underpinning the study are: ‘What influences early adolescent racial-ethnic identity development?’, ‘How do early adolescents enact racial-ethnic identity in high school contexts?’ and, ‘How does racial-ethnic identity impact on the way early adolescents engage at high school?’

A pragmatic, mixed methods design was used to research this phenomenon. Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) defined mixed methods as those that “include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words), where neither type of method is inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm” (p. 256). Similarly, mixed methods have been characterised as quantitative and qualitative data collection, data analysis and the mixing of quantitative and qualitative approaches within a single study, with data integrated at some stage (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003). One of the most compelling reasons for wanting to investigate the phenomenon using qualitative as well as quantitative methods in this study was to capture, in a thick description, the participants’ perspectives about the experience and impact of racial-ethnic identity in their young lives.

This chapter will outline the research design, including a description of the chosen mixed methods approach, the research context and participants, the choice of research instruments and data collection methods, the data analysis methods, and issues of reliability and validity. This chapter will finish with a discussion of the ethical issues encountered in carrying out this project.

Mixed methods research

Today’s research world is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, complex, and dynamic. As a result educational researchers are progressively using multiple methods as they collaborate in teams to provide more comprehensive programmes. Mixed method approaches also allow researchers to mix and match design components that offer the best

chance of answering their specific research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Traditionally, the link between the two approaches has been that quantitative research has been about theory verification, and qualitative approaches were associated with theory generation. However, this dichotomy has been challenged in recent times and consequently, over the last two decades the boundaries between qualitative and quantitative approaches have begun to blur (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Punch, 2005).

Combining methods can be particularly useful if the area being researched is new, or if the background theory for an investigation is minimal and the generation of useable theory is an aim (Geurts & Roosendaal, 2001; Morse, 2003). Importantly, the use of mixed method designs has greater impact with policy-makers because figures tend to be more persuasive than narratives, even though stories are more easily understood and used for illustrative purposes (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore qualitative and quantitative approaches used in conjunction may provide complementary data that together give a more complete picture of complex social issues, and as such should give results from which to make better inferences (Creswell et al., 2003; Gorard & Taylor, 2004).

Pragmatism is seen as the underpinning philosophy of the mixed methods approach (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007). The pragmatic approach is not committed to either quantitative or qualitative methods, but rather to the selection of what best suits the research question (Creswell, 2003). Thus, the pragmatic approach is based on the view that research should always be tailor-made, based on the area being studied and the research question, rather than the epistemological or ontological assumptions with which it is underpinned (Creswell, 2003). This differs from the past in that research has focused more on design and less on purpose and the potential audiences for the findings (Newman, Ridenour, Newman & DeMarco, 2003). Newman et al. (2003) argue that thinking about purpose can be a valuable tool to achieve linkages between research questions, the way the study is carried out, and the interpretation of the findings.

To date, there appears to be limited New Zealand social-psychological research undertaken in the area under investigation – racial-ethnic identity development among adolescents. Sociological theory from the New Zealand context, related to the issue under investigation, can be found regarding Māori identity (e.g., McIntosh, 2005; Borrell; 2005), Pākehā Identity (e.g., McCreanor, 2005; Bell, 1996), Samoan identity (e.g., Keddell, 2006; Wurtzberg, 2004) and Chinese identity (e.g., Ip & Pang, 2005), although

only one of these examples examine adolescent identity specifically (Borrell, 2005). Whilst the aforementioned research offers an excellent insight into the sociological constructs that impact racial and or ethnic identity development, they do not offer usable explanations for understanding how racial-ethnic identity impacts adolescents' psychological functioning in school contexts.

This study is designed to generate further knowledge and explanations about racial-ethnic identity, underpinned by social-psychological theory, that will help us to understand more about the role of racial-ethnic identity among adolescents attending multi-ethnic high schools in New Zealand. By using qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate overlapping but different facets in the research project reported here, it was envisaged that it will result in an enriched understanding of the phenomenon. In addition, the area under investigation is a complex phenomenon about which it seemed important to construct an explanation that would account for these complexities. Furthermore, it was anticipated that the research project would generate new ideas and questions to pursue. Against this backdrop, an addition to the knowledge base was envisaged, including clarifying and extending what is already known. It was envisaged that this research project might be able to have an impact on policy and generate a social and wider institutional impact, particularly with parents and teachers (Creswell, 2003; Newman et al. 2003). The ultimate aim would be that should adolescents' perceptions of the role of racial-ethnic identity in their school lives be positive, reporting the research might result in shifting the perception of school teachers and policy makers regarding the importance of affirming racial-ethnic identity, and teaching about race, ethnicity and racism, as critical factors in student academic and social engagement in school contexts.

Selecting a mixed methods design

A myriad of designs now exist that add to the complexity of the mixed methods debate (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). To clarify and simplify the plethora of designs available, several typologies, differing in the degree of complexity involved, have been developed (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). For example, some researchers have developed typologies differentiating between whether the qualitative and quantitative data collection methods occur concurrently or sequentially (e.g., Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). However, most sequential mixed methods designers have outlined a two-phase process beginning with either the quantitative data collection and analysis, followed by

qualitative data collection and analysis, or alternatively, the qualitative, followed by the quantitative phase (e.g., Creswell et al., 2003; Morse, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). In addition, a sandwich mixed method design with several phases has been proposed (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004), as have nested models where, for example, a quantitative data collection method may have embedded within it a qualitative component (Morse, 2003).

Critical of the development of typologies that are essentially linear and divided into discrete components, Maxwell and Loomis (2003) proposed an interactive or integrated mixed method model. They maintained that it is difficult to keep a totally sequential separation of qualitative and quantitative elements of research. Rather than a choice from a set of fixed possible arrangements, Maxwell and Loomis viewed the design of a study as consisting of the components and the ways in which they connect with and influence each other. Creswell (2003) suggested iterative phases of a design where the researcher 'cycles' back and forth between quantitative and qualitative data collection.

The design in this research project is essentially an interactive mixed method model; initially involving a concurrent nested quantitative/qualitative phase (the questionnaire), followed by a qualitative phase (the semi-structured student interviews). The rationale for conceptualising the research as an interactive or integrated mixed method model was based upon several features. Firstly, the methods used were not entirely discrete. In the concurrent nested phase, qualitative and quantitative elements were integrated rather than regarded as conceptually separate elements. Secondly, each phase informed the subsequent phase and alternatively, each phase explicated and enriched the previous phase. Creswell's (2003) analogy of the researcher cycling back and forth between quantitative and qualitative data aptly describes the process undertaken. Such a process was used in that data from each phase or method was used to guide and inform, and at times re-examine, results from previous or subsequent phases from a different perspective. As such, a quantitative/qualitative phase (in the form of a questionnaire, see Appendix A), using closed questions and two open-ended questions, was implemented initially; followed by a qualitative phase involving detailed interviews (in the form of semi-structured interviews, see Appendix B) with fewer participants.

According to Creswell et al. (2003) a decision must be made in a mixed methods design about the priority given to the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research, or

whether equal priority should be given to both. The emphasis may result from practical constraints of the data collection, the interest of researcher, what the researcher seeks to emphasise in the study, the need to understand one form of data before concentrating on the next, or the audience preference. In the present study, the original thought was to give equal priority to the quantitative and qualitative data. Given the dearth of New Zealand literature related to the research question, it was considered important to understand the questionnaire data before concentrating on the interviewing phase. The questionnaire had the potential to collect a comprehensive amount of data related to the research question. Initially, it was assumed that the questionnaire would form the basis for the emphasis in the analysis and interpretation phases of the research project. However, in the questionnaire analysis phase, whilst reading the adolescents' qualitative responses to the open questions, their voice and the passion of their responses were evident. Once all of the qualitative data was obtained, with its richness of responses, it was clear that the quantitative data would need to serve as reinforcement to the interview responses. Thus, while equal priority was given to the qualitative and quantitative data in the data collection phase and analysis, greater weight was subsequently given to the qualitative data in the interpretation phases.

Research goals

This study examined the self-identifications, feelings of connectedness, meanings and perceived consequences of adolescents' racial-ethnic identities. The broad research questions are: 'What influences early adolescent racial-ethnic identity development?', 'How do early adolescents enact racial-ethnic identity in high school contexts?' and, 'How does racial-ethnic identity impact on the way early adolescents engage at high school?'

The goals of the research are:

Study 1a. To investigate and compare the racial-ethnic identity content – in particular, levels of Commitment, Exploration, Connectedness, Awareness of Racism and Embedded Achievement – among New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese adolescents;

Study 1b. To investigate the racial-ethnic identity informed behaviours, beliefs, stereotype perceptions and meaning adolescents attach to their racial-ethnic identity;

Study 1c. To examine the relationship of racial-ethnic identity to educational engagement and the educational resiliency strategies enacted by high-achieving New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese adolescents.

In order to achieve these goals I used Phinney and Ong's (2007) *Revised Multi-dimensional Ethnic Identity Model* (MEIM-R); and Oyserman et al.'s (1995) *Tripartite Interactive Model* (TIM) as an underpinning framework for a questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire items and 31 individual semi-structured interviews.

The survey instrument was administered to 695 Year Nine (12-13 year olds) students and semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 31 Year Nine students from five multi-ethnic urban high schools in Auckland, New Zealand. The analysis in this study focuses on a comparison between four racial-ethnic groups – New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese.

The following sections outline the instruments used.

The questionnaire

Questionnaires are suitable when research is concerned with questions regarding self-reported beliefs and behaviours (Neuman, 2010). Therefore, the choice of a questionnaire was appropriate as the information sought was concerned with the adolescents' own perceptions of their racial-ethnic identity. Self-completion questionnaires are very widely used as a data collection method in educational and social science research (Scott & Usher, 1999). They are considered to be a cost and time effective method of collecting data from a large number of people in a relatively standardised way. In some situations, particularly in those questionnaires with a qualitative component, self-completion questionnaires may allow people to express views on issues about which they may not feel comfortable talking with an interviewer (Liu, 2007). Questionnaires are also useful at the start of a project, providing baseline data, and can also shape the nature of questions you might ask in any subsequent data collection phase. Questions likely to provide valid

data were developed based on findings from research related to adolescent racial-ethnic identity development in general and the research question in particular.

The development of the questionnaire took place over a period of three months. Feedback and advice was obtained from supervisors as part of this process. A major choice in constructing a questionnaire concerns the use of open-ended or closed-ended questions (Bryman, 2006). An open-ended question is one that poses a question but does not constrain the answer, thus requiring respondents to answer in their own words (Jenkins, 2008). In contrast, a closed-ended question requires the respondent to choose a response from a number of responses provided. Each has advantages and disadvantages (Pool, 1991).

The greatest advantage of open-ended questions is that respondents can answer in any way they wish; they are not forced to choose among a possible limited set of responses (Jackson & Pool, 1996). The resulting responses may provide a rich source of information and the researcher's understandings of the phenomena or question may be changed completely by unexpected responses to open-ended questions. There are, however, several drawbacks to open questions including the coding and analysing of rich and varied material, the varying length of responses, the difficulty with inarticulate respondents, and the reluctance of respondents to reveal detailed information. Open-ended questions require more work from respondents and researchers (Creswell, 2003).

Closed-ended questions, on the other hand, are easier for respondents to complete because they require less effort and less facility with words (Bryman, 2006). Using response options enhances standardisation by creating the same frame of reference for all respondents (Munn & Drever, 1990). Nevertheless, good closed questions are difficult to develop and important responses may be omitted thus leaving respondents to choose among alternatives that do not correspond to their true feelings or opinions.

The questionnaire used both closed and open-ended questions. The first section of the questionnaire utilised two existing standardised measures of racial-ethnic identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Oyserman et al., 2005), designed as a means of assessing five different components of racial-ethnic identity. The closed question data was to be analysed statistically and therefore used prescribed wording and order of questions, to

ensure that each respondent received the same information. They also had a prescribed response format (Likert scales), to enable rapid completion of the questionnaire.

Additionally, two open end-ended items were included at the end of the questionnaire for a number of reasons, including to encourage full, meaningful answers from the participants, eliciting their nuanced personal understandings, knowledge and/or feelings, to gather new information about the research topic, to explain and/or clarify the quantitative findings, and to explore different dimensions of the respondents' experiences (Walsh, Kiesler, Sproull, & Hesse, 1992).

Lastly, the questionnaire was piloted once with a Year Nine class not involved in the study. A pilot, or feasibility study, is a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior to a larger study, in order to improve the final study's quality and efficiency. A pilot study can generally reveal deficiencies in the design of a proposed experiment or procedure and these can then be addressed before time and resources are expended on large-scale studies (Lancaster, Dodd & Williamson, 2004). Participants involved in the pilot study were asked to complete the questionnaire, comment on its structure, wording and its ease of use. As a result of this process the questionnaire was revised – words were included, or modified, ambiguities within questions reduced, and instructions altered to facilitate ease of completion.

The content of the questionnaire

The present study's 28-item questionnaire was designed to assess racial-ethnic identity and consisted of items including racial-ethnic Self-identification, Exploration, Commitment, Connectedness, Awareness of Racism and Embedded achievement. Additional demographic data was also collected in the survey to enable further comparisons to be made between racial-ethnic groups. In this questionnaire, the Multidimensional Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R, Phinney & Ong, 2007) is used as a composite measure of racial-ethnic identity, alongside Oyserman et al.'s (1995) Tripartite Interactive Model (TIM). Informed by the developmental theories of Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1980), as well as the social identity theory of Tajfel (1981), Phinney (1992) created the MEIM, and later the MEIM-R (Phinney & Ong, 2007), which is underpinned by the belief that ethnic identity is a general phenomenon with elements or components that are common across all ethnic group members. Racial-ethnic Commitment and Exploration were assessed with the revised version 6-item Multigroup Ethnic Identity

Measure (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Because the two scales are distinct constructs, all components were assessed separately to gain greater insight into the process of ethnic identity development, a technique used with success in previous research (French, et al., 2006).

The MEIM-R has demonstrated high estimates of reliability, and has been widely used in racial-ethnic identity research. The revised version has similar content to the original MEIM, with a lower reading level. The two components of MEIM-R were assessed with a 5-point Likert response scale (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree). Separate subscale scores were created by taking an average score of the three items for ethnic Exploration and the three items for ethnic Commitment. Reliability analyses of the two subscales have shown that both scales have good reliability, with Cronbach alphas of .76 for exploration and .78 for commitment. For the combined 6-item scale, alpha was .81 (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

The Tripartite Interactive Model (Oyserman et al., 1995) proposes a tripartite measure of racial-ethnic identity, whereby three components – Connectedness, Awareness of Racism, and Embedded Achievement – interact to promote well-being and academic achievement. Oyserman et al. (1995) propose that adolescents who strongly endorse all three racial-ethnic identity components would be better equipped to succeed in school over time than those who did not. The researchers also propose that defining oneself in terms of any one of these components alone was insufficient to maintain the focused effort that school success requires. The original TIM measure comprises four items for each of the three components, but some extra items were developed for each component by the researcher (three extra questions for Connectedness, one extra question for Awareness of Racism and two extra questions for Embedded Achievement). As a result, an enhanced version of the TIM model was used in the study questionnaire. The three enhanced components of Connectedness, Awareness of Racism, and Embedded Achievement were also assessed on a 5-point Likert response scale (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 neither agree nor disagree, 4 agree, 5 strongly agree).

Although brief, the TIM scales are adequately reliable (alphas from 0.58 to 0.79 across samples) (Altschul, et al., 2006; Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001). Over eight months, test-retest reliability were 0.78 for Connectedness, 0.81 for Awareness of Racism, and 0.65 for Embedded Achievement (Altschul, et al., 2006).

Racial-ethnic self-identification

Racial-ethnic self-identification is a basic element of group identity. Since racial-ethnic identity is both a psychological and social construct, individual self-identification is the most appropriate means of measurement in research categorisation (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Measurement of racial-ethnic identity must begin with verifying that the individuals being studied, in fact, self-identify as members of a particular racial-ethnic group. This can be done either with open-ended questions or lists that are appropriately inclusive (Phinney, 1992); lists, with an option to denote ‘other’ racial-ethnic identities, were used in the present study. In addition, it is useful to collect information on the ancestry and racial-ethnic identity of the respondents’ parents, both to clarify any possible confusion with regard to the respondent’s answers and to assist in understanding whether their main racial-ethnic identity choice corresponds more with the mother’s or father’s racial-ethnic origins.

The research survey began with a preamble, which stated “Whilst we all live in New Zealand and might consider ourselves New Zealanders, every person is also a member of an ethnic group, sometimes more than one ethnic group. Some names of ethnic groups include: Samoan, Chinese, Māori, Tongan, and New Zealand European/Pākehā.” The first survey question then asked the respondents “To which ethnic group/s do you belong?” The survey allowed the respondents to identify with as many racial-ethnic groups as required¹. The second survey question then asked the respondents to self-prioritise: “If you belong to more than one ethnic group, which is the main ethnic group you belong to?” There is much national and international debate about the ‘right’ way to collect race or ethnicity data (Callister, 2004; Cornell & Hartmann, 1998; Kukutai & Callister, 2009) and letting people prioritise their own main ethnic identity choice has both benefits and disadvantages. The advantage of this option is that it explicitly values the adolescents’ preferences and gives them the opportunity to express how they see themselves. Its disadvantage is that it forces the adolescents to make choices between groups.

In addition, the respondents were asked to provide information on the ancestry and racial-ethnic identity/ies of their parents, both to clarify any possible confusion with regard to the respondents’ answers and to assist in understanding whether their main racial-ethnic identity choice corresponded more with the mother’s or father’s racial-ethnic origins.

¹ It is common in New Zealand surveys and the official census to have multiple ethnicities.

Multiple ethnic selections were permissible. They were also asked to identify the languages that they felt they could hold a conversation in. Although there was no objective measure of language proficiency, this question was asked to gauge their subjective perception of their ability and use of a main, ethnic group and/or other group language.

Commitment

One of the most important components of racial-ethnic identity is Commitment, or a sense of belonging. The term Commitment has been used in both social psychology (Branscombe et al., 1999) and developmental psychology (Roberts, et al., 1999) to refer to a strong attachment and personal investment in a group. When the terms ‘ethnic or racial identity’ are used in everyday language, what is most often meant, among the various meanings of the construct, is this idea of commitment to a racial-ethnic identity. Commitment alone does not define a confident, mature, or achieved identity and Commitment levels are likely to differ across varying contexts and at different times in an individual’s life, and are highly influenced by the individual’s growing awareness of the social and race politics associated with ethnic group identification (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

The Commitment measure consisted of three items, taken directly from the MEIM-R scale (Phinney & Ong, 2007):

- *I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group*
- *I understand what being a member of my ethnic group means*
- *I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.*

Exploration

Exploration involves seeking information about, and experiences relevant to, one’s identity and is essential to the process of racial-ethnic identity formation. Exploration can involve a range of activities such as reading and talking to people, learning cultural practices, and attending cultural events. Although Exploration is most common in adolescence, it is an ongoing process that may continue possibly throughout life, depending on individual experiences (Phinney, 2006). Exploration is important to the

process of racial-ethnic identity development, because without it one's Commitment may be less secure and more subject to change with new experiences. Phinney and Ong (2007) suggest that Exploration is unlikely without at least some level of attachment to one's racial-ethnic group membership and that a Commitment to one's group is expected to promote Exploration of one's racial-ethnic identity. In this sense, the two constructs are correlated.

The Exploration measure consisted of three items, taken directly from the MEIM-R scale (Phinney & Ong, 2007):

- *I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions and customs.*
- *I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better*
- *I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.*

Connectedness

According to Oyserman et al. (2007), Connectedness describes the extent to which individuals feel a positive bond to their racial-ethnic group. These researchers assert that if membership in a racial-ethnic group is to move beyond being a mere racial-ethnic fact (i.e., biology or ancestry) to becoming a racial-ethnic identity, then one must feel positively connected with that group. Research has shown a positive correlation between feelings of racial-ethnic identity Connectedness and positive feelings of self-worth (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-esteem (Swanson, Spencer, & Harpalani, 2003). Broadly defined, Connectedness focuses on feeling good about being a member of one's racial-ethnic group and is critical if adolescents are to be motivated to engage in in-group relevant behaviours. To the extent that adolescents do not see their racial-ethnic group membership as important, they may feel ambivalent about acting in ways congruent with in-group values or norms.

The enhanced Connectedness measure consisted of seven items, the first four taken directly from the Oyserman et al. (2007) scale, and the other three were added to assess the students' connectedness to their language and cultural activities.

- *I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its achievements*

- *It is important that I know how to speak and understand my main ethnic language*
- *I feel close to others in my ethnic group*
- *Speaking my language makes me feel closer to others in my ethnic group*
- *I am proud of my ethnic group*
- *My friends and I use our own language when we hang out together*
- *I like to participate in the cultural activities associated with my ethnic group (church, traditional ceremonies, celebrations).*

Awareness of racism

It has been argued that individuals struggle to sustain racial-ethnic identities that are not accepted by other societal members (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). To the extent that racism and prejudice focus on negative stereotypes about academic interest, attainment, and achievement, Awareness of Racism may be helpful in buffering the impact of racist encounters. Without Awareness of Racism, negative academic feedback might otherwise reduce adolescents' sustained efforts to attain successful academic outcomes (Crocker & Major, 1989; Rubie-Davies, et al., 2006). This component of racial-ethnic identity has also been termed awareness of others' prejudice (Quintana, 1998), or public regard (Crocker & Major, 1989; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Developmental research suggests that awareness of others' negative view of one's racial-ethnic in-group and incorporation of this knowledge into racial-ethnic identity occurs early (Quintana & Segura-Herrera, 2003). Experimental evidence suggests that children act on racial-ethnic stereotype information as young as age six, and may internalise at least some aspects of this component of racial-ethnic identity by early adolescence (Bigler, Averhart, & Liben, 2003). To the extent that racial discrimination might be a part of adolescents' social context, Awareness of Racism is necessary to help adolescents maintain persistence in the face of failures, obstacles, and implicit or explicit negative expectations (Oyserman, et al., 2007), even if it is only to make sense of their group's history.

The enhanced Awareness of Racism measure consisted of five items: the first four taken directly from the Oyserman et al. (2007) scale, and the remaining item was more related to experiences of adolescents, who can be more susceptible to societal stereotyping.

- *Some people treat me differently because I am from my ethnic group*
- *My ethnic group has less opportunities*
- *People might have negative ideas about my abilities because I am from my ethnic group*
- *The way I look and speak influences what others expect of me*
- *I feel embarrassed when people ask me what ethnic group I belong to.*

Embedded Achievement

Embedded Achievement is related to an individual's belief that achievement is an in-group identifier and successful school engagement is a way to enact one's in-group identity. It also includes the related sense that achievement of some in-group members helps other in-group members succeed. Because negative stereotypes about minority group adolescents include low academic achievement, disengagement from school, and lack of academic ability (Oyserman, et al., 1995), adolescents from these groups may be less able to recruit sufficient motivational attention to override these messages and stay focused on school success. By viewing achievement as part of being a member of one's racial-ethnic group, identification with this goal may be more easily facilitated. Altschul et al. (2006) propose that, when combined with Connectedness and Awareness of Racism, Embedded Achievement can provide a much needed buffer against negative messages about the likelihood of success for poor and minority youths by incorporating school and achievement as in-group defining characteristics.

The enhanced Embedded Achievement measure consisted of six items: the first four taken directly from the Oyserman et al. (2007) scale, and the remaining two items added to assess expectations by family, and modeling by others in their ethnic group.

- *People from my ethnic group do well at school*
- *It is important for my family and my ethnic group that I succeed in school*

- *If I work hard and get good grades, other people from my ethnic group will respect me*
- *If I am successful it will help my ethnic group*
- *People other than my family expect me to do well at school*
- *It helps me when others in my ethnic group are successful.*

Open-ended questionnaire items

The last items in the questionnaire were open-ended and asked the participants to: ‘Please list two things you like about being a member of your ethnic group’ and ‘Please list two things you do not like about being a member of your ethnic group’. The items were included in the hope of gaining a more nuanced understanding regarding what adolescents perceive as the benefits and/or challenges associated with their racial-ethnic identity membership.

Demographic data

The last section of the questionnaire data was designed to gather demographic information about the participants, pertinent to data analyses. These final demographic questions asked:

Are you: *Female* *Male*

How long have you lived in New Zealand? _____ Years or r all my life

Relative to other Year 9 students, how well are you doing in your school work?

Below average *Average* *Above average*

Quantitative data analysis

The data produced by the questionnaire was quantitative and, more specifically, ordinal (Denscombe, 2003). The questionnaire was pre-coded, beginning with responses that disagreed with the statement scoring a 1, ranging to a response that was in agreement with the statement scoring a 5. The results were entered into the statistical analysis programme

SPSS. Once the data was entered, it was then checked for accuracy and any gaps in the questionnaires were identified. There was very little missing data (less than 1%) and for these cases the mean score for each item was entered (Marsh, 1990). After the quantitative data was entered and checked, analyses of the data then followed. Then a number of different analyses were carried out. Pearson correlations were performed to determine whether significant relationships existed between the five factors – Commitment, Exploration, Connectedness, Awareness of Racism and Embedded Achievement. Means for each factor were calculated (thus creating scale variables), followed by analyses of whether differences existed between groups, the groups being formed based upon ethnicity, time spent living in New Zealand, language use, gender and perceived ability.

Checking and cleaning the data file

This process involved detecting and resolving errors in coding and inputting the data into the computer. There are two key points where checking and cleaning the data should be undertaken. One is immediately after the data is returned. In the case of this research project, checking and cleaning the data involved identifying problem cases, or data input dilemmas, where for example, respondents may have marked more than the required number of responses for each question. While this process was carried out as questionnaires were returned, it continued during data input. The second point in checking and cleaning the data is where the computer survey package has read all the data available. Checking here can confirm that there are no serious codebook errors. At this point, all the data was checked thoroughly for errors, firstly, by checking the input of each questionnaire case by case. Two further cleaning techniques were employed; the first, wild-code checking was carried out. Every indicator has a specified set of legitimate codes and wild codes are any that are not legitimate. For example, legitimate codes for responses to nominal value questions were 1 and 0. Wild-code checking consisted of examining the values recorded for every item to ensure that there were no out-of-range codes.

Methods of quantitative analysis

The various scales were assessed for reliability, using Cronbach's alpha. A factor model across the five scales was used to evaluate the uniqueness of the scales, both for the total sample and for each of the four ethnic groups. A multivariate analysis of variance

compared the means of the five scales across the four ethnic groups, and provided there is overall statistical significance, then univariate analyses of variance followed by Scheffe contrasts were used to investigate the nature of any differences.

Analysis of the open-ended questions

During the data coding process, the two open-ended questions were coded. Sets of codes were developed based on the responses provided. Once a number of questionnaires had been returned, a sample of the responses was used to create indicators for each open question. While these indicators provided a range that represented most subsequent responses, they were not entirely representative of the entire population of those who returned questionnaires and additional codes were added accordingly. There are reliability issues involved when categorising responses to open survey questions (Singleton & Straits, 2005). To increase the reliability of the decisions made about categorising the participants' responses I blindly coded the responses to the open-ended questions, removing as much identifying information as possible. Periodically over the course of data analysis, transcripts were subjected to blind coding and review by a trained research assistant. The research assistant was trained by my academic supervisor Professor John Hattie and separately coded a number of the responses to ensure a high degree of inter-coder reliability (Bryman, 2001). Consequently, after several attempts at coding the qualitative data, inter-coder reliability was attained.

The two open ended questions in the questionnaire, asked respondents to write about the positive things about being a member of their ethnic group, and the other asked them to write about the negative things about being a member of their ethnic group. Each question was analysed separately. Firstly the responses were grouped by ethnicity and put into a separate data file. As many of the ethnicity identifiers as possible were then removed. The written responses to the two open-ended statements were generally short and direct which made it easy to group them as categories began to emerge. The categories were colour coded, named and continually refined as the process continued to develop emerging themes. Once all of the responses had been coded, the frequency of each response was noted in order to judge its significance. This was done in two ways: as a percentage of the number of participants within each age range, and as a percentage of the total number of participants. This allowed differences between the racial-ethnic groups to be accurately determined. The themes are discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

The semi-structured interviews

Interviews can allow an interviewer to probe the interviewee for clarification or more detail (Creswell, 2003). They can take various forms from highly structured through to unstructured, depending on their purpose (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Structured interviews adhere to a rigid schedule of questions that may not allow the researcher to access a participant's particular perspectives and world view (Merriam, 1998). Interviews in qualitative research tend to be more open-ended and less structured allowing for participants to define the world in unique ways (Fontana & Frey, 2000). The unstructured interview is non-standardised and open-ended and sometimes called the ethnographic interview (Punch, 2005). In the unstructured interview, however, there are no predetermined questions and the interview is shaped by what the participant tells the researcher. While insights and understanding can be obtained in this approach, the interviewer may become overwhelmed with a sea of divergent viewpoints and seemingly unconnected information (Merriam, 1998).

Thus, the decision was made to use semi-structured interviews rather than either structured or unstructured interviews. Semi-structured individual interviews were a way of accessing the adolescents' perceptions, meanings of situations and constructions of reality in their own words so that the researcher could gain insights into how they viewed the world (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The use of a semi-structured interview also allowed for the construction, in advance, of the overall structure, the content to be covered, the main questions to be asked and the sequence to be organised (Drever, 1995). The semi-structured interviews also allowed for prompting and probing and the possibility of eliciting more in depth responses from the participants. The semi-structured format allowed the interviewer to respond to the situation, the emerging world view of the participant and to new ideas about the research under investigation. Merriam (1998) has noted that the key to obtaining good data from interviewing is to ask good questions, and in her words, "good questions take practice" (p. 75). To this end, an interview schedule was developed and the questions discussed with supervisors, after which some changes were made to the interview questions.

With qualitative research interviews you try to understand something from the interviewee's point of view. The interviewer's task is to explore people's perceptions of their experiences, whilst allowing them to convey a situation from their own perspective

and in their own words. In this way, research interviews are based on the conversations about everyday life.

Data collection

In this study, I used questions constructed to elicit information about categories relevant to the research, but was open to new and unexpected phenomena/responses. The interview participants were all school-nominated high-achieving students (see page 92 for information about the criteria for selection) who self-identified as New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan or Chinese. They were asked questions to elicit information about the role of racial-ethnic identity in their school lives. As such, the questions were open-ended and seen as ‘prompts’ or ‘conversation starters’. All interview sessions were conducted in a classroom at the school, during normal school hours. The interviews were audio recorded in their entirety with the permission of the students. (See Appendix B for interview questions).

Qualitative data analysis of the semi-structured interviews

Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data, which means reducing and interpreting what other people have said and what the researcher has seen and read (Creswell, 2003). It is a complex process that involves moving back and forth within the data, between the data and abstract concepts, and between description and interpretation (Merriam, 1998).

Four analytic processes helped provide a systematic procedure to guide the analysis of the interview data. These included open coding, axial coding, memo writing, and theory development. The questions that were asked while examining each piece of data were,

What is this piece of data an example of? Or,

What does this piece of data stand for, or represent? Or,

What category or property of a category does this piece of data indicate?

(Away, Ammon, & Maehr, 2008, p. 184).

Open coding

The patterns, concepts, or phenomena in the interview data were determined by first utilising open coding, which involved analysing the completed interviews line by line and continually asking, ‘What is going on here?’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). For example, one of the Samoan students in the study commented,

I love being Samoan. I feel proud of my culture. I have lots of friends who are Samoan and smart too. I don’t have many other [non-Samoan] friends though. It is not really encouraged. I go to church with Samoans and hang out at school with the same people. Sometimes I feel like being Samoan is the only thing I can be.

In this statement, the student is explaining their conflicting feelings and perceptions about being Samoan. I coded it ‘racial-ethnic pride’, ‘same group peers’ and ‘cultural constraints.’ According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), to “open up the text” (p. 102) involves a micro-analytic process of identifying concepts line by line and breaking the data down into smaller pieces. When this is done, labels are attached to the smaller pieces of data and then restated to represent what is occurring (i.e., ‘Samoan adolescent is proud of being Samoan, but feels like cultural expectations constrain out group friendships’). A constant comparison was used to determine whether a new piece of data was an example of the same phenomenon and coded the same, or whether a new category code needed to be created (Creswell, 2003).

As phenomena were identified, they were put into categories. This helped organise the data into concepts that were understandable, discernible and able to be linked to one another in a logical manner. After categories were constructed and specified by their dimensions and properties, each category was broken down further by creating subcategories, which further specified and distinguished the traits of a certain concept or process. This gave me an idea of the range or variability within a particular concept or category. Furthermore, the goal in utilising categories was to ultimately be able to identify variations in the patterns (e.g., cultural processes) brought to light by the open coding procedure.

Axial coding

The next step was axial coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), with this strategy, the goal is to build a series of relationships around an axis of a category. Axial

coding begins with a major category that then branches out to other concepts, thus showing meaningful relationships between concepts (e.g. racial-ethnic identity enactment in different contexts). This analysis also involved looking for specific conditions, actions/interactions, and/or consequences that were connected to a specific phenomenon. Axial coding also involved asking questions, such as “why, or how come, where, when how, and with what results, and in so doing they uncover relationships among categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998 p. 127). For example, one of the first codes identified was ‘belonging’. A dimension of this code resulted in identifying two ways in which the adolescents experienced belonging: ‘connectedness to community’ and ‘place – e.g., a country’.

Memo writing

The purpose of using memo writing in the study was to analyse ideas, categories, or other coding that was happening in the moment (Charmaz, 2006). Memo writing was also important because it helped capture my thoughts, connections, comparisons, and directions. Utilising memos also served a reflexive function because it allowed the researcher to reflect on the research process and on building the theory (Flick, 2002). Charmaz (2006) explicitly writes about the benefits regarding writing memos, which include helping researchers wrestle with ideas regarding the data, have an analytic direction, refine categories, define relationships among categories, and increase confidence in their capability to analyse data.

A good example of memo writing included writing down thoughts and questions regarding any racial-ethnic group differences that were emerging in the data. As open and axial coding progressed, questions arose regarding the possibility of group differences. One of the central questions in my mind was, ‘what are the differences in how the different groups experience the same phenomena?’ As the researcher, I purposefully aimed at looking for trends or clues as to group differences or variations in the data, so I could make sense of group response similarities and differences.

Theory building

Building theory, although it had actually been happening throughout previous steps, was the last step in the analysis process. It involved linking the identified categories of data or phenomena. By linking categories, I attempted to make sense of the data (Strauss &

Corbin, 1998). This step also involved considering the role and value of categories and relabeling them, where necessary. By linking and connecting categories to other categories or concepts and identifying how they influenced each other, it was possible to begin to discern and explain the processes through which adolescents construct and make sense of racial-ethnic identity in their multi-ethnic school context. Progressively, theory was constructed by piecing the categories together and presenting an understanding of the events or processes involved.

Merriam (1998) argued that theoretical themes could come from the three sources – the researcher, the participants, or sources outside the study such as literature; themes should reflect the purpose of the research. In effect, they are the answers to the research question (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Final naming of the themes in the present study came substantively from the data. The themes finally settled upon were not, however, immediately identifiable in the data. It was only after considerable cycling and recycling through the data, discussion with colleagues and supervisors, and reading and rereading the literature that the final five main themes were decided upon.

The data set and analyses files were managed by using file folders organised on the computer. As each set of data was analysed, the coded sections were placed in computer file folders labelled by each category, theme or sub-theme.

Trustworthiness and dependability of the qualitative data

Regardless of the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualisation, the way in which the data is collected, analysed and interpreted, and the findings presented (Merriam, 1998). With the growth of qualitative research, however, validity has taken forms that are different from quantitative research (Merriam, 1998). Concepts of trustworthiness, authenticity, triangulation, credibility and dependability have replaced the notions of validity and reliability (Neuman, 2003).

Triangulation refers to the practice of using several data collection methods, collecting data over time, or studying different groups of participants in one research study. With regards to triangulation, Denzin (2010) has advised, "By combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and data sources, [researchers] can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single-observer, and single-theory studies" (p. 307).

Triangulation has evolved to include using multiple data collection and analysis methods, multiple data sources, multiple analysts, and multiple theories or perspectives. The purpose of triangulation is to test for consistency rather than to achieve the same result using different data sources or inquiry approaches (Scott & Usher, 1999). In the research project reported here, data was triangulated through using both quantitative and qualitative data in the questionnaires and qualitative data from individual interviews. Thus, the research question was investigated from more than one standpoint which ensured more comprehensive coverage, an increased amount and enrichment of the research data, and hence knowledge about the topic. All contributed to a higher degree of trustworthiness in the research.

Peer examination has also been identified as a potential way of increasing the trustworthiness of research, particularly in the interpretation of the findings (Munn & Drever, 1990). Peer examination occurred in multiple stages during the present study, both in establishing the research question and the design of the research project, and also by asking colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerged (Merriam, 1998). Peer and supervisor comment and critique had already begun during the early phase of the doctoral programme. The process of peer examination was continued on an ongoing basis during the course of the research, both with colleagues, more than one of whom acted as a critical friend, and my two supervisors. The challenging of my interpretations and thinking from these people's perspectives required the questioning of all aspects of the study, leading to the exploration of alternative ways of viewing and interpreting the data.

The issue of researcher bias is one that required consideration if the trustworthiness of the current research process was to be enhanced. Bias may arise from distortions and blind spots that limit the production of a careful and faithful representation of the data (Lancaster, et al., 2004). Achieving a completely objective stance is extremely problematic because researchers themselves are part of the world they study (Merriam, 1998). All observations and analyses are filtered through the researcher's world view, values and perspectives (Denscombe, 2003). The researcher brings his/her own construction of reality to the research question, which then interacts with the participants' construction of the phenomenon under study. The product is ultimately the researcher's interpretation of others' views filtered through the researcher's own views (Marsh, 1990). Therefore, researchers need to take into account and acknowledge their biases

(Denscombe, 2003) and demonstrate that bias has been reduced as much as possible (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Five strategies for reducing bias were used in this study, including using colleagues and supervisors as critical friends, actively searching for alternative views held by others, providing a detailed description of the analysis process, providing data exemplars, and thoroughly probing personal biases in all phases of the study.

The research context

This study was conducted in five large multi-ethnic high schools located in Auckland, New Zealand. The Auckland metropolitan area, in the North Island of New Zealand, is the largest and most populous urban area in the country with 1,354,900 residents, 31 percent of the country's population (Ministry of Social Development, 2010). Multi-ethnic schools in New Zealand are schools in which students from at least two other ethnic groups together comprise at least 20 percent of the school's population (Ministry of Education, 2011). Over 90 percent of multi-ethnic schools are situated in urban areas. In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education ranks state schools into decile groupings. Decile one schools are in areas of greatest socio-economic disadvantage. Areas of least socio-economic disadvantage fall into the decile ten category. About 60 percent of multicultural schools are in the lowest four deciles, 6 percent are in the highest decile. Most of the multicultural schools are in the North Island, particularly in Auckland. The five multi-ethnic Auckland high schools involved in this study ranged from decile three to nine (Ministry of Education, 2011). They are referred to in the study as North School, East School, South School, West School and Central School.

Invitations to participate in the study were sent out to 15 multi-ethnic Auckland schools (see Appendix C). It was stipulated in the invitation that only the first five schools to accept the invitation would be involved. Five schools replied within a two week period and meetings were set up for the researcher to meet with the principals of the schools. Subsequently, all five schools signed a consent form giving permission for me to proceed (see Appendix D). Participation was informed and voluntary. All Year Nine students who had parental consent (see Appendices E and F) and who themselves consented to being involved (see Appendices G and H) were asked to complete the questionnaire.

After the students had completed the questionnaire, the data had been entered into SPSS, and an initial analysis of the questionnaire data had begun, the principals and teachers

were then asked to recommend eight high-achieving students (per school) to participate in a semi-structured individual interview. A balance of gender and ethnic groups was requested after a decision to focus the study on the four biggest ethnic cohorts in the data – New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese. The Indian cohort was initially identified as one of the largest groups, however, a decision by the researcher and her supervisors was made not to analyse this data because, although this cohort was large, it was hard to separate the Fijian-Indian and Indian-Continent students from the single grouping. It would have been very difficult to theorise about this large mixed grouping.

The semi-structured interviews with high-achieving students from each of the four racial-ethnic groups occurred approximately two weeks after the completion of the questionnaires. The school principals and Year Nine deans, from each school, were invited to recommend eight high achieving students from each of the racial-ethnic groups who would then be invited to participate in semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C). All students who were subsequently invited, and agreed, to participate in an interview provided parental consent and gave consent themselves to be interviewed (see Appendices I, J, K, and L). All interviews were conducted in classrooms in the school set aside by staff at the school. All interviews were conducted during school hours at a time that was considered least disruptive to the students and their teachers.

Sampling

Each phase of the research required its own approach to the selection of the participants. Phase One of the study recruited 1128 questionnaire respondents, 695 of whom were included in the study. Phase two of the study recruited 31 interview participants.

Selection of the questionnaire participants

Prior to beginning the study, the researcher obtained University of Auckland ethics consent, and the collaboration and support of Boards of Trustees, principals and teaching staff members at each school. An oral presentation outlining the nature of the study was made by the researcher to the Year Nine students and staff in an assembly at each high school. Opportunities to ask questions of the researcher, and have them answered in a one-on-one situation, were provided for all students after the presentation. In addition, a participant information sheet was disseminated to all Year Nine students at the participating schools.

All participants were Year Nine students (aged 13-14 years) who were given consent from their parents/caregivers to participate, and who themselves agreed to participate. Students were informed that their participation was voluntary and because the questionnaire was anonymous, any information they provided would be confidential. The entire survey took about 15 minutes to complete. Data was collected within a four month period in late 2008 and early 2009. The researcher was on hand to answer questions during the implementation of the questionnaire, and collected all questionnaires from the schools involved.

A total sample of 1128 Year Nine students completed the study questionnaire. All students approximately ranged in age from 13 to 14 years and the sample comprised a similar number of male ($n = 576$) and female ($n = 552$) subjects. Based on the racial-ethnic self-identifications of the questionnaire respondents the racial-ethnic composition of the total sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Ethnic Profile of Total Questionnaire Respondents

Participant self-identifications	<i>n</i>	%
NZ Pākehā	431	38.2
Māori	113	10.0
Samoan	83	7.4
Cook Island Māori	37	3.3
Tongan	31	2.7
Niuean	18	1.6
Chinese	68	6.0
Indian (mixed)	142	12.6
Other	205	18.2
Total	1128	100.0

As explained in the previous section, and for the purpose of completing this study in a timely and focussed manner, only questionnaires from the four largest single racial-ethnic group were analysed for this particular study – those students self-identifying as New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan or Chinese. Approximately 38% ($n = 431$) of the study cohort self-identified as Pākehā; 10% ($n = 113$) self-identified as Māori; 7.5% ($n = 83$) self-identified as Samoan; and 6% ($n = 68$) self-identified as Chinese. The questionnaire responses from these four groups were examined to determine how they constructed and

conceptualised their ethnic identity. A profile of the New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese Questionnaire respondents is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Profile of NZ Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese Questionnaire Respondents

Ethnicity	<i>n</i>	Gender	
		Female	Male
NZ Pākehā	431	198	233
Māori	113	54	59
Samoan	83	43	40
Chinese	68	35	33
Total	695	330	365

Selection of the interview participants

Qualitative researchers employ sampling procedures that are less structured or strict than those used by quantitative researchers (Bryman, 2001). Thus, non-probability sampling is more often the method of choice (Merriam, 1998). The selection of the interview participants in the present study involved purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that research is an investigative process where the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight into the phenomenon. Therefore, a sample of information-rich cases is selected for study in depth and the choice is guided by the judgment of the investigator (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

In purposive sampling, it is first necessary to decide on the criteria with which to choose the potential participants, by creating a list of the attributes considered essential. In line with the research goals, the key criteria were that the interview participants must be early adolescents who:

- Were in Year Nine
- Attended a multi-ethnic Auckland high school
- Self-identified as members of one of the four selected racial-ethnic groups – New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan, or Chinese.

- Were identified by their principals/teachers as high achieving (the decision about what constituted ‘high achieving’ was left to the school principals and Year Nine deans helping to recruit for the study).

The next question to consider was ‘how many adolescents should be interviewed?’ The interview sample size had to be big enough to identify common characteristics between cultural groups and provide answers to the research questions, without being overly burdensome. Green and Thorogood (2004) have stated that “the experience of most qualitative researchers is that in interview studies little that is ‘new’ comes out of transcripts after you have interviewed 20 or so people” (p. 120). Additionally, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) have suggested that studies that use more than one method require fewer participants. In consultation with my academic supervisors the target was set at 40 (eight per school) and each school was then invited to recommend eight high-achieving students to be interviewed – two from each of the four target racial-ethnic groups in each of the four schools. It must be noted that at this stage of the research Central School withdrew from the study because of internal school issues unrelated to this study. As such, thirty-one high-achieving students were eventually interviewed. Whilst 32 students were selected, and agreed to participate in the interviews, one of the students failed to return the parental consent form. Whilst verbal parental consent was attained for this student by the researcher shortly after sending out the participant information sheets and consent forms, because the parental consent form for that student was not signed and returned to the researcher, the interview did not proceed. All interviews took place in a quiet classroom at the students’ school. The profiles of the interview participants are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Ethnic and Gender Profile of Total Interview Participants

School	NZ Pākehā	Māori	Samoan	Chinese	Total	Gender	
						Female	Male
North	3	4	0	2	9	3	6
East	2	2	2	2	8	4	4
South	2	2	2	2	8	4	4
West	3	0	2	1	6	3	3
Central	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	8	6	7	31	14	17

Ethical considerations in the research process

Social science research has an ethical dimension because it involves the examination of human behaviour and the processes that mediate that behaviour (Merriam, 2009). Thus, social science researchers must ensure the rights, privacy, and welfare of the people on which the research is focussed (Punch, 2005). The process of conducting ethical research is made even more complex in this study, given that it focuses on the perspective of adolescents – Year Nine students aged between 13-14 years old. Including children and/or adolescents as participants in social research raises many ethical dilemmas for researchers. In New Zealand, participants who are aged 16 years or less, are considered children. As such, many additional ethical issues must be considered.

The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee had a number of stipulations for researching with children, which were adhered to during this study. Because the participants were aged less than 16 years of age, their parents, guardians, or carers were first approached for their passive consent. Once parental consent was gained, the assent of the participants was also sought because the participants were perceived to be of an age to understand the project and their role in it. All documentation, including the Participant Information Sheet, questionnaire and assent statement was written to the reading age of the participants. This documentation was piloted with a group of Year Nine students ($n = 33$) to ensure the language used was accessible and appropriate. Modifications to the documentation were subsequently made, prior to their use in the schools involved in the study.

Perceptions of children's vulnerability and competence are one of the key issues in making decisions about their participation in research. Discussion of ethics in research can be reduced to a conflict between children's right to be protected and their right to have a voice (Drever, 1995). Researchers have to find the balance between protection and participation to enable children to be heard - without exploiting or distressing them, and protected - without silencing and excluding them (Merriam, 1998). Snook (2003) has also pointed out that ethical concerns in all research relate to issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy, and confidentiality. These ethical concerns were considered from the outset so that ethical practices were built in throughout the research design.

The harm/benefit ratio is a fundamental concept in social science research (Sellers et al., 2006). Essentially, the concept means that consideration of the likely benefits of the research must be weighed up against the personal cost to the individuals taking part. Possible benefits were that the findings might lead to theoretical understandings about the construction and role of racial-ethnic identity for adolescents at high school. In addition, it was hoped that there might be some satisfaction for the interviewees in raising their consciousness about how their understandings of racial-ethnic identity contributed to their social and academic identities at school. The foreseeable costs to the individuals involved related mostly to their time. For the questionnaire respondents, it was assumed that the time involvement would not be more than 20 minutes at the most. In the case of the participants in the individual interviews, it was envisaged that the time commitment would be about 45 minutes.

A fundamental ethical principle of social research is that involvement must be voluntary and participants informed honestly about the nature of the research project (Snook, 2003). To ensure that the participants were fully aware of the nature of the research project, their rights, their role and the voluntary nature of their participation, a series of actions were undertaken. In the first phase of the research project (the intention to implement the study questionnaire with Year Nine students in all five schools), a parent information sheet was sent home informing the parents of the project outline, the invitation to their children and the proposed date that the questionnaire would be implemented at school. This form was included with the school newsletter on three different occasions prior to the date of the questionnaire implementation. It was also published on the homepage of each school's website for three weeks prior to the implementation of the questionnaire.

The researcher's original intention was that parents would provide active consent for their children to participate in the completion of the questionnaire, and return their consent forms to the school via their children. With active consent, a researcher can feel assured (as much as is possible), that the parent has read the information, understands the study, and has given approval for the child to participate. On the other hand, gaining active parental consent can be more labour and time intensive to get a satisfactory return rate, and some studies show that active consent procedures can result in a biased sample, which affects your ability to generalise the results (Pokorny, Jason, Schoeny, Townsend & Curie, 2001). In the case of all five schools involved in this study, gaining active

consent from the parents of all Year Nine students was considered a burden by the school staff, because more time and energy needed to be devoted to gaining consent.

Therefore, at the request of the schools involved, parents were instead asked to retract permission if they did not wish their children to participate – a process called passive consent. Under passive consent procedures, parents/guardians informed the school only if they did not want their child to participate in a study (opt out). Parents/guardians were notified in writing (via a Parents Information Sheet attached to the weekly school newsletters and by a message posted on the school website) for three consecutive weeks before about the survey and when it was to be administered. This gave parents a reasonable opportunity to review the information and questionnaire, and to decline their child's participation if they wished. One advantage for using passive consent procedures is that they typically result in a very high response rate, and may also yield a non-biased sample for population-based surveys (Pokorny, Jason, Schoeny, Townsend & Curie, 2001). One of the major criticisms of using passive consent procedures is that the parent/guardian may not get the information they need about the study. For example, information that is sent home through the children may never make it home, or may be accidentally discarded when it arrives with other information sent by the school. The researcher has no documentation that the parent/guardian had exposure to the information. Even if they received the information, there is no guarantee that they read it and understood that they had to notify someone if they did not want their child to participate.

In the end, this researcher followed the recommendations of other scholars (Pokorny, Jason, Schoeny, Townsend & Curie, 2001), and collaborated with the school administrators and staff seeking their advice on what would work best with their population, looking for multiple methods to inform the target population about the study. Parents/guardians were notified in writing three weeks prior to the implementation of the study and given information about the questionnaire and when it was to be administered. This gave them a reasonable opportunity to review the information and the questionnaire, and subsequently decline their child's participation if they wished. This research project and its associated activities had to become part of the schools' existing processes. Across all five schools, very few parents in total ($n = 31$) declined to allow their child/children to participate.

In terms of the individual interviews, at the request of the researcher, 32 high achieving students were nominated by the teachers and principals based on their knowledge of the Year Nine cohort and grades/marks. The parents/caregivers of each nominated student were then contacted individually by the school (by mail) and sent Parent Information Sheets and Consent Forms. If they actively consented to their child being interviewed, they were asked to return their signed consent form to a nominated teacher at the school. Opportunities to contact the nominated teacher and/or researcher were made available, if the parents wanted to ask further questions about the questionnaire or their child/children's involvement in the project. At that point, Participant Information Sheets were given to each of the high achieving students. If they agreed to participate they let the nominated teacher know, who then organised the interview time schedule. Prior to the commencement of the individual interview, each student participant was given opportunities to ask questions and then asked to sign a participant Consent Form.

The protection of the participants' privacy is a further ethical consideration critical to the research endeavour, a consideration that can be addressed in one of two ways – either through anonymity or confidentiality (Snook, 2003). While anonymity protects an individual's identity from being known even to the researcher, confidentiality means the informants' names may be attached to responses but the researcher holds the identity of the participants in confidence (Neuman, 2003). Ideally, participants' anonymity should be preserved but, if this is not possible, then confidentiality is crucial (Punch, 2005).

In the first phase of the research project, the data was collected by means of the questionnaire which was anonymous. Although anonymity could not be preserved in the qualitative interviews, because the participants had been selected by their teachers and because of the small numbers participating, confidentiality was given the highest priority. For example, when the interview tapes were transcribed, the transcriber was asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement, and data was recorded, analysed and published in ways that prevented the identification of individuals. Where direct quotes were used, the participants were given non-identifiable codes. The storage of data and consent forms was organised separately and securely in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher and her supervisors had access. Finally, in accordance with ethical requirements, before embarking on the research project an ethics application was submitted to The University

of Auckland Human Ethics Committee. Subsequently on 25 September 2008 ethics was approved (Reference 2008 / 373).

Summary

This chapter has explained the research questions, outlined the research process and presented a critical rationale for the mixed methodology chosen for this investigation. A justification for the methods and a discussion of their design, have been explained within the context of this research project. A description of the participants who were interviewed and the ethical considerations pertinent to this study were also explained to give the reader an overall picture of the research design.

The next chapter will present the results of the questionnaire and the findings of the open-ended questionnaire items and the interviews.

Chapter Five: Results

This chapter will illustrate the nature of racial-ethnic identity in early adolescence by presenting the findings from the three sets of data in the study – 1a) the closed quantitative survey items, 1b) the qualitative open-ended survey items and, 1c) the 31 semi-structured interviews. I will begin each section by briefly describing the data collection approach or tool and making clear links to the aims and purposes of the study. The research questions underpinning the study are: ‘What influences early adolescent racial-ethnic identity development?’, ‘How do early adolescents enact racial-ethnic identity in high school contexts?’ and, ‘How does racial-ethnic identity impact on the way early adolescents engage at high school?’ Consequently, the results in this chapter will illustrate, through various lenses, the ways in which these early adolescents construct and explore their racial-ethnic identity and the role racial-ethnic identity plays in their lives.

Study 1a: Racial-ethnic identity construction and content

The closed questionnaire items

This study examined the self-identifications, feelings of connectedness and diverse content of adolescents’ racial-ethnic identities. Using Phinney and Ong’s (2007) *Revised Multi-dimensional Ethnic Identity Model* (MEIM-R) and Oyserman et al.’s (1995) *Tripartite Interactive Model* (TIM) as an underpinning framework, this study surveyed the racial-ethnic self-identifications and content of 695 Year nine students from five multi-ethnic urban high-schools in Auckland, New Zealand’s largest city. This age group (13-14 years old) was chosen because early adolescence is a critical time when adolescents must figure out their place among the social groupings and racial-ethnic categories that exist in society and, more importantly for them, at school. The analysis in this study focuses on a comparison between four racial-ethnic groupings – New Zealand European/Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese.

In order to understand the content and nature of racial-ethnic identity in early adolescence, the same survey was administered to all students. The 28-item questionnaire was designed to assess racial-ethnic identity and includes items that assessed the components of Exploration and Commitment (MEIM factors), and Connectedness, Embedded achievement and Awareness of Racism (TIM factors). As explained in

Chapter Four, additional items were added to the TIM measure to gather extra information. Demographic data was also collected in the survey to enable further comparisons to be made between racial-ethnic groups. Because the two original scales are distinct constructs, they were assessed separately to gain greater insight into the process of ethnic identity development, a technique used with success in previous research (French, et al., 2006).

Results

The estimates of reliability (coefficient alpha) for both the original and enhanced scales were all sufficiently high to give confidence in using the total scores. As the enhanced set of items slightly increased the reliability estimates and added additional information about each of the Exploration, Awareness of Racism, and Embedded Achievement scales, they were used in all analyses. The mean scores for Connectedness and Commitment were higher than the means for Exploration, Awareness of Racism, and Embedded Achievement (refer to Table 4).

Table 4

Means, standard deviations, and estimates of reliability (alpha) for the five racial-ethnic identity scales

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Original		Enhanced	
			<i>n</i>	α	<i>n</i>	α
Commitment	3.65	0.82	3	0.78		
Exploration	3.30	0.83	3	0.75		
Connectedness	3.70	0.72	4	0.70	6	0.71
Awareness	2.63	0.72	4	0.65	5	0.69
Embedded Achievement	3.62	0.70	4	0.71	6	0.75

Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to assess the relationships between Commitment, Exploration, Connectedness, Awareness of Racism, and Embedded Achievement. The five dimensions are expected to be related but each score aims to provide unique variance. As can be seen from Table 5, Awareness of Racism is most unlike the other four variables, but Commitment, Exploration, Connectedness, and Embedded Achievement provide sufficient unique variance to be used in the following analyses. All measures were statistically significant and positively correlated (Table 5),

but there is sufficient variance to indicate that the scales tap into different aspects of racial-ethnic identity.

Table 5

Pearson Correlation Coefficients between the five racial-ethnic identity components

Racial-ethnic identity components	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Exploration	–				
2. Commitment	.72*	–			
3. Connectedness	.65*	.78*	–		
4. Awareness	.24*	.15*	.16*	–	
5. Embedded Achievement	.53*	.66*	.71*	.21*	–

Note. * $p < .01$

A maximum likelihood factor analysis indicated that there was one higher order factor that explained 56% of the total variance. The factor loadings were all high (Exploration .77, Commitment .88, Connectedness .88, Embedded Achievement .78), although Awareness had a much lower loading (.21) indicating that it was the most distinct of the factors. Overall, the five variables contributed sufficiently unique variance to be used in subsequent analyses. The factor pattern was similar for each of the four ethnic groups (Table 6).

Table 6

Factor loadings for each of the ethnic groups, and for all combined

Ethnic Groups	Pākehā	Māori	Samoan	Chinese	All
Exploration	0.63	0.84	0.80	0.74	0.77
Commitment	0.80	0.90	0.90	0.92	0.88
Connectedness	0.81	0.93	0.89	0.88	0.88
Awareness of racism	0.12	0.14	0.09	0.04	0.21
Embedded Achievement	0.71	0.81	0.73	0.83	0.78

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance was performed to determine if ethnic groups scored differently on Connectedness, Commitment, Exploration, Awareness of Racism, and Embedded Achievement. The Wilk's Lambda test revealed there was a statistically significant difference between ethnic groups' scores on the five measures ($F(40,4775) = 6.73, p < .001$). The univariate anovas indicated that all five scales contributed to this overall difference: Commitment, $F(8,1099) = 1.36, p < .001$; Exploration, $F(8,1099) =$

2.02, $p < .001$); Connectedness $F(8,1099) = 1.95$, $p < .001$; Awareness of racism $F(8,1099) = 2.63$, $p < .001$; and Embedded Achievement $F(8,1099) = 1.78$, $p < .001$.

Overall, the Pākehā and Chinese were more similar to each other, and the Māori and Samoan students were more similar to each other, but there were differences between these two super-groups. The Māori and Samoan groups had higher means on Commitment and Exploration, and also (slightly less) on Connectedness compared to the Pākehā and Chinese. Chinese, Māori and Samoan had higher means than Pākehā on Awareness, and there were no differences on Embedded Achievement. Racial-ethnic group means for the five scales can be seen in Table 7. The Cohens d effect size for the differences between groups for each of the five components is shown along with Scheffe contrasts in Table 8.

Table 7

Racial-ethnic group means for the five components

Main Ethnic	n	Commitment		Exploration		Connectedness		Awareness of Racism		Embedded achievement	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Pākehā	431	3.35	.72	2.96	.74	3.45	.61	2.42	.69	3.42	.61
Māori	113	3.94	.79	3.68	.81	3.79	.76	2.76	.71	3.65	.77
Samoan	83	3.96	.77	3.66	.70	4.11	.71	2.71	.70	3.87	.67
Chinese	68	3.48	.75	3.10	.72	3.53	.67	2.92	.48	3.45	.76

Table 8

Indications of statistically significant Scheffe post-hoc comparisons (= $p < .05$, ** = $p < .001$)*

		Exploration	Commitment	Connectedness	Awareness	Embedded
Pākehā	Chinese	.19	.18	.13	.75**	.05
	Māori	.95**	.80**	.53**	.49**	.36*
	Samoan	.95**	.84**	1.05**	.42**	.72**
Chinese	Māori	.74**	.59**	.36	-.25	.26
	Samoan	.79**	.63	.83**	-.34	.59**

Pākehā and Chinese

The Pākehā and Chinese participants had the lowest scores for both Commitment and Exploration. This suggests that Pākehā and Chinese adolescents are less likely to see their racial-ethnic group membership as an important part of who they are, nor feel the need to find out more information about their racial-ethnic group. The low Commitment and Exploration scores for the Pākehā participants were expected given the ambiguous nature of this large racial-ethnic grouping and the perceived lack of collective understanding regarding membership, common traditions, and history (Bell, 1996; McCreanor, 2005). It is entirely possible that the only thing these participants might have in common is their sense of Commitment to the national identity component of this label, their historical origins in wider Europe, and the fair colour of their skin. The low Commitment score could also signify the lack of clarity around the collective meaning of the Pākehā label and this grouping 'owning' this label. The low Exploration score suggests a perceived lack of distinct cultural traditions and activities that might be representative of the Pākehā collective. Racial-ethnic identity Exploration is unlikely without a level of racial-ethnic identity Commitment.

The low Commitment and Exploration scores for the Chinese participants were unexpected. It was assumed that because members of this minority group tend to mix in their own racial-ethnic circles (Ip & Pang, 2005), that they would have a strong sense of collective Commitment to membership and a wish to uphold and/or explore aspects of their cultural identity in their new country of settlement as a means of retaining Chinese racial-ethnic identity. However, a further examination of the research reveals that psychological changes, including alterations in individuals' attitudes towards their racial-ethnic identities, is common in immigrant groups during the acculturation process (Berry, et al., 2006).

The Connectedness scores for the Pākehā and Chinese participants were the lowest of the four groups. This indicates that racial-ethnic identity is less salient for these adolescents and they feel less positive about group membership. A positive sense of belonging to one's racial-ethnic identity group is needed before members are able to enact racial-ethnic identity and/or engage in relevant in-group behaviour. Whilst the Pākehā participants' low levels of racial-ethnic Connectedness is consistent with a trend among White

participants in existing international (Frankenburg, 2001; Phinney & Alipuria, 1990) and national (Bell, 1996; McCreanor, 2005) research, the low Connectedness score for the Chinese cohort was, again, unexpected. One possible explanation is their very high Awareness of Racism score.

The Chinese cohort had the highest Awareness of Racism score and this suggests that their experiences with discrimination and racism influence their perceptions of self as Chinese racial-ethnic group members. Possible reasons include their visible minority status and the high media profile of their group's perceived impact on New Zealand society, especially in the mainstream media (see Coddington, 2006). Whilst the sheer level of racism they encounter is a concern, Oyserman et al. (1995) stipulate that this could paradoxically act as a buffer against the potential negative impact of discrimination on academic performance.

The Pākehā Awareness of Racism score also suggests that whilst this group was aware of racism, they were less aware than the other three racial-ethnic identity groups measured. This is a concern given Oyserman et al's (1995) premise that racial-ethnic identity Awareness of Racism may be helpful in buffering the impact of racist encounters. In multi-ethnic school contexts, it is highly likely that these Pākehā students might have race-based encounters with students of other racial-ethnic groups that cause them to reflect on their own racial-ethnic identity. An increased awareness of racism would help them to maintain persistence in the face any implicit or explicit negative expectations and/or overt discrimination.

Finally, the low level of Embedded Achievement was unexpected for both the Pākehā and Chinese cohorts given the (widely publicised) higher levels of success both groups experience in the school system compared to Māori and Samoan students. There are several theories that could account for this unexpected result including Pākehā students' lack of consideration for the racialised nature of society and schooling opportunities (Zirkel, 2002), often termed 'colour-blindness'. It is entirely possible that because Pākehā students do not have to articulate the constructs of their racial-ethnic identity often, they have not previously considered whether one's racial-ethnic identity impacts success and/or achievement at school. Similarly, the Chinese cohort's low score was also surprising given the ever-present 'model minority' stereotype perpetuated in Western society promoting Chinese as more academically able than other racial-ethnic groups.

Oyserman and Sakamoto (1997) propose that the ‘model minority’ stereotype can have one of two effects: an increased sense of pride and connection because the stereotype implies Chinese people work hard, or a focus on the way being labelled a ‘model minority’ seems to denigrate their own personal efforts by turning success into a group trait.

Māori and Samoan

The mean Commitment and Exploration scores of the Māori and Samoan participants were significantly higher than those of the Chinese and Pākehā participants. This indicates that Māori and Samoan students feel a greater certainty of belonging to their racial-ethnic group and involve themselves more often in finding out more about their racial-ethnic group collective history, traditions and cultural activities.

The mean Connectedness, Awareness of Racism and Embedded Achievement scores of the Māori and Samoan participants were significantly higher than those of the Chinese and Pākehā participants. The high Connectedness scores were expected given the cultural and political renaissance for Māori, and the strong in-group maintenance of many cultural, religious and traditional practices in New Zealand-based Samoan communities (Anae, 1998). Given that particular racial-ethnic in-group behaviours and actions can express racial-ethnic identity, the high Connectedness scores reinforce Oyserman et al.’s (1995) contention that feeling like you belong motivates one to become involved in culturally relevant ethnic behaviours.

The high Awareness of Racism score was also expected given the media misrepresentations of these groups, and the omnipresent stereotypes that adolescents in these groups must contend with. Steele (1997a; 2004) and Aronson (2004) call this phenomenon ‘stereotype threat’ and state that race-based discrimination can negatively impact the performance, motivation, and learning of students who have to contend with it. However, there is also strong evidence that discrimination experiences may be useful predictors of racial-ethnic Exploration in adolescence (Pahl & Way, 2006), and that these same race-based encounters might also prompt individuals to identify more strongly with their racial-ethnic group (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999).

Whilst it was expected that their Connectedness and Awareness of Racism scores would be higher given the salience of racial-ethnic identity for these groups in their multi-ethnic

urban school contexts, their high Embedded Achievement scores were a surprise. Māori and Samoan students are over-represented in the ‘long tail of underachievement’ in the New Zealand education system and consistently less successful academically according to school engagement data (Ministry of Education, 2007). Māori and Samoan New Zealanders are also over-represented in the lower socio-economic profile and perform poorer in comparison to non-Māori in a range of educational, health and income indicators (Dorovolomo, Koya, Phan, Veramu, & Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Durie, 1998). It is an important finding that there is a positive correlation between their racial-ethnic identity and ability to be successful academically. Māori and Samoan students have a long history of being stereotyped as less academically able than their Pākehā peers.

Study 1b: Adolescent racial-ethnic identity behaviours, perceptions and challenges

The open-ended survey items

Study 1b reports on the racial-ethnic identity informed behaviours, beliefs and stereotype perceptions of 695 early adolescents from four different racial-ethnic groups in New Zealand – NZ European Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese. These results are based on participant responses to two open-ended survey items, which elicited information about the significance and meaning adolescents attach to their racial-ethnic identity. The open-ended questions were the last component of an anonymous 28-closed item questionnaire administered to 695 early adolescents to gain an understanding about their racial-ethnic identity beliefs and experiences. The responses typically varied from a few phrases to a couple of paragraphs and represented a wide variety of adolescent beliefs about racial-ethnic identity behaviours, perceptions and challenges. The open-ended items asked the participants to: ‘Please list two things you like about being a member of your ethnic group’ and ‘please list two things you do not like about being a member of your ethnic group’. It is the responses to these items that are explained in this section, in the hope of better understanding what adolescents perceive as the benefits and/or challenges associated with their racial-ethnic identity membership.

Results

Participants were asked to respond to an open-ended survey item asking: ‘Please list two things you like about being a member of your ethnic group’. From a total of 695 study participants, there were 774 separate responses to this question. A number of the

respondents wrote two or three responses to the question. Analysis of the responses resulted in the emergence of 6 key themes (see Table 9 and Table 9 key).

Table 9

Positive factors associated with racial-ethnic identity

Main Ethnic	Belonging		Difference		Religion		Culture		Look		Language		Total
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Pākehā	114	26.2%	164	37.8%	4	0.9%	78	17.9%	21	4.8%	54	12.4%	435
Māori	36	26.1%	31	22.4%	0	0.0%	51	36.9%	5	3.6%	15	10.9%	138
Samoan	16	13.8%	24	20.7%	3	2.6%	50	43.1%	3	2.6%	20	17.2%	116
Chinese	11	12.9%	21	24.7%	2	2.4%	41	48.3%	2	2.4%	8	9.4%	85

Table 9 Key:

Belonging – connectedness, community, place

Difference – status and pride associated with uniqueness

Religion – spirituality, faith

Culture – cultural traditions, performance, celebrations, food, dress and sport

Look – phenotype, physicality, skin colour

Language – a distinctive ethnic language

In a sample of 431 Pākehā adolescents, 435 total responses were obtained. Thirty-eight percent of total Pākehā group responses related to feeling positive about a sense of *status and pride associated with difference*. Status and pride comments often referred to the “privilege” of being a member of the majority ethnic group, including “feeling normal”, “not being considered different...blending in” and speaking the “dominant language”. Specific responses coded under this theme also included a number of references to the benefits of not “being stereotyped” or “targeted for racism” like other groups. One respondent expressed that being a member of her ethnic group was good because “we are portrayed in a good light”. Other comments which illustrate their beliefs about the privileges of being Pākehā include: “I am White so I get a better education and a better job”, “I get all opportunities and am not confined by my ethnicity” and “I get treated better by the authorities”. These comparative references illustrate the heightened awareness that these Pākehā adolescents have of the inequalities and/or overt racism other ethnic groups experience.

Self-categorising as Pākehā engendered a positive *sense of belonging, community and place* according to 26% of these respondents. Implicit in a number of the responses was the inferred notion that ‘being Pākehā’ also implicitly meant ‘being a New Zealander’. This ethnic-national association is evident in responses like, “I like being NZ European because this is my home”, “I like living in my home country”, “I feel like I belong somewhere”, and “I’m proud of being kiwi (Pākehā) because I was born in New Zealand”. Another category of interest was the often paradoxical nature of the responses coded in the *culture* category, which made reference to a sense of cultural pride in celebrating “ANZAC day”, “Christmas”, and “beating the Auzzies (sic) at sport”; whilst simultaneously claiming that they “don’t notice [their ethnic/cultural difference]”, “don’t really think about it”, “wouldn’t care if they were any other ethnicity as long as [they] are respected” and “don’t let it control their life”. This ambivalence about racial-ethnic identity is not uncommon in research with majority and/or New Zealand Pākehā participants (Bell, 1996; McCreanor, 2005).

In a sample of 113 Māori adolescents, 138 total responses were obtained. Thirty-seven percent of the responses referred to the adolescents feeling positive about the *culture* of their racial-ethnic identity group, including participating in kapahaka (Māori performance/dance), cultural traditions or “doing things our way” and “our history, achievements, stories and language”. One respondent pointedly stated “I like being a New Zealand Māori because it is a beautiful culture”. Self-categorising as Māori positive produced a positive *sense of belonging, community and place* for 26% of these Māori adolescents, including having a deep pride in being, “traditional tangata whenua (people of the land)”. Membership and affinity with the Māori racial-ethnic group was positively influenced by “family”, “friends”, and “living in our own country”. One respondent stated that being Māori “gives me a sense of belonging to someone/something” and another mentioned that “Māori look after each other”. Reference to feelings of *pride and status* in identifying as Māori were reported in 22% of the responses. Respondents made reference to Māori being a “generous people”, “unique”, “strong and brave” and “respectful”. A number of other illustrative responses from this category are, “[I like] being a *proper* New Zealander”, “there aren’t a lot of Māori people anymore so I’m proud when I say I am Māori” and “it’s just cool being a Māori”.

In a sample of 83 Samoan adolescents, 116 total responses were obtained. A significant number of the responses (43%) alluded to Samoan racial-ethnic identity membership being positively associated with culture, for example, traditional Samoan “traditions and beliefs”, religion, food, performances and celebrations like the annual Auckland Polyfest and Pasifika Festival where “my culture is widely celebrated”. Like the Māori cohort, participants appear positive about their ability to participate in demonstrable activities to convey their racial-ethnic identity group membership. A number of the responses (21%) also spoke to the *difference and pride* associated with being Samoan, including “how we are brought up”, the “strong emphasis on the importance of family” and “we understand how things should be done and respected”. One Samoan respondent simply stated, “It is cool being an Islander because we are different to everyone”. In addition, 17% of the responses made reference to the importance of Samoan *language*, stating “I love the way we speak”, “it’s cool talking in Samoan” and “we get to communicate in our own language”.

In a sample of 68 Chinese adolescents, 85 responses were obtained. Nearly half (48%) of the responses linked positive racial-ethnic identity membership to Chinese *culture*, most notably the popularity of, and traditional activities associated with, Chinese food. Reference was also made to Chinese cultural expectations regarding academic success, that is, Chinese culture being “well focused on education” and “intellectual ability”. A number of respondents stated that they liked that “people think I am smart and good at Maths”, “people expect highly of me” and “my parents encourage me to be successful”. Finally, like all of the other cohorts, the Chinese respondents felt positively about their *difference from others*, with 25% of responses making statements like, “we have our very own culture that is very different from other cultures”, “our traditions are awesome and I love them”, “I love the rich history and heritage and background of my ethnic group” and “I can say something in my own language that most people can't understand in New Zealand”.

Participants were also asked to respond to an open-ended survey item asking: ‘What are the negative things about being a member of your racial-ethnic group?’ From a total of 695 study participants, there were 354 responses to this question. Analysis of the responses resulted in the emergence of five key themes (see Table 10 and Table 10 key)

Table 10

Negative factors associated with racial-ethnic identity

Main Ethnic	Racism		Low Exp		Look		Culture		High Exp		Total
Pākehā	131	61.2%	3	1.4%	29	13.6%	40	18.7%	11	5.1%	214
Māori	41	62.1%	6	9.1%	7	10.6%	11	16.7%	1	1.5%	66
Samoan	11	39.3%	2	7.1%	1	3.6%	14	50.0%	0	0.0%	28
Chinese	25	54.4%	1	2.2%	5	10.8%	9	19.6%	6	13.0%	46

Table 10 Key:

Racism – discrimination, marginalisation, stereotyping, difference

Low Exp – low expectations about academic ability

Look – phenotype, physicality, skin colour

Culture – religious or cultural practices restricting, embarrassing or absent

High Exp – overly high expectations about academic ability

A total of 695 adolescents were asked to list things they didn't like about being a member of their racial ethnic group. In three of the four groups (Pākehā, Māori and Chinese) approximately 50% of the group recorded a response. In the Samoan group only 34% responded. It can only be assumed that the remaining students in each cohort had nothing negative to say about being a member of their ethnic group.

The most significant finding from an analysis of the participant responses was the overwhelming discrimination, racism and stereotyping members from all four key groups reported that they personally experienced, engaged in or witnessed. Considering the myriad effects perceptions of racism and discrimination can have on adolescents, it is important to differentiate between the kinds of stereotypes each group must contend with, and the resultant racist and/or discriminatory encounters they experience. Interestingly, alongside their own personal experiences with racism, a number of the Pākehā responses also suggested that their racial-ethnic groups reputation was premised on 'being racist', and this undesirable status had a negative influence on self-identification as Pākehā. This is interesting because the other three racial-ethnic groups involved in this study only reported their personal experiences, as targets of racism, as the most overwhelming negative factor associated with their racial-ethnic group membership.

In a sample of 431 Pākehā adolescents, 214 total responses were obtained. An overwhelmingly large (61%) number of the responses made reference to *racism and discrimination* as a factor negatively associated with being Pākehā. A number of respondents referred to their personal experiences of racism, which were mostly based on skin colour, including “being teased for being White”, “being mocked for being the only White boy in my class” and “being called White [but] White is the colour of this page which I'm not”. There was also the perception that “people stereotype people to be weaker if they are White” and that Pākehā people “can’t be very gangster” and those who do enact their social attachment to American rap culture are being “*wiggers* – White n”. Responses also reflected a frustration that Pākehā were perceived as having a history of engaging in racism, which resulted in them feeling guilty for “what we have done in the past” and “history – how we did things to Māori”. Respondents reported feeling shame about “the bad things my ethnic group has done in the past”, adding that “we have done terrible things” that “don't make me proud”. Other responses that reflect this sense of generational remorse include, “I don’t like what the Pākehās did to the Māori in the early days” and “I’m not proud about how my people took the land here from others”. A number of Pākehā respondents reported resenting having to contend with the ever-present stereotype that Pākehā were all racist or “the people who insult other ethnicities”, adding that they did not like “what people associate with us because we are White e.g. we are racist”.

Alongside the difficulty of dissociating themselves from perceived historical acts of racism, a number of Pākehā respondents also referred to their dislike of present-day *racism* enacted by in-group (other Pākehā) members, stating that “people in my ethnic group are racist”, “we are obnoxious towards other cultures - *not like us*” and “we are usually the ones being racist”. One respondent exclaimed, “Other people always think we are racist towards Māori. But I’m not”. Some of the Pākehā responses (19%) also suggested a sense of frustration associated with not being able to clearly articulate the distinct cultural attributes of their racial-ethnic group. Comments illustrating this negative aspect of group membership include “being Pākehā is quite boring and normal”, “it’s just not as interesting as other groups – there is not that much culture or cultural activities” and “sometimes it would be cool to be different”. These quotes demonstrate that Pākehā culture is perceived as either the default culture, invisible or completely nonexistent. Other responses including “I would like to learn my own language but that’s English and

not anything special” and “I sometimes want to be in a different ethnic group because it can be so boring” indicate that defining what is distinctive about Pākehā culture can be problematic. Evident in the data is a clear wish by some Pākehā respondents to better understand and discern the invisible, taken-for-granted, seemingly cultureless, Pākehā culture. Thus, the issue may actually be less complex than imagined, in that it is not that Pākehā have no culture, but that these students appear to have no cultural self-awareness.

In a sample of 113 Māori adolescents, 66 total responses were obtained. A large number (62%) of the responses referred to the negative impact “mockery” (this term was mentioned in 25% of the total responses across all five schools) or negative *stereotyping/racism* had on their self-concept as Māori. Māori respondents were acutely aware of the unwarranted generalisations and stereotypical constructions of Māori people and culture in the mainstream media and in their own local communities, including the school community. The respondents’ references to stereotypes about Māori imply a proposed link between being Māori and “gangs”, “violence” and “crime”. Of particular concern, given the school age of the participants, is the perceived notion that Māori are “not very smart”, “dumb” and unlikely to “pass school and [subsequently] drop out”. Māori students’ racial-ethnic identity and academic development could be affected profoundly by experiences of real or perceived discrimination, resulting in low school engagement and achievement.

In a sample of 83 Samoan adolescents, 28 total responses were obtained. A number (39%) of responses alluded to their perceived experiences of *discrimination*. The respondents reported that the expectations on them as Samoans to “act like gangsters”, be “dumb” or “FOBs –*fresh off the boat*” (a reference to their supposed limited knowledge of English language and/or a pronounced Samoan accent). Respondents felt that these expectations perpetuated negative stereotypes, misrepresented their cultural realities, and undermined their sense of positive Samoan identity. Half of the total 28 responses referred to particular aspects of Samoan culture and rigid family expectations as a negative factor, including comments about “old traditions”, the “strictness of the culture” and “family, family, family – I am not aloud (sic) to spend time with my friends”.

In a sample of 68 Chinese adolescents, 46 responses were obtained. Over half (54%) of the responses linked negative feelings about racial-ethnic identity membership to experiences of *discrimination, racism and stereotyping*. The participant comments reflect

common negative societal stereotypes including, “being dissed (*mocked*) about driving”, “the pollution in China”, and “eating cats and dogs”. These negative stereotypes have the power to seriously destabilise the Chinese adolescents’ feelings of security and belonging regarding their racial-ethnic and national identities. Moreover, whilst the respondents know that Chinese identity is more complex and attenuated than stereotypes suggest, their racial-ethnic identity development is still impacted by the fact that “people are racist to [wards] us”. Positive stereotypes, also known as model-minority stereotypes (Wong & Halgin, 2006), were also noted as a negative aspect in that they were still viewed as an incorrect perception of all Chinese people. Although the content of the stereotype is positive, respondents perceived the intent as less positive, stating “I don’t like how people always stereotype Asians as smart” and “people assume we are good at maths and always think we are nerdy”. One student noted, “I am tired of people thinking I will be smart at everything”. Chinese students are likely to experience anxiety when trying to uphold the expectations of these model minority stereotypes, and can also encounter conflict with their peers, both those of different races and those in their own racial group.

A fifth of the total responses (20%) also indicated that intra-group *expectations* concerning Chinese cultural and language maintenance, can be a negative aspect of Chinese group membership and leads to the adolescents feeling like they “can’t practise English” and are “not as free as others” because their “parents are more strict”. Students also referred to being pressured into “thinking too much about studies” and feeling frustrated with “what people expect of us”. In combination with the normative adolescent desire to establish a strong sense of individual identity and sense of belonging at school, factors like these could lead to a resistance towards positive Chinese racial-ethnic identity development during adolescence.

In summary, a close examination of the adolescents’ positive and negative understandings about racial-ethnic identity group membership, have provided us with insights into the self-perceptions and race-based encounters that facilitate adolescents’ racial-ethnic identity development. It is clear from the findings of Study 1b that racial-ethnic identity matters. It matters for individuals, for groups and, in light of our increasingly diverse racial-ethnic demographic, for our nation. Adolescent racial-ethnic identity development is part of a wider social process and just as a racial-ethnic group must affirm and reaffirm its boundaries (or be reminded by others of what they are) in order for such boundaries to

retain social relevance, individual group members must also affirm and reaffirm their racial-ethnic identity (or have it reaffirmed by outsiders) in order for it to be a feature of any social situation in which they are participants. Often it is assumed, if only as a simplification, that racial-ethnic identity is fixed over time and that racial-ethnic boundaries are well defined, but in reality racial-ethnic identity salience is time, place and space dependent, that is, it is situational.

Racial-ethnic identity, as articulated by these research participants in Study 1b, is important for three reasons: race and/or ethnicity is at the core of the discrimination they experience; a positive racial-ethnic identity can buffer them from the negative effects of perceiving racial discrimination; and their racial-ethnic identity is affected by perceptions of racial discrimination. That is, although their racial-ethnic identities are in a constant state of flux, they are also of great consequence to the students overall sense of identity. Adolescents, who attend multi-ethnic urban high schools, will undoubtedly have encounters where they consciously have to negotiate, or even endure, race-based experiences of invisibility, differentiated expectations, stereotyping, hostility, or even abuse. However, these experiences may be a necessary and crucial, albeit unpleasant, aspect of healthy racial-ethnic identity development. The findings of study 1b proposes that discerning the significance of one's racial-ethnic identity involves two simultaneously occurring and conscious tensions – rebelling against communally prescribed, and socially ascribed racial-ethnic identities, at the same time as nurturing a sense of belonging, pride and positive membership in one's racial-ethnic identity.

Study 1c: Multiple identities, multiple ways to engage

The interviews

In this study the relationship of racial-ethnic identity to educational engagement was examined among 31 high-achieving Year Nine early adolescents (aged 13-14years) attending large urban schools in Auckland, New Zealand. Schools are inherently social places and students do not learn alone but rather in the presence of many others. As such, students pursue both social and academic goals in school contexts. This study sought to understand the role that racial-ethnic identity plays in the academic, social, interpersonal educational lives of high-achieving adolescents. This study focused on high-achieving Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese students because they would be able to discuss, from

their own diverse perspectives, what their racial-ethnic identities meant for them in the school context and what they did to persist and achieve at school.

How do high-achieving adolescents, from diverse racial-ethnic groups, organise their developing psychological capacities in conjunction with the evolving social, cultural, racial-ethnic and historical circumstances of their lives? Identifying the strategies they employ is important because it offers an insight into the ways other students might stay engaged and perform well in school, develop positive peer relationships, be resilient, and feel positive about themselves, their racial-ethnic identity and their future. The following section presents the findings of the Study 1c interview data. Five themes were developed from the interview data. These themes were: 1) Racial-ethnic identity matters, 2) Academic identity, 3) Family socialisation, 4) Resilience matters and, 5) Racism.

Racial-ethnic identity matters: “It represents who I am”

All of the interview participants were asked to talk about what racial or ethnic group/s they belonged to and the role of racial-ethnic identity in their lives. What became clear very quickly from the majority of the responses was that ethnicity and race mattered for a variety of reasons, some of which impacted upon them at school. In most instances notions of race and ethnicity were coupled, that is, wider societal perceptions and stereotypes actually influenced whether the students felt connected to their group, or not, and/or whether, or not, they enacted their group membership. In some contexts perceptions about race were emphasised more than ethnicity, and vice versa. The multi-ethnic contexts where they lived and went to school shaped not only how they thought about others, but also how and whether they thought about their own racial-ethnic identities. Therefore, racial-ethnic identity mattered for a range of reasons, some of which were exacerbated in the school context.

Contrary to popular belief, the high-achieving New Zealand Pākehā students interviewed for this study experienced racial-ethnic identity as a salient aspect of their self. Racial-ethnic identity salience was invoked in specific situations, particularly when other racial-ethnic groups were the majority, which encouraged the Pākehā students to think about what being Pākehā meant for them. Of particular interest is the dichotomous reference to ‘White people’ and ‘Brown people’. Reference to skin colour, and terms like ‘White’, have been uncommon in New Zealand. On the other hand, little research has explored the perspective of early adolescents. In this study the participants were generally uninhibited

in talking about their racial-ethnic identities and used a range of terms copied from American television and music videos. One quote illustrates how the school social context can invoke racial-ethnic identity salience:

I was describing our school to my cousin and she lives in [name of town] and there are more White people over there. So she goes ‘at school it’s pretty much White people over here [the majority] and only a few brown people over there. So I was like ‘no there’s pretty much brown over there [the majority] and little group of White people in the corner at my school.

The multi-ethnic nature of the high school context seemed to be a catalyst for racial-ethnic identity exploration and pride. One of the New Zealand Pākehā students stated,

I think it’s good you can feel like you’re special, it’s not like you have to stand out in your culture at school, but it’s good that you can feel special and know something that’s really cool about your culture like other people have and I think what a lot of New Zealand Pākehā don’t really know what culture they are like sort of like me I wouldn’t really... some of the cultures are really easy to like pinpoint what you think is some people don’t know and I think they should learn....it is hard to pinpoint our stuff... Yeah especially with all the other cultures around...With all the other cultures in New Zealand... you need to... it is important to keep your culture and learn about it. I think it’s really important you just know anything you can about your culture.

The high-achieving Māori students felt that their racial-ethnic identity was important for three main reasons. Racial-ethnic identity mattered because it represented their family, because it helped them to understand who they were, and because it was considered ‘cool’. One quote from a Māori student illustrates this,

It represents who I am. We are different, it’s real different and I am proud to be Māori. I like to say I am Māori. Everyone, my whole family are Māori.

Another student commented on the responsibility of claiming Māori identity. This comment illustrates how obligation to family and other members of one’s racial-ethnic group might shape the role racial-ethnic identity plays in individuals’ lives.

It's where I am from, it's what I am...it's just part of me. When you are out and around you are not just representing yourself you are representing your whole family and where we come from.

For the Samoan students, racial-ethnic identity mattered for them in every context – at home, at school, in their neighbourhoods and at church. Like the Māori participants these students embodied their racial-ethnic identity, with one respondent stating *'Being Samoan is part of my identity, yeah like it is a part of who I am so that is how people see me'*. The Samoan students were also proud of many activities associated with being Samoan, in particular the Samoan language and other behaviours they associated with demonstrating Samoan culture like *'our Samoan beliefs - faa'samoa'*, *'our religion and our cultural groups'*. One respondent went on to say that these ethnic activities enabled her to feel pride and, at the same time, relief that she did not *'have to go back to Samoa to feel the culture'*. Often the Samoan respondents were encouraged by their parents to establish and maintain in-group friendships only, and this impacted how they saw themselves and how they believed others saw them. One female student stated,

I love being Samoan. I feel proud of my culture. I have lots of friends who are Samoan and smart too. I don't have many other [non-Samoan] friends though. It is not really encouraged. I go to church with Samoans and hang out at school with the same people. Sometimes I feel like being Samoan is the only thing I can be.

The Chinese respondents' comments illustrate that, whilst they were proud to be Chinese and/or Chinese New Zealanders, they felt that their racial-ethnic identity was more important to others. They felt that it determined how others saw and treated them in their schools. One female Chinese student stated boldly,

Being different to others is only sometimes important – it depends who. I am multicultural. ...anyway, why does what I am, have to be who I am? [Interviewer: I don't know...why?...]...Because I look like this (pointing to her face).

Other Chinese respondents alluded to the difficulty of retaining Chinese racial-ethnic identity in a context where the attainment of *'kiwi-ness'* was valued. A number of the respondents referred to the importance of maintaining Chinese identity with one student stating, *'I think it is important to keep up the cultural practices because I don't want to lose it here and I like feeling like I belong to something'*. The Chinese students felt a

tension between strong family expectations to maintain their ethnic language and customs, and a wish to make New Zealand friends and *'do normal things teenagers in New Zealand do'*. One Chinese male stated,

I was born here but my parents were born in China, so like I do speak the language and everything. It's hard because I feel more at home in New Zealand, when I come back from China I am like yes I'm home. I guess I feel more New Zealander than I do Chinese....but I think I can be both; I can still keep my knowledge of being Chinese and also being a New Zealander at the same time.... my sister and my parents say that I don't act like a real Chinese person like just because I have a mix of ideas and thoughts of both. But there are good and bad...better ways of thinking using the ideas of both.

Racial-ethnic identities clearly matter for all members of all four ethnic groups in this study. Racial-ethnic identity was about who they were and who they were not, what they did and what they did not do, and how they interacted or did not interact. The students' everyday interactions, the moments in time in which their racial-ethnic identity took shape and was given meaning in social interaction, was the means through which perceived boundaries between groups were created, reproduced and resisted. One is clearly a member of a particular group, at least in part, because one is not a member of another.

Academic identity matters: "Being successful at school is like being ready for the future"

The above quote was from one of the high-achieving Samoan students interviewed for this study. She, like all of the other 31 high-achieving students interviewed, saw academic achievement as a means of determining a good future for herself and/or her family. All of the students saw themselves as having an academic identity, that is, they wanted to do well at school and saw themselves as smart. Academic achievement, while dependent on the skills, background knowledge and resources available to students, was also influenced by how they identified as belonging at school and/or the reasons driving them to be persistent at school. This sense of belonging and commitment to academic success shaped the students' engagement with and willingness to persist at school. Academic achievement was a function of the students' sense of self, albeit for various reasons.

All of the students talked about very similar strategies in terms of achieving success at school. They all referred to the importance of trying your best in your assignments and tests and completing your homework. One Samoan student suggested other students should, *'Revise what you have done in the day and keep up with your homework because that's like wagging a class, not doing your homework'*. Another student (Pākehā) stated, *'Do all your homework and assignments and stuff like that, make them good quality'*. Other strategies mentioned by the 31 interviewees included: listening in class, paying attention and if students are being distracting, *'Just tell them to shut up'* or *'don't sit with them'*; studying at home; and, not wagging (skipping class) because *'At the end of the day I face the consequences'*.

Another comment from a Pākehā student warns of the social costs associated with poor achievement. He states,

I'm in the High-Achievers class where everyone gets high marks... in another class you would have to not try and get as good marks so you don't get mocked I reckon. Also, I don't really like failing...my parents are a good influence as well. I think you really need to think about if you were going to do something what your parents would think if they were watching you do that and it straight away puts me off the idea...you just wouldn't want to do something that puts down your culture as well. If a lot of New Zealand Europeans wagged at this school it would give us a bad name.

The Pākehā and Chinese students held similar personal beliefs about their academic ability and potential. When asked by the researcher if they considered themselves 'smart', all of the Pākehā and Chinese students answered 'yes' or *'I suppose so'*. In addition they perceived that out-groups also saw them as smart. For example, one Pākehā student stated, *'people expect us, well not really expect but we are generally smart, like pretty brainy...we do well at school, we are quite smart people I guess.'* A Chinese respondent commented in a similar manner stating, *'they think Asians are smart, so you have got to be smart'*.

However, the Pākehā and Chinese respondents had different reasons for persisting at school. The Pākehā students talked about the importance of academic success in terms of its importance for getting a well paid job. Their comments allude to the belief that

educational achievement is a personal success, one that takes personal persistence and motivation. One Pākehā respondent boldly stated his formula for success as, *'get high qualifications, get a good job, get lots of money'*, qualifying his statement with the comment that, *'we can't really move on unless we succeed academically in this day and age'*. Another Pākehā student commented on his personal motivation, that *"it's definitely an attitude, you either care or you don't care or you kind of care. So I care quite a lot. And then there are others that don't really see education as the main part of their life....you have to want it I suppose'*.

The Chinese students alluded to the notion that academic success was not a choice but rather an expectation, one that reflected on the entire family. They talked more specifically about various cultural and family expectations regarding academic success, with one student stating,

Being successful at school is important to Chinese because they want you to succeed in life and be successful and like get good grades and all that...I am kind of representing my parents. In some ways being smart is important because it makes them look smart [the parents].

Another student added,

School success impacts other people as well because if you were successful in something people who know you would feel proud as well and yeah so you would also feel special if you were successful...you know, for your family and your friends.

One student also discussed the importance placed on academic success in China,

I think it's really important especially in China they get pushed really hard and do really well to get a good job. I think it's hard to get a job back there because there so much people...compared to my cousin back in China, I have less pressure and I like that.

The Māori students in this study talked a lot about the importance of Māori succeeding at school, so that the stereotypes about Māori having a lack of academic ability might be dispelled. They mentioned the prevalence of low expectations on them and that they, and

other Māori, need to *'prove them wrong'*. Two quotes illustrate the frustration Māori students have with the persistent myths about the supposed inferior abilities of Māori,

I reckon that most young Māoris are portrayed as bad asses and stuff like that, and they are not really given a fair chance. I think it's good when Māori students achieve and stuff. It is important for Māori people to be successful at school because Māori people don't usually have that higher reputation so probably try and get that up throughout the country. It would be real good to have Māori people go far and stuff ...you know, more Māori people achieving in school.

Being successful at school is important for Māori because... people think that Māori have less chance of success...that very few Māori people graduate and leave school with a good job, and most Māoris (sic) fail at school at learning and stuff. I think it's changing now. There are way more brainier Māoris.

The Samoan students saw school achievement and academic success not only as personal identity, but also as a reflection of their family aspirations – as a way of pleasing and *'paying back'* their parents and getting a good job. Every Samoan student interviewed spoke of the importance of making their parents proud and not being *'stuck like their parents who come over from Samoan and had to work in factories'*. They instead wanted *'to have a good job and earn money for their families'*. They all stated that their parents wanted them *'to get good jobs and a good life...Yeah, our parents want a good future for us as stuff and like we don't want to let them down'*. The Samoan students also talked about the importance of *'being a good role model for your culture and your ethnicity'* and trying to find a balance between *'other commitments that you have to put first before your homework'*. When pressed for further details the students mentioned other responsibilities they had like chores, church, teaching at Sunday school and their regular Samoan cultural group practises.

Family socialisation matters: “I have learnt that it is important to know”

The meaning and importance of the students racial-ethnic identities shifted as contexts changed from home to school. The interview data showed that strength of racial-ethnic identity was related to the students' family background for all of the racial-ethnic groups studied. Strength of racial-ethnic identity was predicted by family participation in cultural

traditions and/or the value placed on ethnic language use. For three of the four racial-ethnic groups studied, involvement in 'ethnic activities' were also important.

All of the students talked about the ways their families had socialised them into understanding what it means to be a member of their racial-ethnic group. One of the Pākehā students said, *'we have been around New Zealand and we go to different places, my dad especially he knows like a lot of stuff about New Zealand culture and stuff...I'm quite interested. I think he teaches us good, and it's good to learn where you come from and stuff...yeah, my family...we sort of talk about race and that sort of stuff'*. Another student who self-identified as Pākehā (despite Māori ancestry too) also stated that *'my grandpa, he tells us a lot about our Māori ancestry and my dad he tells us about our Irish ancestry and my nana she tells us all about our English ancestry, so yeah...I have learnt that it is important to know'*.

Comments from the Māori students suggest that racial-ethnic identity socialisation is intimately tied to learning, from their parents mostly, about their indigenous heritage and culture. They also mentioned notions of belonging and place in New Zealand, *'as tangata whenua of this land'*. All of the Māori students talked about participating in activities that helped them to understand what it meant to be Māori. Most of these activities were experienced with their parents and/or wider extended families. One female Māori student stated, *'Yes me and my mum are learning about our Māori tribes and where our roots are...and I like going to the marae and I like catching up with my family there'*. This student was developing a racial-ethnic identity alongside her mother. They had both experienced exclusion in Māori contexts because of their fair phenotype. The student stated, *'All the time they say we are plastic and I haven't got the right colour'*, which became a motivator for her and her mother to find out more about their ancestry and heritage. The importance of knowing 'how' one is Māori was a recurring theme in the Māori students' interviews, including references to, *'the language and my dad and all his family knowing where they are from and our history ancestors and all that'*.

The Māori students also talked about the need for families to socialise their students into school, to support them to do well at school. Six of the eight Māori students referred to their mother's and/or father's positive influence on their persistence at school. One student stated,

My mum and dad are pretty good role models for us... yeah, every parent has got to come into parent teacher interviews see how their kids are doing. That's like my mum. Heaps of parents... they don't come in; my mum comes in just to watch me. This means I have to work hard at things I want to achieve in and just do my best.

Two other Māori students also talked about the importance of family, referring to cultural differences between Māori parents and others. They stated, *'Maybe it's how they're brought up, it's how their own family is. Yeah probably their family's just not switched on or whatever'*. Another student said, *'I know that it's usually the naughty kids that don't have a stable home and I think it's good that you have both parents that both help you and stuff'*. The students clearly believed that knowledgeable, stable and supportive family environments, and parents' active interest in their children's achievement, were helpful in terms of keeping them focussed and motivated at school.

The Chinese respondents talked about their parents expecting them to do well at school and maintain a strong Chinese cultural identity. Respondents commented on the familial expectation that they would *'be a good Chinese'*, that is, *'focus on schoolwork, speak Chinese, get a good job and earn money...make your family proud and look after them'*. Furthermore, all of the Chinese respondents talked about the various Chinese celebrations and activities that their families participated in, including the comment that, *'some of the stuff we do is different, like funerals and celebration like weddings....that sort of thing, different festivals too'*.

Resilience matters: “My mum believes in me, and I do too”

The above quote was offered by a female Māori student in response to the question 'what helps you to persist at school?' Her answer reveals that familial support, enhanced self-efficacy and self-concept help students to be resilient. Resilience involves overcoming adversity to achieve good developmental outcomes. The concept of resilience, as illustrated by the students in this study, was closely linked to personal attributes such as self-efficacy and enhanced self-concept. All of the students who were interviewed demonstrated characteristics of resilience in order to overcome adversity, and also employed a range of self-regulated learning behaviours in order to direct their own learning and achieve their goals (the importance of this was discussed in Chapter Four). All of the students interviewed also demonstrated elements of “cultural flexibility”

(Carter, 2010), that is, they had learnt to effectively manage their self-representations across a range of different social environments including their schools, communities, and neighbourhoods. Other resilience strategies that were mentioned by the students related to their involvement in a number of different school and/or extra-curricular activities as a means of, in the words of one Māori student, *'being an all-rounder – being good at heaps of things'*. It seems that the students' involvement and success in a range of activities boosted their self-efficacy and enabled them to have *'mates all over the place'*.

The students interviewed talked about their interests in a range of different 'extra-curricular' school activities, including: sports – like rugby, basketball, waka ama and netball; social groups – like the debating, computer, extra language and *'green-school'* clubs; performing arts like kapahaka groups, music groups and choirs; and in the case of one male Pākehā student,

I started a philosophy club...you know, so we can talk about the existence of gods and stuff. I just like to think about stuff. I just think things I like to learn more about, like... I am an atheist so I like learning about other religions and stuff. So go out of my way to do more stuff like that. I like being myself...being different.

The students' participation in, and experiences of success in, a range of different domains enabled them to build new friendships and talents within, and outside of, the school context. As such they adopted multiple identities to represent themselves – a practice called 'identity switching' in the literature (e.g., see White & Burke, 1987). The students demonstrated that they could strategically emphasise identities that are valued, and de-emphasise identities that are not, in any given social context. So, whilst being proud of their racial-ethnic and academic identities, the students also stressed that their 'other' identities were important to them too. Moreover, these multiple identities appeared to protect their psychological well-being. One Māori student emphasised the benefits of multiple positive school identities when he talked about how he stops other students from distracting him in class. He stated, *'I just tell them to shut up. I am their leader in the kapahaka and waka ama groups so they kind of respect me because of that. It's like mana'*.

Towards the end of the interview the students were asked to talk about what they would do, if asked by other students to wag school and or cheat in a test. They were also asked

to explain what they did when their schoolwork and/or relationships at school got challenging. The students were able to talk explicitly about the resilience strategies they employed to persist at school and in the case of the Māori, Samoan and Chinese groups, counter the stereotype threat they faced. The students demonstrated important characteristics of resilience in an attempt to overcome negative messages of underachievement and limited potential. These students were able to identify and engage in relationships and environments that promoted their growth and well-being, and had an ability to screen out negative messages. These students also had healthy expectations, a clear sense of purpose, a sense of competence, resourcefulness, flexibility, openness to new experiences and good interpersonal skills. These students described a range of ways of dealing with peer pressure, distractions in class and racism, of which by far the most common took passive or conciliatory forms. Such coping mechanisms included the following:

Ignoring – The students actively ignored or pretended not to hear taunts or challenges.

If you got extremely high marks sure people would call you a nerd. But I would just not reply because they would be jealous you got good marks because if you think about it they are. (female Samoan)

I think I would prove them wrong, or ignore them. Like...it wouldn't really affect me much because it is just their opinion and it wouldn't really affect me. (male Chinese)

Avoidance – They avoided places and or people who might get them into trouble, even if it meant extra work later on.

A lot of my friends don't really focus in class so half the time I don't sit with them, that helps so then I can, just listen in class and do what you are suppose to do and that always helps. (male Māori)

Sometimes I wag, just so my mates don't get me in trouble. I catch up though. I study at home by myself. (male Māori)

Joking – The students will joke with, laugh at or reply with a smart retort.

I would mock them back. (male Māori)

I would just laugh and tell them that I am proud to get high marks. (female Samoan)

Seeking support – the students would talk through any confusion, ask further questions and/or challenge when they did not understand or felt put down.

I'm sort of a smart arse and I question stuff. Like if the teacher says something and I don't believe it is right I will sort of ask about it to double check. Some teachers don't appreciate the way I ask. (male Pākehā)

Moral reasoning – the students would rely on their 'inner compass' to arrive at a moral decision about what is right or wrong.

Inside I would be (wanting to wag) but I know the right thing to do is just walk away and not wag. (female Samoan)

I just tell them something like not everyone is that stereotype and that, there are always exceptions. (female Chinese)

I think you really need to think about if you were going to do something what your parents would think if they were watching you do that and it straight away puts me off the idea. (male Pākehā)

I'm tempted to say something back but I just don't want to hurt them even though you're getting hurt yourself you shouldn't put down other peoples culture. (female Samoan)

I just can't eh...I have to be a role model for my younger brothers and sisters. (male Māori)

I wouldn't be allowed to do that so I wouldn't. My parents would beat me. I wouldn't listen to them. At the end of the day I face the consequences. (female Samoan)

Another way that students demonstrated resilience was by being culturally flexible. When the students were asked about who they preferred to be friends with – members of their own racial-ethnic group or others – most of the students from all four ethnic groups said that race and/or ethnicity did not matter. The interview data suggested that cultural flexibility, that is, the ability to move seamlessly amongst different cultural (and in this

case racial-ethnic) groups, was a function of individual student choice and a type of resilience strategy. The students remarked that they got along and were friends with students from different social and cultural backgrounds. A female Chinese student revealed this sentiment when she stated *'It doesn't matter to me and I try to be friends with everybody and I try to get to know anybody no matter what their culture or ethnicity is'*. Similarly a male Pākehā student asserted that, *'It doesn't really matter...because if they are your friends, they are your friends. It doesn't really matter what ethnicity they are or what colour their skin is'*. When asked why some students tended to gravitate to their own racial or ethnic group, the generally heard matter-of-fact response was that it is not about 'race' but that students separate into groups based on their shared beliefs, 'common interests' and tastes. A female Samoan student stated, *'it doesn't really matter who you are friends with that I met I just become friends with them I don't look at their ethnicity I just look at their personality and stuff'*.

Racism matters: "If they see you as black they look down on you"

The interview data suggests that racism was perceived by the students as encounters where they were racially discriminated against, treated badly, mocked, not given respect, or considered inferior because of the colour of their skin, because they spoke a different language or had an accent, or because they came from a different country or culture. All of the students acknowledged that experiences of racism were a common phenomenon at school and shaped who they interacted with, who was in their gifted and talented education class and where students hung out at school. All of the students in the sample had experienced or witnessed racist behaviour at school. These encounters were mostly experienced from peers, teachers, the media and other adults outside of the school context (like shopkeepers) and was mostly verbal. Discrimination occurred between members of majority and minority groups, between minority groups, between majority groups, and within groups. Also, the venues in which racism was experienced represented the social settings and contexts where the students led their lives – in schools and their communities, among peers, and with adults and authority figures. When asked if they saw or experienced much racism at school, the following excerpt of a transcript is a good illustration of what most of the students said.

Do you think there's racism at school? (Interviewer) *Student (female Pākehā):*
yeah.

What kind of racism do you see? *Just sort of put downs to different races because they are not the same and people think they are different. They are different but they are people.*

Where does this racism happen the most? Where do you see or hear it? *everywhere... in class, out of class, everywhere.*

Do particular groups say it more than other groups? *No, everyone is racist to everyone else.*

An interesting distinction between the groups was that the Pākehā group largely talked about the racism they witnessed at school, whilst the other three groups talked about racism they both witnessed and experienced. The Māori, Samoan and Chinese students perceived that they experienced racism in many ways. Alternatively, a number of the Pākehā students talked about the fact that there were not many racist stereotypes for them to contend with because *'no one is really racist to White people'*. Another similar comment was,

I don't think there are any stereotypes about European people...there are stereotypes about Māori people and Chinese people and that sort of stuff. Chinese people are supposed to be better at Maths and stuff. But Europeans... well, people have pretty high standards for Europeans I believe.

Comments from students of all four ethnic groups referred to the negative stereotypes attributed to minority students. The students were very aware that the stereotypes were generalisations only, in fact when asked why stereotypes prevailed, despite most people knowing that they were inaccurate one student stated,

People are insecure about what they are and other people try to sort of make people feel awkward about things they can't really change. And there's probably one person right at the back of the stereotype that is what the stereotype is based on and it grew larger. One person has come to represent a whole group, or something, which seems crazy.

Others felt that the statements were just *'put downs'* and/or harmless *'mockery'*. One comment that illustrates the belief that the stereotypes were simply innocuous was stated by a male Pākehā student who said, *'yeah, there is a fair amount [of racism] but it's not*

like hate racism, more like joking... but it's never said with a cold undertone. It's just like sort of jokes'. The put downs, mockery and stereotypes were not perceived as quite so harmless by those at the receiving end, however.

The interview data shows that the Māori students were consistently negatively stereotyped. Comments by the Māori students themselves alluded to discriminatory comments including, *'we are [seen as] dumb, dirty and poor', 'they think we are like the stupid people and we don't know anything'* and *'They think all the Māoris are hori [poor and tough] and they go around with their bros'*. Another Māori student stated,

Māoris are normally the ones on TV being violent and misbehaving. They stereotype that and think that everyone behaves like that. If someone reads in the newspaper that most Māoris fail, they will probably expect nearly every Māori person to fail. I think that boys are probably portrayed the worst, like whenever you see stuff on TV...people robbing some stores... Māori, oh man... like that I think portrays it even more.

Similarly, the Samoan students felt that there were a number of negative stereotypes that they had to contend with. One student stated,

In my experience people think that we are not as academically successful as other cultures, so yeah...they pretty much think that we are dumb and violent because we are from the Islands.

Research on stereotype threat shows that these kinds of repeated experiences with racism, stereotyping and/or discrimination can have one of two effects – the students can withdraw from the context in which they feel stereotyped (for example, rejecting either their racial-ethnic identity or academic identity), or be resilient and persist and try to compensate for the stigma. One way of compensating is to work to disconfirm the stereotype. This strategy is illustrated in this quote from one of the high-achieving Māori students,

Nobody should be like judged just because of what they are...Yeah; it makes you want to just to be at the top of all this stuff...just to show them up.

And another comment from a Samoan student,

If they see you as black they look down on you. They don't think you are the same but you can prove them wrong by your schoolwork.

In conclusion, this study illustrates the ways the adolescents' social identities were vulnerable to racial-ethnic stereotypes, a phenomenon known as 'stereotype threat'. That is, when an individual's social identity includes a group that is negatively stereotyped in a domain, or area of study, the person is vulnerable to underperformance in that domain (Knowles & Peng, 2005). However, this study has shown that not all members of a stigmatised group have the same degree of vulnerability to stereotype threat. Rather, differences in the degree to which people base their identities on their group membership, or on achievement in the stereotyped domain, can influence the degree to which they are vulnerable to stereotype-based underperformance. Study 1c has shown that the high-achieving students interviewed in this study value and feel confident enacting a range of identities including racial-ethnic identities which have been nurtured by their parents; academic identities which they are rewarded for at school and home; and their other social identities in which they experience success and greater friendship networks. In addition, this study has shown how their multiple identities can protect them from stereotype threat, but also how the experience of stereotype threat can influence the ways they enact their racial-ethnic, academic and other social identities in school contexts.

In the next chapter, the findings from the three studies are brought together to answer the broad research questions; 'What influences early adolescent racial-ethnic identity development?'; 'How do early adolescents enact racial-ethnic identity in high school contexts?' and; 'How does racial-ethnic identity impact on the way early adolescents engage at high school?'

Chapter Six:

Discussion

The educational experience of New Zealand high school students is a multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses far more than academic achievement and school completion. Other important aspects of the educational experience include students' feelings about school, their sense of belonging and membership in the social order of the school, and their connectedness to others in the school context. These socio-emotional aspects of the educational experience have important consequences in adolescents' lives. Academically engaged students, and those who feel a part of their school, are less likely to drop out of high school and to engage in problem behaviours (Weinstein & Strambler, 2010).

The so-called achievement gap – the lower achievement of Māori and Pasifika students compared to Pākehā and Asian – has justifiably received a great deal of attention (Ministry of Education, 2009c). Yet broader social concerns about educational disparity have highlighted other aspects of the educational experience, such as the full participation of Māori and Pasifika adolescents in student life and their feelings of comfort and belonging in our schools. These broader experiences are a function of students' backgrounds, but also of the characteristics of the schools they attend. The racial-ethnic and socio-economic composition of the school, the general make-up of the student body, the school's interpersonal climate, how well students get along and feel comfortable with each other and teacher-student relationships are crucial.

Educational success is among the most important correlates of overall physical, mental, and social well-being. Additionally, strong racial-ethnic identity is thought to buffer minorities against the negative effects of negative academic stereotyping and racial discrimination. However, few New Zealand studies have examined the relationship between racial-ethnic identity, educational resilience and school engagement. This chapter discusses the reported psychological and behavioural outcomes of racial-ethnic identity for the adolescents in this study; the relationships among racial-ethnic identity, racism and school engagement; and the role of family racial socialisation in racial-ethnic identity development and resilience at school. This chapter will also review the theoretical and empirical literature to inform our understanding of the present study's research

findings. Overall, this dissertation supports the conclusion that a strong, positive racial-ethnic identity benefits adolescent psychosocial well-being and school engagement.

Racial-ethnic identity matters

The extant literature led to the hypothesis that the indigenous and/or minority racial-ethnic groups in this study (the Māori, Samoan and Chinese groups) would have higher levels of Commitment and Exploration levels than the majority Pākehā group. This suggestion was based on the perspective that these minority racial-ethnic groups have specific racial-ethnic practices, languages and also experience more racial-ethnic discrimination than members of the majority Pākehā group, making racial-ethnic identity a more salient and ‘lived’ identity. Contrary to this suggestion, the Chinese cohort was more akin to the Pākehā group, whereas the Māori and Samoan had similar profiles on the various measures of racial-ethnic identity.

The Chinese and Pākehā adolescents in this study were less likely to incorporate their race or ethnicity into their identity, and were consequently ‘aschematic’ (Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, Fryberg, Brosh, & Hart-Johnson, 2003) and showed ‘ambivalent regard’ (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009) for racial-ethnic identity. Oyserman et al. (2003) argue that adolescents who are aschematic for race-ethnicity are aware of their racial-ethnic group membership and their membership in larger society but see these things as simply ‘social facts’ rather than self-defining and meaningful information. Members from these groups are more likely to consider themselves as individuals or identify more strongly with other social groupings. However, because the Chinese and Pākehā adolescents in this study are based in heterogeneous multi-ethnic high schools, it is likely that they are aware of the racial-ethnic category ascribed to them by others. However, there are two other possible reasons for the Chinese participants low Commitment and Exploration scores: the Chinese adolescents’ responses reflect a wish to both maintain their own racial-ethnic identity but also become involved with wider society – termed integration; or they may have little interest in cultural maintenance and alternatively prefer to interact with the wider society – termed assimilation (Berry, et al., 2006).

Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that race-ethnicity is not a particularly important self-defining characteristic for members of these two racial-ethnic groups at school unless pertinent school-based experiences, like racist encounters, make it central.

The Māori and Samoan adolescents in this study incorporated race and/or ethnicity as a central component of their identity. That is, they were more likely to have an achieved sense of belonging and membership to their racial-ethnic group than Chinese and Pākehā adolescents. Phinney (1992) described ethnic identity achievement as the extent to which people within an ethnic or racial group have developed a secure sense of themselves as members of that ethnic or racial group, along with an understanding and acceptance of their ethnicity or race. The findings of this study suggest that Māori and Samoan adolescents are more likely to commit to understanding the meaning of their racial-ethnic identity through exploration, which ultimately leads to a secure sense of one's racial-ethnic group membership. These adolescents explore their racial-ethnic identity in ways that make them more sensitive to race/ethnicity-relevant cues, which in turn renders it more likely that they will experience a salient racial-ethnic identity.

Oyserman et al.'s (1995) tripartite model of racial-ethnic identity was also used to assess adolescents' levels of Connectedness, Awareness of Racism, and Embedded Achievement. Specifically, this model proposes that adolescents who strongly endorse all three components would be better equipped to succeed in school over time than those who did not. An examination of the existing research led to the assumption that two of the minority racial-ethnic groups in this study, the Māori and Samoan groups, would have higher Connectedness and Awareness of Racism scores, but lower Embedded Achievement scores than the Pākehā and Chinese groups. This assumption was based on the perspective that Māori and Samoan students are members of historically stigmatised groups and must contend with stereotypes regarding lower national academic attainment levels, higher welfare dependency, incarceration and health-related problems. Given that Embedded Achievement is social identity construct shaped by generalised perceptions of racial-ethnic ability, it was assumed the Māori and Samoan participants in this study would perceive that their racial-ethnic identity group would be 'less able' or 'less successful' than other racial-ethnic identity groups.

Unexpectedly, the Māori and Samoan participants had the highest scores for all three constructs. Oyserman et al.'s (1995) contend that these students should therefore be better equipped to succeed in school over time. However, this is not the case in New Zealand. By and large, only 20–23% of Māori and Samoan students leave high school having achieved a university entrance standard, compared to 67% of Asian students and 49% of

Pākehā students (Ministry of Education, 2009b). The findings of this study suggest that a combination of demographic, individual, and contextual variables may come into play alongside racial-ethnic identity to negatively impact the academic outcomes of Māori and Samoan students. Another explanation is that Māori and Samoan students' identification with academic success, that is, their sense of Embedded Achievement, diminishes the longer they stay in school. A key influence on this 'academic dis-identification' may be the stereotype threat they encounter in their immediate environments (Steele, 2004). The racial-ethnic or social-class make-up in schools and/or neighbourhood features such as racial-ethnic segregation and economic deprivation may be especially influential in the ability of adolescents to sustain Embedded Achievement. The current data do not allow for empirical assessment of this possibility, although it is clearly an important focus for future research.

The Chinese and Pākehā adolescents had the lowest scores for all three constructs, except for Awareness of Racism, which the Chinese cohort had the highest score for. It is not surprising that the Pākehā cohort achieved the scores they did given that Oyserman et al.'s (1995) framework was developed for racial-ethnic minority adolescents. Research has repeatedly found low levels of racial-ethnic centrality among members of the White majority in the United States (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2000; Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009) and as such the generalised lack of engagement with race or ethnicity by the Pākehā adolescents in the current study is consistent with past racial-ethnic identity research with White cohorts. Although these adolescents attended schools that were ethnically diverse, and in which they in fact might be in the minority, ethnicity was less important to their identity than for all other groups. This suggests the need to educate Pākehā adolescents about their own racial and ethnic backgrounds, the socio-political origins and impact of racism, and ultimately to help them establish a positive sense of connection to their racial-ethnic heritages. Such an education is important if we are to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to cope with experiences of race-based discrimination in an increasingly racialised society.

In attempting to find an explanation for the low racial-ethnic identity salience for the Chinese participants in Study 1a, a key signal was the significant difference between the Awareness of Racism score of this racial-ethnic group and the others. Recent studies suggest that racial-ethnic discrimination is a salient feature in the experiences of Chinese

adolescents (Lee, 2003; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004) and that such discrimination has negative consequences for their psychological well-being. Rosenbloom and Way (2004) also suggest that the model minority myth regarding 'Asian' students may be at the root of the harassment these students report from their peers. It may be the case that students in other racial-ethnic groups feel that teachers favour and have high expectations for Asian students but not for them. Therefore, they become resentful of the Asian students and more prone to victimise them. It may indeed be the case that the Chinese adolescents in this study have a low sense of 'public regard' (Sellers, et al., 1998). Public regard refers to their perceptions of how others view their racial-ethnic group, illustrated in this study by the very high Awareness of Racism score. This perception could be impacting their willingness to commit to, explore and feel connected to their racial-ethnic group in the school context.

In an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse society, it is critical to gain an understanding of the role that individuals' racial-ethnic identities play in their lives. Previous research suggests that racial-ethnic identity can have an important influence, as it has been related to outcome variables such as academic achievement, abilities to cope with racism and discrimination and psychological well-being. The findings of Study 1a suggest that racial-ethnic identity is more salient for minority adolescents than for adolescents who are members of the ethnic majority.

The findings of Study 1b additionally propose that racial-ethnic identity group 'membership' matters and can have a positive impact on adolescents' sense of belonging and affinity to a collective. For the Māori and Samoan cohorts in this study the positive aspects of racial-ethnic identity group membership were largely attributed to a sense of belonging and pride in their racial-ethnic identity group and a clear commitment to cultural and language maintenance aspirations. A considerable amount of developmental research supports the importance for members of stigmatised groups to develop a positive orientation toward their racial-ethnic group. Longitudinal research supports the connections among ethnic pride, ethnic identification, and psychological adjustment (see Quintana, 2007), and academic achievement has also been positively associated with those adolescents who have a positive view of their racial group (Chavous, et al., 2003) and who are strongly connected to their racial-ethnic group (Altschul, et al., 2006). Research also suggests, however, that strong identification with the culture of origin to

the exclusion of connection to broader society is detrimental in that this stance may leave them vulnerable to out-group stereotypes that tell them that positive factors like school success and good health are not in-group norms (Steele, 1997b). Further research should examine the out-group perceptions of Māori and Samoan adolescents to gauge an understanding of whether their strong sense of belonging and pride in their racial-ethnic group is also matched with a sense of belonging and connection to broader society.

However, when the Māori and Samoan students' perceptions of the positive aspects of their racial-ethnic group membership are considered alongside their perceptions of the negative aspects, a predicament is identified. In general, their marked experiences with race-based negative stereotypes are based on notions of cultural and social deficit, and these negative generalisations contrast with what they claim to be the positive aspects of belonging to their racial-ethnic group – cultural participation, language maintenance and group solidarity. Whilst the adolescents derive a positive sense of individual self from these aspects of the collective Māori and Samoan cultures, they are highly aware of the ways these cultural attributes are misrepresented in the mainstream media and misunderstood by members of other racial-ethnic groups. In these ways, and others, Māori and Samoan adolescents are conflicted by divergent aspirations – to participate actively, and in culturally appropriate ways, within their racial-ethnic groups, and to vigorously disprove stereotypes that posit them as culturally deficit members of an underclass.

Besides positive academic outcomes, researchers have investigated the link between positive racial-ethnic identity and psychological well-being (Quintana, 2007). Māori and Samoan students face negative cultural stereotypes that portray members of their racial-ethnic group as less intelligent than Pākehā and Asian students. These stereotypes are compounded by statistics suggesting that, on average, members of these minority racial-ethnic groups score lower on achievement tests, have lower marks, and attain lower levels of education than their Pākehā and Asian peers. Although one might anticipate that these negative stereotypes and educational outcomes would pose a threat to the self-concept of racial-ethnic minority students, Study 1a has found that the Māori and Samoan students had perceptions of academic self-concept that were on average equal to, or higher, than those of their Pākehā and Asian counterparts.

Given the strong Connectedness, Exploration and Commitment scores from the Māori and Samoan groups in Study 1a, it can be surmised that a strong identification with one's group served as a psychological buffer against prejudice and discrimination. The basis of this hypothesis is that feeling connected to one's group has been shown to compensate for the negative effects of discrimination. That is, in the presence of discrimination, individuals can feel good about themselves by focusing on the positive aspects of their group. As Shin, Daly and Vera (2007) propose, "in the presence of increasing obstacles, a strong identity may provide adolescents with the capacity to not allow [negative pressures] to interfere with their academic performance" (p. 381).

Sellers et al. (2006) studied 314 African American adolescents and found that their perceptions of racial discrimination were correlated with depression and stress. However, those students who scored higher on measures of racial-ethnic identity were found to have lower levels of stress and depression. The researchers hypothesised this was because a strong racial-ethnic identity could serve as a protective resilience factor and help prevent the internalisation of inferiority beliefs. Wong et al. (2003) used longitudinal data to examine the influence of racial-ethnic identity on the psychological outcomes of African American adolescents, as well as school achievement indicators. Their findings also indicated that a strong racial-ethnic identity was positively correlated with good psychological health, as well as higher academic motivation and self-esteem. In sum, the studies cited above suggest there are significant protective effects that result from a strong racial-ethnic identity. Dominant racial-ethnic groups also benefit from a strong racial-ethnic identity, yet there are several key differences between members of dominant racial-ethnic groups and minorities.

Many researchers have pointed out that there are significant differences between dominant racial-ethnic groups and members of other groups in terms of how they define their racial-ethnic identity and its importance (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009; McDermott & Samson, 2005; White & Burke, 1987). According to Knowles and Peng (2005), 'White' racial-ethnic identity, in particular, has been an under-investigated construct, often unseen and unacknowledged. This could be because race and/or ethnicity play a less salient role for these adolescents, simply because they are in the majority. Many White adolescents and young adults deny the privilege of being a dominant racial-ethnic group member, because it can spare them the discomfort of admitting unearned

advantages merely by being White (McDermott & Samson, 2005). Whilst members of minority groups often rely on racial-ethnic identity as a source of unity and strength in the face of prejudice and discrimination (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996), many dominant group members do not believe they have a race at all (Jackson, Ronald & Heckman, 2002). One possible reason for this phenomenon is that they may feel uncomfortable with their privilege and may be reluctant to admit that their membership carries with it some invisible advantages.

Although the Pākehā participants in this study placed slightly less importance on race and ethnicity than the other three groups in the study, some researchers have found that when they are in the numerical minority, they have an increased need for group solidarity (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009). This phenomenon aligns with social identity theory, namely, that when people have contact with others from different racial-ethnic groups, their need for in-group identification increases (French et al., 2000). McDermott and Samson (2005) did a survey of the literature regarding White racial-ethnic identity in the United States and found that there is no one size fits all among this group. Being White is considered to be a complex identity; its meaning depends on the social context. For example, Whites living in poverty or in poor neighbourhoods may have different experiences and perceptions of their identity and may not experience the same level of privileged existence that other Whites have.

The analysis of the Study 1a data revealed that adolescents from all four racial-ethnic groups saw racial-ethnic identity as an important part of their self-concept. Their scores on the quantitative scales measuring racial-ethnic identity Commitment and Connectedness illustrated that all of the students were both committed to, and connected with, their racial-ethnic group. Seeing themselves as a member of a racial-ethnic group shaped who they were and how they belonged. A sense of belonging is the experience of personal involvement in a group in such a way that people have a sense of valued involvement, between themselves and the group. According to Phinney and Alipuria (1990), a sense of belonging incorporates feelings toward a racial-ethnic group, a strong bond toward in-group members, an overwhelming attachment to one's group, and sense of shared fate with one's group.

In these ways, a sense of group belonging is a psychological construct. Adolescents participate in a complex social environment populated by many friendship groups,

cliques, and crowds. The desire to belong to a racial-ethnic group may influence an adolescent's behaviour well before he or she is actually a member of the group. Individuals may change their behaviour in order to gain same-group peer acceptance. Thus, one's peer group affiliation does not need to be reciprocated in order to influence behaviour. Research with adolescents supports the relevance of racial-ethnic group belonging for positive adjustment. Closeness in peer relationships is positively correlated with popularity and good social reputation (Cauce, 1986), self-esteem (McGuire & Weisz, 1982), and psychosocial adjustment (Buhrmester, 1990). Consequently, in the present study racial-ethnic identity influenced who the students made friends with at school. As evidenced by the semi-structured interview data in Study 1c, the students felt that although they would like to have developed friendships across racial-ethnic groups, *"most students hang out with others like them... it is easier to make friends with people from your own ethnic group"*.

As New Zealand society has become more multi-ethnic, racial-ethnic group membership and a sense of belonging within that group has become an increasingly important element of personal identity. The results of this research suggests that for students attending multi-ethnic high schools in Auckland, New Zealand, racial-ethnic identity plays an important role in their healthy adjustment and school functioning. With increased racial-ethnic diversity, the adolescents were interacting across racial-ethnic lines in their communities and schools. The multi-ethnic school contexts they were in meant that racial-ethnic differences were more visible and negotiating racial-ethnic identity more complicated than once was true for those living in racial and ethnic enclaves. In particular, members of the Māori, Samoan and Chinese groups had to consider the extent to which they would sustain their unique group identity, identify with characteristics that afford success in the dominant society, and negotiate their relationships with others similarly situated as minorities in relation to the dominant group.

It is clear that racial-ethnic identity provided the students with a sense of belonging and place. The need for *social belonging*, for seeing oneself as socially connected, is a basic human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; MacDonald & Leary, 2005). Indeed, a sense of social connectedness predicts favourable outcomes. One of the most important questions that people ask themselves in deciding to enter, continue, or abandon a pursuit

is, “Do I belong?” Among socially stigmatised individuals, this question may be visited and revisited.

Culture matters

Culture consists of whatever it is one has to know, or believe, in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members . . . It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them. (Keesing, 1974, p. 77)

Cultural practices – socially patterned activities organised with reference to community norms and values – are important for the enactment and formation of racial-ethnic identity, and it is through cultural practices – as people “do” life – that identities are shaped, constructed, and negotiated (Nasir & Saxe, 2003, p. 14). Culture inheres in practices and meanings shared by members of a particular social group, such as families, ethnic networks, neighbourhoods, communities, schools, and organisations. Culture is characterised by shared values, beliefs, behaviours, styles, and *tool-kits* of “symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views” (Swidler, 1986, p. 273), practices ranging from speech styles and language to specific kinds of physical interaction, tastes in music, clothing, and food, and other symbolic ethnic cues (Gans, 1979); and symbolic boundaries, or “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorise objects, people, practices, and even time and space” (Lamont & Molnar, 2002, p. 168). However, not all individuals of particular racial-ethnic groups agree on what cultural practices or narratives define the group, and indeed, collective racial-ethnic identities risk essentialising individuals .

The present findings indicate that the students who strike the best academic and social balance are those that Carter (2010) refers to as ‘cultural straddlers.’ Cultural straddlers understand the functions of both dominant and non-dominant cultural capital and value and embrace skills to participate in multiple cultural environments, including mainstream society, their school environments, and their respective racial-ethnic communities. While straddlers share cultural practices and expressions with other members of their social groups, they traverse the boundaries across groups and environments more successfully. Straddlers can illuminate other places on the spectrums of racial-ethnic identity management and cultural presentation that splinter the acculturative/oppositional binary divide in most of the literature concerned with this phenomenon. I, like Carter (2010), describe them as straddlers because they, like most of us, participate in myriad cultural

environments – family, peer groups, racial-ethnic community, neighbourhoods, school, and other interethnic settings – that require different types of cultural competencies and currencies.

The high achieving adolescent cultural straddlers in Study 1c simultaneously sustained authentic racial-ethnic identities and achieved academically by effectively managing their academic success among their peers. The Māori and Samoan students, in particular, viewed the acquisition of their own racial-ethnic-group language and culture as additive, and thus actively avoided rejecting their own racial-ethnic identity and culture. Instead they embraced a form of biculturalism that led to their successful participation in both cultures. They appeared to carefully traverse the social boundaries between their racial-ethnic peer cultures and their school environments. These students demonstrated multiple cultural competencies and deployed varied cultural tools and resources to strike a more effective balance among the various cultural spheres in which they participated. Rather than succumb to the acculturative/oppositional culture divide, straddlers navigated between the dominant and non-dominant communities, choosing to be intercultural (Sussman, 2000) and accepting and seeking facility with multiple cultural repertoires.

Yet, as other researchers have shown, the continuum of culture and identity is not necessarily linear or bipolar. Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997), for example, offered a more complex, multidimensional understanding of racial-ethnic identity, suggesting that variation exists even among those who have bicultural identities. That is, biculturalism is not just a fixed midway point on the identity spectrum between sole identification with one's ethnic culture or with the larger society. Some students can move back and forth among different cultural environments, strategically alternating and turning cultural codes on and off, while others appear to be more 'blended' and identify with their multiple social identities simultaneously.

Evident in the Study 1b data, was a perception from the Pākehā participants that Pākehā, like other White racial-ethnic groups, are cultureless. Pākehā racial-ethnic identity was conceptualised by the adolescents as having four components: being 'born in' New Zealand, having White skin, having little or no ties to European history and culture, and having no unique traditions. To the Pākehā adolescents, only 'ethnic' people had enduring ties to the past. The responses from the Pākehā adolescents also suggest that only those people, whose cultural traditions and practices differ from the majority, have a culture.

Avril Bell (1996) proposes that as members of a dominant culture, Pākehā see their culture as the national culture and because they have not had to struggle to assert their cultural identity they have not developed a strong sense of ethnic consciousness. In addition, Bell (1996) argues that Pākehā are rarely called on to identify their ethnicity as they occupy a dominant location, on which the social norms of society are based. However, whilst the Pākehā adolescents' responses indicate that Pākehā culture is mostly invisible and/or taken for granted for them, their responses also illustrate that Pākehā culture is 'real' and 'felt' in the context of their multi-ethnic high schools, often oppressively so. The findings of Study 1b suggest that we need to find ways to make Pākehā culture visible and, in the words of Perry (2001) "disarm its cloaked perniciousness" (p. 60).

These Pākehā adolescents are not the only 'Whites' to have pondered whether White culture exists (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996; Roediger, 1994) and much research suggests that the felt 'invisibility' of Pākehā culture is because it is constructed as 'normal' (Frankenberg, 1993). The consciousness of being 'White' only becomes active and politicised in certain circumstances. For most Pākehā adolescents, this usually occurs in the presence of, or during their interactions in multicultural settings where they are the minority.

Although most international literature in this area uses the term 'White', it is important to briefly point out that this turn of phrase remains taboo in most New Zealand academic writing. Spoonley and Larner (1995) have suggested that there is an incentive for Pākehā New Zealanders to distance themselves from the associations of the descriptor 'White', because the racism embodied in such a label is more overt and obvious than the label 'Pākehā'. However, the usually self-claimed Pākehā label is also highly contentious and by no means uncontested (Ballara, 1986; Lawn, 1994; McCreanor, 2005; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

The Pākehā and Māori responses in Study 1b reflected notions of belonging and place, as New Zealanders, as central to perceptions of their racial-ethnic self. Over a quarter of all responses from these two groups allude to positive racial-ethnic identity membership being related to them originating from, feeling that they belong to, or being a native of, New Zealand. Unexpected, however, was the difference between these two racial-ethnic identity groups in terms of what other factors they associated with positive identification.

Whilst references to tangible demonstrations of racial-ethnic identity like kapahaka, celebrations and traditions were expected, and reported, as central to Māori identity, Pākehā students identified their lack of experience with racism, discrimination and stereotyping as a positive factor associated with Pākehā identification. Whilst the Māori, Samoan and Chinese respondents identified cultural practices and attributes that made their racial-ethnic identity group distinctive and unique, the Pākehā respondents referred to attributes that identified them as non-members of other racial-ethnic identity groups. This is an interesting distinction between groups.

Researchers have recognised the importance of examining the role of behaviour as it relates to racial-ethnic group identification, particularly engagement in behaviours that are unique to a particular racial-ethnic group (Deaux & Ethier, 1998; Oyserman & Harrison, 1998). The racial-ethnic behaviours mentioned by the adolescents in the present study were either specific to, or had unique symbolic meanings for their particular racial-ethnic groups based on the cultural values and beliefs of that group. These activities included their racial-ethnic language use, in-group friendships, and participation in racial-ethnic functions, celebrations, media and traditions.

As evidenced by the Māori, Samoan and Chinese students' responses in Study 1b, involvement in racial-ethnic group activities, celebrations, traditions and other cultural activities nurtured racial-ethnic identity connectedness and commitment. Specifically, in Studies 1b and 1c, these students tied their overall sense of racial-ethnic identity, as well as their feelings of attachment and importance, to the ways in which they participated as members of their group. When matched with their high overall scores in the Connectedness, Exploration and Commitment scales in Study 1a, this demonstrates that racial-ethnic identity and group membership are central and pivotal aspects of their overall identity.

Involvement in cultural activities can be a process by which individuals explore, learn, and become involved in their racial-ethnic group. What became clear through an analysis of the data was that the demonstrable aspects of collective racial-ethnic identity were important for group connectedness, because they were markers of belonging that enabled students to fit in (Oyserman et al., 2006). These markers of belonging provided a form of 'evidence of fit' with the in-group and allowed for pursuit of personal goals (e.g., school success). Those individuals who lacked clear physical markers of belonging, might have

been more likely to pursue belongingness through behaviours perceived as in-group related (Oyserman et al., 2006).

In a study of young New Zealanders of Indian, Pākehā, Māori and Greek ancestry it was found that their expressions of cultural identity varied depending on the situations they were in; that there were marked differences between what some saw as merely a racial-ethnic label rather than a living culture; and that for young Māori there was much variation in terms of alignment with ‘traditional’ markers of Māori identity (Sawicka et al., 2003). A study of Samoan-Pākehā people (Keddell, 2006) found that their expressions of cultural identity ranged from one based on being ‘solely Pākehā’ to different expressions of cultural identity based on being ‘solely Samoan’, and that these expressions changed depending on age and situation. These examples of research point to the rapid evolution of cultural identities in New Zealand, influenced heavily by ongoing globalisation and migration. Recent theorists have argued for ‘hybrid’ identities or ‘emerging ethnicities’ as a way of explaining the complex postmodern personal sense of self. They argue that this sense of self is subject to a myriad of different cultural influences with those related to ethnicity being just one (Bhabha, 1994; Fook, 2001; Werbner & Modood, 1997; Webber, 2008). This represents a departure from race-based categorisation to a focus on culture, which, in its strictest sense refers to the values, beliefs and practices of someone irrespective of their ancestry, although those elements may reflect constructions related to ancestry.

Particular situational characteristics may be responsible for racial-ethnic salience. For example, participation in group-specific behaviours, such as speaking a racial-ethnic language and eating cultural foods, appears to be associated with racial-ethnic salience. Many of the common racial-ethnic activities that adolescents in the present study indicated participating in (e.g., speaking Samoan and eating Samoan food) likely included the presence of other Samoan people, such as members of the adolescents’ families. Previous research has implied that interacting with others in one’s racial-ethnic group can influence momentary feelings of racial-ethnic identification (Yip & Fuligni, 2002). Furthermore, numerous references were made by the students in Studies 1b and 1c about the importance of same-group friendships, implying that for some students, being in the physical presence of same-group members may enhance their feelings of connectedness,

belonging and attachment to their racial-ethnic group. Moreover, these feelings may differ depending on whether the adolescents are among peers, family members, or adults.

Whilst three of the groups in this study enjoyed their cultural activities and found them to be a positive aspect of being a racial-ethnic group member, the Pākehā group fell into two distinct groups: those that expressed a wish to know more about and ‘do’ more Pākehā cultural activities; and those that felt ambivalent about its importance. This second grouping is not new because Pākehā are, said Avril Bell (2004) “more likely to identify nationally rather than ethnically” (p. 89), and to make little distinction between Pākehā culture and the national culture.

The first grouping is more complex, however, because the suggestion that all people are cultural and live in cultural worlds challenged the Pākehā adolescents. Generally, they tended to see their way of life as ‘normal’ rather than cultural. The Pākehā adolescents were more likely to talk about themselves in relation to their national identity (New Zealander) rather than name being part of a cultural group within their nation state. For the Pākehā students in this study, their ‘culture’ or ‘lack of’ was often first recognised through encounters with different racial-ethnic groups and usually when they were in a situation where they were in a minority. As an analysis of the Study 1b data revealed, although dominant group members do not always see their own daily practices and values as cultural, they often name as cultural the practices and values of people different from them.

Pākehā culture, ethnicity and identity along with issues of race and racism in New Zealand have been hotly debated through both academic and popular literature; and through various media such as New Zealand magazines (*Metro*, *North & South*, and the *NZ Listener*), television and radio programmes and daily newspapers since the 1970s. James Ritchie (1992) offers an explanation for why it may have been much more comfortable to say ‘I am a New Zealander’, especially for those students who were part of the dominant group – who thus get to define most aspects of cultural life. Ritchie (1992) states that it is much simpler to maintain a national identity than to have to think about who we are as cultural beings and the responsibilities of relationships with others that may be involved.

But the real stuff of culture in any of its meanings is messy, confusing, paradoxical, ironical, unclear, allowing alternatives and interpretations on some occasions but not on others. The head stuff gets mixed up with the heart stuff, the realities with the ideals and ideologies. All that gets hopelessly intertwined with the personal motivations of individuals, which may have cultural foundations or relevance, but which may be purely idiosyncratic, the leachate from the deposits of personal histories, the garbage heap of private experience. ... We are all continually negotiating the uses of the term [culture], and also its referents. (Ritchie, 1992, p. 99)

In his book *Racism and Ethnicity*, Paul Spoonley (1988) defined Pākehā as “New Zealanders of a European [and/or British] background, whose cultural values and behaviour have been primarily formed from the experience of being a member of the dominant group of New Zealand” (pp. 63–64). In addition, Black (1997) has marked the following features of Pākehā families as ‘cultural’: 1) Many Pākehā families have a [sense of] short lineage as a result of the discontinuity caused by migration; 2) Pākehā do search for family origins beyond Aotearoa; 3) While the nuclear family image is regarded as normal and ideal, in fact many people do not live in a traditional nuclear family setting; and 4) Neither older nor younger people are well valued and respected in Pākehā society. But it is less easy to define what the shared cultural values and behaviours are that mark out Pākehā as a specific cultural group. The process of marking out cultural values for any cultural group is relative to those of other cultural groups. It is the combinations in which the ingredients of culture come together for a group that make it exclusive (King, 1991). Claudia Bell (1996) observes:

For while it may be almost impossible to sum up what constitutes Pākehā culture, or articulate the essence of this, for Pākehā themselves there is obviously strong awareness of their own cultural distinctiveness. This anthropological-sociological notion is stated in such phrases as “people like us”, “real New Zealanders” or “kiwis”. In New Zealand the juxtaposition of Pākehā against Māori, or against Australians, or against Asian or other immigrant groups, is a way of affirming boundaries and differences. (pp. 193-194)

Other Pākehā cultural values, behaviours, traditions and beliefs were reported by Michael King in an interview with Spoonley (1986). King spoke of language having “a New

Zealand idiom and vocabulary” (p. 7); a New Zealand literature where Pākehā and Māori and writers of other ethnicities can be distinguished from each other; the tradition of warfare; equality of opportunity, everyone getting a “fair go”; the belief in racial equality; an attachment to the outdoors; sport and in particular rugby; helping the underdog “someone who’s in trouble”; a degree of reliability “having power behind the scrum” (p. 8); a Judeo-Christian base for ethics; and having a past in Europe. All of the above can be characterised as being both Pākehā and New Zealand because Pākehā, in Forrest Tyler’s analysis of cultural groups, are the dominant and therefore the culture defining group (Tyler, Brome, & Williams, 1991). Whilst these values may not be exclusively Pākehā, they are shared by Pākehā to a great extent. Many of the cultural values, behaviours, traditions or beliefs in King’s list above are echoed in the responses from the Pākehā participants in this study.

Family racial-ethnic socialisation matters

Socialisation is a process in which an individual’s standards, skills, motives, attitudes, and behaviours change to conform to those regarded as desirable and appropriate for his or her present and future role in society. Many agents, and agencies, play a role in the socialisation process, including family, peers, schools, and the media. Moreover, it is recognised that these various agents function together rather than independently. Families have been recognised as an early pervasive and highly influential context for socialisation. Children are dependent on families for nurturance and support from an early age, which accounts, in part, for their prominence as a socialisation agent. Commonly referred to as racial socialisation, parents' race-related communications to children have been viewed as important determinants of children's race-related attitudes and beliefs, and of their sense of efficacy in negotiating race-related barriers and experiences (Bowman & Howard, 1985).

As with most children, the socialisation of minority children usually takes place in a family setting that includes adult caregivers who are usually biological parents but may include grandparents, relatives, godparents, and other non-biologically related adults. An important goal of socialisation in minority families is teaching children how to interact effectively in dual cultural contexts: the context of their racial-ethnic group and the context of the majority society. The analysis of the data from Studies 1b and 1c suggested

a relationship between family racial-ethnic identity socialisation practices and racial-ethnic group connectedness, commitment and exploration.

Family socialisation helped the adolescents from Study 1c to learn about who they were and who they were not, by means of socialisation into the cultural aspects of their racial-ethnic identities. This form of ‘cultural socialisation’ (Hughes et al., 2006) was evidenced in the parental practices referred to by the interview participants who commented that parents and families taught them about their racial-ethnic ‘heritage and history’; promoted cultural customs and traditions; and promoted cultural, racial, and ethnic pride, either deliberately or implicitly. Examples from the data in Studies 1b and 1c include talking about important historical or cultural figures (e.g., “Hone Heke” and “Sir Edmond Hillary”); exposing children to culturally relevant books, artefacts, music, and stories (e.g., “the Treaty of Waitangi”, “kapahaka”, and “Confucian beliefs”); celebrating cultural holidays (e.g., “Chinese New Year”, “Christmas” and “Waitangi Day”); eating ethnic foods (e.g., “everyone loves Chinese food” and “hangi”); and encouraging children to use their family’s native language (e.g., “My mother and me are learning to speak Māori” and “My family speaks Samoan only at home”). Practices like these are likely to have promoted racial-ethnic pride in the adolescents, oriented them to race-related barriers, and prepared them to succeed in both their mainstream and racial-ethnic group endeavours. Parents who expose children to their heritage and actively discuss issues relevant to ethnic group membership, including the dual messages of pride in group membership and preparation for experiences with racism, may be initiating a child into racial-ethnic identity exploration, and ultimately toward a positive racial-ethnic identity in adolescence.

Parents’ racial-ethnic socialisation can influence an adolescent’s identity development and well-being. For instance, studies have found that children whose parents emphasise their racial-ethnic group’s culture, history, and heritage report higher self-esteem, more knowledge about their racial-ethnic group, and more favourable in-group attitudes (Stevenson, 1995). Parents’ efforts to prepare children for racial barriers have also been associated with favourable youth outcomes, including higher grades and feelings of efficacy (Bowman & Howard, 1985), and lower depression (Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997). However, studies have also shown that parents’ over-emphasis on racial-ethnic barriers may undermine adolescents’ efficacy and prompt them to withdraw from

activities that are essential for access to opportunity and reward structures in the dominant society (Biafora, Taylor, Warheir, Zimmerman, & Vega, 1993). Thus, the consequences of racial-ethnic socialisation for children depend upon the nature of the messages that parents transmit.

There are also differences in racial-ethnic socialisation according to parents' socioeconomic background and their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. Hughes and Chen (1997) found that parents were likely to transmit to children the sorts of racial-ethnic socialisation messages they had received during their own upbringing. Further, parents' perceptions of racial bias in the workplace predicted the frequency of discussions with children about discrimination as well as the frequency of messages regarding racial mistrust. Moreover, a number of developmental theorists have argued that the degree to which minority adolescents receive race-based socialisation may buffer them from negative impacts of discrimination (Helms, 2003; Phelan, Locke Davidson, & Yu, 1993). Scott (2003) found that African American youth whose parents provided high degrees of race-based socialisation were likely to use more effective strategies to cope with perceived discrimination. Thus, racial socialisation practices and messages are influenced both by family practices and by the nature of parents' daily experiences.

Minority group socialisation has also been referred to as acculturation. Many of the Samoan and Chinese participants referred to the necessity of acculturation for them and their families, especially with regard to the process of learning how to integrate into the majority culture, developing English proficiency, and initiating out-group friendships. These participants also described the intergenerational differences between their parents' aspirations and theirs. Both the Samoan and Chinese participants talked about the conflict between their desire for some sense of uniformity with, and general acceptance by, other 'kiwi teenagers' and their parents' wishes for them to retain their unique racial-ethnic languages and cultural practices. Thus, acculturation across generations is not a uniform process. In each generation there is diversity in individuals' aspirations for involvement with both their native and the dominant cultures. In addition, acculturation is not a unidirectional process such that movement toward the dominant culture is necessarily associated with a corresponding loss of the native culture. In Study 1b the Māori, Samoan and Chinese participants all assessed their 'culture' as the most positive thing about being a member of their racial-ethnic group. In spite of negative ecological variables, such as

societal discrimination, educational disparities and in some cases poverty, participation in the cultural activities of their racial-ethnic group helped the students to maintain a positive sense of racial-ethnic identity.

As evidenced by data in Study 1c, family socialisation helped the high-achieving students to feel a sense of embedded achievement and/or educational resilience. It is likely that parents' racial-ethnic socialisation practices were associated with the high-achieving students' high self-efficacy and school engagement, and thus their enhanced cognitive abilities, academic orientations, and success in school. Past studies have shown that positive racial-ethnic identity and high self-esteem are positively associated with youths' academic orientations and outcomes (Chavous et al., 2003; Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). The students in Study 1c discussed how their racial-ethnic socialisation contained messages about opportunity, which in turn influenced their own perceptions of opportunity and their subsequent investment in the educational domain. In addition, certain types of messages, such as preparation for bias, may have lessened the students' vulnerability to stereotypes about their groups' intellectual capabilities, which in turn influenced their performance and achievement. Families can help adolescents to cope with stressors in their lives by modelling coping strategies. Although schools and peers serve as socialising agents, parents, as the children's first teachers, play a primary role in the development of racial-ethnic identity and resilience. All parents are expected to socialise their children to be competent adult members of a given socio-cultural niche, but racial-ethnic minority parents must also teach their children to cope with discrimination and disparaging stereotypes. Parent racial-ethnic socialisation can play a vital role in empowering adolescents to function successfully in the milieu of the dominant culture while remaining grounded in their home culture.

It is clear that positive family socialisation is an important variable in considering potential protective factors. Contrary to prior beliefs motivated by the notion of adolescence as a tumultuous time period, this study also suggests that many families can enjoy healthy interactions during adolescence. The adolescents' overall perceptions about their parents' racial-ethnic socialisation, monitoring of schoolwork, and guidance when dealing with racial-ethnic discrimination, suggests that their involvement results in racial-ethnic pride, a sense of in-group belonging and resilience strategies for coping with

racism. Family racial-ethnic socialisation, then, is an important protective factor for adolescents attending multi-ethnic high schools.

Racism matters

The life chances of students are determined by their ability to interact critically with the discourses around them, while still avoiding the temptation to be seduced by the disempowering messages those discourses often contain. The discourse surrounding children teaches them who they are, what their place is in the world and what they need to do to become autonomous and valuable citizens. (Corson, 2001, p. 14)

Racial-ethnic identity development is an active social process between an individual and others in their socio-cultural and historical contexts, as well as within interpersonal relationships. Racial-ethnic identities are being continually co-constructed as individuals and groups accept, reject, challenge, and negotiate the meanings of race, ethnicity, and racial-ethnic group membership and boundaries. Racial-ethnic identities, like other social identities, are often socially referenced in relation to the feedback individuals receive from multiple referent groups about how they are viewed (Shotter, 1993). In relation to this feedback, individuals refine and make meanings about their own identities. These socially referenced identities, in turn, affect the ways in which individuals enact their identities and interact with referent groups.

One type of social feedback that individuals receive is racism. Racism includes stereotypes (beliefs), prejudices (attitudes), and discrimination (behaviours) that denigrate individuals on the basis of phenotype (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999). The students in the present study all reported race-based experiences through: stereotypes – “everyone just expects Samoans to be dumb and FOBs [fresh of the boat]”; prejudices – “they [Māori] are just lazy, they need to try harder”; and discrimination – “when I go to some shops with my mates I am the only one asked to leave my bag outside...it’s cos I am Māori”. In its varied forms, racism can negatively affect adolescents’ self-perceptions, academic achievement, and mental health (Ambady, Shih, & Pittinsky, 2001; Clark & Clark, 1950; McKown & Weinstein, 2003).

Racism can affect adolescents through a variety of social processes, including stereotype threat, attributional ambiguity, and interpersonal expectancy effects (Crocker & Major,

1989; McKown & Weinstein, 2003). It is frequently assumed that a target must be aware of racism for these processes and their associated outcomes to occur. For example, for another's racial stereotype to be threatening, one must believe that important others endorse a specific stereotype about one's race (McKown & Weinstein, 2003). Awareness of racism, as a dimension of their social world, thus represents a potentially critical development in adolescents' lives. When adolescents come to understand that others may harbour racial-ethnic stereotypes, prejudices, or discriminatory tendencies, their orientation to intergroup contexts may be altered. Adolescents may, for example, become concerned about being judged or treated a particular way because of their ethnic group membership (McKown & Weinstein, 2003). Furthermore, adolescents' beliefs about what racism is may affect how they make sense of social information, store and retrieve memories of social events, and what they do in response to interracial encounters.

The findings of Study 1b demonstrate that racial-ethnic identities are importantly, though not exclusively, informed by experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination. Race and racism is highly consequential in all manner of societies, to inter-group contexts, like schools, within societies, and to individual members of those societies. The most frequently reported concern in Study 1b was being called racially insulting names and being made fun of because the negative societal stereotypes referring to one's racial-ethnic group's perceived intelligence, cultural peculiarities, and/or proclivity for the enactment of racism. Perceived discrimination and racial-ethnic-cultural bias is powerful because the force of the negative stereotypes perpetuate further discrimination, and international and national research has shown that this may be internalised by the recipients and as such become a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' (Borrell, 2005; Rosenthal, 2002). Given that group expectations are a strong predictor of the future, the notion of a self-fulfilling prophecy can explain how negative thoughts become reality. Over the course of time, and through continual reinforcement from society, these generalised indicators in themselves can become markers of identity.

The results of Study 1b also suggest that a critical point of conflict in early adolescent racial-ethnic identity development, in that the culturally distinctive activities or characteristics that the groups describe as their link to group membership, are also at the core of the racism and discrimination they must endure as group members. As such, racial-ethnic identity salience was found to be triggered by two social processes that

happen simultaneously and are antithetical to each other. The first process is a deeply conscious immersion into the cultural traditions and values of their group, through religious, familial, neighbourhood and/or educational communities, where a positive sense of racial-ethnic identity pride and confidence is gained. The second process is filtering the meaning of their racial-ethnic identity through negative differential treatment and societal messages from others about the status, value and perceived ability of their racial-ethnic group. The findings of Study 1b show that this complex ‘double process’ is a necessary way for adolescents in multi-ethnic contexts to come to understand the meaning of their racial-ethnic identity.

The findings of Study 1b also suggest that Māori and Samoan adolescents will have to work hard to assert their desired racial-ethnic identities, given that the nature and range of ways their racial-ethnic identities are constrained by the dominant discourse, representations, and images which are attributed to them by wider society. By and large, the process of racial-ethnic labelling and stereotyping greatly oversimplifies how race and ethnicity are experienced. The reality is that Māori and Samoan adolescents will need to continue to contest the meanings attributed to their racial-ethnic identity by actively participating in efforts to counter and reshape the connotations and images associated with their racial-ethnic identity.

The Pākehā and Chinese adolescents in this study also stated that they experienced a racial-ethnic identity ‘bind’, in that their positive racial-ethnic self-identifications were also impacted by externally imposed constraints and stereotypes. Accompanying and often contradicting their positive self-perceptions regarding racial-ethnic identity membership, was their expressed need to constantly negotiate responses to negative stereotypes and perceived discrimination. The Chinese adolescents acknowledged the benefits of being widely perceived as academically competent and/or successful, disciplined and motivated by success, which are all characteristics ascribed to the model minority stereotype. The model minority stereotype suggests that Chinese (and other ‘Asians’) are more academically, economically, and socially successful than any other racial minority groups (Wong & Halgin, 2006). The myth proposes that Chinese students are more successful than other racial minority students because of their supposedly unique Chinese cultural values that emphasise hard work, strong family values, and/or stronger belief in meritocracy (Wu, 2002). Contrary to these popular beliefs, the overly

positive caricature of Chinese as the model minority is erroneous. Furthermore, this generalised and distorted comparison can have adverse effects in the lives of Chinese students (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; Wong & Halgin, 2006). Much research has found that Chinese students experience difficulty in being friends with their peers in school settings because of their favoured status (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). This problem creates a sense of social isolation, which could potentially contribute to cultural marginalisation (Sue & Sue, 1990), a psychological state in which individuals do not feel a part of either the traditional or dominant culture. Basically, marginalised individuals experience no emotional or social affiliation to any social group and lack a social support system. Such cultural marginalisation has been found to be significantly related to depression (Kim, Gonzales, Stroh, & Wang, 2006).

The comments from the Pākehā adolescents in the study also suggest a critical point of conflict regarding the positive and negative ways they perceive their racial-ethnic group membership. Whilst being relieved that they do not experience the levels of discrimination and racism that members of other minority racial-ethnic groups are subjected to (identified as a positive attribute of being Pākehā), they commented on being affronted by the negative stereotype that they were the perpetrators of ‘racism’. Given that racism is a complex phenomenon whose markers – stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination – are distinct but interwoven, it is difficult to capture the essence of the Pākehā adolescents’ understandings of ‘racism’ in its fullest sense. What is clear is that the Pākehā adolescents in Study 1b adopted a self-distancing approach to the predicament of being posited collectively as the perpetrators of racism, communicating varying levels of discomfort.

Students who attend multi-ethnic schools should theoretically have increased opportunities to form friendships with members of other racial-ethnic groups. However, race and ethnic boundaries persist despite the fact that schools are perhaps the most racially and ethnically diverse institutional environments that adolescents will experience in their lifetimes. The data from Studies 1a and 1b indicate that although out-group friendships were desirable, the adolescents had more friends from within their racial-ethnic group. The findings of Study 1c also show that the adolescents’ experiences with racism influenced who they were friends with. Some of the students talked about the inevitability of in-group friendships given that they had some things in common:

language, cultural interests and in some cases religion. In-group friendships provided some of the students with a sense of collective ‘cultural safety’ and this acted as a protective factor in the school contexts. Though past research has suggested that early exposure to multi-ethnic contexts can affect attitudes about other racial-ethnic groups (Haynie & Osgood, 2006), it is clear from this study that a diverse student body does not necessarily translate into racially or ethnically integrated peer groups and friendship networks. In fact, other research has suggested that, even when adolescents manage to break racial-ethnic boundaries in friendship selection, these friendships face greater challenges than do those between individuals from the same racial-ethnic group (Kao & Joyner, 2004). The *Contact Hypothesis*, as theorised by Allport (1954), suggests that racial-ethnic attitudes in adolescence are directly correlated to the degree of intimate contact between members of different racial-ethnic groups in adulthood. Therefore, this study’s findings may be suggestive of social distance between groups in the future, to the extent that adolescents are the harbingers of trends in the general population.

In an analysis of the Study 1b data, it became clear that racism was prevalent and powerful in the lives of the adolescents surveyed. Experiencing racism, prejudice, discrimination, or oppression based on one’s social position can affect developmental pathways in minority children by way of imposing an environment that is likely negative or non-supporting. Although many of these experiences are considered morally wrong and harmful, the data from Studies 1b and 1c suggests that their occurrence is a daily fact of life for many minority adolescents. Discriminatory and racial experiences seemed to provoke adolescent Chinese students in the present study (Studies 1a, 1b and 1c) to feel ambivalent about how to behave in certain situations. This may actually cause internal conflict, which can lead to confusion about self-concept, or racial-ethnic identity formation. Additionally, Gonzales, Knight, Birman, & Sirolli (2004) conclude that when this type of confusion is experienced, adolescent immigrants may demonstrate separatist attitudes, become involved in interethnic clashes, and/or engage in delinquent behaviours.

Adolescents who perceive high levels of racism are at much higher risk for less than favourable developmental outcomes. Wong et al. (2003) found that discrimination in a school setting that is perpetrated by one’s teachers or peers relates to academic, social, and mental health difficulties. Specifically, their research found that higher levels of perceived discrimination increased African American youths’ likelihood to engage in

problem behaviours and associate with negative peers. Additionally, racial discrimination may have indirect effects on adolescent development. Stone and Han (2005) found that perceptions of discrimination were positively related to perceptions of poor school quality, and perceptions of poor school quality correlated with lower grades and poor academic achievement. Such research highlights the importance of the context in which racial discrimination is perceived.

An awareness of how ‘out-group’ members perceive one’s racial-ethnic group is important because it provides individuals with a sense of preparedness for racism. As such, an awareness of racism can be conceived of as a protective factor. Adolescents, particularly racial-ethnic minority adolescents, need to develop what has been termed as an awareness of racism (Oyserman et al., 1995), awareness of others’ prejudice (Quintana & Segura-Herrera, 2003), and/or public regard (Crocker et al., 1991; Sellers et al., 1998). Altschul et al. (2006) purport that to the extent that racism and prejudice focus on negative stereotypes about academic interest, attainment, and achievement, an ‘Awareness of Racism’ may be helpful in buffering adolescents from the detrimental effects. These researchers assert that without Awareness of Racism, any negative academic feedback might otherwise reduce the sustained effort to attain academic outcomes (Crocker & Major, 1989). The findings of this study suggest that the adolescents’ frequent encounters with racism were an uncomfortable, but necessary, way to come to understand the meaning of race, ethnicity, culture and ‘otherness’ – namely, one’s racial-ethnic identity.

Racial-ethnic identity is a protective factor for adolescents

Children, who hurt, hurt all over. Children, who fail, often fail in everything they do. Risk is pervasive. If a student is at risk in one area, that student is very likely to be at risk in many other areas. (Frymier, 1992, p. 257)

Students today are being exposed to increasingly difficult life environments that can significantly obstruct their path to academic success. Research has identified a wide range of risk factors, for example, racial discrimination, psychological difficulties, community violence, and familial difficulties involving poverty, disruption, alcoholism and violence. These factors can negatively affect students’ lives, interfere with learning, and increase the likelihood of school failure (Borman & Overman, 2004). However, research has also shown that there are a number of factors and interactions in students’ lives that can help

them defy the odds and experience educational resilience (Waxman, Gray, & Padron, 2004).

Adolescents' cultural and/or racial-ethnic identity can have a significant influence on how they deal with adverse circumstances. Moreover, people's world views, largely influenced by their cultural background, can have a powerful influence on their ability to successfully adapt to the environment. According to Sue and Sue (2003), world views are "composed of our attitudes, values, opinions, and concepts and affect how we think, define events, make decisions, and behave" (p. 268). Members of minority groups often perceive and experience their lives differently based in part on their cultural upbringing and unique world views. In Western cultures the dominant groups tend to assume their world view is shared by members of all other cultures (Sue & Sue, 2003). This group tends to emphasise individual-centred values, verbal expressiveness, self-disclosure, and direct communication of thoughts and feelings. However, many members of other racial-ethnic groups do not share those same values, which can cause them to make meaning of their world differently. The coping strategies adolescents employ to negotiate their world, including the school environment, are thought to be based in part on their cultural attitudes and values.

There is a strong belief that minority adolescents must develop a strong, positive racial-ethnic identity to protect themselves from the prejudice, racism, and discrimination that remain common in society. There is ample evidence in the data from the present study that adolescents from all of the racial-ethnic groups, both native born and immigrant, experience discrimination. Further, self reports of experiences of racism or discrimination have been shown to be correlated with lower self-esteem, increased depressive symptoms, increased behavioural problems, and heightened general psychological distress (Kao, 2000). Even the simple expectation of discrimination (e.g., anticipating a challenge by security in a store, receiving less attention in class from a teacher) is related to increased levels of stress which can seriously compromise psychosocial well-being.

Although experiences with discrimination were reported frequently in the study data, evidence from Study 1c suggest that a positive racial-ethnic identity seems to provide adolescents with coping skills. The high-achieving students in this study felt a pride in their racial-ethnic group membership, had self-reported high self-esteem, and an active, yet tolerant, approach to dealing with experiences of racism. The high-achieving

adolescents constructed a racial-ethnic identity whose meaning included the attitude that academic achievement is a part of being an in-group member. While all of the students felt it was important to do well at school to make their parents proud, the Māori and Samoan students, in particular, also talked about the importance of dispelling the stereotypes about intellectual inferiority attached to their racial-ethnic group. Positive racial-ethnic identity and commitment to group membership helped with the academic motivation, achievement, ability beliefs, and career aspirations for these students.

Longitudinal research (Chavous et al., 2003) has shown that Black adolescents who perceived their racial-ethnic identity to be central to their self-concept attended school more regularly, achieved higher grades, and were more likely to graduate and go on to college. The effects of a strong, positive racial-ethnic identity seem to be similarly positive among many racial-ethnic groups. Research on Native American, South-east Asian, and Latino adolescents has also documented that academic motivation, persistence, and achievement are similarly related to a strong, positive racial-ethnic identity, albeit in various ways. For example, the strength of racial-ethnic identification among youth of Chinese and Mexican heritage is clearly related to their valuing of educational achievement goals and their self-identification with the goals of their school (Fuligni, Witkow & Garcia, 2005).

Fuligni, Witkow and Garcia's (2005) findings suggest that a strong, positive racial-ethnic identity may support adolescent psychosocial well-being and academic engagement at school as well, which in turn enables them to be resilient. Educational resilience has been defined as "the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences" (Wang et al., 1994, p. 46). Categories of individual resilience or protective factors identified by researchers have included social and academic competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and sense of purpose (Waxman et al., 2003). Educational resilience is neither the result of an individual personality trait nor the outcome of a single intervention (Franklin, 2000). Rather, this construct is considered to be a dynamic set of interactions between the student and resources in his or her environment that work together to interrupt a negative trajectory and support academic success (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Moreover, resilience is not a fixed attribute in individuals, and the successful negotiation of psychological risks at one point in a person's life does

not guarantee that the individual will not react adversely to other stresses when the situations change. As Rutter (1981) stated, “If circumstances change, resilience alters” (p. 323).

Resilient students are those who “have a set of personality characteristics, dispositions, and beliefs that promote their academic success regardless of their backgrounds or current circumstances” (McMillan & Reed, 1994, p. 139). The resilient high-achieving students in Study 1c had a strong sense of self-efficacy and believed they were successful because they chose to be. They also had a psychological support system both in and out of school that provided encouragement to them. They used their time positively to complete homework and other school tasks, but also to find out more about their racial-ethnic heritages in addition to participating in cultural activities and celebrations. These resilient adolescents had an internal locus of control, a positive sense of self and feelings of empowerment.

Various protective factors seemed to contribute towards the development of resilience in the high-achieving students in Study 1c. The development of a strong belief in self was evident in all of the high-achieving participants, and was manifested in an understanding about who they were, what they wanted to achieve in life, and the direction they needed to take to realise their goals. This positive sense of self developed in members of all four racial-ethnic groups, despite the urban environment, which, in the case of three of the five schools, surrounded them with negative circumstances including economic struggles and poverty, the pervasive availability of drugs, gang and community violence, and family or peer group problems.

Common personal characteristics demonstrated by the high-achieving participants, in addition to resilience, included determination, motivation and inner will, positive use of problem solving, independence, realistic aspirations, heightened sensitivity to each other and the world around them, and appreciation of cultural diversity. Protective factors also included support networks that existed within the high school to develop their achievement, including other high-achieving peers, family members, supportive teachers, and other adults. This network was reported as essential to the academic success of the high-achieving participants in Study 1c.

Furthermore, all of the high-achieving students in Study 1c were involved in numerous activities that were held both during and after school hours. Most participated in more than one sport and all were also involved in numerous school and community cultural clubs and activities, including jazz bands, language clubs, service groups, and academic competitions. These extracurricular activities had a major impact on these young people, contributing to their heightened self-concept, their positive use of spare time, and their ability to excel academically. Many were productively busy every day for several hours after school, which gave them little time to fall prey to some of the urban problems that may have troubled their less productive peers, including drugs and gangs. Therefore, the findings of Study 1c emphasise the mediating role of a sense of wide-ranging social connectedness (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Academically at-risk students who participate in extracurricular activities with friends, facilitating their social integration in school, are less likely to drop out of school (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997).

Another major factor that some of the students in Study 1c believed contributed to their successful academic achievement was their involvement in the gifted and talented education classes. The Study 1c participants believed that these classes provided them with the opportunity to work hard and to be grouped with other students who wanted to work and to learn. Most of the participants in this study also appeared to have families that nurtured them in different ways and at different levels. It is clear that positive self-concept (including self-concept related to racial-ethnic identity), determination, high self-esteem, supportive family environments and academic challenge act as a buffer and helped these students to be academically resilient.

Overall, the adolescents in the Study 1c had to manage the tensions between their racial-ethnic and academic identities as they were positioned, and positioned themselves, in relation to cultural practices inside of the school context, and out. It is clear that these adolescents, who were themselves the targets of stereotyping, did not necessarily incorporate these stereotypes and the accompanying negative attributes into their identity and behaviour. Rather, they developed strategies to handle situations in which stereotyping might have occurred. Given individual differences in choices of strategies, members of the same group are likely to differ in their vulnerability to stereotypes and in their success in navigating the larger society. The findings of Study 1c show that the high-achieving students engaged in what has been termed ‘cultural flexibility’ (Carter, 2010),

‘cultural frame switching’ (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000), ‘biculturalism’ (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997) and/or ‘interculturalism’ (Sussman, 2000). That is, they are able to value, assess and negotiate their ways through, and across, different cultural and social peer groups and environments. Carter (2003) has termed these students ‘cultural straddlers’ because they are able to successfully navigate, and participate, in multiple cultural contexts, thus developing multiple social identities.

Students who learn to successfully manage a range of social identities can more effectively negotiate their way through high school and other significant cultural environments. Studies of culturally flexible students show consistent results of positive academic, psychological, and social attainment, compared with their relatively monocultural peers (Carter, 2005; Phinney and Devich-Navarro, 1997; Trueba, 2002). The present study indicates that ultimately, culturally flexible students possess the ability to interact across different social and cultural settings, embrace multiple forms of cultural knowledge and expand their own understanding of self. They can also hold inclusive perspectives about others who differ in myriad social aspects or identities.

Few scholars, if any, however, have written explicitly about cultural flexibility, particularly as it pertains to students’ racial-ethnic informed social behaviours in school. Yet, this study has clearly shown that students negotiate their own social identities and peer networks in ways that compel them to make choices about whether to interact across the racial-ethnic categories ascribed to them, or to remain within their circumscribed limits. Phinney and Devich-Navarro (1997) have presented a multidimensional view of cultural flexibility, which they term ‘biculturalism’ and found evidence that racial-ethnic minority students vary in the extent to which they identify with their racial-ethnic and national heritages. Some are termed *Blended Bicultural* and identify with a combination of both cultures; others are termed *Alternating Bicultural* and move back and forth between their two cultural worlds, and; still others are *Separate* in their racial-ethnic identity and are embedded primarily within their racial-ethnic culture. The high-achieving students in Study 1c engaged in all of these activities, choosing a different identity for different contexts. These students will be best placed to take advantage of opportunities because they have a strong sense of racial-ethnic identity, but have also developed “hybrid identities and cultural formations that transform the ‘old’ ethnic culture and the ‘new majority’ culture in creative ways” (p. 118). Perron, Vondracek, Skorikov,

Tremblay, and Corbiere (1998) have argued that the more students explore and affirm their own racial-ethnic identity, while showing openness to members of other racial-ethnic groups, the more likely they are to aspire to post-secondary education.

Researchers have established the dynamic nature of culture in racial-ethnic identity and discuss how there exist multiple forms of cultural identity transitions. A 'subtractive' identity transition is one where students gradually lose touch with their native/home culture identity (Valenzuela 1999). An 'additive' identity transition is one where students grow closer to the host/dominant cultural identity, but still maintain some connections with their cultural heritage. An 'affirmative' (or sometimes perceived as oppositional) identity transition involves students rejecting the mainstream cultural identity and maintaining their own cultural centrality (Gibson 1997). Lastly, an 'intercultural' identity transition is one where the students define themselves "as world citizens and are able to interact appropriately and effectively in many countries or regions" (Sussman, 2000, p. 368). To be culturally flexible, adolescents from multi-ethnic schools will most likely have to develop 'intercultural' or 'additive' identities. These identity options characterise students who define themselves as world citizens and racial-ethnic group members. They are consequently able to interact effectively in multiple cultural settings. Intercultural identities enable students to be willing and inclined to participate in various cultural environments and to personally maintain different cultural schemas (Carter, 2010). Not only does the intercultural individual possess multiple cultural competencies, but he or she also does not denigrate one culture in favour of another; they conceive of themselves as multifaceted cultural beings (LaFramboise et al., 1993).

While social psychologists use the term 'interculturalism', sociologists utilise the idea of 'omnivorousness' – capturing the individual's capacity to be eclectic and multicultural in his or her tastes, knowledge, or cultural appreciation (Peterson & Kern, 1996). Culturally flexible individuals may maintain strong levels of individualism or self-views, since they participate in and move across diverse social and cultural environments. At the individual level, self-esteem could be a major determinant of cultural flexibility. A strong sense of self might imbue individuals with the confidence to move comfortably across different racial-ethnic identity contexts. In other words, the culturally flexible individual, enabled by a high self-concept and self-esteem, may not necessarily feel great pressure to conform to delineated, group-based identity markers, self-segregation, or thick and salient in-

group/out-group boundaries. Rather, he or she could make more expansive choices about his or her social interactions and participation in myriad cultural activities.

This study shows that resilience emanates from three main sources: the individual, the family, and the environment or social context. Adolescents most likely to have high levels of resilience possess the following characteristics: sociability, above-average intelligence, an internal locus of control, positive self-concept, and sense of embedded achievement (Borman & Overman, 2004). They are also hard workers, are involved in extracurricular activities, and are able to rely on at least one supportive adult for guidance and mentoring. Catterall (1998) also found that the most important protective factors that contributed to academic engagement included family support, school responsiveness, and engagement in school activities. In this study, the link between families and schools, as well as strong community support, have been shown to be two of the key components that contribute to educational resilience.

In summary, critical racial-ethnic identity issues emerge for adolescents educated in multi-ethnic school contexts in which their social and cultural realities are either highlighted, celebrated, disparaged or made invisible. In a developmental period when racial-ethnic identity markers can mean much to them, many students learn about the meaning of their group membership in the situations where they interact with one another both socially and academically. However, developing students' self-esteem and cultural flexibility in multi-ethnic high schools has less to do with whether these students sit in the classroom with students from other racial-ethnic groups, and more to do with whether positive familial, cultural, and social supports are in place.

The next chapter, Chapter Seven, presents the conclusions that can be drawn from this study in relation to the research questions, explores the significance of the study for students, educators, parents and schools, presents the study's limitations and contribution to the racial-ethnic identity literature, and makes suggestions for future research.

Chapter Seven:

Conclusion

Race, ethnicity, and identity – one can almost guarantee that these three social concepts will play a role in the educational well-being of all adolescents in New Zealand; complexly so. Yet explanations for why and how they matter have continued to elude educational researchers. For most, if not all of us, our socialisation as racial-ethnic beings begins early in life within our families, and much of this socialisation continues during the compulsory years of schooling, from preschool to high school, and even further during the tertiary years and beyond. Racial-ethnic identities emerge in institutional, cultural, and personal contexts; they are neither static nor one dimensional; and their meanings, as expressed in schools, neighbourhoods, peer groups, and families, vary across time, space, and place. But perhaps, more critically, what is relevant in the field of educational research is *how* racial-ethnic identity and the concomitant cultural behaviours matter to educational engagement.

This study furthers our understanding of the influences on adolescents' racial-ethnic identity construction by exploring the perspectives of early adolescents from four racial-ethnic groups – Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese. As evidenced by the findings of this study, racial-ethnic identity had a significant impact on the adolescents' school lives, social relationships, educational engagement, and social identities. To investigate this phenomenon, this study asked the following questions: 'What influences early adolescent racial-ethnic identity development?', 'How do early adolescents enact racial-ethnic identity in high school contexts?' and, 'How does racial-ethnic identity impact on the way early adolescents engage at high school?'

This study shows that New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese students' academic, cultural, psychological, and social experiences are *heterogeneous*. That is, multiple frames of racial-ethnic identity and cultural orientation exist among diverse students in society. Relying on a multidimensional perspective of racial-ethnic identity, this study has shown how four groups of students who attend multi-ethnic schools in Auckland, New Zealand, differ in their interpretations of how racial-ethnic identity affects their day-to-day school and personal lives. These students differ in their individual beliefs, opinions, and attitudes about how they feel group members should act, which

includes students' perspectives about what it means to 'act Māori', 'be a good Chinese', or 'prove you are Samoan enough'.

The influences on racial-ethnic identity construction

The results of this study show that racial-ethnic identity in its broadest sense is comprised of three key components – race, ethnicity and culture. The three components interact together to give adolescents a sense of individual, and collective, identity. The first component is race, and although the term race is no longer useful as a biological construct, we cannot avoid the fact that socially constructed perceptions of race, and consequently racism, are an everyday occurrence for some members of society. The idea of race “distorts, exaggerates, and maximises human differences; it is the most extreme form of difference that humans can assert about another human being or group, as one of its components is the belief that differences are permanent and cannot be overcome” (Smedley & Smedley, 2005, p. 22). As such, notions of race essentialise and stereotype people, their social statuses, their social behaviours, and their social ranking. In the form of racism, race continues to play an important role in determining how individuals construe, indeed construct, their racial-ethnic identities.

The second component is ethnicity, which is most closely associated with the issues of boundary-making, boundary-maintenance, and membership. Ethnic boundaries determine who is a member, and who is not, by the use of criteria such as language, knowledge of descent, participation in cultural activities and the like. Therefore, racial-ethnic identities are largely dependent on one's knowledge, or mastery of, component three – culture. Culture dictates the appropriate and inappropriate content of a particular ethnicity and designates the language, religion, belief system, art, music, dress and traditions that constitute ethnic group membership. These elements of culture are part of a “toolkit”, as Swidler (1996, p. 273) called it, used to create the meaning and way of life seen to be unique to particular ethnic groups. Thus, culture can be seen as the substance of ethnicity. However, humans, as individuals or groups, are not born “with propensities for any particular culture, culture traits, or language, only with the capacity to acquire and to create culture” (Smedley & Smedley, 2005, p. 17).

As such, racial-ethnic identity development is complex. Primarily, one's ethnicity is negotiated, defined and produced through one's social interactions with others, most importantly one's family and peers. It is within these interactions that one learns about

culture – the acts, languages, stories and customs associated with being a member of a racial-ethnic group. However, racial-ethnic identities are also influenced by external racial, social, economic, and political messages that shape the feasibility and attractiveness of certain identity choices. These three components influence the construction of racial-ethnic identity, and the meanings individuals attach to it.

There were a number of key influences on the ways the adolescents constructed their racial-ethnic identities. The first was their sense of connectedness and belonging to their racial-ethnic group. Across all of the three studies the adolescents reported the importance of knowing where you come from and knowing what connects you to others as a member of a racial-ethnic group. One of the two most important ways that the adolescents constructed that positive sense of connectedness to their racial-ethnic group was through socialisation messages from their families and peers, and participation in racial-ethnic group cultural activities. The use of the study questionnaire showed that the search for the meaning of one's racial-ethnic identity is a complex process, characterised by a sense of Commitment, a desire for racial-ethnic Exploration as a means of acquiring culture, and a sense of group Connectedness – inside and outside of school contexts. Adolescents narratives illustrated that their families are often the most potent source of information in the process of racial-ethnic identity exploration and the acquisition of one's cultural knowledge. However, this study confirms previous theoretical postulations, that by adolescence, individuals are also influenced by their interactions with their peers (Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2001) and their experience of racism and racial-ethnic stereotypes (Altschul et al., 2006).

Enacting racial-ethnic identities in school contexts

This study provides evidence that racial-ethnic identities matter for students attending multi-ethnic high schools in Auckland, New Zealand. The study's examination of adolescents' racial-ethnic identities suggests that racial-ethnic group pride and connectedness can be both constrained and enhanced in the school context. This thesis proposes that a positive racial-ethnic identity is important for adolescents attending multi-ethnic schools because “when students...develop healthy, positive, and strong racial identities...they are freer to focus on the need to achieve” (Ford, Grantham, & Moore, 2006, p. 16).

The qualitative findings indicated two distinct ways in which adolescents conceptualised the meaning of their racial-ethnic group membership and the role of their racial-ethnic identity to their broader social selves. First, those adolescents who considered their racial-ethnic identity to be a meaningful component of their social selves discussed the overarching influence of racial-ethnic identity in shaping their world views, friendships and the way they made meaning of their experiences at school. Conversely, those adolescents who did not consider racial-ethnic identity to be a meaningful component of their social selves described their racial-ethnic group membership as a mere descriptor, but not as something that consciously shaped their life experience.

The findings of this study have established that Māori and Samoan students filter most of their interactions with others, inside and outside of their group, through the lens of their racial-ethnic identities. Their racial-ethnic identities were salient in most situations in the school context for three reasons: the perceived persistent racism and negative stereotyping from others; their propensity to hang out together in groups at school, which enabled them to enact their racial-ethnic identities and safely practise their culture; and the importance they placed on their racial-ethnic group membership and cultural ‘toolkit’, that is, their unique language, traditions and other cultural ‘tools’ gave them a sense of belonging and connection to other group members. Because adolescents have the need to belong, they often interact with the peers, whom they feel they share the most characteristics, hence increasing their chances of being accepted (Osterman, 2000). In multi-ethnic high schools, this common characteristic is often racial-ethnic identity. The Māori and Samoan students mostly associated with their in-group members because they reported it is comforting to be surrounded by people with similar experiences and backgrounds. This study postulates that this social support is additionally needed to counteract the negative stereotypes that exist regarding their racial-ethnic groups. The positive influence of in-group friendships and involvement in cultural activities helped the Māori and Samoan students to buffer experiences of racism and negative stereotyping.

The Chinese students were less apt to invoke racial-ethnic identity in the school context, but despite this, race and/or ethnicity still played a significant role in their school experiences via their perceptions of the racism they experienced. Whilst the Chinese students considered themselves members of the Chinese racial-ethnic group, and were proud of their cultural attributes, they did not choose to enact their racial-ethnic identities

at school, most likely because of the threat of bringing attention to themselves and the stereotype of them as a ‘model minority’. The model minority stereotype of Chinese people includes the belief that they are “hardworking, intelligent, and ambitious” which leads to a sense that they “pose a threat to other groups in terms of educational, economic, and political opportunities” (Maddux, Galinsky, Cuddy, & Polifroni, 2008, p. 86). This belief was reported to be the source of a large percentage of the racism they experienced. Many of the most common ethnic activities that the Chinese adolescents reported enjoying (e.g., speaking Chinese, eating Chinese food) likely included the presence of other Chinese people, such as members of the adolescents’ families. This would have been a situation where racial-ethnic identity became salient and implies that interacting with others in one’s racial-ethnic group influences identification and Connectedness.

In multi-ethnic school contexts all students have encounters where they experience being the ‘other’, and this caused the Pākehā students in this study to think about what constituted their racial-ethnic identities. For a number of the Pākehā students, they were a numerical minority in their multi-ethnic school and tended to be discontented at the lack of an ‘ethnic’ identity and/or an easily identifiable culture, and expressed the desire to have a unique racial-ethnic identity and pride that the minority groups seemed to share amongst themselves. The Pākehā students had lower levels of group Connectedness, Exploration and Commitment than the other three groups. Frankenberg (1993) proposes that this response may relate to Pākehā fear that any overt acknowledgement of their racial-ethnic identity could be thought of as racist. This can be considered a protective strategy and is often perceived by those adopting it as a means of minimising racism and their majority group status. The Pākehā students’ generalised lack of engagement with their race or ethnicity is consistent with past scholarship on Whiteness (Grossman & Charmaraman, 2009). This suggests the need to educate Pākehā adolescents about their own racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and to challenge the often invisible default standard of their majority group status. Future research should investigate the unique racial-ethnic socialisation within Pākehā families, such that the cultural practices of language, food, customs, and celebrations might be examined in as much detail as the cultural traditions of ethnic ‘others’.

Lastly, it is evident from the findings of the study that the high-achieving students had two important common attributes aside from high academic achievement – they were all

involved and successful across a range of contexts and they all had clear and informed views about their racial-ethnic identity. They reported having conversations with family members “regularly” about issues to do with race and ethnicity. Whether they thought their racial-ethnic group membership was important for them, or not, these students could justify their thoughts on the matter. They also reported being in maths clubs, cultural performance groups, computer clubs, sports teams and language groups, among others, and had different friends across these groups. These opportunities to mix across various social and cultural boundaries in and outside of the schools mattered because it enabled the students to acquire a range of skills, knowledge and cultural ways of being. They were more ‘culturally flexible’ and comfortable across a range of cultural contexts.

Schools and families must offer adolescents more opportunities to acquire different kinds of racial, ethnic and/or cultural knowledge. The acquisition of cultural knowledge alongside academic knowledge need not be seen as an either/or choice for schools and parents. Indigenous American writer and researcher Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley (1995) has stated,

In the past, Native people tended to view formal education as a hindrance to their traditional ways, but now they are beginning to look at it in a different light. They are seeking to gain control of their education and give it direction to accomplish the goals they set for it, strengthening their own culture while simultaneously embracing western science as a second force that can help them maintain themselves with as much self-reliance and self-sufficiency as possible. (p. 11)

Hohepa (2001) has similarly argued that cultural resurgence amongst racial-ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples can, and should, involve learning and reclaiming ancestral languages and practices, and working towards various forms of cultural self-determination. Schools can play a supporting role in terms of encouraging students to bring these aspirations into the school context with them. Educating students from racially or ethnically diverse groups must involve encouraging them to take their languages, their cultures and their knowledge with them. It should encourage access to knowledge of the world, not at the expense of their cultural knowledge, but rather alongside the acquisition of their own knowledge. The findings of the present study have suggested that this will have positive spin-offs for students’ educational and

social engagement at school.

Penetito (2010) purports that there are two basic requirements in order for students to feel good about school: “firstly if it holds up a mirror to them and they can see themselves growing and developing in a way that is personally meaningful for them; and secondly, if it helps them to project themselves into the immediate world around them as well as into the world at large” (2010, p. 35). Exposure to a range of different ‘cultural ways of being’ can help to build better understanding of other racial-ethnic groups and cultures – while simultaneously strengthening one’s own. Through learning about others, we come to know ourselves. Therefore, the provision of events in schools and communities which dispel stereotypes, along with experiences in which students’ bilingual ability can be seen as advantageous, would lead to students feeling greater commitment to their racial-ethnic selves. These events and experiences could be positive racial-ethnic encounters, if they provide opportunities to demonstrate competence across a range of curricular and extra-curricular subjects, including peer, community and school recognition for expertise in multiple fields. These kinds of events would enable adolescents of all racial-ethnic groups to deconstruct stereotypes. Importantly, these programmes should ascribe equal status to racial-ethnic groups and encourage dialogue as a means of dispelling negative stereotypes.

Future directions

One of the strengths of this study is the integration of the findings from three studies. The use of three sets of data provided a multilayered understanding of the development of racial-ethnic identity in adolescents. In addition, the integration of multiple sets of findings not only ensured the validity of the research findings, but also enabled the researcher to explore the phenomenon of racial-ethnic identity through a range of lenses. While the quantitative data allowed for a broad understanding of the ways the four groups of adolescents constructed their racial-ethnic identity, the qualitative findings expanded on the meaningfulness of their experiences as members of their racial-ethnic group. For example, the Awareness of Racism measure in Study 1a showed that all four groups of adolescents perceived that they experienced high levels of racism in their lives. However, the responses to the open-ended questionnaire items in Study 1b, and the interview data in Study 1c indicated that the source, content and impact of the racism was completely different for each of the four groups. This study advocates multiple methods of data

collection as a means of gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomena being researched.

Although this study furthers our understanding of the influences on racial-ethnic identity development, there are certain limitations to consider. First, while this study was concerned with understanding the influences on adolescents' racial-ethnic identity development and school engagement in multi-ethnic school contexts, it is acknowledged that many other variables in the adolescents' social world could also have influenced their experiences as members of their racial-ethnic group, including; their family's socio-economic status, the parents' education levels or type of employment, and the students' own academic achievement data. Further studies should include these variables to garner a broader socio-cultural and educational picture of adolescents' development. In addition, future studies should develop a measure that directly examines adolescents' perceptions of the ways in which the school addresses issues associated with race and ethnicity.

This study focussed solely on the experiences of Year Nine students. Although sample selection was predicated on Erikson's (1968) argument that identity formation is a central task of adolescence, future studies should examine longitudinally the development of racial-ethnic identity and the influence of the school context on that development. For example, it is quite probable that the experiences of these same adolescents in Year Seven (aged 10-11 years) and Year 12 (aged 15-16 years) would vary from what they reported in Year Nine. Consequently, the use of longitudinal designs would allow for greater understanding of the influences on adolescent racial-ethnic identity development in multi-ethnic school contexts, across time.

Future studies should also examine the ways in which the various socialising agents (parents, peers and teachers) jointly influence the process of racial-ethnic identity development. As such, future research should not only examine the racial-ethnic identity of the adolescents, but studies should also measure the racial-ethnic identity of peers, parents, and school staff. Therefore, although the focus of this study was adolescents' perceptions and interpretations, future work should also recognise and better account for the fact that these perceptions are shaped by their relationships with others.

Finally, the analyses of the quantitative portion of the study did not permit the determination of the directionality of the relationships examined. Although these analyses

furthered our understanding, future work should incorporate more sophisticated methods of analysis that permit researchers to determine both causality and the specific nature of the relationships between the racial-ethnic identity components. Furthermore, researchers should aim to supplement self-report data with data from other sources, such as official school achievement data. In sum, this study is the first step in understanding the influences on adolescent racial-ethnic identity development in multi-ethnic school contexts.

Appendix A: Study Questionnaire and Student Consent Statement



- I agree to voluntarily participate in this research project (please tick the box)

Student Questionnaire

Whilst we all live in New Zealand and might consider ourselves New Zealanders, every person is also a member of an ethnic group, sometimes more than one ethnic group. Some names of ethnic groups include: Samoan, Chinese, Māori, Tongan, and New Zealand European/Pakeha.

1. To which ethnic group/s do you belong? (Tick the box or boxes that apply to you):

- ¹ NZ European/Pakeha ² Māori ³ Samoan ⁴ Cook Island Māori
- ⁵ Tongan ⁶ Niuean ⁷ Chinese ⁸ Indian
- ⁹ Other (such as Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan) please state:

2. If you belong to more than one ethnic group, which is the main ethnic group you belong to? (please tick one box only)

- ¹ NZ European/Pakeha ² Māori ³ Samoan ⁴ Cook Island Māori
- ⁵ Tongan ⁶ Niuean ⁷ Chinese ⁸ Indian
- ⁹ Other (such as Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan) please state: _____

3. To which ethnic group(s) does your mother belong?

- ¹ NZ European/Pakeha ² Māori ³ Samoan ⁴ Cook Island Māori
- ⁵ Tongan ⁶ Niuean ⁷ Chinese ⁸ Indian
- ⁹ Other (such as Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan) please state: _____

4. To which ethnic group(s) does your father belong?

¹ NZ European/Pakeha ² Māori ³ Samoan ⁴ Cook Island Māori

⁵ Tongan ⁶ Niuean ⁷ Chinese ⁸ Indian

⁹ Other (such as Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan) please state: _____

5. What language(s) can you hold a conversation in?

¹ English ² Māori ³ Samoan ⁴ Cook Island Māori

⁵ Tongan ⁶ Niuean ⁷ Chinese ⁸ Indian

⁹ Other (such as Dutch, Japanese, Tokelauan) please state: _____

Thinking about your main ethnic group, please tell me how much you agree with these statements:

No		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, like its history and customs	r	r	r	r	r
2.	I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	r	r	r	r	r
3.	I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	r	r	r	r	r
4.	I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its achievements	r	r	r	r	r
5.	People from my ethnic group do well at school	r	r	r	r	r
6.	It is important for my family and my ethnic group that I succeed in school	r	r	r	r	r
7.	I understand what being a member of my ethnic group means	r	r	r	r	r
8.	If I work hard and get good grades, other people from my ethnic group will respect me	r	r	r	r	r
9.	I feel close to others in my ethnic group	r	r	r	r	r
10.	I am proud of my ethnic group	r	r	r	r	r

11.	If I am successful it will help my ethnic group	r	r	r	r	r
12.	Some people treat me differently because I am from my ethnic group	r	r	r	r	r
13.	It is important that I know how to speak and understand my main ethnic language	r	r	r	r	r
14.	People other than my family expect me to do well at school	r	r	r	r	r
15.	I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group	r	r	r	r	r
16.	I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group	r	r	r	r	r
17.	Speaking my language makes me feel closer to others in my ethnic group	r	r	r	r	r
18.	It helps me when others in my ethnic group are successful	r	r	r	r	r
19.	My ethnic group has less opportunities	r	r	r	r	r
20.	People might have negative ideas about my abilities because I am from my ethnic group	r	r	r	r	r
21.	The way I look and speak influences what others expect of me	r	r	r	r	r

Thinking about your main ethnic group, please tell me how often you do the following things:

No		Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Quite Often	Often
22.	I spend time getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own	r	r	r	r	r
23.	I feel embarrassed when people ask me what ethnic group I belong to	r	r	r	r	r
24.	My friends and I use our own language when we hang out together	r	r	r	r	r
25.	I get teased or mocked by people from other ethnic groups because of the ethnic group I belong to	r	r	r	r	r
26.	My ethnic group is portrayed positively in the media (TV, radio, music)	r	r	r	r	r
27.	I like to participate in the cultural activities associated with my ethnic group (church, traditional ceremonies, celebrations)	r	r	r	r	r

Please list two things you like about being a member of your ethnic group (s).

Please list two things you don't like about being a member of your ethnic group (s).

Finally, could you answer a few simple demographic questions (please tick or write the correct answer)

Are you: Female Male

How long have you lived in New Zealand? _____ Years **or** all my life

Relative to other Year 9 students, how well are you doing in your school work?

Below average Average Above average

*Thank you for doing this questionnaire. I appreciate your help.
Melinda Webber*

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the 8 October 2008 for a period of three years. Reference number 2008/373.

Appendix B: Interview Schedule



Interview Schedule

(Indicative Interview Questions)

Researcher: Melinda Webber

Research Topic: Negotiating a place at high school: The content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity

Date:

These are examples of the questions that the researcher will use to prompt discussion during the interviews.

1. What ethnic group/s do you identify with?
2. In what ways do you feel you belong to this ethnic group?
3. What are the positives about belonging to the _____ group?
4. What types of racism and stereotypes are you aware of that are associated with being _____?
5. In what ways do _____ achieve at school?
6. What do others believe about _____ ability to achieve at school?
7. What were you most worried about when you started high school?
8. What were you excited about when you started high school?
9. In what ways do you experience peer pressure and how do you deal with it?
10. What home/community factors impact on your schooling and how do you deal with them?
11. What school/teacher factors impact on your schooling and how do you deal with them?

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the _____ for a period of three years from _____. Reference number _____.

Appendix C: Principals/Board of Trustees Information Sheet



Principal / Board of Trustees Information Sheet

Researcher: Melinda Webber

Research Topic: *Negotiating a place at high school: The content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity*

Date:

Dear Principal and Board of Trustees members,

My name is Melinda Webber and I am a PhD student at the University of Auckland Faculty of Education. I am about to undertake a research project and I seek your permission to ask your Year nine students to participate in this research project. The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship of ethnic identity to school transition and academic achievement. The study also wishes to examine the strategies employed by adolescents negotiating a space in a new school context. This study seeks to appreciate what influences ethnic identity, how ethnic identity is enacted, and how it impacts on academic achievement.

This study has two components:

- A 15-minute questionnaire completed by all Year nine students.
- A 30-minute confidential interview with two high achieving students from each the four main ethnic groups being studied: New Zealand European/Pakeha, Māori, Chinese and Samoan.

I request your permission to:

- Ask all Year nine students, and their parents/caregivers/guardians, to give their consent to take part in the study via information provided in a school newsletter.
- Conduct a 15-minute anonymous questionnaire with all Year nine students. The questionnaire asks 32 questions about the content of their racial-ethnic identity and culture. Students will not be asked to identify themselves in this questionnaire.
- Ask form teachers to administer the questionnaire at school, in a time that will cause the least disruption to both students and teachers. Teachers will be asked to administer the questionnaires in class but the completed questionnaires will be dropped into a box at the end of the class so that the teacher cannot easily identify any particular student.
- Interview two high achieving Year nine students from each of the following ethnic groups - New Zealand European/Pakeha, Māori, Samoan and Chinese. These interviews will last approximately 30 minutes and will be conducted on school grounds in a time that causes least interruption to the school day. The interviews will inquire into the strategies these high-achieving students use to negotiate the impact their peers; home and school have on their academic performance at school. These interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed.

The students' participation is completely voluntary and their participation or non-participation will not be revealed to anyone except the researcher. Non-participation should not affect the students in terms of their relationship with the school or their grades. They, or their families, may withdraw their permission at any time with no negative consequences. The information interview participants provide may also be withdrawn up to the date of data analysis in May 2009. Only the researcher, transcriber, data entry person(s) and academic supervisors will have access to the information contained in the questionnaires, interviews, observations and consent forms, which will be stored in a locked cupboard in my office at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. They will then be destroyed.

The data gathered at your school and content from the subsequent doctoral thesis may be published for a wider academic audience, but the identity of your school and the students' involved will not be revealed at any point.

Your school will be given a copy of the final report and the researcher will present the study findings to staff, parents or the Board of Trustees at the schools request.

If you have any questions about this research or would like to discuss any concerns prior to providing consent, please feel free to contact me at 09 6238899 (ext 48456), my doctoral supervisors, or Co-Heads of School.

<p>Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley 09 6238899 (ext 82554). e.mckinley@auckland.ac.nz The Hub, N452 Faculty of Education The University of Auckland 74 Epsom Avenue, Epsom Auckland 1023 NEW ZEALAND</p>	<p>Professor John Hattie 09 6238899 (ext 82496) j.hattie@auckland.ac.nz The Hub, N452 Faculty of Education The University of Auckland 74 Epsom Avenue, Epsom Auckland 1023 NEW ZEALAND</p>	<p>Dr Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington / Hemi Dale (Te Puna Wananga - School of Māori Education) c.mcmurchy@auckland.ac.nz h.dale@auckland.ac.nz Faculty of Education The University of Auckland 78 Epsom Avenue, Epsom Auckland 1023 NEW ZEALAND</p>
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

If your school is happy to participate in this study please sign the attached consent form.

Kind regards,

Melinda Webber

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the 1 October for a period of three years. Reference number 2008/373.

Appendix D: Principals/Board of Trustees Consent Form



Principal / Board of Trustees Consent Form

(This information will be stored for a period of six years)

Researcher: Melinda Webber

Research Topic: *Negotiating a place at high school: The content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity*

- I have read the participant information sheet and understand the nature of the study.
- I have been offered the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that our participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- I agree that non-participation will not affect the student's relationship with the school or their grades.
- I understand that the school and all research participants may withdraw their information up until the date of data analysis, May 2009.
- I understand that only the researcher, transcriber and academic supervisors will have access to the information contained in the questionnaires, interviews, observations and consent forms.
- I understand that all data and consent forms will be stored separately in the researchers office at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. They will then be destroyed.

I give my permission for the school's participation in this project.

Signature _____

Name _____

Date _____

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the 1 October 2008 for a period of three years. Reference number 2008/373.

Appendix E: Parent Information Sheet and Assent Form (for Questionnaire)



Parent Information Sheet (Questionnaire)

Researcher: Melinda Webber

Research Topic: *Negotiating a place at high school: The content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity*

Date: 24 November 2008

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

My name is Melinda Webber and I am a PhD student at the University of Auckland Faculty of Education. I am about to undertake a research project at your child's school and I seek your permission to ask your child to participate in that research project. The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship of ethnic identity to school transition and academic achievement. The study also wishes to examine the strategies employed by adolescents negotiating friendships, identity issues and achievement in the new school context. This study seeks to appreciate what influences ethnic identity, how ethnic identity is enacted, and how it impacts on academic achievement.

Your child's involvement in the study would require him/her to complete a 15-minute anonymous questionnaire, answering non-sensitive questions about his or her ethnic identity. The questionnaire asks 32 multiple-choice questions about the content of their ethnic identity and culture. This questionnaire will be administered at school, in a time that will cause the least disruption to both students and teachers. Teachers will be asked to administer the questionnaires in class but the completed questionnaires will be dropped into a box at the end of the class so that the teacher cannot easily identify any particular student. Your child's participation in the study is completely voluntary and his or her participation or non-participation will not be revealed to anyone except the researcher. Non-participation will not affect the students in terms of their relationship with the school or their grades. You may withdraw your permission for your child to participate at any time with no negative consequences. Only the researcher, transcriber, data entry person(s) and academic supervisors will have access to the information contained in the questionnaires, which will be stored in a locked cupboard in my office at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. They will then be destroyed. All written material will be confidential and your child's identity will not be revealed.

If you have any questions about this research or would like to discuss any concerns prior to providing consent, please feel free to contact me at 09 6238899 (ext 48456), my doctoral supervisors, or Co-Heads of School.

Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley 09 6238899 (ext 82554). e.mckinley@auckland.ac.nz	Professor John Hattie 09 6238899 (ext 82496) j.hattie@auckland.ac.nz	Dr Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington /Hemi Dale (Te Puna Wananga - School of Māori Education) c.mcmurchy@auckland.ac.nz h.dale@auckland.ac.nz
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human

Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019,

Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

If you agree to your child participating in the research project you do not need to do anything.

If you do not want your child to participate in the study please sign the attached assent form and return it to the school office.

I do not give permission for my child to be involved in the research project

Name: _____

Childs Name: _____

Date: _____

Kind regards,

Melinda Webber

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the 1 October 2008 for a period of three years. Reference number 2008/373.

Appendix F: Student Information Sheet (for Questionnaire)



Student Information Sheet (Questionnaire)

Researcher: Melinda Webber

Research Topic: *Negotiating a place at high school: The content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity*

Date:

Dear Year 9 student,

My name is Melinda Webber and I am a PhD student at the University of Auckland. I would like to ask you to participate in a study that examines how you think about your ethnic identity. Your participation involves completing a 15-minute questionnaire answering questions about your ethnic identity. The questionnaire will be completed in class with one of your teachers. Teachers will be asked to administer the completed questionnaires in class but the completed questionnaires will be dropped into a box at the end of the class so that the teacher cannot easily identify any particular student.

Your participation is completely voluntary and will not affect your school grades in any way. You may choose not to participate at any time with no negative consequences. Only the researcher, data entry person(s) and the researcher's supervisors will have access to the information contained in the questionnaires and consent forms. Your identity will never be revealed in the study. The questionnaires and consent forms will be stored in a locked cupboard in the researcher's office so that you cannot be identified and then it will be destroyed after six years.

If you have any questions about this research or would like to discuss any concerns prior to providing consent, please feel free to contact me at 09 6238899 (ext 48456), my doctoral supervisors, or Co-Heads of School.

Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley 09 6238899 (ext 82554). e.mckinley@auckland.ac.nz	Professor John Hattie 09 6238899 (ext 82496) j.hattie@auckland.ac.nz	Dr Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington /Hemi Dale (Te Puna Wananga - School of Māori Education) c.mcmurchy@auckland.ac.nz h.dale@auckland.ac.nz
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

If you are happy to participate in this study please sign the consent statement at the top of the questionnaire.

Kind regards,
Melinda Webber

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on 1 October 2008 for a period of three years. Reference number 2008/373.

Appendix G: Parent Information Sheet (for Student Interviews)



Parent/Caregiver Information Sheet

(Individual Student Interview)

Researcher: Melinda Webber

Research Topic: *Negotiating a place at high school: The content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity*

Date:

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

My name is Melinda Webber and I am a PhD student at the University of Auckland Faculty of Education. I am leading a research project investigating the relationship of ethnic identity to academic achievement, and the strategies employed by adolescents transitioning to high school. To better understand this topic it is important to talk to high-achieving students about their experiences and the things they do to ensure they achieve at school. The study requires that a number of high-achieving adolescents, across three schools, complete a 30-minute one-on-one interview with the researcher, answering questions about his/her racial-ethnic identity and the ways they cope with pressures that might impact on their academic achievement. There are 16 students in all being interviewed, 4 each from the New Zealand-European/Pakeha, Chinese, Māori and Samoan ethnic groups. Your child's school has identified your child as a high-achiever and I would like your permission to invite your child to be interviewed as part of this study. If you consent, his/her interview will be administered at school, in a time that will cause the least disruption to your child and their teacher.

The kinds of questions that your child will be asked in the interview are as follows:

1. What ethnic group/s do you identify with?
2. In what ways do feel you belong to this ethnic group?
3. What are the positives about belonging to the _____ group?
4. What types of racism and stereotypes are you aware of that are associated with being _____?
5. What were you most worried about when you started high school?
6. What were you excited about when you started high school?
7. In what ways do you experience peer pressure and how do you deal with it?

Your child's participation is completely voluntary and his or her participation or non-participation will not be revealed to anyone except the researcher. Nor will it affect your child's grades in any way. Whilst all efforts will be made to endure your child's confidentiality, because of the small number of students being interviewed, they may be able to be identified. Therefore anonymity cannot be guaranteed. You may withdraw permission for your child to participate at any time with no negative consequences, and withdraw the information they have provided up until the date of data analysis in May 2009. This provision also applies to your child. The interview will be audio-recorded but your child may ask that the tape be stopped at any time. Only the researcher, transcriber, data entry person(s) and academic supervisors will have access to the information contained in the interviews, which will be stored in my office at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. They will then be destroyed. The transcriber will be asked to sign an agreement requiring that the confidentiality of all information be preserved. If you agree to let your child participate, please indicate this decision below and return this consent form to the researcher, in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by the following date - _____.

If you have any questions about this research or would like to discuss any concerns prior to providing consent, please feel free to contact me at 09 6238899 (ext 48456), my doctoral supervisors, or Co-Heads of School.

<p>Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley</p> <p>09 6238899 (ext 82554).</p> <p>e.mckinley@auckland.ac.nz</p>	<p>Professor John Hattie</p> <p>09 6238899 (ext 82496)</p> <p>j.hattie@auckland.ac.nz</p>	<p>Dr Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington /Hemi Dale (Te Puna Wananga - School of Māori Education)</p> <p>c.mcmurchy@auckland.ac.nz</p> <p>h.dale@auckland.ac.nz</p>
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human

Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

If you agree to your child participating in the research project please sign the attached consent form and return it in the stamped self-addressed envelope provided.

Kind regards,

Melinda Webber

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the 1 October for a period of three years. Reference number 2008/373.

Appendix H: Parent Consent Form (for Student Interviews)



Parent/Caregiver Consent Form (Interviews)

(This information will be stored for a period of six years)

Researcher: Melinda Webber

Research Topic: *Negotiating a place at high school: The content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity*

- I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project.
- I consent to my child participating in the study with the understanding that his/her participation is entirely voluntary.
- I understand that I may withdraw my permission at any time with no negative consequences.
- I understand that my child may withdraw any information they have provided up until the date of data analysis in May 2009.
- I understand that only the researcher, transcriber and academic supervisors will have access to the information contained in the questionnaires, interviews, observations and consent forms.
- I understand that all data and consent forms will be stored separately in the researchers office at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. They will then be destroyed.

I approve my child's participation in the interview Yes ___ Date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Parent/ Caregiver printed name: _____

Parent/Caregiver signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return this consent form in the self-addressed envelope supplied.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the 1 October 2008 for a period of three years. Reference number 2008/373.

Appendix I: Student Participant Information Sheet (for Interviews)



Student Information Sheet

(Individual Student Interview)

Researcher: Melinda Webber

Research Topic: *Negotiating a place at high school: The content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity*

Date:

Dear Year 9 student,

My name is Melinda Webber and I am a PhD student at the University of Auckland Faculty of Education. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project investigating the relationship of ethnic identity to academic achievement, and the strategies adolescents use when transitioning to high school. To better understand this topic it is important to talk to high-achieving students about their experiences and the things they do to ensure they achieve at school. The study requires that a number of high-achieving adolescents, across three schools, complete a 30-minute one-on-one interview with the researcher, answering questions about his/her ethnic identity and the ways they cope with pressures that might impact on their academic achievement. There are 16 students in all being interviewed, 4 each from the New Zealand European/Pakeha, Chinese, Māori and Samoan ethnic groups. Your school has identified you as a high-achiever from one of these ethnic groups.

If you agree to participate, your interview will be administered at school, in a time that will cause the least disruption to you and your teachers. Your participation or non-participation will not affect your school grades in any way. Your participation is completely voluntary and the information you provide will not be revealed to anyone except the researcher. Your name will not be used in any written report. You will be asked to provide a pseudonym. However, because of the small number of students being interviewed it may be possible for you to be identified. Therefore your anonymity cannot be guaranteed. I would like to audiotape the interview but you may ask that the tape be turned off at any stage during the interview. You may withdraw your participation and any information you have provided up until the time of data analysis in May 2009 with no negative consequences. Only the researcher, transcriber, data entry person(s) and academic supervisors will have access to the information contained in the interviews, which will be stored in my office at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. They will then be destroyed. The transcriber will be asked to sign an agreement requiring that the confidentiality of all information be

preserved.

If you have any questions about this research or would like to discuss any concerns prior to providing consent, please feel free to contact me at 09 6238899 (ext 48456), my doctoral supervisors, or Co-Heads of School.

Associate Professor Elizabeth McKinley 09 6238899 (ext 82554). e.mckinley@auckland.ac.nz Faculty of Education The University of Auckland 74 Epsom Avenue, Epsom Auckland 1023 NEW ZEALAND	Professor John Hattie 09 6238899 (ext 82496) j.hattie@auckland.ac.nz The Hub, N452 Faculty of Education The University of Auckland 74 Epsom Avenue, Epsom Auckland 1023 NEW ZEALAND	Dr Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington /Hemi Dale (Te Puna Wananga - School of Māori Education) c.mcmurchy@auckland.ac.nz h.dale@auckland.ac.nz Gate 1, Block D, Room 20 Faculty of Education Auckland 1023 NEW ZEALAND
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 extn. 83711.

If you are happy to participate in this study please sign the enclosed consent form and return it in the self-addressed envelope provided.

Kind regards,

Melinda Webber

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the 1 October for a period of three years. Reference Number 2008/373.

Appendix J: Student Consent Form (for Interviews)



Student Consent (interview)

(This consent form will be kept for a period of six years)

- I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project.
- I understand that the interview will take approximately 30 minutes.
- I consent to being interviewed for the study with the understanding that my participation is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw at any time with no negative consequences.
- I understand that I can withdraw any information I have provided up to the date of data analysis in May 2009.
- I agree to the interview being audio-recorded and then transcribed but I am aware that I can have the tape turned off at any time.
- I understand that my identity will be kept strictly confidential and that a pseudonym will be used in any written report. However, because of the small number of students being interviewed I may be identifiable.
- I understand that only the researcher, transcriber and academic supervisors will have access to the information contained in the questionnaires, interviews, observations and consent forms.
- I understand that all data and consent forms will be stored separately in the researchers office at the University of Auckland for a period of six years. They will then be destroyed.

Although your name is required on this consent form your identity will remain anonymous.

I agree to participate in this research project Yes ___ No ___

I agree to be audio-taped Yes / No

Name: _____

Date: _____

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE on the 8 October 2008 for a period of three years. Reference number 2008/373.

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