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For Graeme and Bridget
Abstract

Ideally, a citizen is an individual who is a formal member of a self-governing political community, with individual rights and freedoms that are equal to those of other citizens, and which are protected by law.

This thesis investigates how closely the citizenship status of non-Maori ethnic minorities in New Zealand approximated this ideal during the 1990s. Its particular focus is on how the neo-liberal ideology of National and Coalition Governments between 1990 and 1999, and those Governments’ understandings of the nature and political significance of ethnicity, affected the ability of those belonging to non-Maori ethnic minority groups to be full and equal members of the New Zealand political community, with an equal capacity for self-governance at the individual level and as members of the political community.

The thesis takes the form of a survey of public policy and law over a period of nine years. Five broad areas or aspects of public policy are examined: the collection and dissemination of official ‘ethnic’ statistics; immigration and citizenship policy; civil rights provided for in domestic and international law; mechanisms for ensuring access to political decision-making; and social policy. The question asked in the thesis is whether the policies developed and administered in each of these areas during the 1990s enriched or detracted from the citizenship status of non-Maori ethnic minorities.
Many people have been involved in the completion of this thesis. First thanks go to my principal supervisor, Professor Andrew Sharp of the Department of Political Studies of the University of Auckland for his astute and stimulating guidance during the writing of the thesis. Thanks also go to Dr Rian Voet, of the Department of Political Studies at Auckland University who supervised me for a short period in Professor Sharp’s absence. Special thanks go to John Martin of the School of Public Management at Victoria University of Wellington who, in an unofficial capacity, provided invaluable guidance and support while I completed the thesis in Wellington.

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