

The University of Auckland Sociology “Class of 1984”

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Abstract

A small but socially cohesive cohort of students graduated in 1984 after completing their master’s theses at the Department of Sociology, University of Auckland. As well as providing a case study of a postgraduate cohort and especially its cohesiveness, the symposium highlights the subsequent careers of the four key sociologists in the group, who have each made major contributions to Aotearoa New Zealand and world sociology through vigorous book and journal article publishing based on their research programmes. Two have been mainly based in Aotearoa New Zealand, one in Australia and the fourth in the United Kingdom, but they have maintained social (and some intellectual) contact ever since. Their quite divergent careers and career strategies are sociologically set against some of the social characteristics of their times. The accounts of each are far from definitive, but provide some useful insights into career contingencies which hopefully will provoke contemplation.

Keywords: postgraduate student cohorts; Aotearoa New Zealand sociology; Auckland; sociology departments; careers; career contingencies; social change

Introduction

Although it varies between postgraduate (sometimes senior undergraduate) cohort groups (‘classes’ in American terminology), the year or years spent with a group of fellow students sharing a programme, enduring the difficulties and celebrating the triumphs, to some extent together, can be an intense experience. Every so often there is a particular student cohort that fires. One such group was a class at the University of Canterbury in (or around) 1977, which included several who went on to have careers as applied sociologists in government services as researchers: Penny Fenwick, Mike Waghorne, Gerald Thorns, Marie Keir and others. Another such group finished their master’s theses at the University of Auckland (UoA) in (or around) 1983 and went on to particularly productive academic careers. These introductory remarks are made to provide some context for the four short autobiographical accounts that complete this publication.

Claudia Bell’s thesis was on Department of Labour subsidised work schemes, Nigel Clark’s on ecology, Georgina Murray’s on women lawyers, and Martin Tolich’s on Tania’s March against militant unions. Other members of that class were Hauraki Greenland, who wrote on “The Politics of Maori Cultural Revival”, and Gary Barnaby, who withdrew on health grounds. These postgraduates became junior lecturers/tutors, helping to teach the burgeoning numbers of undergraduates attracted to sociology. This group of postgraduate students was socially cohesive in a department which was reasonably new and active. Several were mature students with earlier careers, including school teaching (Georgina) and preschool teaching (Claudia). The group’s studies began out of the somewhat decrepit Rex Court building on Symonds Street, but were then mainly housed on Floor 9 of the Human Sciences Building (HSB)—which at the far end included an incinerator for dead Psychology Department laboratory animals. Recently, this building has been demolished to be replaced by updated rooms. Of the teaching line-up at the time, Ivanica

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† Prof Charles Crothers (1947 - 2023): the four people featured in this article warmly acknowledge Charles for his academic support, and for his ongoing interest in our work and careers. He is remembered with respect and love.

Vodanovich was particularly important in setting high standards of scholarship, and David Bedggood provided illuminating Marxist analyses grounded in international scholarship.¹

From this foundation of masters, and later doctoral work, productive careers were launched. However, for various reasons, the impact of their work among other New Zealand sociologists is muted, and the social network linking them likely unknown. Two pursued most of their careers overseas (Georgina in Queensland, Australia and Nigel in the United Kingdom). This case study of a postgraduate group/cohort aims to document some of the group or common processes at play in producing this quartet and seeks to make their work more visible.

Literature concerning sociology groups and careers

Although it is often an intense experience, not much is written about student cohorts. An earlier conceptual article (Crothers, 1991) suggested that Sociology (and other) departments were “feudal” in nature, with postgraduate students occupying an under-labourer caste slot, often relying on the department for part-time employment to subsidise their studies. The New Zealand situation in the 1980s was not too dissimilar. There is an ever-expanding body of autobiographical or biographical accounts of sociologists and many authors (likely all) comment on postgraduate experiences, while some focus on this portion of a sociologist’s life.

Some accounts discuss a teacher/mentor’s effects on their students. In studies of ‘schools’ of sociology, accounts are available of the social characteristics of the recruitment grounds for postgraduate students, their education and socialisation into the tenets of the school, and finally their spreading, in their later careers, of the school’s doctrines across other universities. (One example is the well-known Chicago School.) Being caught up in a recognisable school is likely a minority experience. Recently, the concept of student cohort has become a professional teaching tool of some postgraduate educators who have deliberately encouraged group cohesion and a sharing of experiences (e.g., GradSchoolHub, 2020).

This set of four case studies aims to add to the stock of historical material on Aotearoa New Zealand sociologists (see Crothers, 2018). A previous conference panel (Schmidt et al., 2014) provided short (and somewhat light-hearted) accounts of their sociological careers. David Thorns (2016) published a retrospective personal account in a special issue of *New Zealand Sociology* on the history of New Zealand sociology. This co-produced study is an attempt to build up such case studies more systematically. The result of the co-production process is the set of questions (see the Appendices) which developed interactively as the authors wrote. An earlier attempt was made by the Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (SAANZ) to recruit oral histories as sociologists retired and a few have been carried out, but more systematic efforts to record retirees’ experiences should be considered.

Personal reactions at writing these autobiographical accounts were clearly ambivalent but the request was seen as unusual and perhaps even gratifying rather than an invasion of privacy. The sociological skills that the authors have exhibited through their careers were turned on their own lives and this required some effort at remembering the details, and then perhaps patching them together into a bigger story.

Some societal context

This section maps aspects of the social framework (with many points referred to below in each of the group members’ accounts) that shaped each group member’s involvements in sociology over their careers. This especially focuses on the formative period during which they were postgraduates doing master’s and PhD research. They enjoyed, to different extents, the good things that benefitted their generation (Baby Boomers) in relation to accessible housing, education and the like.

¹ For context concerning the Sociology Department, see Crothers et al. (2014).

Over the post-war period, Aotearoa New Zealand was marked by decades of long relative social and cultural stability, articulated as a sleepy colonialist cultural cringe, with somewhat mythical aspirations about Aotearoa New Zealand's supposed dilution of social class and race relations (which was reinforced by the country's ethnic homogeneity at that time). It was a time of hidden sexism, very low unemployment and inflation, strong unionism, and a very limited acceptance of inclusion of diversity where ideological differences (e.g., left/right) were downplayed, although there was a largely supposed threat of more radical thought (on both, the left and right).

Cultural nationalist and populist movements became stronger during this time, with growing confidence in the Aotearoa New Zealand identity in films like *Goodbye Pork Pie* (1981) and *Utu* (1983). There was also more visibility of injustice against Māori and protests, such as the occupation of Takaparawhau Bastion Point in the late 1970s, and the massive struggles around the 1981 Springbok tour. The social movements that had begun to flower in New Zealand in the 1970s continued to be active.

Economic tensions included the United Kingdom (New Zealand's prime market) joining the European European Community and the 1970s oil price crisis, with unemployment and inflation rising. The early 1980s was a hinge period in New Zealand, where the country became a global leader in neoliberalism, with the local variant, and 'Rogernomics', actively developed by the Lange Labour Government. The neoliberal plan was purportedly an endeavour to correct the welfare state excesses of the post-war period and the 'Think Big' development state of Robert Muldoon. This was an era when government privatised state assets and encouraged private investment in major industrial projects. In a gathering social storm of bankruptcies, suicides and evictions, New Zealand's relatively equitable society was thrown to the wolves to supposedly rescue its capitalist enterprises.

Subsequently, New Zealand lurched through various deepening and lessening periods of revolutionary neoliberalism, with struggles more often fought inside institutions than on the streets. It became, if anything, a revolution of capital, achieved with limited public dissent.

Within the group, the four continued with the business of postgraduate student life alongside the further pressures of family and domestic living (both Claudia and Georgina had partners and children, and Martin was married). The commitment to demonstrating and protesting was taken very seriously—sometimes, in 1981, there had been twice-weekly protests (on Wednesday night and Saturday morning) which activists in good standing ignored at peril of their political reputations.

This '84 group were recipients of a universal free education (before the imposition of the neoliberal reforms that later drove the crippling debt of student loans). Though they were largely from working-class backgrounds, with state co-educational secondary schooling, they were able to supplement the reasonably adequate student bursaries and allowances with working-class jobs. There was also excellent distance education available to them, most helpfully when the women were pregnant. This group were among the last cohort of junior lecturers who had taught at half-rate and completed a PhD in the other half of their time.

The intellectual milieu at the University of Auckland Sociology Department in the early 1980s featured theoretical debates that more broadly ranged from right to left than today: David Bedggood was an explicit Marxist whose general classes drew much student interest and whose advanced classes had theoretical appeal. More generally, the Marxism taught at that time was loosely centred on the materialist insight that production is the underlying base of culture but that this must be understood through the filter of ideology. That is, it was a reflexive form of structuralism, before post-structuralism and cultural studies became the dominant alternatives. Methods were not much emphasised but featured the standard approaches.

As the formative period waned and the group fanned out to take up lecturing positions in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, the intensity of their societal interactions faded as the demands of academic survival in new environments became paramount, and different jurisdictions attracted less political intensity.

The Fab Four: A sketched overview

Hauraki Greenland completed his short but powerful academic career at the University of Auckland, writing a much-cited essay (Greenland, 1991) for a collection on Pasifika in Aotearoa New Zealand. He moved on to an illustrious career in several government departments, including Māori Affairs, Treasury and a final stint as a principal adviser with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). Sadly, he died in 2007. The MoJ set up an annual memorial scholarship in his honour.

Martin Tolich pursued the rigorous training offered through an American PhD at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) near Sacramento, California. The other three—Nigel Clark, Claudia Bell and Georgina Murray—pursued home-grown PhDs. After that, each had remarkably stable academic careers.

Claudia Bell worked at the University of Auckland, first in Continuing Education, and then after achieving tenure, in the Department of Sociology. Nigel Clark, after a short stint at the University of Auckland as a junior lecturer while completing his PhD, held jobs at the Open University and at Lancaster University, where he still works part time. Georgina Murray stayed at Griffith University, Brisbane, while Martin Tolich moved to University of Otago, after initially establishing his career at Massey University, Palmerston North. Each steadily ascended the academic ladder, with Georgina and Martin achieving associate professorships and Nigel a full professorship. At the time of writing, Claudia, Georgina and Martin have retired, and Nigel continues as an academic.

Claudia Bell built her PhD research into rural ideologies in Aotearoa New Zealand (completed in 1993) into a powerful book (Bell, 1996) on the construction of Pākehā identity in Aotearoa New Zealand social life. This was a bestseller and led to widespread debate at the time. Nigel parlayed his PhD into a range of publications on the natural environment in its social framing. Georgina continued from her thesis work to investigate business elite networks and corporate power, with extensions to Australia and also worldwide. Her magnum opus *Corporate Networks and Social Power in Australia and New Zealand* (Murray, 2006/2017) aptly summarised much of her work. Martin continued some of his ethnographic research into consumption behaviour into other topics; for example, being an experimental drug subject. Various studies resulted and there was also a successful extension into textbook writing on research methods and then social research ethics. These very brief orientating comments introduce a few key themes, but as can be seen from their personal accounts (see below), their careers and publications have been complex and include many studies involving interviewing or other fieldwork.

The class of '84 have been incredibly productive, especially in their contributions to the book literature. Using the University of Auckland library catalogue, I found books authored or edited by the quartet. Some are also available in public libraries. Their respective Google Scholar profiles indicate their stated research interests (see Table 1) as well as outputs and citations. Data from Google profiles, including the presentations available from the program Publish or Perish, shows that the cumulative counts are massive: some 470 items to date, nearly 40 books, and over 10,000 citations (see Table 2). These are uncorrected counts that include mistakes and a wide variety of literature forms, including grey literature.

Some of the quartet's work has involved other authors, and working with others has been one of the skills of all the group's members. For example, much of Nigel's authorship projects have been as part of an Open University development team.

Table 1: Current interests according to their Google profile

Claudia Bell	National identity, tourism, landscape, food, cycling, retiree migration, social justice
Nigel Clark	Anthropocene, nature-society relations, geophilosophy, geopolitics, social theory
Georgina Murray	Political economy
Martin Tolich	Qualitative research ethics; tertiary education: capstones, society and societal issues; sociology: research ethics, qualitative research, conscientious objectors

Table 2: Output metrics

	Items	Books	Citations	H-index
Claudia Bell	84	12	1858	18
Georgina Murray	147	9	1132	19
Martin Tolich	119	11	5599	24
Nigel Clark	150	6	3946	32

The quartet has not much engaged with professional associational activity (such as national sociology associations). On a practical side, Martin is the founder of the innovative New Zealand Ethics Committee (NZEC). NZEC is an independent not-for-profit ethical review committee for researchers undertaking research outside the university context and for researchers not affiliated to universities, conducting research internationally. His emerging teaching specialism is public sociology by way of creating research-based internships for senior sociology students. Martin, and especially Georgina, have been particularly successful with research grants.

Interestingly, none of the quartet has become a mainstream sociologist in terms of a narrow definition, although they have not strayed far, and have provided cutting-edge sociological contributions that have influenced other disciplines: Claudia's interests have lain in cultural studies, Nigel's in human geography, Georgina's in political economy, and Martin's in human research ethics.

Conclusion

A high-flying sociological explanation of this cohort is not required. Occasional confluences arise pretty much by chance in some student cohorts. Nevertheless, examining the personal accounts in the framework of the (appended) questions—with their implied hypotheses—may be fruitful. Perhaps there is a generational aspect: the quartet were undoubtedly each affected in various ways by the '60s experiences that engendered strong concerns for social justice as well as curiosities about social experiences: family circumstances impinged, and while there were some shifts in their broadly stable organisational careers, these seem not to have shaped research interests. Each, rather, has pursued a long-term guiding thread: Claudia has spelt out the cultural furnishing of particular (and general) lifestyle groups, Georgina has tracked corporate power and its appurtenances, Martin has explored occupational subcultures in relation to technologies and then ethics, and Nigel has doggedly explored the human relationship with our Earth and environment. In so doing, the quartet have clearly added much to the stock of knowledge not only about Aotearoa New Zealand society but also that pertaining to other countries, and indeed world social science.

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Appendices: Fab Four life history account guide

- Where did you grow up? Go to school? Was there anything in this background that propelled you towards sociology or that you’ve drawn on in your writing (or intend to)? What was your main post-secondary training/job, and did this have any relevance for later sociological work?
- Why did you go to university? Why did you take sociology?
- Why did you develop your master’s/PhD work?
- What were the benefits of where you did thesis work? Anything about postgraduate work at Auckland that inspired you?
- What topic did you choose for each and why? Why did you choose to do your thesis at University of Auckland (or not)?
- What has your academic career been? How did you decide on this?
- What topics have you worked on? Why those topics?
- Why did you choose to write books as well as articles, etc?
- How did your teaching/supervising fit into your career?
- Were there any particular audiences you saw yourself as addressing? That you felt responsible to?
- What image of the discipline have you held, and how does your work contribute to it? Who were supportive colleagues along the way?
- Have you achieved your career goals? Any lessons?

A1–A4: Case studies and personal autobiographical accounts

A1: Claudia Bell

I grew up in rural Waikato, part of the post-war baby cohort. The local school had just one teacher, and a horse paddock. Isolation led to lots of reading, drawing and writing (for children's pages of the local newspaper and for children's magazines). I was happily publishing from the age of seven.

Later, an all-girls city secondary school was oppressive—I didn't know that word, then. How could adult women—teachers—be so mean to pubescent girls? No one suggested university for me. As it was, I recall my dad's much older sister complaining that "those girls (we three sisters) had far too much education!" (??) Early parenthood (not unusual for my generation; oral contraception was hard to obtain) meant I lived in the country with wee kiddies.

In the mid-1970s, Massey University extramural study filled the intellectual void. This was free and easily accessed by mature students (over 25). Many were teachers upskilling, and/or mothers like myself, whose early parenthood meant they had missed out on tertiary education.

The main costs were postage of essays and to return library books (yes, books were lent and delivered by mail), and transport and attendance at a one-week block course in Palmerston North for each enrolled course. At that time, I had no thought of completing a degree—only clever people did that! My first papers were in sociology, because they looked interesting (!). I also took a lot of literature papers, completing five more than I needed for a degree. At that time, I worked part-time at weekends on Heylen Polls, doing door-to-door social/market research, in Auckland City. With three preschoolers, I also worked part-time at their playcentre and at occasional cleaning or catering jobs.

In those days (late 1970s), Massey Stage 3 was not offered extramurally, so I bussed—or hitch-hiked, if broke—into Auckland Uni. In 1981, I then enrolled in an MA programme, very surprised I could get paid for tutoring. (As an extramural student, I had never experienced a tutorial.) The main public debate at the time was the Springbok tour protests, which was causing huge divisions in New Zealand society. The events heightened the nation's self-examination of race relations here, leading over time to extensive social changes. Sociology students were eager to discuss these events in tutorials. We took seriously the university official mantra of "critic and conscience of society". This was a lively, stimulating, fun environment.

An appreciated and influential colleague was David Bedggood, a Marxist sociologist. Plus, I worked alongside Margot Roth, an inspiring legend of second-wave feminism. Her impact on sociology, and on students, was inestimable. My first book was published at this time: *Women and Change* (1985), a commissioned study of the impacts of the United Nations' Decade for Women (1974–1984) on New Zealand women. These included significant legal changes, such as the Property (Relationships) Act 1976 and the Family Proceedings Act 1980. That was an era when we often popped out during the day to join street marches up Queen Street, demanding greater rights for women. (I hate to even write this, but remember that awful phrase by nervous, appeasing woman: "I am not a feminist, but...!")

There were no student loans—the appalling debts which blight today's students. Over summers, I did paid fieldwork in various parts of New Zealand. In 1981, one project was underwater social research at Leigh Marine Reserve, looking at recreational users' activities in a scientific marine environment. To do this, I had to get a scuba diving qualification. As a single parent—hey, I needed a job!

My employer was what is now the Department of Conservation. This led to other DOC fieldwork contracts throughout New Zealand. Land use surveys in the East Cape, and investigations for potential for cycle trails and other recreational activities in DOC lands; for example, Woodhill Forest and Lake Otaola (Kaipara Harbour) were two such projects. For the latter, I had the joy of carrying out interviews by kayak, to reach people fishing various parts of the lake. Often there was no accommodation available, so camping in a small tent was not unusual. Once, somewhere inland from Ruatoria on the East Cape, I stayed in a

shepherd's hut. The only access to a farmhouse was by horse, so someone kindly lend me one, and pointed the way.

Early on, I found the value of hands-on primary research. My MA thesis fieldwork was in Hokianga, researching government job creation schemes (Project Employment Programme or PEP). These were make-work projects in return for a dole equivalent. Any person eligible for work could be employed. Hence many households could draw several wages. In an area that had long experienced high unemployment, this was significant. PEP schemes were enthusiastically encouraged by the local council, which received generous overheads for managing each local project. The work was mainly physical and outdoors. 'The Wombles' collected rubbish and debris from roadsides. Others cleared willows from choked rivers, made mud bricks, repaired marae, established horticultural units, or cut fence posts in the forest. (Sadly, once the subsidies ended, so did most projects. High levels of unemployment returned.)

Concurrently I was writing feminist articles for magazines, including a weekly column in the *New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, and doing commercial book reviews. I also taught evening and weekend courses for various organisations, including the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), University of Auckland, and carried out small research commissions.

Amazing as it seems now, though a solo mother of three children with no permanent employment, just numerous contracts, by the end of my MA (1983)—raised by frugal parents—I had saved from scratch enough money to buy a house in Grey Lynn. I needed one third deposit for the 'handyman's dream', walking distance to university. First mortgage: 21% interest, second mortgage 26% (I am not joking!). Coincidentally, Nigel Clark bought one nearby shortly after. For both of us, flatmates helped cover costs. I mention this as a reflection of the different times we lived in. Without student loans, we had no choice but to earn money. So we did. Pre-gentrification, inner-city houses were not the commodity they are now; they were simply homes for people to live in. The standard of living was much lower: far fewer mod cons, just one bathroom per household, neither Nigel nor I owned a car, we did not have or expect international holidays; it was before expensive electronic devices were required in every household, and before designer labels dictated popular taste. My children lived with me there until they all left home, by about 1990. Another contrast with today: teenage children left home to go flatting. They shared mostly run-down old houses and villas, affordable in those days.

In 1986, I was appointed to a permanent academic position at the CCE. My community education job involved designing and running non-degree events for the public: seminars, night courses, conferences, workshops. This required that I establish large networks across a wide range of organisations and interest areas, from the city council and political parties to various pressure groups and interest groups. Topics included inner-city development, housing, environmental issues, health topics and the arts. A monthly series featured famous visiting overseas writers. I also re-established the Elam Summer Art School, then added summer and Easter writing schools. I chose the lecturers, wrote the advertising blurbs and managed events, with the support of one secretary. At the same time, I taught one undergraduate course in Sociology. Eventually, after ten years, there were major changes in the CCE. As a tenured academic, a review provided me with the opportunity to transfer to the Sociology Department full time.

I completed my PhD in 1992, on rural ideology in New Zealand. Dr Charles Crothers was a practical, encouraging supervisor; Professor Ian Carter was not. The topic reflected my upbringing, when farmers believed they were the 'backbone of the economy'. Late 1980s Rogernomics shattered that. My fieldwork was funded by piggy-backing my own research onto a commissioned review of the New Zealand National Rural Library Service. As the project continued through New Zealand, conditions for rural people became more and more fraught. Rogernomics was resulting in the closure of many rural services, such as post offices and hospitals. The cancellation of farm subsidies (guaranteeing export prices) meant that this sector had to compete with every other business; privilege and security were over. There were fears of growing depopulation as young people left the country for town. It was an extremely depressing time, with

enormous concerns about the escalating rural suicide rate. Interviewing in this situation was sometimes deeply traumatic.

Putting our Town on the Map (1994) also drew from observations during my PhD fieldwork. Co-written with artist and my new life-partner, John Lyall, it was about small towns in New Zealand struggling to assert their identity and retain population in the face of social change. John and I visited every small town in New Zealand. This was shoe-string research: in lieu of funding, we took our tent and usually camped. John's Cibachrome photographs of each small-town attraction were later a large component of a major exhibition at Rotorua Art Gallery, which bought the entire collection, and which toured the show throughout New Zealand. Some of those photographs were also used on a set of New Zealand postage stamps, and in a 16-page article in *New Zealand Geographic*. The book resulted in numerous speaking invitations, and in a prime-time TV documentary, produced by EyeWorks pictures. The book was a finalist in the 1994 New Zealand Book Awards.

As I was completing my PhD, in the early 1990s, I was invited to produce a manuscript for Penguin Books. The result was *Inventing New Zealand: Everyday Myths of Pakeha Identity* (1996). This was an instant bestseller, with wide media attention.

For some years most of my writing and teaching was about various aspects of New Zealand culture and identity. I edited several academic collections of articles, mostly used in teaching (Dunmore Press; Oxford University Press). I also co-ordinated the first cultural studies Stage One course in New Zealand, at first team-taught.

Non-academic art catalogue essays were also produced (to accompany exhibitions), then a new book—*Excavating the Past: Michael Shepherd, Painter* (2005)—plus numerous items for fine arts magazines (e.g., *Art New Zealand*). Arts writing included occasional involvement with John Lyall and a South Korean-based international touring artist group called Nine Dragon Heads. As their English language writer, I accompanied them to various parts of Korea, and to Bosnia and Serbia. Outputs about that group appeared in the organisation's own publications, on their extensive website, in arts magazines, and as chapters/papers in academic journals (such as *Space and Culture*) and books (e.g., *Lifestyle Mobilities*).

Across decades, I published extensively on New Zealand topics. From 1995, this was only in international journals, despite the persistent mythologies by local academics that global publishers would not be interested in us. But then, by *not* publishing in local journals, there were accusations of failing to support the local! Academia is often a 'can't win' game. Research on kiwiana, by definition local, involving a field trip throughout New Zealand to visit collectors, resulted in several articles, all published in reputable international journals and in overseas edited book collections.

At the end of the 1990s, the Waitangi National Trust commissioned a visitor study of the Waitangi Treaty House and grounds, across a whole year. Some of my students were employed to carry out fieldwork at the site, in five different sampling periods. We were given the onsite visitor residence as a base. Some students didn't like the large wetas that came inside, but we all loved to hear the cry of kiwi in the night. The project resulted in six reports, a list of recommendations, and a presentation that one student and I made to the Treaty Board. This project provided students with a practical, hands-on, paid fieldwork experience, as well as a CV line.

By the late 1990s I was teaching a course titled Sociology of Food, despite the head of department at the time wondering why it was in the programme; "It is not very important, is it?" she suggested. Duh? I researched and published articles on New Zealand farmers' markets, Balinese cooking schools, Tasmanian roadkill (what is food?). Sociology of Food segued into another commercial best-selling book, my third: *The Great New Zealand Piccart* (2008), co-written with Lindsay Neill. The university has little respect for commercial publications, however successful. (An occasional congratulations would have been nice, but commercial publications just don't 'count'). Lindsay and I were joint writers of nine academic publications that drew from this research.

Again, public presentation opportunities arose from this project, including at Auckland City Art Gallery (*Kai to Pie* exhibition), and Auckland War Memorial Museum. The final pie cart article was in 2016, about ethical and methodological dilemmas of carrying out research in a small country like New Zealand, where individuals might easily be identified. “Think of New Zealand as a small town,” Martin Tolich advised.

My commitment to local material overlapped with increasing international projects. From the 1990s, I taught a postgraduate course in tourism and heritage, continuing this until 2018. Tourism is—or was, before COVID-19—essentially about marketing identity, with diverse, far-reaching impacts. This became a key focal point of my research for the remainder of my career. I co-wrote a book with John Lyall: *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism and Identity* (2001). The Chicago Art Gallery compiled a major photographic exhibition, *The Universal Eye*, based on our book. The catalogue featured an essay by Umberto Eco. The exhibition toured the USA, London and Italy in 2005 and 2006.

Research into tourism topics continued. There were articles about tourism in Vietnam, visitor experiences of Mongolia, and—with fieldwork funded by the Canadian Government—polar bear tourism at Churchill, Manitoba; ‘Collecting eco-tourism capital: Polar bear tourism’ was published in the *Journal of Social Sciences Research* in 2012.

At this time, New Zealand’s claimed green ethos was widely promoted in tourism discourse. For a further project, I employed students to carry out fieldwork over summer at backpacker hostels throughout New Zealand. I selected hostels claiming elements of eco-tourism or ‘clean and green’ on their websites. The students—and I—carried out interviews with guests at the hotels as well as with the operators, to see how those claims matched actual practices. The article, ‘Branding for backpackers’, appeared in the *Journal of Vacation Marketing* in 2008. This led to a series of other ‘greenwash’ articles, and to international invitations, including a visiting fellowship at the University of London, presentations at Harvard and at the Sorbonne, Paris, and participation with a study tour group to an eco-city (Curitiba) in Brazil with a New Zealand Government-led party.

My teaching and research then moved into international migration, which I was also teaching—a logical extension of having taught postgraduate tourism and heritage for some years. This sat comfortably with the current academic ‘buzz’ around theories of mobility. In the final ten years of my career, I undertook annual field trips for projects in South-East Asian countries. Small budgets meant I mostly stayed in family-run modest guest houses. This was a great advantage, both for learning more about local culture, and for meeting retiree travellers who were looking to settle.

This began with research into retirees migrating to Bali to live (tourists or migrants?). The topic was further explored in Cambodia, Malaysia and Laos: places where many Western retirees could afford to reside more comfortably than in their home countries (e.g., Australia, UK and Europe). My interviewees ranged from 65 years of age to 82. Most were in their late 60s and 70s. If they had very little money, they could afford to live in South-East Asia rather than wherever they came from. Some had cashed up to do this: sold their flat in Switzerland or Belgium, then escaped to paradise (they hoped).

None were from New Zealand, probably largely because of the pension system here: everyone over 65 qualifies for a pension but may live out of New Zealand for only up to six months of the year in order to keep receiving it. For people of slender means, this works against permanent settlement anywhere else.

My discovery that some migrant retirees set up small aid projects in their new countries led to my final academic research: investigation of foreigners establishing social justice projects in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar. The writing and publishing factory continued. My last field trip, January to February 2019, included a few weeks interviewing subjects in Myanmar, all creators of non-NGO social justice projects. There was cautious optimism about the prospects for democracy in Myanmar. Then, in 2021, in the new COVID-19 world, and with domination by the military junta, I watch in horror what was happening in Myanmar. Destruction.

My final book, *Western Retirees Migrants and Older Tourists in South East Asia: Collected Papers*, was translated into Chinese: 九里校区:四川省成都市二环路北一段111号西南交通大学. This was a result of my visiting fellowship at a university in Chengdu, Western China in 2019.

Alongside the international material, I continued to write about New Zealand topics, always published overseas. The editors invited an analysis of kiwiana for a book *Designing Worlds: National Design Histories in an Age of Globalisation* (2015). The final local article, “‘Great Rides’ on New Zealand’s new national cycleway: Pursuing mobility capital”, was published in *Landscape Research* in 2018.

People may hate this comment, but I never found the actual writing difficult. (A colleague once complained that this gave me “unfair advantage”.) It was just a matter of fitting it around all the other academic commitments; plus, of course, constantly applying for research funding. I wrote in a manner that students found accessible, so was able to use a lot of my own research-based material in my teaching. That engagement with students, especially those extraordinary international students working in their second or third language, was such a pleasure. Some were development studies students. I managed to visit several of them at some stage in Mongolia, Vietnam and Cambodia, seeing them in their new post-university roles.

By its nature, academic writing is an isolated activity. Colleagues were working on their own diverse topics, none of them parallel with mine. There was no collegial sharing of drafts or discussion required or expected: they were the experts on their own topics. Hardly anyone took any interest in the weekly seminar programme, which was once a focal point for hearing about the work of others. Plus, most people worked at home, which was perfectly logical in car-congested Auckland. I lived near the university and preferred to use my university office. (Peace! Better computer! IT support!). The departmental fun, friendship and social life of the 1980s had long disappeared. Loss of office staff (into a larger school structure) and of our beautiful harbour-view staff room finally destroyed any possibility of a workplace culture. Most weeks there would be several days of not seeing any colleagues at all.

The trick to being prolific: write quickly, obsessively maybe, and publish several items each year. Writing is a job; treat it like a job. My final academic paper was submitted the day before I retired. I then cleared my computer (office already emptied), and quietly left (31 January 2019). I have no incomplete leftover articles. Nor am I continuing any academic work in retirement.

Charles asked about lessons from this career. Constant intellectual curiosity is essential: for me, the need to understand a topic required that I research and write about it. I always selected conferences where the paper had to be submitted first, before the event. That ensured a publication quite quickly after the presentation, wherever it might be (Croatia, Poland, Finland, London, Naples, Macedonia, Macau, etc.). This meant that every hard-crafted conference paper wound up in proceedings, and/or was extended into a journal article somewhere.

The *worst advice* I ever received from a head of department: just write the same thing over and again, for different publications. So *boringly tediously* self-stultifying! Bah!! Hey, there are so very many things in the world one wants to know more about!

My career was very firmly based on primary research fieldwork. Over those 30+ years, I met and interviewed hundreds of people. A life of *listening*... Flexibility is essential: a topic might change, as one undertakes fieldwork. (This may be fun!) I think writing fluency co-relates to being a lifelong reader: fiction as much as non-fiction. I have no idea how to encourage a work ethic in other people.

Like the other three people in this article, I was never interested in media limelight. Requests for opportunities to appear on TV news or blabber-banter show, or to be (mis)quoted in a trivialising manner to add ‘academic authority’ to news or feature articles: such requests were rapidly passed on to others. Even writing this is with a little discomfort; who would be interested?

Unlike my three peers, I never left New Zealand to study or for a position in an overseas university. My family commitments kept me here. I did have sabbatical experiences as a visiting fellow at the University of London, at Bloemfontein in South Africa, and in Chengdu, Western China. One sabbatical was spent as

a chicken-bus traveller across South and Eastern Africa, resulting in several articles about Namibia, and a publication on the racism intrinsic to African tourism, published in *Blackwell's Companion to Global Inequalities*. I also had a writers' residency in Chicago, and another at the Bellagio Centre, Italy. In 2006, I was awarded a Fulbright to teach in the USA; sadly, I had to withdraw on health grounds. I attended international conferences annually, enjoying the scholarly company of people working in similar fields to my own. I often tacked personal travel onto each trip, before rushing home to teach classes. But New Zealand remained home base.

Notably, none of this group of four were particularly bewitched by committee work. That must correspond to the prolific outputs Charles observed in the introduction. Yes, we all made solid service contributions, as required. But I happily ignored—despaired at—the advice of a senior female colleague, who frequently proudly boasted that she need never bother to publish, as she was on so many important committees instead. Clearly, there are various ways to be an academic.

I do acknowledge that this story is of its time. International fieldwork-based research would not be as do-able in this new COVID-19 world. Plus all that aeroplane travel, emitting more than my share of carbon emissions; this would now be a severe conscience issue. And with various serious constraints on teaching resources, there may now be less choice in one's teaching topics. It would, for now, be impossible to construct such a research career.

Is this a Baby Boomer story? Or course it is, simply because of the time when I was born. We had free good healthcare and education. My Depression-era parents had not attended high school. We grew up in a very conservative nation, expected to conform without question to the same values and views as our parents. But along came the 1960s. The youth generation rebelled. Then second-wave feminism appeared, and we rebelled even more, many of us now resisting our husbands ('head of the household!') as we had resisted our parents. We developed a powerful sense of agency; a determination to forge our own lives. The personal was political; politics was personal. We threw enormous time and energy into redressing social injustices, both local and global. Anti-Vietnam War! Gay rights! Anti-apartheid! Civil rights!

So much has happened since. This doesn't include world peace, or global cooperation for equality across nations. In New Zealand, equal pay is still elusive; domestic violence and child abuse are increasing; the cost of living is challenging. But there is a growing consciousness of the enormity of climate change; and far more women and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds are in positions of power than ever before. To me, one of the most important progressions for the next generation of women has to be the Me Too! Movement. Bravo! At last!

It is sad that so much university work is now online. This is so detrimental to forming classmate friendships. University is not, and should not be, just about scholarly work and gaining qualifications. My own continuing warm friendships with these three people, whom I met in 1981 during that first MA year, now 40 years later, remain significant.

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A2: Georgina Murray

Where did you grow up?

My parents were British working-class migrants who paid for their ticket to New Zealand with the sale of my father's red MG sports car. (The car had been bought by him with his British army 1939–1945 demobilisation money.) My father had left Liverpool and came first to Wellington where he went to Teachers Training College, and my mother followed him, leaving Birmingham a year later. She looked after my older sister and gave birth to me in Wellington in 1951. Full of enthusiasm for the new classless country, they lost their working-class accents on the boat trip over.

When my father got his first teaching job at Kaimarama, in a sole-teacher school on the Coromandel, my mother thought the journey over the Tapu Range was literally the road to hell. This suspicion was confirmed for her when they reached Whitianga and the schoolhouse had hay bales in it and sheep, hens and goats wandering aimlessly through it. The house was without electricity, though it had running water. Being my mother, she sat on the dirty shit-encrusted floor and sobbed until something better was found.

My first experience of school was going to Kaimarama School with my father, well before I turned five. I remember being awestruck by the Troy boys singing country and western songs on their ukuleles and guitars. Then going for nature walks with the big kids and learning about insects and birds. Curiosity there was always rewarded with attention and answers. School was fun! Learning was fun and people were fun to be with.

Going to school? Was there anything in this background that propelled you towards sociology or that you've drawn on in your writing (or intend to)?

We left the sun-soaked beaches and blue waves of Whitianga when I was four and my father went to teach prisoners at Waikeria Prison in the landlocked Waikato. Living in the Waikeria village meant living with other United Kingdom expats; being taught early to be afraid of men; wondering what it meant to have grandparents, aunts and cousins; and living under strict instructions never to talk to prisoners wandering around the farm and in the village. We were made aware of the distinction between us (that is, assorted migrant prison officer families = good) and them (that is, prison inmates = bad), although later they became more interesting, different and deviant.

My father, a communist, used to bring inmates home, not to work as other officers did, but to have a family meal and read and study if he was tutoring them for university courses. My father was always doing university courses that he had first begun as a returned soldier at the London School of Economics with Harold Laski. The famous Laski was not the reason my father had become a Marxist, though. That had

been a process that began in a railway signal box when he was a very young teen, working with a communist who turned his Catholicism upside down in their nightly debates between trains.

My father's socialism was something I took on board from him. But it was also something that was reinforced by reading, as an 11-year-old, Jessica Mitford's book *Hons and Rebels*, given to me by the women whose convenience shop I worked at in Ponsonby Road after we moved in our little green Ford Prefect with all our belongings up to Auckland. Socialism always made sense to me. When my father went on protests against Diem, the South Vietnamese President, in the early 1960s, it easily followed that I should do the same at later Vietnam protests. I was a Progressive Youth member and marched with my friend Graham Franklin Brown and the Lee boys et al. to Paratai Drive where the United States Ambassador (purportedly) lived and where a policeman was shoved over the cliff.

I did not like Auckland high schools at all. My parents both left home early and worked late. This was good because, apart from having to cook dinners often (I still hate cooking), it meant I could stay home with a book after they left. This was one of the times when I read most—anything I could get my hands on. Was it sociological? Not directly, mostly novels. Are they sociological? Often, just not explicitly so. Consequently, I failed University Entrance, presumably to the disappointment of the headmaster, Mr Wolloxall, who had told me as a 13-year-old student that he expected a University Scholarship from me because of my IQ. So, denied by my parents the option to go hairdressing, I went to Teachers Training College.

Training College was irritating. I remember fights for women to be able to wear pant suits (not even jeans); I can remember being paid \$16 while a male student was paid \$22; and I can remember them trying to make all the students swear on the Bible as to their fealty to the profession, and me refusing to and having to walk up by myself in front of the whole assembled staff and students and swear on something that wasn't a bible. One kind thing I remember there (and have always subsequently tried to pass on to students whenever possible) was Betty Gilderdale (a lecturer and author) who, when she handed back our essays, told me in front of the class that "I could write". This was an important piece of information for a dyslexic.

My mother in Auckland bloomed again, being back into city life. She became active in abortion reform and was instrumental in helping set up the abortion clinic at Remuera. So, the feminist theory and experiences multiplied all around me.

My first teaching job was at Ohai, a small coal-mining village at the bottom of the South Island. There I saw the New Zealand class system in action in microcosm. There were the coal miners' children, who were the majority of the 5-year-olds I taught, and a few local farmers' children, and in the distant hills were the Speight children, who were sent to boarding school in Switzerland. Their parents were the owners of Speights Brewery. The Speights were spoken of by locals with a mixture of contempt and envy; they remembered it all including such things as when, in the Depression, the Speights' car (the only one in the district) broke down in the village. The wife, who was a model, got out of the car and the husband put mohair blankets under the car wheels to un-stick it. When un-stuck, he and his wife then drove off, leaving the mohair blankets in the mud. I didn't last very long at Ohai Primary School because I didn't get on with the headmaster. This became a pattern with other headmasters. I particularly remember one in Christchurch, who rebuked me soundly for taking the 44 children in my class for a walk to a local park. This had been an attempt to break the tedium of a very boring curriculum. Getting pregnant and becoming grounded, as was standard then, I stopped teaching and joined with my friend Mary Hancock to organise a domestic violence shelter for women. This was in Napier in 1975 when New Zealand, like most countries, was in denial about domestic violence—it was only the second shelter started in New Zealand. We spoke too and organised women's groups to make contributions, and eventually succeeded in opening a shelter.

What was your main post-secondary training/job, and did this have any relevance for later sociological work?

Schools where I taught were boring even when the kids were funny, bright and lively, which they often were. My relief was doing university study through Massey. It was ego-boosting to get As for essays in sociology, which I loved, and I devoured J. V. Baldridge's text *Sociology: A Critical Approach*. It treated sociology so self-reflexively; for example, quoting from the Martin Nicolaus's 1968 speech at the American Sociological Association, which is still worth repeating:

Sociology is not now and never has been any kind of objective seeking out of social truth or reality. Historically, the profession is an outgrowth of nineteenth century European traditionalism and conservatism wedded to twentieth century American corporate liberalism. That is to say that the eyes of sociologists with few but honourable (or honourable but few) exceptions have been turned downward, and their palms upward. Eyes down to study the activities of the lower classes of the subject population...

It was irresistible to be part of such a bad-ass reflexive way of thinking. It gave me permission from the beginning to research the rich and famous as ruthlessly as I could, simply to reduce a power imbalance in sociological writing and society. Other disciplines like economics and history didn't offer me that option. I was told by a history tutor to never question historians in print until after I had done my PhD. It seemed to me then (and now) that most history is written by White middle-class men in the interests of legitimating White male upper-class interests.

Why did you develop your master's/PhD work?

I did my master's on the sociology of women in the legal profession—*Sharing in the shingles: The distribution of rewards in the NZ legal profession*—because I had gone to law school in Auckland and had seen even in the early 1980s how women in law were being treated. Women were the majority (and often the brightest) of my master's law class, but once they left law school, they were subject to misogyny and did badly compared with their male peers—and if they were Māori women, they were subject to both misogyny and racism. I interviewed 100 lawyers (50 men and 50 women). The interviews were great fun and the lawyers were generous with their insights (maybe because fewer people were surveyed or interviewed in the 1980s) and some of my worst suspicions about the treatment of women were confirmed. But writing it up was never quite as easy as my head of department had said it would be: "Interview pieces write themselves." They don't. But I managed to write two articles (1987 and 1989) and three chapters (1988, 1990 and 2003) on the situation of women in the law. A highlight for me was in 1984, just after I finished my master's, when I was invited to Bellagio in Italy (where George Clooney now lives) to the Rockefeller Institute. There, as a young person, for the first time in Italy, I sat around a huge table with a group of elderly academics critically debating facets of the legal profession. They were leading high-profile academics, including Philip Lewis, a senior fellow at Oxford, Rick Abel, a professor of law at the University of California and Harry Arthurs, the dean of Osgoode Hall and later president at York University (Canada). None of them were the unwelcome and unwelcome individual who turned up at my bedroom door early one morning. Women are vulnerable to unwelcome sexual overtures at conferences then and now. The Rockefeller Institute itself was magnificent and had reputedly been lived in by Mussolini before the war. The output of our labours was a three-volume piece called *Lawyers in Society* (1988). My chapter was "The New Zealand legal profession: From colonial GPs to the servants of capital?" At that time, looking out across the snow-capped mountain surrounding Lake Camo, I thought that academia had a lot going for it. Travel, fighting for change and social justice, and meeting people—what more could a job offer?

What were the benefits of where you did thesis work? Anything about postgraduate work at Auckland that inspired you?

I loved being a critic of the law and happily never felt inhibited by thinking I would ever need to get a job as a lawyer. So, I decided to do my PhD on the law too but look at it from a Marxist perspective. (I was at this time heavily influenced by reading *Capital* in a reading group with David Bedggood, which was hugely important to me.) Using Marx, I hoped to put the legal profession within a circuit of capital framework. Then I came to the conclusion that the law was only of secondary importance and the real kernel of power was business—how it organised, for whom, and what were its strengths and weaknesses. So, I interviewed 108 top businessmen and 4 businesswomen in New Zealand for my doctorate. In those days before Zoom, it meant lots of plane travel between Auckland and Wellington. Eventually after six years of long nights, with tutoring, a wakeful toddler and a lot of coffee, I was awarded my PhD, *New Zealand Corporate Capitalism*, in 1990.

The University of Auckland Department of Sociology at that time too was lively and generally a good place to be where some of the staff were generally supportive and not all into the sociology of railway trains and stamps. My peer group was unusually stimulating too. Tutoring sociology was largely fun, particularly when I knew what I was talking about (which wasn't when I had to tutor statistics). And my overall advice to anyone thinking of doing a PhD and tutoring, is don't—unless you desperately need the money and cleaning toilets is the only other alternative open to you, because you will be consumed by the effort. Much better to finish the PhD early and get a full-time job.

What has your academic career been? How did you decide on this?

The exotic Italian experience at Bellagio, plus having published a number of journal articles on the legal profession and having finished my PhD in 1990, motivated me to apply for academic jobs—though my daughter, by now at primary school, told me she would “like me to get a job on the checkouts at the supermarket like Michelle's mum”. But I went ahead anyway and got a job at Griffith University that year. I had thought Griffith was next to Wagga Wagga and had quite fancied being able to put out a business card with Wagga Wagga on it, but disappointingly, Griffith is in Brisbane. But I knew neither place, and leaving family and friends for a place where I knew no one was a big challenge.

Happily, when I first went to Griffith the place was hopping with Marxists and radical lesbian separatists who had just fought a colleague who had publicly called for the closure of their new Women's Studies Centre within the Humanities. It was all very lively and confrontational. My colleagues were doing exceptionally good work—Tony Van Fossen on tax havens, Brian Head on Australian society, George Lafferty and Geoff Dow on Karl Marx and Sweden's social democracy, and Malcolm Alexander on interlocking directorates—so it was all very exciting. I was able to continue my work on top business with Malcolm, who had been instrumental in getting me the job. We wrote the article ‘Business power in Australia – the concentration of directorship holdings amongst the top 250 corporates’ in 1992 and got a large Australian Research Council grant in 1994. The grant financed interview travel around Australia, enabling me to interview top Australian businessmen and some women. For me the culmination of this work was my book *Capitalist Networks and Social Power in Australia and New Zealand* (2006, 2017). This work was then (and now) closest to my heart because it pulled no punches in its underlying call for a more equitable (non-neoliberal) society that was better than the one determined for us by capitalists. And this was certainly the theoretical basis of the book John Scott and I edited, *Financial Elites and Transnational Business: Who Rules the World?* (2012).

The other research topics that I have been happily side-tracked by (other than the already mentioned feminism for which I did an edited collection with David Peetz called *Women, Labor Segmentation and Regulation: Varieties of Gender Gaps* (2017), also involved looking at power and its misuse by the powerful—this time, power abuse by think tanks. I wrote about them first with my PhD student Vladimir Pacheco (2000), and later with Alejandro Salas Portes when we did an edited collection called *Think Tanks and Global Politics: Key Spaces Within Global Structures of Power* (2017). And the other industrial relations topic I researched

was coal mining and the work of female miners and domestic workers, in a book written with David Peetz called *Women of the Coal Rushes* (2010). We were commissioned to do this by a union—the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU)—who were concerned that the stories of women were dying out with their ageing. They included not just the women miners (they were still a minority in the mines where they had only begun to work in the 1970s) but also the domestic women workers who had major roles in bitter work disputes and long, drawn-out protests. This meant interviewing women in the coal-mining towns of the Bowen basin in Queensland. Many of the women were old but they were very happy to talk and to know that their stories would be preserved and written into our book.

Why did you choose to write books as well as articles, etc?

I chose to write books because I could and because I was always irritated by other peoples' truths and thought (probably wrongly) that I knew a better truth about power and its abuse. And because I enjoyed collaborating with people who were better writers than me and pushed me further than I would ever go on my own. And second, when I started, writing books was still seen as being necessary for academic promotion. Not that I was ever particularly good at being promoted. And the goal posts were always being shifted upward. When I started in 1990, a senior staff member confidentially complained to me because he had three books and wasn't a professor. I had five books (three edited collections) and never became a full professor. This might have been because at that time being a woman held female academics back, but also because I had received only three (old) major grants (1994, 1994 and 2009). Typically, the university is now dominated by a business agenda, the largest part of which is getting large grants from wherever possible, and the funding source, by choosing your project, will have a positive role in determining the direction of your research—even if they never directly interfere with processes or outcomes (both of which do happen). Sadly, this means the unfunded—however socially or medically worthy—fades into research oblivion.

Have you achieved your career goals?

Not yet, as I am still involved in two projects. The first is with an ex-student, Marco Oechsner, who is currently at Cambridge, working in a COVID-ridden UK hospital, and in his downtime trying to finish his part of our overdue-with-the-publisher book *Capitalism Ate My Body*. The other project is with David Peetz and Ian Lowe on an Australian Research Council project called the Intimidation and Voice of Research Scientists. My part has been interviewing women worldwide on their stories of harassment in science. This book should be mostly finished by the end of 2023.

Any lessons?

Any lessons—don't accept anyone else's negative definition of you. Particularly, if you are a woman academic, you are still the recipients of a gender pay gap (men get discretionary bonuses whereas women generally don't; see Bailey et al., 2016) and you are likely to be hindered in your expectations of promotion. But if you can now get a job in academia, I would still recommend it—the travel's great!

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A3: Martin Tolich

Where did you grow up?

I was born in a state house in Bayswater (Auckland) before moving north for intermediate school and returning to Marcellin College for my high-school years. My education was based around Catholicism.

Go to school? Was there anything in this background that propelled you towards sociology or that you've drawn on in your writing (or intend to)?

The turning point for my education came in School Certificate geography where I scored a high-grade. Although the focus was on New Zealand geographies—relief, climate, soils, vegetation and drainage—my interest was taken by people who lived in these places. So that was really a turning point.

Leaving school, I went on my OE, and when people ask me which of the countries that I had visited were my favourite —California, Europe, May Day 1977 in Red Square, the trans-Siberian railway, climbing Fuji on my 20th birthday—my answer was always the same: it was the six months that I spent in the freezers at Westfield freezing works that provided the greatest insight into human life. I remember the sense of alienation that gripped my life when I saw a truck driver—we had loaded meat onto his truck— being able to escape the factory where I was stuck. Freedom.

What was your main post-secondary training/job? Did this have any relevance for later sociological work?

The sociology of work became my main focus and that was trying to understand the meaningless working life in freezing works.

Why did you go to university?

When I returned to New Zealand in 1977, I looked at jobs in the newspaper and saw that a tertiary education was essential.

Why did you take sociology?

I took psychology and sociology and anthropology, but I excelled in sociology. I found it difficult to answer multiple-choice questions in psychology as there was always a more complex answer than yes and no.

Why develop master's/PhD Work?

I did a master's. One feeble attempt at Auckland University. I was attempting to use research methods when really this had not been taught to me systematically at Auckland University. The focus at Auckland was on essay writing. I was an empirical researcher I was soon to learn.

Thus, when I went to California in 1983 to get married, the master's at Auckland gave me some background in postgraduate studies and I took methodological courses that allowed me to more systematically study the sociology of the workplace. The journal article I wrote from the PhD is titled 'Alienating and liberating emotions at work'. The source of that inspiration was the Westfield freezing works experience of alienation.

Why did you choose to do your thesis at University of Auckland (or not)?

I did a master's thesis but was totally unprepared for it.

Anything about postgraduate study at Auckland that inspired you?

Being part of a really strong cohort of Nigel, Claudia, Gary, Hauraki and Georgina. I found those people to be very supportive and we gelled in Ivanica Vodanovich's class for mutual protection. There weren't a lot of PhD students around, so we were kind of senior students. Tania's March captured the low ebb of a trade union movement that I wanted to champion. When I moved away to California, I intended to drop the trade union as social movement part of my portfolio.

In the US, I was fascinated with how technology was used by workers. I was interested in green fields and brownfields. I was interested in how this new technology was easier for new workers than older workers. My research focus was on the UPC code that you find on any consumer item. When that was introduced in cash registers, how did it affect workers? Surprisingly—not helpful for my PhD—they loved it. But because I had the skills of an inductive iterative research design, I could see that the workers were talking about other forms of alienation, what Hochschild calls the "estrangement from emotion". The supermarkets were the location.

What were the benefits of a US doctoral education?

There are two stories here. One is fretful—would I succeed?—and that stayed with me for 6½ years. But the other story is just the brilliance of people like Lyn Lofland, Gary Hamilton and Judy Stacey who just lit up the room with their teaching in their research.

What has your academic career been? How did you decide on this?

My academic career began with my first academic position at Massey University where I saw an opportunity to study the workplace in an occupation that always interested me. I wrote eight or nine articles about the feminisation of jockeys and jockeys in a total institution, asking questions like why weren't jockeys anorexic?

My career took a detour in an ethics application to study jockeys in and around the Manawatu. A local bishop who was a member of the ethics committee questioned me about my ethnography, asking why I was doing journalism at the university. I literally fell off my horse, on my road to Damascus, and chose a new career, which was championing qualitative research ethics. I'm currently writing my 12th book on the subject.

It is interesting how things turn out. I remember a mentor at UC Davis telling graduate students to go forth into the world and find a place to dig and dig deep. Research ethics was that place, and it has been good to me. I have been a member of an ethics committee at Massey University—I became its deputy chair—and a member of the health and disability ethics committee for Manawatu, and when those committees were disbanded, Annette King, Minister of Health appointed me the inaugural chair of the multi-region health and disability ethics committee, based in Wellington. I served there for four years, and

I saw a need—researchers who were not from a tertiary institution or doing health research had no ethics committee, so I set up a not-for-profit company, The New Zealand Ethics Limited, that hosted a New Zealand ethics committee, which has been running now for the last 12 years. I have the distinction to be the only person in the world who actually owns an ethics committee.

What topics have you worked on? Why those topics?

The topics have always been trying to understand qualitative research ethics. My 11th book—*Finding Your Research Ethics Self*—is just out. The book assumes that qualitative researchers (according to a 2006 article I wrote) go to an ethics committee and tell them: 1) what the research is about, 2) what the ethical issues are raised by that research, and 3) how they (the researcher) are going to address those ethical issues. This is stupid. There is also a fourth question that ethics committees deliberately don't ask: "What are you going to do when your research question changes?"—as it invariably will in qualitative research. This book addresses that fourth question by finding a way to better train qualitative students.

Why did you move to the University of Otago?

In 2003, I had a sense that Massey University was in decline, and I feared that the government would move to have fewer universities. Auckland University and Otago University were the safest bets, and a position came up at Otago University. They wanted someone to teach year 2 research methods. I asked them what textbook they used—they use *Social Science Research in New Zealand*—which I had co-written with Carl Davidson. Otago was just a more prestigious university.

Were there any particular audiences you saw yourself as addressing, that you felt responsible to?
Ethics committees.

Who have been supportive colleagues along the way?

There are many people who have supported me along the way, some in New Zealand but most overseas. It would be impolite to mention any of them because I would miss out someone.

How has your teaching/supervision related to your career?

When you look at teaching in the United States in a State College or at the University of California, one can see an elitist system working. In Sacramento State University, you would be teaching four classes each semester. In a University of California University, you would be teaching two classes per semester. This would give you more time to do research. New Zealand universities are more elite than that. At Otago, we teach three courses a year and first- and second-year courses have tutors who do all the grading.

Have you achieved your career goals?

Yes, I have.

Any lessons?

To cherish the autonomy to see work as teaching and everything else—writing books—as fun. I have taken every opportunity I have been given.

Selected publications

Tolich, M. B. (1993). Alienating and liberating emotions at work: Supermarket clerks' performance of customer service. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 22(3), 361–381.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/089124193022003004>

- Tolich, M., & Davidson, C. (Eds). (2020). *Social science research in New Zealand: An introduction*. Auckland University Press.
- Tolich, M., & Tumilty, E. (2020). *Finding your research ethics self*. Routledge.

A4: Nigel Clark

I grew up in Kohimarama, in the eastern suburbs of Auckland. I went to St. Thomas's, a state primary/intermediate school, where my final-year teacher, Samuel McHarg, introduced me to environmental issues (through the 1973 Sick Earth project). I then went on to King's College but got out as fast as possible and went straight to university in 1978, originally aiming to do town planning until I was derailed by sociology and the prospect of revolutionary change. I just have this sense of arriving at university very naive and unformed, having not done a lot of living (I think I enrolled on my 17th birthday). As I came out of my undergraduate years, still fairly unfamiliar with the ways in the world, it meant a lot to be taken seriously by my Fab Four friends.

I just kind of stayed on for a master's in 1983 and ended up writing a dissertation entitled *Ecology and the limits to capitalism*. 1984 was really my turning point to being a theorist, both because I was increasingly drawn to theory and because I was too shy to interview real people. Being with a small group—the Fab Three plus Hauraki and Gary—who were all more grown up than me, but also loved what they were doing—was central to being a postgraduate and a formative experience. But another formative moment was facing off against the police during the 1981 Springbok tour and looking down the row of people in the front line and seeing three of my sociology lecturers (I'm thinking it was Ivanica, Cluny and David).

I wandered round the world for a few years and then came back to do a PhD, really because I wasn't sure what else to do, but I knew that I wanted to really push some issues at the intersection of radical social change and radical ecology. Along the way, with some help from Barry Smart, I discovered post-structuralism, got deeper into theory, and my thesis, after many turns, morphed into a genealogy of artificial nature entitled *Prospects of enchantment, Dreamworlds of nature* (1994). After that I knew that I wanted to keep on pushing the question of how social agency and physical processes impacted upon each other, from as many different angles as I could find, which increasingly drew me further from mainstream social science/sociology.

In the 1990s, I lived in the same street in Arch Hill as Claudia and her partner, artist John Lyall, and we jokingly referred to ourselves as the 'King Street School of Cultural Theory', but in all seriousness, our work together and conversations were vital in drawing me into a world of art, literature and cultural production. My collaborations with John Lyall around his notion of 'feral theory' played a big part in my thinking around nonhuman agency in a postcolonial context, and in the late 1990s, I curated two art exhibitions: *alt.nature* and *Shrinking Worlds* (John featured in both of them). I was also increasingly influenced by Australian feminist theory at this time.

I was always a bit reluctant to take on a proper academic career, as I (rightly) recognised I wasn't really suited to big institutions and a linear career path, and I eventually stumbled into a job lecturing back in the Department of Sociology at the University of Auckland. This was a familiar and supportive environment for learning the basics of lecturing, but me and the department were probably both ready for a break from each other, and I ended up taking a job in early 2000 at the Open University (OU) in Milton Keynes in the UK, and living in London, and then Oxford. This entailed a move into a human geography department, but this was just as conducive to my interest in nonhuman agency: the transition was no big deal and I continued to publish in social theory/sociology journals and to hang out with sociologists as well as geographers. I liked the pace of the OU, the time we took to develop teaching material, and I got to

work on one of the first online distance learning environment courses and to work in very interdisciplinary teams.

There was a feeling in coming to the UK that I was starting again, and a lot of what I had done previously didn't count, though in my case this was not just a matter of coming from New Zealand, but of publications and achievements in the art world not really counting for much in social science. My feeling has always been that in issues around environmental issues, nonhuman agency and questions of decolonisation, Europe and the North Atlantic has a lot to learn from the Antipodes, though one of the things I miss about being in the UK is feeling out of touch with Māori thought and politics and scholarship, and with the Pacific more generally. But in many respects moving to the UK wasn't a big leap, especially as it has often meant working closely with people who are also diasporic in some way, and often in ways that are more visible than it is for me.

Alongside numerous side projects, my long-term interest in nonhuman agency eventually crystallised into the book *Inhuman Nature: Sociable Life on a Dynamic Planet* (2011) which, as the title suggests, was about trying to draw social theory into a full engagement with the Earth and with volatile and variable Earth processes. These are themes I've continued to push, up to and including a more recent book that I co-wrote with Lancaster sociologist colleague Bron Szerszynski: *Planetary Social Thought: The Anthropocene Challenge to the Social Sciences*. Books, especially these two, have always held the appeal of drawing diverse material into a bigger, deeper and more idiosyncratic statement than you can get away with in papers or chapters.

Moving to a small geography department nested in a bigger environment centre at Lancaster University in 2012 drew me back into face-to-face teaching, and the 'joys' of PowerPoint and big lectures. I hold the Chair of Social Sustainability in the Lancaster Environment Centre. A lot of the teaching I've had to do, as in many places, is just covering the bases, but in the last few years I've been able to experiment with courses where I really get my students to think with and through Earth processes. It's interesting to see how raising questions of how you might work and play and engage with the Earth 'otherwise' seems to work as an enlivening and creative alternative to simply confronting the threat of climate change.

My version of social science has always been relentlessly interdisciplinary, not only in the sense that I cross over into neighbouring disciplines, but that I also work with artists, humanities scholars and natural scientists. I've co-authored books and papers with natural scientists, and published in the fields of literary studies, geography, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, cultural and media studies, environmental studies, feminist studies, art theory and whatever else comes along, but I guess when you're interested in what the Earth gets up to, a certain amount of wandering comes into it. I've watched environmental catastrophe gradually loom ever since primary school in the early '70s, and my abiding interest is to try and reshape social science to take account of the jittery planet on which it finds itself. I also feel immensely lucky that I got my tertiary education just in advance of big fee hikes and that I had my major career breaks before it was compulsory to attract research funding, which I've never been particularly interested in or successful at—frankly, because I never needed it. Currently, I'm ever more appalled by the fact that a generation of students are going into deep debt to learn about how fucked their planet is, and then being increasingly brutally policed when they try and do anything about it.

Selected publications

Clark, N. (1994). *Prospects of enchantment, dreamworlds of nature: An analysis of the natural referent from resemblance to the hyper-real* [PhD thesis, University of Auckland]. ResearchSpace.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2292/894>

Clark, N. (2011). *Inhuman nature: Sociable life on a dynamic planet*. SAGE.

Clark, N., & Szerszynski, B. (2020) *Planetary social thought: The Anthropocene challenge to the social sciences*. Polity Press.