Human Rights Commission
Te Kāhui Tika Tangata

Confident, equal and proud?

A discussion paper on the barriers Asians face to equality in New Zealand

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The Hon Pansy Wong states that her vision as Minister for Ethnic Affairs "is to ensure that ethnic New Zealanders are confident, equal and proud citizens of our nation." Yet, strong barriers still remain to the equality of ethnic New Zealanders, and in some instances the inequities between ethnic New Zealanders and European New Zealanders continue to widen.

The research indicates that this is especially true for Asian people. A myriad of reports have been released in New Zealand on migrants, refugees, skilled workers and international students, along with New Zealanders attitudes towards them, and in all cases Asians stand out as the group experiencing the most discrimination. These findings lead to three important questions:

1. Why is this (broad) group a particular target for discrimination, and is this over and above that experienced by other minority groups?
2. Do Asians feel **confident** and **proud** regardless of this apparent discrimination?
3. What can be done to ensure that Asians are given **equal** treatment?

This report does not aim to answer these questions, but instead seeks to encourage discussion by providing a review of the research showing Asians to be the group facing the most discrimination in NZ.

This report is a discussion paper for the 2010 New Zealand Diversity Forum taking place on August 23 at the Christchurch Convention Centre, co-hosted by the Human Rights Commission and Victoria University of Wellington's Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research. It is our hope that the material provided here will lead the way to an informed and constructive discussion on discrimination towards Asians in NZ and about how to move forward from here. Any and all input into this discussion is welcome and encouraged.

Human Rights Commission
Te Kāhui Tika Tangata

Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui
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Te Pae Rangahau Tauhōkai Ahurea

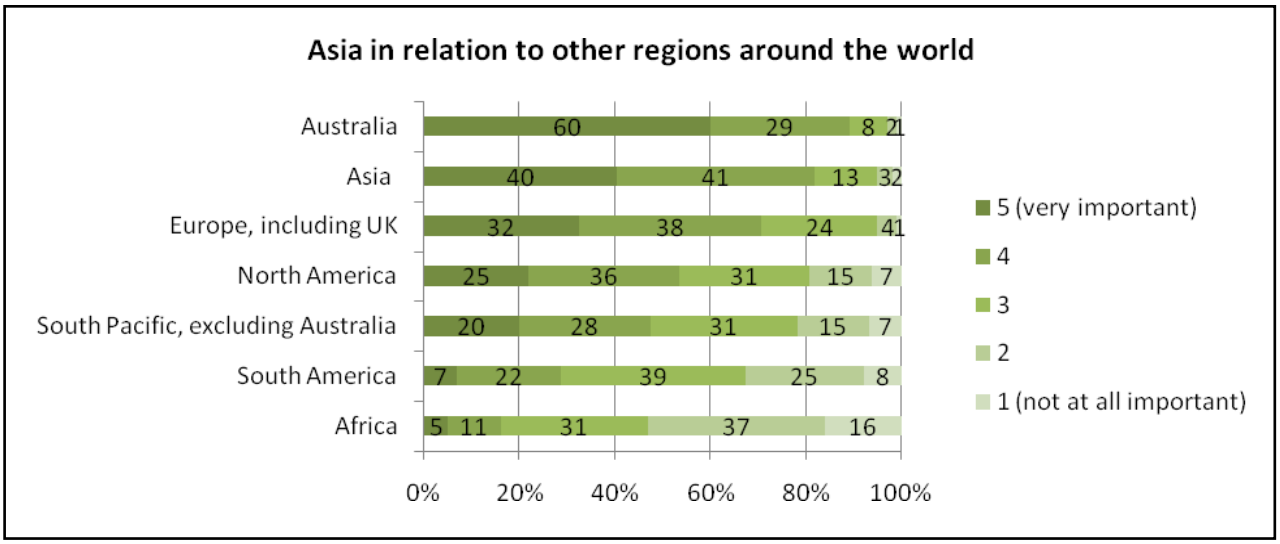
Table of Contents

1. Introduction

Asian people are the fastest growing population in New Zealand. In the most recent Census of Population and Dwellings, those who identified as Asian reached nearly 9% of the total population, which surpassed those identifying as Pacific peoples (6.6%, Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Migration from Asia has increased steadily since the change to a more inclusive immigration policy in 1987 and to a skills-based immigration system in 1991 (Department of Labour, 2003).

These significant changes in migration trends and immigration policy have dramatically altered the face of New Zealand. In 2001/2002, nearly 60% of residence approvals were made for those entering NZ under the General Skills Category and approximately half of them originated from Asian countries (Department of Labour, 2003). While these migrants are recognised as being crucial for New Zealand's economic development, migrants from Asia are often not accepted by the wider NZ society and even struggle to find employment after they have been granted residence based on their skills.

New Zealand is progressive in its policies towards diversity, migration and social inclusion. In fact, in some ways we are doing better than other countries who are trying to achieve the same goals for diversity. Nearly 90% of New Zealanders feel that it is a good thing for our society to be made up of different races, religions and cultures, which is slightly higher than Australians (85%; Dunn, 2003) and much more consensual than among Europeans (64%, ranging from 36% in Greece to 77% in Sweden; European Commission, 2001). New Zealanders think Asia is more important to New Zealand's future than all other geographical regions except Australia (Asia:NZ Foundation, 2009).



Source: Asia:NZ Foundation, 2009

1.1 What New Zealanders Think of Asia and Her Settlers

In general, New Zealanders hold Asia in high regard. When asked about the importance of the Asian region to New Zealand's future, four out of five people believe that it is either important or very important. Approximately 90% of New Zealanders believe that Asian tourism in New Zealand will have a positive future impact on the country and strongly endorse Asia as an export market. A majority also believe in the benefits to New Zealand of the economic growth in Asia (80%), free trade agreements between NZ and Asia (78%), and NZ tourism in Asia (74%). Asian migrants are seen as contributing significantly to NZ society (81%) and are felt to bring valuable diversity to the country (78%; Asia: NZ Foundation, 2009).

The flip side to the perceived positive impact of Asia on New Zealand is the less optimistic view about the costs to New Zealand society that come with a closer relationship with Asia. A smaller majority of people believe that NZ benefits from: Asian imports to NZ (63%), Asian cultures and values (59%), Asian immigration (55%) and the population growth in Asia (47%; Asia: NZ Foundation, 2009). When attitudes towards immigrants and immigration are assessed, about one in two New Zealanders feel the recent arrival of many Asian migrants is changing NZ in undesirable ways. And almost one in two people believe that Asians are over-represented in crime, whereas only 2.5% of those actually incarcerated identify as Asian (which is far lower than the 9% Asian population at large; Gendall, Spoonley & Trlin, 2007). Taken together, these findings point to the idea that some New Zealanders are happy to have a one-way relationship with Asia, where they wish NZ to benefit economically, but they would like to keep New Zealand society and values distant from Asian influence and not quite inclusive of Asian people.

The less positive views towards Asian influence on New Zealand society, and more strongly, the anxieties that some New Zealanders hold about the potential (negative) impact that the greater influx of Asian migration will bring to New Zealand, has perhaps led to an increase in prejudice, racism and discrimination being exhibited towards Asian inhabitants in recent years. When New Zealanders are asked to identify which group (ethnic or otherwise) faces the most discrimination, Asians have been cited first year after year. In the 2009 UMR Research report on perceived discrimination in NZ, 75% of respondents believed that Asians experienced either a "great deal" or "some" discrimination, compared to the somewhat fewer number of people who believe Pacific peoples (58%) and Māori (56%) face discrimination (UMR Research Ltd, 2009).

Significantly, in a study about perceptions of Asia, it was shown that New Zealanders who had more personal involvement with people from Asia had warmer feelings towards Asians as a whole. About three out of four people who have a lot of contact with Asian people (77%) feel warmly towards people originating in Asia, whereas only one in two people (49%) who have hardly any contact with people from Asia feel warmly towards them. It was shown that contact occurs in various spheres of life, including shopping, via friends and family, through work or business, travel, in the neighbourhood, or through the schools or the health care system (Asia:NZ Foundation, 2009).

Finally, a commonly held belief about migrants to New Zealand is that "they stick to themselves" in ethnic enclaves and do little to try to fit in (Gendall, Spoonley & Trlin, 2007). Sixty six percent of New Zealanders think that they could do more to learn about New Zealand culture and 34% believe that Asian people do not mix well with other New Zealanders (Asia:NZ Foundation, 2009). This conception is partially true; Asian migrants often report trying to reach out and make social connections with New Zealanders to no avail and in the end they live and socialise primarily with people from their own ethnic communities (Chang, Morris & Vokes, 2006; Lidgard, 1996). The feeling that new migrants should "try harder to integrate" (but struggle in fact to do so) has been found among many host societies besides New Zealand (Rohmann, A., Florack, A., & Piontkowski, U., 2006).

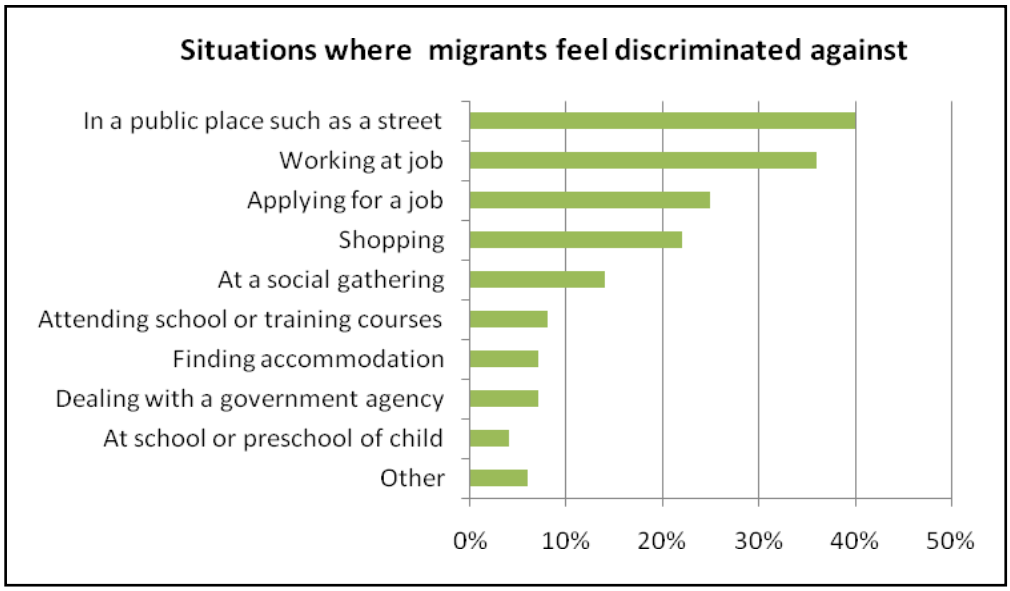
1.2 Asian People's Experiences of Discrimination

Some studies have been conducted with Asian people directly, to find out whether they have in fact experienced discrimination in New Zealand. When broadly asked if they had experienced discrimination in the past 12 months, 23.2% of Asian respondents said that they had (Statistics New Zealand, 2009); a higher proportion than all other ethnic groups, including both Māori (16%) and Pacific (14.1%) respondents. In a different study conducted with all applicants approved for permanent residence in NZ between 2005 and 2007, Asian participants reported experiencing more discrimination than other groups. East Asians (e.g., China, Japan and Korea) were the group most likely to report discrimination (42%), with slightly less discrimination reported by South East Asians (37%; e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines; Department of Labour, 2009). This can be compared to the majority of participants representing the other regions reporting less, but still significant levels of discrimination, with between 20 and 30% of South Asians, South Africans, North Americans, Europeans (and "other") having reported it. And finally, respondents from the UK/Ireland and the Pacific were the least likely to report experiencing discrimination, with 15% and 12% respectively (Department of Labour, 2009).

1.3 What Sort of Discrimination Do Asians Experience?

In the Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand conducted with new permanent residents; those who had experienced discrimination were asked to identify the situations in which they felt they had been targeted. The three most commonly reported responses were: (1) in a public place such as a street, (2) working at a job, or (3) applying for a job. East Asians were reported to be the most likely to experience discrimination in a public place, but otherwise Asians were not specifically identified. However, a large amount of other research

conducted with Asian people corroborates this finding. The following sections will first summarise the discrimination that Asian people have reported experiencing in public places, and second will review the reports on the barriers Asians face in gaining equal access to employment based on their ethnicity.



Source: Department of Labour, 2009

2. Harassment in Public

Many publications have been released in New Zealand that provide anecdotal accounts of harassment experienced by Asian people in public places. This usually takes the form of racist epithets uttered by passers-by or in more extreme form by having eggs thrown at them on street corners or drinks spilled on them at bars. The following sections review the literature on harassment towards Asian people and provide direct quotes describing their experiences where possible.

2.1 Korean Experiences in Christchurch and Auckland

Thirty-six Korean migrants were interviewed about their experiences in Christchurch, and nearly all of them reported having been on the receiving end of some harassment since they arrived in the city. There were many reports of verbal abuse, including the oft-uttered sentiment of “go back where you came from”. The more physical abuse included eggs and stones being thrown at them or their cars. They reported that most (but not all) of the harassment was inflicted on them by teenagers.

One woman told the interviewers that she would go for daily walks and be harassed every other day:

> *“They used their middle finger and used the f-word and … like Asian bitch, like that, those kind of things. Always are horrid, whenever I walk.”*

One day a group of teenagers began throwing stones at her and simply laughed when she confronted them. This experience was similar to that of a dairy-owner who reported that teenagers would throw eggs and stones through the open door of his dairy. He found this very stressful and ended up selling the establishment, listing the harassment as one of the reasons for doing so.

Source: Asia:NZ Foundation

The migrants explained that they thought the harassment and discrimination they experienced was at the hands of low-class and less educated New Zealanders who were perhaps ignorant about people from other cultures. They believed it to occur more at an individual level rather than a societal one (Chang, Morris & Vokes, 2006).

Korean migrants in Auckland reported very similar experiences of discrimination and harassment. They faced intolerance based on their language abilities and appearance, as well as verbal and physical harassment (Meares, Ho, Peace & Spoonley, 2010b).

> *"When I walk in the streets, teenagers swear and spit at me. When I drive people point out that I'm Asian and swear at me."*

2.2 Chinese Employers and Employees in Auckland

In a study designed to understand the economic integration of migrants from the People's Republic of China in Auckland, respondents also provided reports of the discrimination they felt faced Chinese migrants in general (Meares, Ho, Peace & Spoonley, 2010a). Nearly two thirds of the participants did not feel that migrants were discriminated against in the workplace (that is 60% of employers and 65% of employees). A much greater number believed that migrants faced either some or a lot of discrimination on the street (65% of employers and 80% of employees). As is common, when asked about their own personal experiences of discrimination they reported lower levels than what they believed their group as a whole experienced. However the number of participants who said they had personally experienced discrimination was still large (30% of employers and 55% of employees). Like with the Korean migrants, these experiences were most often at the hands of young people in the streets.

> *"One day I went shopping. Two young guys said nasty words to me in the shop. I felt very uncomfortable."*

"Most of the local people are kind and friendly toward new migrants. One time a few young guys said nasty words to me from a bus window."

It can be seen that some of the respondents also expressed the same opinion held by the Korean migrants: that it is not all New Zealanders who discriminate against them (Meares, Ho, Peace & Spoonley, 2010b). It is clear that the perpetrators of harassment and blatant discrimination are perceived to be the younger, less educated and lower class New Zealanders, whereas the majority of New Zealanders are perceived to be friendly and more open to diversity. That's the good news. The bad news is that the subtle and hidden discrimination is more pervasive. This will be illustrated in Section 3 on the employment inequities.

2.3 Reporting Racism in Nelson/Tasman

A survey of migrants and their personal experiences of racism was taken in Nelson/Tasman with the express purpose to design and instate a reporting system for racist incidents (Kohner, 2009). Of the 184 participants of 48 different ethnicities, it was found that 81% of them had experienced racism personally and 86% had witnessed racist incidents. While Asian specific information was not given, several Asian-specific incidents were reported. Part of the motivation for creating a system for reporting racism was a statement made in the Settling In Nelson/Tasman report in 2005 that said that there was "widespread racism against Asians in the street" and that there was no way to deal with it. Focus groups were held with the participants to get a sense of the nature of the racism and discrimination. Among the incidents reported were many Asian-specific examples. The examples were again dominated by discriminatory acts led by young people:

"*I have witnessed an incident where youths in a car have thrown food and shouted insults at [Asian] friends standing on the footpath."*

Referring to threats received, one participant relayed this experience:

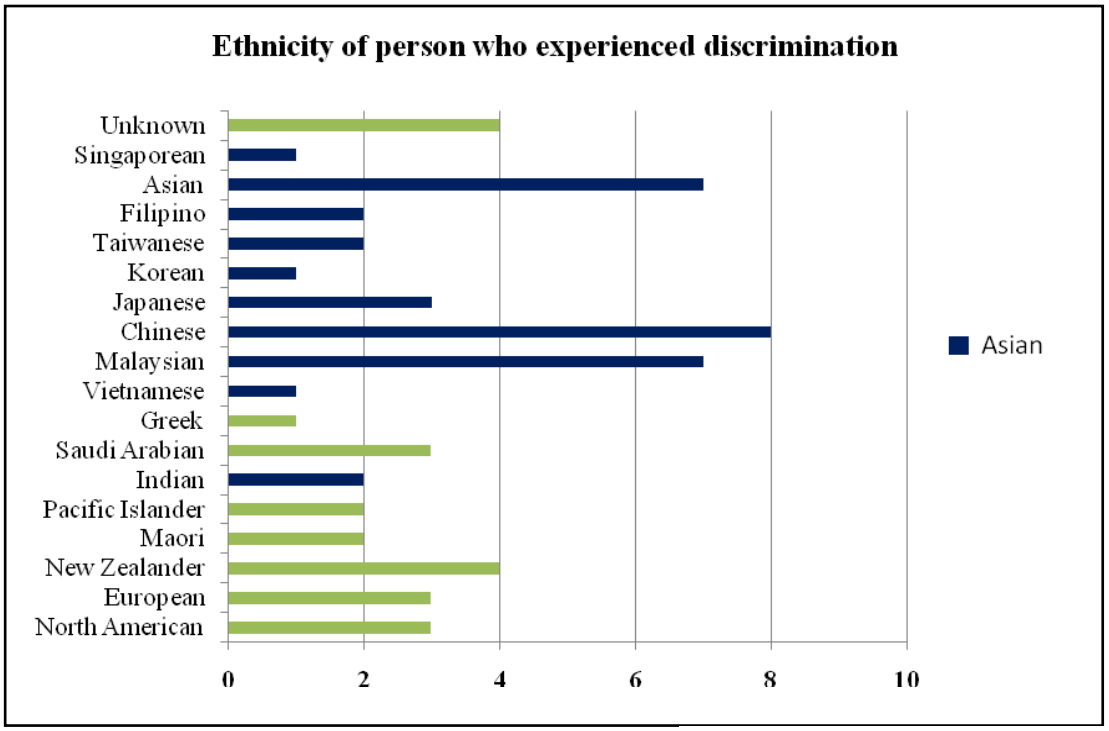
"Someone said "Asian" and made a motion as if to slit throat."

Included with the reports of harassment were a couple of examples of physical violence:

"Last year at fish and chip shop someone hit son, and said 'get out'. Son say 'why hit?' He say 'you look like [Asian]'." (Kohner, 2009)

2.4 International Students' Experiences of Harassment

As part of the Safer Students Campaign in Christchurch, an online reporting system has been launched for international students to confidentially report any incidents of harassment they experience or witness (www.report-it.org.nz). In the first year of its launch, it was found that two thirds of the students who had been harassed were Asian. Importantly, several resolutions to the harassment cases were made once they were reported on the website.



Source: Safer Students Campaign, 2009

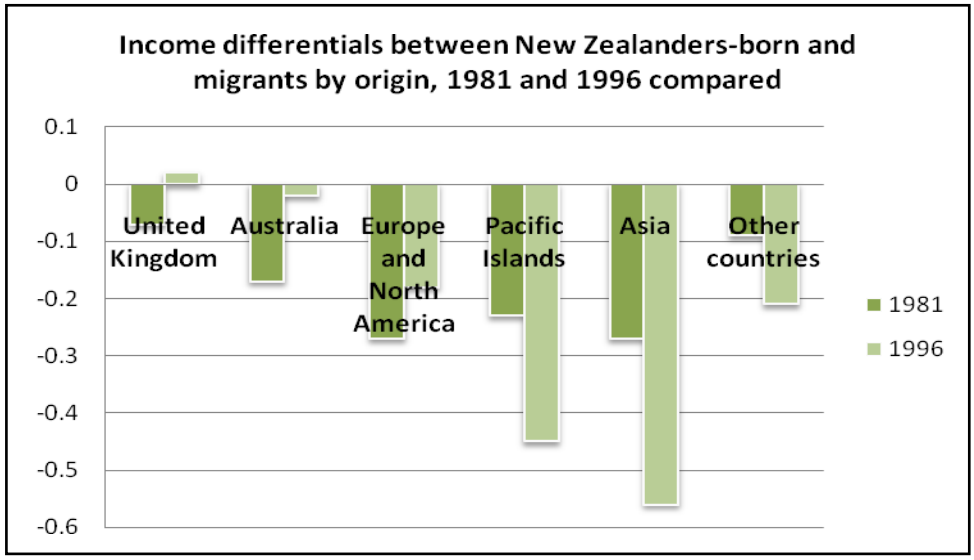
3. Unequal Access to Employment

Not being able to gain fair access to employment and equitable income is arguably more detrimental than the experience of verbal and (mild) physical harassment. It certainly has more impact on socio-economic standing.

Analysis of the NZ census data reveals that Asian people who have entered NZ through the General Skills Category have higher levels of unemployment and lower levels of employment than all other migrant groups entering NZ under the same category. Within this category, both male and female South Asians who have been in NZ between 0 and 2 years have the highest rates of unemployment (15.6% for males and 19% for females), although they are the group with the highest number of university qualifications and lowest number with no qualifications or school only. Similarly, both males and females from East Asia who have been in NZ between 0 and 2 years have the lowest employment rates of all groups (38.9% for males and 28.7% for females; Department of Labour, 2003).

An article published in 1998 provides a comparison of migrants in the workforce from three different census years (1981, 1986 and 1996) and finds that migrants originating in Asian countries have become more disadvantaged over time. As is shown in the following graph, in 1981, migrants from Europe, North America, Pacific Islands and Asia all had similar levels of income to one another, and were all equally disadvantaged compared to alike New Zealand-born citizens (earning about 25% less). By 1996, the gap between the income levels for NZ-born and migrants originating in English-speaking countries began to close. On the other

side, the gap in income levels widened between NZ-born and migrants originating in non-English speaking countries. This was especially true for Asians. Whereas in 1981, Asians had income levels approximately 25% less than comparable NZ-born citizens, by 1996 they were making nearly 60% less. One possible explanation given was that the changes to the labour market in the 1990s caused Asian people with insufficient English language skills to be penalised by the greater competition for jobs.



Source: Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998

Asians have also been repeatedly shown to be at a disadvantage in gaining employment, compared with NZ-born job applicants. The follow sections will summarise this research.

3.1 Sri Lankan Migrant Experiences Accessing Employment

One hundred and fourteen Sri Lankan migrants were interviewed in four NZ cities (Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton and Palmerston North) about their experiences in finding employment in New Zealand (Basnayake, 1999). About half of the respondents said they felt discriminated against when searching for employment. One third were not employed, although at the time the study took place Sri Lankans had the highest level of tertiary education in the country, and 92% identified as either fluent, very fluent or spoke English as a first language. Nearly half of the respondents who were unemployed had not been asked for an interview. When asked to state whether they felt the barriers were present because they needed to upgrade their English, qualifications, computer knowledge or that they were currently receiving training, many of the migrants nominated their own "other" reasons for the disadvantage that were beyond their control, such as:

"Lower the age and change the pigments of the skin."

"Change the colour of the skin."

"Change name to an English name."

Of those employed, a third of them had experienced discrimination in the workplace. A large portion of them believed this was due to their race, colour, accent or having an ethnic name. The half who had not experienced discrimination stated that they were aware that Sri Lankans faced discrimination in the workplace. The most commonly reported sources of discrimination were employers (65.5%), recruitment consultants (56.4%), general public (27%), employees (20%) and Work and Income New Zealand (20%) (Basnayake, 1999).

3.2 HR Professionals and Recruitment Consultants' Experiences

A group of human resource professionals and recruitment consultants provided information about discrimination facing all New Zealanders searching for employment (Burns, 2000). When asked if they felt that people faced unfair barriers to employment, 95% of the respondents said yes. Two of the most cited reasons for the discrimination can be broadly related to Asian people: non-New Zealand accent (70%) and different culture (57%). Half of the respondents believed Asians to specifically face discrimination (compared to 37% who nominated Pacific people and 32% who thought Māori were targeted). Slightly fewer than 40% of respondents reported having first hand experience of discrimination towards Asians, which differed significantly between HR professionals (31%) and recruitment consultants (54%). Managers and clients of the professionals/consultants were overwhelmingly identified as being the perpetrators of discrimination (88%). Another significant finding was that 25% of respondents reported that recruitment consultants themselves had been found to discriminate against clients. One recruitment consultant offered this as a potential explanation:

> *"I would say that 75 percent of clients we deal with discriminate when they describe what they want in an employee. Because the client pays us to find that employee, we in turn have to discriminate every day. It is morally and ethically against our views but the bottom line is the company's needs."*
>
> Source: Burns, 2000

3.3 Wearing Your Ethnicity on Your Sleeve

In a series of innovative studies, a research group at Auckland University's School of Business was able to clearly illustrate that Asian people are not given equal access to

employment. Those with ethnic names and ethnic qualifications fare the worse, even when their CVs are comparatively the same as Pākehā applications (Wilson et al., 2005).

The researchers created CVs for "overqualified" Asian and Pākehā job applicants in three studies. They then gave them to Human Resource Management students (practicing managers and undergraduates) to rate for suitability and shortlist the best three. The first study showed that Pākehā applicants were rated as more suitable than Indians, who were rated as slightly more suitable than Chinese applicants. Furthermore, those who had ethnic sounding names (as opposed to anglicised Asian names) were rated even worse. Of those shortlisted, 63.5% were Pākehā and the remainder were evenly split between the Indian and Chinese applicants.

The second study aimed to test the hypothesis that Asian migrants are disadvantaged in seeking employment because their Asian qualifications are unknown to the majority of employers. Other research has shown that employers indeed prefer applicants to have NZ qualifications (Butcher, Spoonley & Trlin, 2006; Henderson, 2003), but the results of this study show that this explains only part of the picture. Applicants this time were Pākehā, local Chinese (with New Zealand qualifications), Chinese migrants (with Chinese qualifications) and UK/Canadian migrants (with UK/Canadian qualifications) and their CVs were given to participants to rate and shortlist. Pākehā applicants were again rated the highest and Asian migrants the lowest. In line with the results from the first study, Pākehā were shortlisted nearly 60% of the time. The difference was that no Chinese migrants were shortlisted, and surprisingly the UK/Canadian migrants were shortlisted more often than the local Chinese applicants. The fact that no Chinese migrants were shortlisted, whereas some local Chinese applicants were, partially supported the hypothesis that Asian migrants are at a disadvantage due to their foreign and unknown qualifications. However, the result that local Chinese were shortlisted less often than UK/Canadian qualifications suggests that it is more than just their qualifications that are putting Asians at a disadvantage in seeking employment.

The third study in the series aimed to test whether the first two studies were underrepresenting the inequities faced by Asians applying for jobs. They argued that since the pools of CVs given to the participants in the previous studies were evenly split between applicant ethnicity, Asians were being overrepresented in terms of the wider New Zealand population. They decided to vary the number of (local) Chinese applicants that they included in a pool of ten (otherwise Pākehā) applications. In all cases, Chinese applications were shortlisted significantly less often than if they had been chosen at random. Almost unbelievably, when eight Chinese applications were provided in a pool of 10, two of the participants chose to only shortlist the Pākehā CVs and declined to shortlist a third (Chinese) applicant (Wilson et al., 2005).

Chinese candidate selection by pool representation

Number of Applicants	2	4	6	8
Expected Selection (%)	20	40	60	80
Candidates Selected - Actual (%)	4.44	13.3	33.33	37.8

Source: Wilson et al., 2005

Other researchers conducted a study to highlight the discrimination faced by Asian people seeking employment with real recruitment consultants who thought they were facing real job applications rather than suitability scenarios (Ward & Masgoret, 2007).

Four CVs were fabricated for two fictional people, one NZ European and one Chinese. They had equivalent experience and qualifications; the differences between them were the names, citizenship and the location of their education and initial employment (i.e., New Zealand versus overseas Chinese qualifications). The CVs were sent to 85 recruitment agencies for technology and sales.

The results clearly showed NZ European to again be favoured over Asian applicants. The NZ European applicants received requests for future contact with consultants more often (28%) than did the Chinese applicants (9%). Similarly, 27% of the Chinese applicants were told that there were no current opportunities compared with 3% of European applicants being told this.

These findings together illustrate that Asians in New Zealand face inequities in their access to employment compared to NZ Europeans. Asian migrants with foreign qualifications and ethnic-sounding names have a much lower chance of gaining suitable employment than NZ Europeans and other migrant groups. However, this research also indicates that Asian people who are born and raised in New Zealand, with New Zealand education and employment experience, face inequality compared to white-skinned, English speaking migrants with foreign qualifications.

4. Coping with Discrimination

Despite these reports of discrimination, when asked how satisfied they are with their lives, Asian people report feeling just as satisfied as other groups, if not slightly more so. So how do they cope with the discrimination that they face?

	European	Māori	Pacific	Asian
Very satisfied / satisfied with life overall	87.1	81.5	80.2	84.1

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2009

Given the depth and breadth of research showing evidence of discrimination against Asians in New Zealand, one might be hard pressed to explain the high levels of life satisfaction reported by Asians in a recent national survey (84%, trailing only NZ Europeans). In fact, Asians are accustomed to using secondary control strategies, that is, coping strategies that involve changing oneself to accommodate external pressures rather than engaging in a confrontational and costly campaign to change external circumstances beyond one's control (Yamaguchi, 2001). There is evidence to suggest that Asians cope with prejudice and discrimination directed against them by putting it out of mind or minimising the experience. For example, the Human Rights Commission's 2009 Race Relations report found that 752 of

the 1253 race-related complaints directed towards it were for comments by MP Hone Harawira, and were typically filed by male NZ Europeans. The group that complained the most about racial discrimination were NZ Europeans, the ethnic group that experiences discrimination the least in NZ society. Even excluding complaints following the Harawira incident, 25% of complaints were by NZ Europeans, 13% by Māori, 7% by Indians, and 10% by other Asians. This does not fit well with a portrait of whingeing ethnic minorities in Aotearoa/New Zealand, but rather ethnic minorities coping with a dominant and vocal majority.

4.1 Life Satisfaction and Quality of Life

More in-depth qualitative research suggests that Chinese migrants downplay the importance of the experience of discrimination and attribute these incidents to a few bad apples (e.g., young, drunk, and poorly educated people) rather than to Kiwis in general. Although few new migrants reported close relationships with Kiwis, they felt like they were treated with respect by people that knew them. Once in a position of employment, they also reported that treatment towards them was fair, with promotions based on merit (Liu & Moughan, 2010). While the experience of discrimination may be common, it is also occasional, and far outnumbered by more pleasant and fulfilling encounters.

For many Asians, migration to New Zealand is a one-way street, a choice taken for their children's education (Chang, Morris & Vokes, 2008; Meares, Ho, Peace & Spoonley, 2010b) or in search of a higher quality of life in a clean and healthy physical environment. The experience of discrimination, while common, is not frequent enough to spoil other aspects of the lifestyle they have chosen. Some people report feeling less stress in New Zealand and having more time to spend with their families than they had in their home countries (Meares, Ho, Peace & Spoonley, 2010b) and report similar current levels of stress to other New Zealanders (AC Nielson, 2008). They also have comparable high levels of subjective well-being to Pākehā, Māori and Pasifika (AC Nielson, 2008).

> *When I look back at Hong Kong and compare it with here, I have no regrets… when I go back to Hong Kong, I cannot see the air, the skyline… and the stress… here it is so quiet, you are able to talk… Hong Kong, no way. Always busy, busy, busy!"*
>
> Source: Spoonley & Meares, 2009

4.2 Acculturation Strategies

Four acculturation strategies that migrants can adopt have been identified in the research literature (integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization; Berry, 2001). Studies conducted both inside and outside of New Zealand show the *integration* strategy to be the most beneficial for a migrant's psychological and sociocultural adjustment with his or her new host society (e.g., Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006 for the international context and Ward & Lin, 2005 for the New Zealand one). This means that the migrant feels strongly attached to the traditions of his or her home or ethnic origins and is also highly involved in the practices of the new host society (as opposed to placing greater importance on one or

the other culture, or neither of them). Research has shown that the majority of New Zealanders (82%) endorse the *integration* strategy for migrants (Ward & Masgoret, 2008; which differs from other countries like the United States and France, where assimilation, or rather completely adopting the values of the new culture, is promoted). In a study conducted with young migrants in New Zealand, it was found that those who maintained their ethnic identity as well as adopted the new national identity had better school adjustment, educational achievement and had high levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction (Ward & Lin, 2005).

Qualitative research with members of the New Zealand Chinese Association (representing multi-generation Kiwi Chinese for the most part) found that the typical identity strategy used by this group was to not differentiate oneself strongly from other New Zealanders (Liu & Moughan, 2010). Interviewees were not able to describe how Chinese leadership styles differed from mainstream New Zealand leadership styles, and attachment to Kiwi Chinese identity was more a matter of intuitive comfort level rather than clearly articulated or definable qualities of difference. Virtually all people in this group saw their dual heritage as both Kiwis and Chinese as an asset, and visualized themselves as being able to bridge communities, even though they were aware that their Chinese language skills were often insufficient.

While they would have emigrated to New Zealand under different circumstances (of low numbers of migrants), their successful integration into New Zealand cultural life points to a strategy of acculturation that does not involve differentiating oneself from the mainstream, but viewing oneself as a combination of qualities from both the heritage ethnicity and society at large-- in short, an assimilative integration strategy. New migrants by contrast clearly identified themselves as Chinese, and were able to articulate clear differences between themselves and Kiwis. These results suggest that a multi-generational pattern of acculturation for Asian migrants is one pathway forward (Liu & Moughan, 2010). But this type of integration is by no means assured in the contemporary environment of large numbers of new migrants being able to form ethnic enclaves both for their own comfort and as a shield against prejudice and discrimination from society at large. If such a pattern were to emerge and be sustained, then the 20th century “Kiwi Chinese” pattern of multi-generational integration would no longer be viable. Furthermore, in the current economic environment the historical pattern of integrative acculturation which came at the cost of the loss of Chinese language skills in the Kiwi Chinese group, which is a significant loss if New Zealand is to establish higher levels of trade with China.

5. Importance of Promoting Social Inclusion and Cohesion

Skilled migrants are increasingly sought in New Zealand to fill gaps and shortages that exist in the labour force. Ensuring that migrants feel welcome, supported and satisfied with their lives in NZ, as we have seen, will in turn increase self-esteem and good mental health. On the other side of this, migrants’ experiences of discrimination, not having close friends, spending time only with their own ethnic groups, and being unemployed were all shown to predict the diagnosis of clinical levels of depression for Indo-Chinese refugees (Pernice & Brook, 1996). Racial discrimination (including physical and verbal abuse, as well as unfair

treatment in the workplace) are associated with poor or fair health, including lower physical functioning, lower mental health, smoking and cardiovascular disease (Harris et al., 2006). In addition, it has been shown that some migrants choose to permanently leave New Zealand because of difficulties settling in, not feeling like they belonged and the inability to find work (Shorland, 2006).

In New Zealand public policy, social cohesion has been defined as being composed of five dimensions: belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy (Strategic Social Policy Group, 2008). The research outlined here has shown that each of these five dimensions are promoted by New Zealanders to some extent, but are also severely compromised. Taking further steps to overcome the inequalities facing Asians in New Zealand, specifically with reference to their access to employment, will help pave the way to a more socially cohesive New Zealand.

6. Where Do We Go From Here?

This is the first report to explicitly outline all of the research in New Zealand showing Asian people to face the greatest level of discrimination of all ethnic groups. This group is heterogeneous and so are their settlement outcomes. Asians comprise a broad group of people originating from the largest continent on earth and, consequently, different Asian groups have different experiences in New Zealand. East Asians (e.g., those originating from China, Japan and Korean) have been shown to face particularly strong discrimination (both in overt and covert forms), but all Asian groups stand out compared to other ethnicities in terms of the treatment that they receive.

Asian migrants themselves have expressed that they are satisfied with life in New Zealand and many feel that the opportunities they sought in coming here have been met. They admit that they experience discrimination as a group, but feel that New Zealanders on the whole are friendly, welcoming and accepting of diversity, and the discrimination they face is at the hands of younger, less educated Kiwis. Their personal experiences of experienced discrimination tend to be less than what they have observed for their group in general. This, together with high life satisfaction levels suggests a psychologically resilient population that is able to cope with discrimination, and may thrive like the Kiwi Chinese over a multi-generational span.

While the majority of the findings here present a negative picture, it is essential to bear in mind that New Zealand is doing comparatively well internationally. This says that New Zealanders are committed to equality and fairness for all and are willing to work towards achieving this goal. New Zealanders' commitment to these values is important, as it has been argued that social cohesion will not be possible without changes being made by both migrants and New Zealand born towards achieving it (e.g., Strategic Social Policy Group, 2008). We need to encourage meaningful and extended contact between Asian people and other New Zealanders, since it has been shown that the more contact people have with Asian people, the warmer they feel towards them. More education is also needed for the public about Asia and Asian migrants in order to bridge some of the gaps that exist between them and other New Zealanders. As the typical experience is shouted epithets from the

street by young people, a strategy needs to be adopted to stamp out this form of egregious racism.

As stated at the beginning, the aim of this paper is to stimulate discussion surrounding these issues of discrimination rather than to answer the pressing question put forth here about how to move forward. It is our hope that by putting a spotlight on this important topic, dialogue can follow between individuals working in government policy, the public and private sector, and out in the community (representing Asian groups and non-Asian groups alike) about the steps that can be taken to remove the barriers facing Asian people in New Zealand.

At this stage, we would like to invite comment on these findings with the express purpose of developing a national strategy towards combating racism and discrimination against Asians. Our basic strategy is in accord with the Human Rights Commission's work following the desecration of Jewish graves: that discrimination against any New Zealander is damaging to all New Zealanders, and that any remedy will be collective.

Source: Asia:NZ Foundation

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