

outlook

EDITION

Asians in Christchurch: The 'most British' city diversifies

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The 'most British' city diversifies
Wardlow Friesen



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INTRODUCTION

New Zealand has experienced remarkable change over the past quarter of a century. From being relatively insulated from global trends, it has become one of the countries most influenced by globalisation as a result of economic, social, legislative and related reforms. One of these changes has been a substantial alteration in the ethnic composition of its population. A recent Asia New Zealand Foundation (Asia:NZ) report has outlined the nature of this change in relation to the growth of New Zealand's Asian population and the demographic implications of this.¹

The 2006 New Zealand Census revealed an increasingly diverse population in terms of ethnicity and demography following 20 years of change since the introduction of the Immigration Act of 1987. The most notable aspect of this change has been the growth of populations of Asian origin, although other populations have also increased.

While the ethnic and demographic changes resulting from the change in immigration policy have been most pronounced in Auckland,² other parts of New Zealand have undergone considerable change as well. After Auckland, the second-largest destination of immigrants has been Christchurch, sometimes called 'the most British (or English) city outside Britain', and this city can be seen as representative of the impacts of the 'new migration' beyond the primary city of Auckland. It is of interest that while many of the processes and patterns shown in the Auckland case are similar in Christchurch, there are also some distinctive differences.

In this report, the Asian population is identified in two ways. The migrant Asian population consists of those who were born in an Asian country, i.e. are overseas born.³ This population does not include New Zealand-born people, even though the children of migrants are sometimes described as 'second (or third) generation migrants'. The ethnic Asian population is made up of all of those who identified themselves in the Census as Asian or as one of the subcategories of Asian irrespective of place of birth. At the most detailed level, people may have identified with a regional or sub-national identity such as Taiwanese, Gujarati or Javanese. More closely approximating national ethnic identities is the higher-level classification of Chinese, Indian or Indonesian, and this classification is often used in this report. Some tabulated Census data are only released at the highest level such as Asian, Maori, Pacific or European, and this level is sometimes also used in this report.

Because of the data availability at the detailed five-year cohort level, two sets of data are used in this report: the population structures of the Canterbury region alongside those of Christchurch city. The use of these two data sets will not have a material difference on the findings of this report since most of the Asian populations in the Canterbury region are located in Christchurch city.

However, the Canterbury region has higher populations in older age cohort and smaller populations in youth cohort than does Christchurch city.

This report clearly identifies where different data sets are used: where the report mentions 'Canterbury' it is referring to the region and where it mentions 'Christchurch' it refers to the city.

- 1 Richard Bedford & Elsie Ho (2008) *Asians in New Zealand: Implications of a changing demography*. Wellington, Asia New Zealand Foundation, Outlook Paper 7.
- 2 Wardlow Friesen (2008) *Diverse Auckland: The face of New Zealand in the 21st century?* Wellington, Asia New Zealand Foundation, Outlook Paper 6.
- 3 Within this overseas-born population there are small numbers whose ethnicity is not Asian, since they may have been born in Asia but of a different ethnicity (see Bedford and Ho 2008:4). At the same time, some overseas born of Asian ethnicity are not included, for example Indo-Fijians and some others born in countries beyond Asia.

GROWING ASIAN POPULATION OF CHRISTCHURCH

4 M. Taher (1970) The Asians. In K.W. Thomson and A.D. Trlin (eds.) *Immigrants in New Zealand*. Palmerston North, Massey University, pp. 46-53.

5 Ibid.

6 Jacqueline Leckie (2007) *Indian settlers: the story of a New Zealand South Asian community*. Dunedin, Otago University Press, pp. 22, 46.

7 Kapil Tiwari (1980) *Indians in New Zealand: studies in a sub culture*. Wellington, Price Milburn, pp. 61-62.

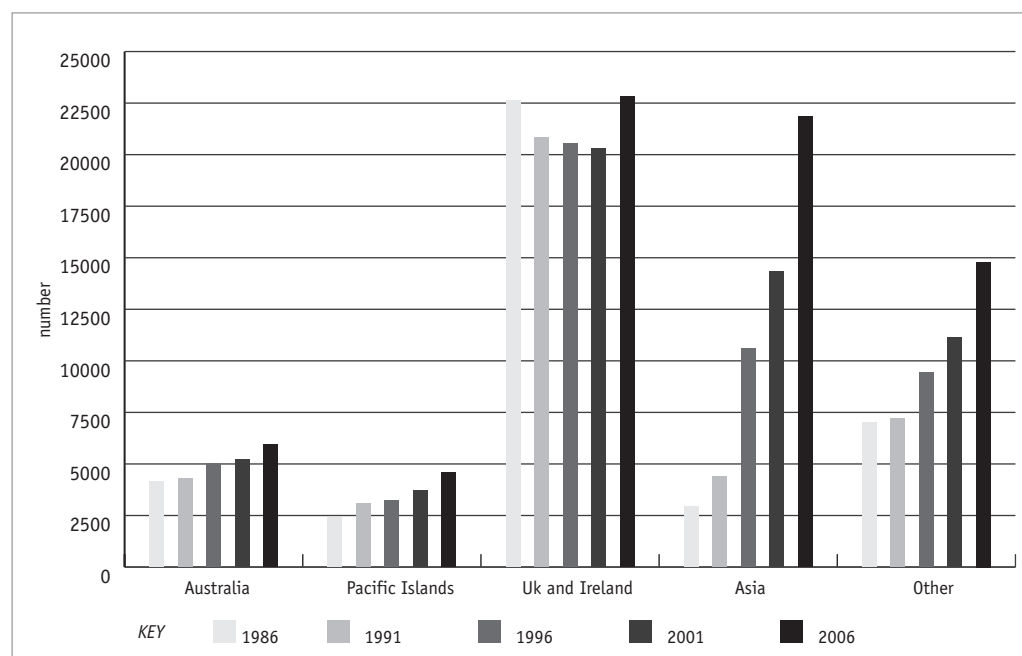
8 Taher 1970, op cit. p. 51.

Although the Asian population of Canterbury was relatively small through much of the 20th century, its origins stretch back to the 19th century. In the 1870s, most of the Chinese population in New Zealand was to be found around the goldmining towns of Otago and the West Coast of the South Island, but in the decades that followed Chinese moved on to other parts, with Christchurch being the main destination in the South Island.⁴ Through the 20th century the number slowly increased, reaching 562 in Canterbury in 1961.⁵ The number of Indians in Christchurch was more modest, with three males identifying themselves in the 1881 Census. Their numbers increased slowly in the 20th century, so that in the 1930s to 1950s, they dominated the bottle-recycling business in Christchurch,⁶ and by 1945 their numbers were sufficient for the Christchurch Indian Association to host the conference of the New Zealand Indian Central Association.⁷ Still, by 1961 there were only about 200 Indians enumerated in the Canterbury region in the Census of that year.⁸

The impetus for the notable change in the Asian population of Christchurch in recent decades has been the immigration policy established in the late 1980s. The criteria for migrant entry into New Zealand were substantially changed with the implementation of the Immigration Act 1987. While earlier immigration policy had been based on preferred source countries, the new policy was based on individual characteristics, especially age, education levels and/or work experience, and the ability to bring investment capital into the country. These changes were specifically quantified by the points system introduced in 1991. One result of these changes was a shift in the relative importance of migrant countries of origin. The United Kingdom and nations of the Pacific have remained as significant sources of migrants, but the countries of Asia have markedly increased their importance as migrant sources for New Zealand. This has changed the ethnic composition of New Zealand, and while this has been most dramatically demonstrated in Auckland, other metropolitan areas have also changed considerably. Christchurch is one of those.

The world regions that have contributed the largest numbers of migrants to Christchurch in recent decades are shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF OVERSEAS BORN BY AREA, CHRISTCHURCH CITY 1986-2006

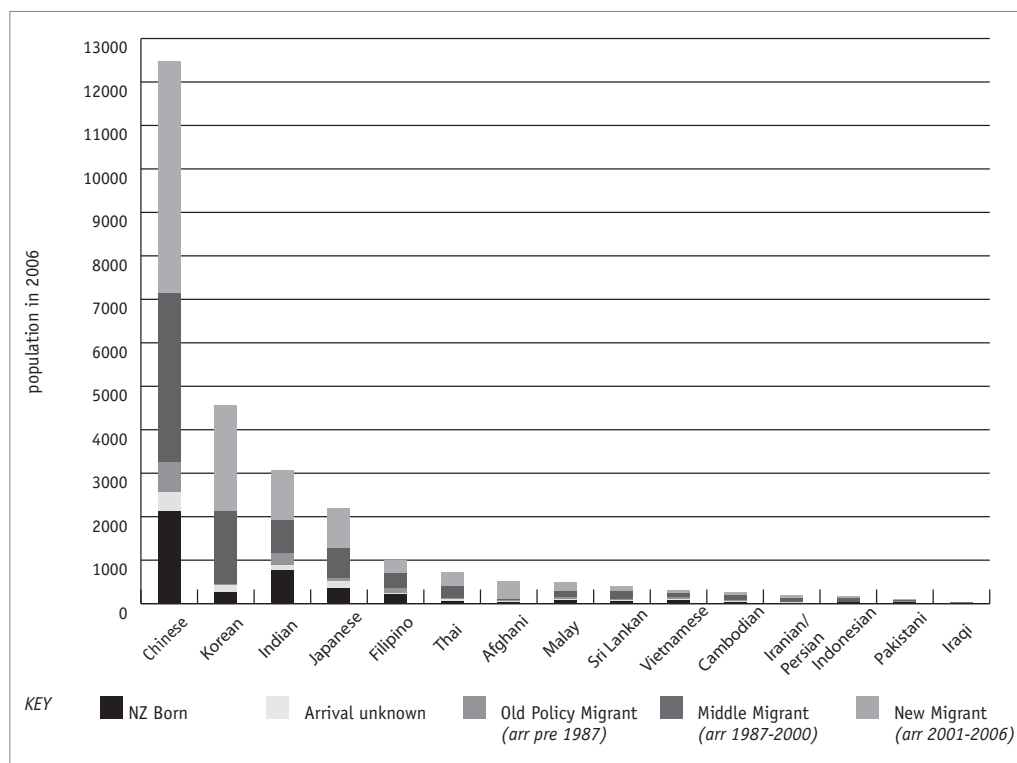


Source: Statistics New Zealand

The UK and Ireland represent the largest birthplace origins for the migrant population of Christchurch, but these numbers have been in decline; on average this population is relatively old because many from the UK arrived in the earlier 20th century. The reversal in this trend shown between 2001 and 2006 is a result of a substantial increase in migrants in this period for New Zealand as a whole, and for the UK especially since 2003. The most notable change in migrant numbers is for the population born in Asia, which increased from fewer than 3,000 people in 1986 to about 22,000 20 years later, coming close to the number born in the UK and Ireland. There is also a significant increase in the other category, and particularly important in this case are migrants from Africa and the Middle East, adding to the ongoing diversification of Christchurch's population.

Different Asian ethnic groups have different migration histories, as suggested by Figure 2, which shows the number of New Zealand born within each group and the number of migrants according to the time period in which they arrived.

FIGURE 2: ASIAN ETHNIC GROUPS IN CHRISTCHURCH CITY 2006: NEW ZEALAND BORN OR PERIOD OF ARRIVAL



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The group with the largest number of New Zealand-born is Chinese, with smaller numbers of Indians and Japanese also in this category. For migrants, the time of arrival may have a significant impact on their demographic characteristics as well as on their level of English language skills, degree of integration into the labour force and other aspects of acculturation. While the number of Asians born in New Zealand is significant, there are relatively small numbers who were migrants arriving before the change in immigration policy in 1987 (old policy migrants), with Chinese and Indian migrants being the main examples. Although hard to see because of their small number, a high proportion of Vietnamese and Cambodian are also old policy migrants since many came as refugees from the 1970s onwards.

The group with the most diverse birthplace origins was the Chinese, with just over one-half born in the People's Republic of China but also considerable numbers born in Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, and smaller numbers originating from many other countries.

9 See Bedford & Ho 2008, op cit. p. 25.

10 Friesen 2008, op cit. p. 5.

Of most Asian groups in Christchurch, a relatively large proportion arrived between 2001 and 2006. Of Koreans, more than half who were resident in 2006 had arrived in the five years before the 2006 Census and most of the others had arrived since 1986, many in the mid to late 1990s when migration from South Korea to New Zealand accelerated. For Chinese, Indian and Japanese populations, about one-half of those who were migrants were also recent arrivals.

This reflects the high rates of immigration in the period 2001 and 2003, reflecting reactions to the events of 11 September 2001 and the perceived safety of New Zealand. After a tightening of language criteria in late 2003, the number of migrants from Asia decreased considerably, although net migration statistics show that this trend has reversed since the 2006 Census. However, migrant numbers from Asia are still much below the peaks of 2002 and 2003.⁹

The diversity of the Asian population of Christchurch city is further demonstrated by a comparison of the countries of birth of the various Asian ethnic groups (Appendix 1, page 19). For the main Asian population groups, about 16 percent were born in New Zealand. Of the larger groups, the largest proportion of New Zealand born was Indians, of whom about one-quarter were in this category. The Chinese, Japanese and Filipino groups had lower, but significant, proportions who were New Zealand-born. In contrast, only six percent of Koreans were locally born, reflecting the recent migration history of this group.

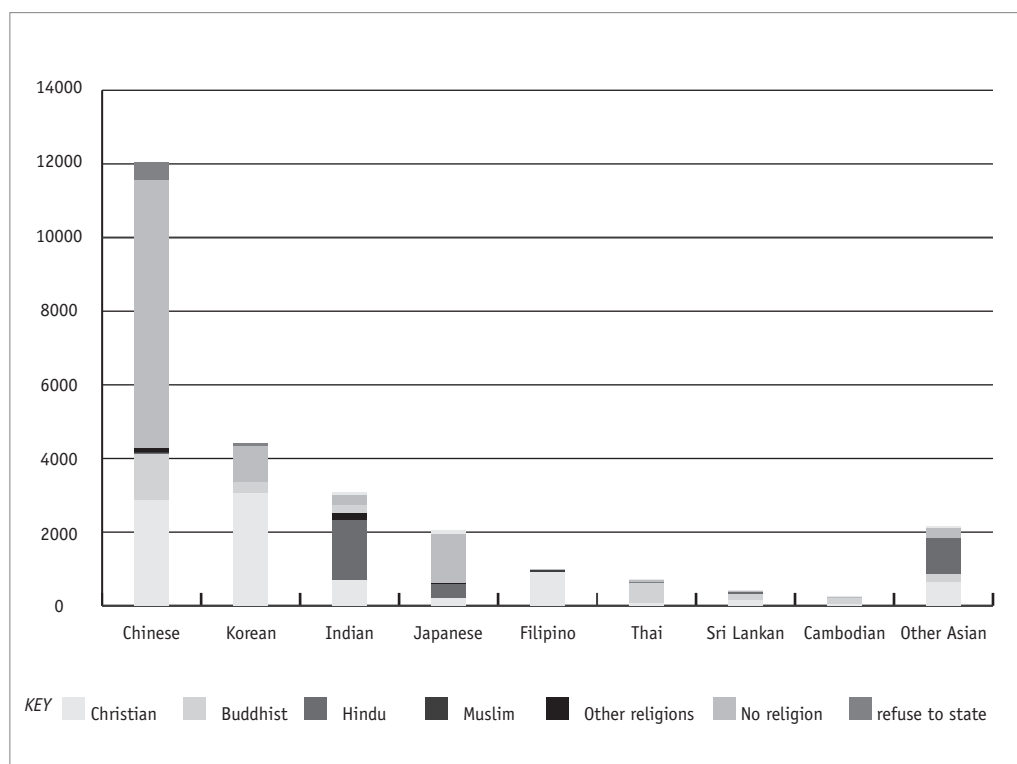
The group with the most diverse birthplace origins was the Chinese, with just over one-half born in the People's Republic of China but also considerable numbers born in Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, and smaller numbers originating from many other countries. Thus, this population is representative of the Chinese diaspora, with many being twice migrants over a longer timeframe (and some more than twice migrants).

Christchurch's Asian population is not only diverse in terms of country of birth and nationality. Language is one indicator of diversity, and within larger ethnic groups there tends to be a number of different languages spoken. For Chinese in Christchurch, the main languages are Northern Chinese (Mandarin), with 3,216 speakers in 2006, Yue (Cantonese) with 3,045 and Min with 699, as well as 4,251 who spoke Sinitic not further defined, or in other words people who specified Chinese without saying which language or dialect. A diversity of Indian languages is also present, with the main ones being Hindi (1,260) and Gujarati (390), but as shown in an earlier report, the Indian community in New Zealand has a great variety of language speakers within it.¹⁰ Of course, within these populations most also speak English, and in many cases a third or fourth language, suggesting that there may be an under-used linguistic resource within the Asian communities.

The religious diversity of the Asian population is demonstrated in Figure 3, which shows the religious affiliations of some of the largest Asian groups in Christchurch.

The proportion of Muslims is relatively low compared with other centres of Indian population such as Auckland.

FIGURE 3: RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF SOME ASIAN ETHNIC GROUPS, CHRISTCHURCH 2006



Source: Statistics New Zealand

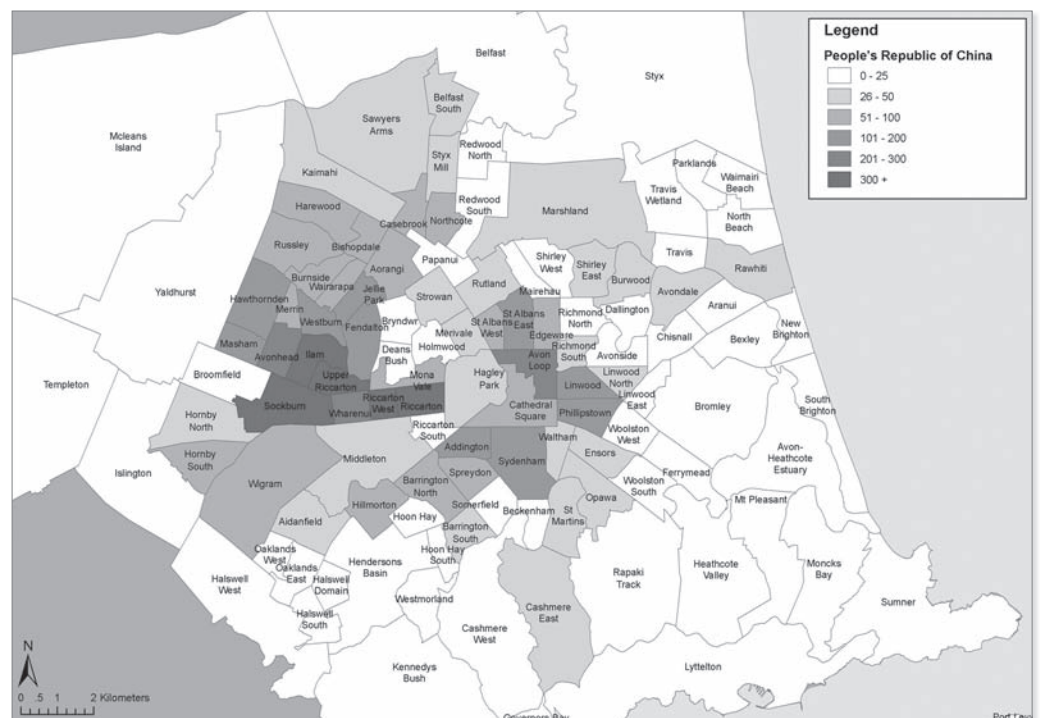
Although a high proportion of Chinese and Japanese have stated no religion, within this category there may exist a number of quasi-religious practices, such as those based on Confucianism, that may not have been considered a religion by many Census respondents. For the Japanese population, Shintoism is perhaps more commonly considered a religion but it may elude Census enumeration as well. The Chinese population also has significant numbers of Christian and Buddhist adherents. The majority of Indians in Christchurch are Hindus, but there are also significant numbers of Christians, although the proportion of Muslims is relatively low compared with other centres of Indian population such as Auckland. Koreans and Filipinos are largely Christians, with the former reflecting the selectivity of migration from Korea, since this proportion of Christians does not represent the religious composition of Korea.

For the Thai, Sri Lankan and Cambodian populations, Buddhism is the predominant religion. Of the 'other Asian' population, Muslims appear to be the largest group, since these other represent a number of countries in Asia where Islam predominates e.g. Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.

Most of the Asian population in the Canterbury region is in Christchurch City, with the main exception being at Lincoln, explained by the presence of Asian staff and students at Lincoln University.

There is a distinctive settlement geography of the Asian populations in Canterbury. Most of the Asian population in the Canterbury region is in Christchurch City, with the main exception being at Lincoln, explained by the presence of Asian staff and students at Lincoln University. Within Christchurch, the largest country of origin of the Asian population is the People's Republic of China, and the concentration of this population is in the areas around Riccarton and Ilam in proximity to the University of Canterbury and an area of medium-priced housing, increasing to higher-cost housing to the north around Fendalton (Figure 4).

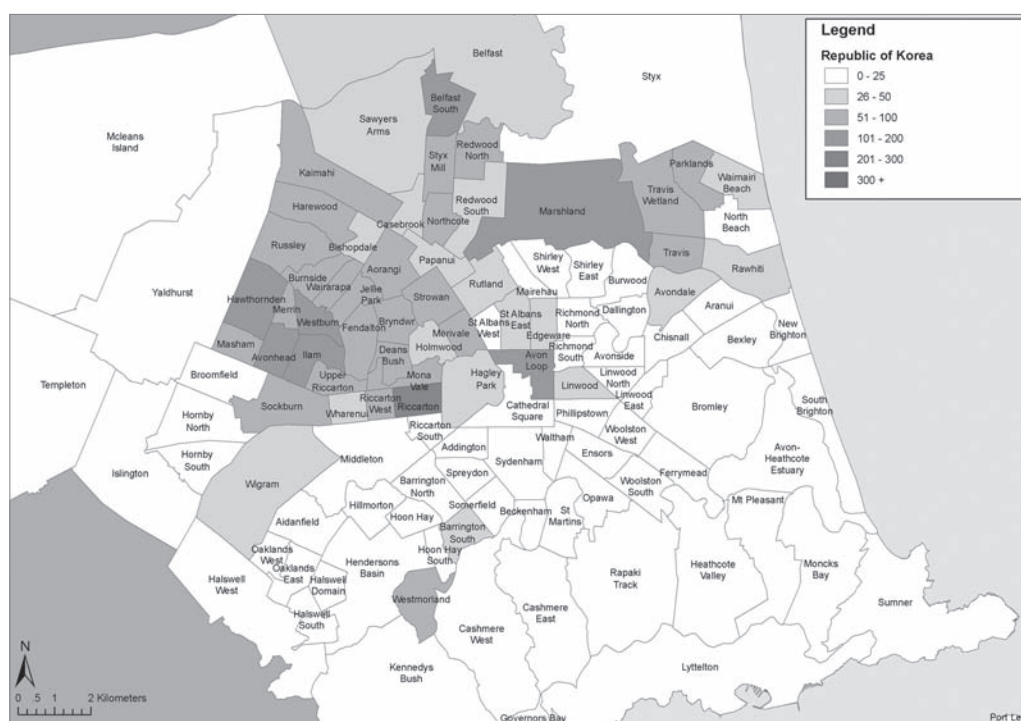
FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION IN CHRISTCHURCH 2006 OF POPULATION BORN IN CHINA



Source: Statistics New Zealand

As well as this there are concentrations of the Asian populations downtown in areas around Cathedral Square; this may be partly explained by the presence of many students in this area.

FIGURE 5: DISTRIBUTION IN CHRISTCHURCH 2006 OF POPULATION BORN IN SOUTH KOREA



Source: Statistics New Zealand

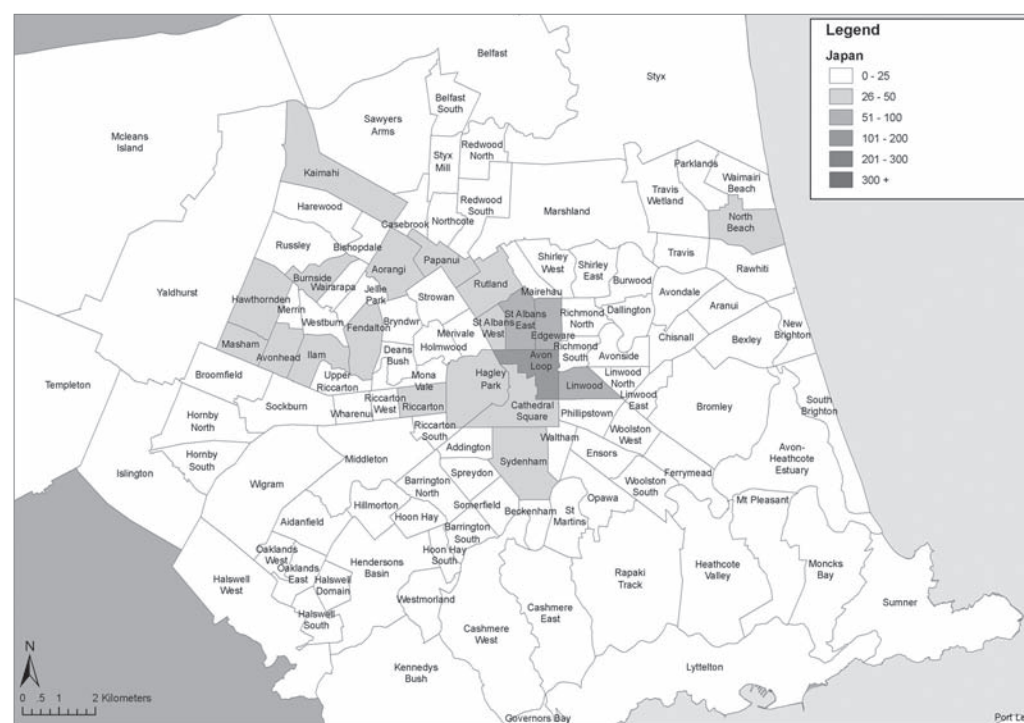
The second-largest migrant Asian population in Christchurch is from South Korea. Their distribution is in some of the same areas as the Chinese, although they have a greater presence to the north in areas such as Marshland and Belfast South (Figure 5).

Chain migration, especially of families, in which recent migrants follow the lead of earlier migrants, has been referenced as an important aspect of the migration of Koreans to New Zealand and to Christchurch,¹¹ so some of the patterns shown in Figure 5 may have developed from early decisions to settle in an area relatively near to the city centre, but where housing was affordable. Further, similar to the patterns for Chinese, the development of ethnic enclaves may have followed on from international students locating near to the University of Canterbury at Ilam.

11 Suzana Chang, Carolyn Morris and Richard Vokes (2006) *Korean migrant families in Christchurch: expectations and experiences*. Wellington, The Families Commission, p. 13.

Spatial distributions of smaller Asian groups are not as easily identifiable as those of the China- and Korea-born populations. Those born in India are especially found around the city centre, but numbers are relatively small since many of the Indian population also come from Fiji. Those born in Japan are also concentrated in the centre but are also spread through some of the same suburbs to the west where those from China and Korea are located (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION IN CHRISTCHURCH 2006 OF POPULATION BORN IN JAPAN



Source: Statistics New Zealand

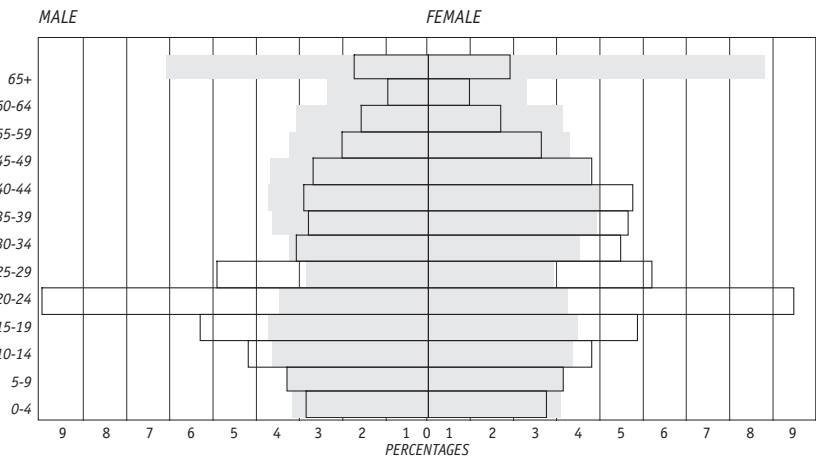
CHARACTERISTICS OF CANTERBURY'S ASIAN POPULATIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE IN CANTERBURY

The age-sex structures of the populations of Asian descent in Christchurch are similar to the national characters of these populations,¹² but have some variations as well. In Figure 7, the Asian population of the Canterbury region is compared with that of the total population, and it is apparent that the Asian population is much younger, with smaller proportions in the age cohorts above 45 years of age and very large proportions in the youth and young adult cohorts aged between 15 and 30. To explain these differences, it is necessary to consider the age-sex structures of the larger Asian groups.

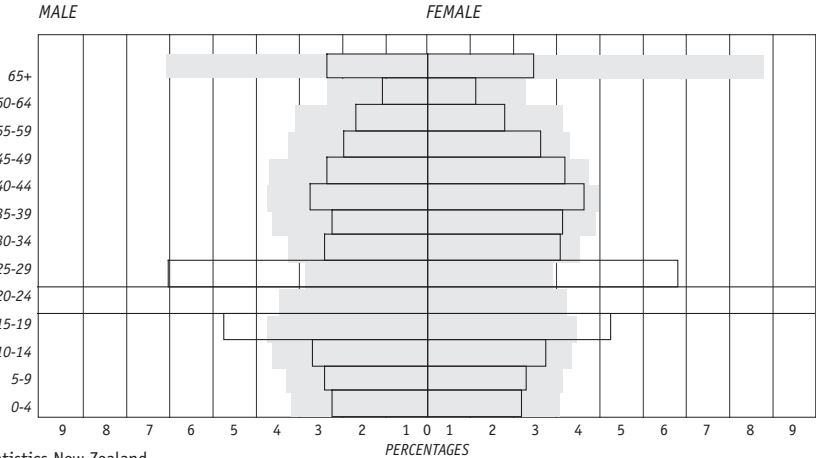
The Chinese population of Canterbury is markedly different from the total population of the region, as shown in Figure 8, and has had a major impact on the total Asian population shown in Figure 7.

FIGURE 7: ASIAN AND TOTAL POPULATION (SHADED) IN CANTERBURY REGION



Source: Statistics New Zealand

FIGURE 8: CHINESE AND TOTAL POPULATION (SHADED) IN CANTERBURY REGION



Source: Statistics New Zealand

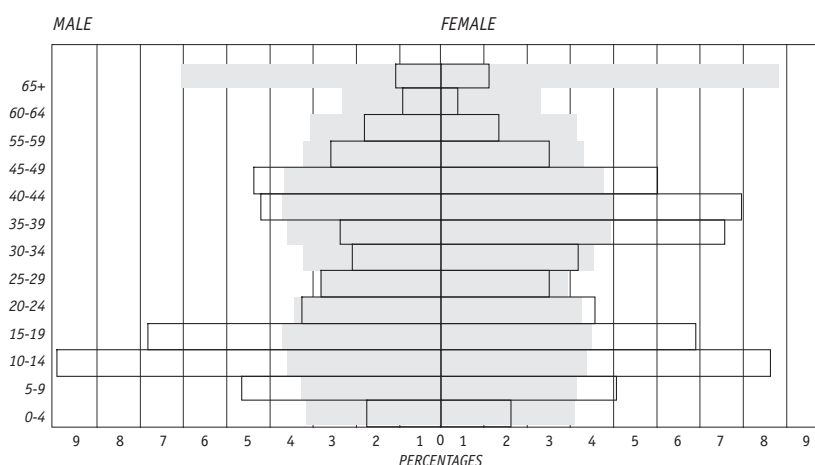
The most dramatic aspect of the Chinese population are the very high proportions in the age cohorts 20 to 24, stretching beyond the limits of the graph so that males comprise 14.4 percent and females 12.4 percent of the total Chinese population. Thus, this cohort makes up more than one-quarter of all Chinese in the Canterbury region, and combined with relatively high proportions in the 15 to 19 and 25 to 29 year cohorts comprise just less than one-half of the Chinese population, emphasising the great importance of international students within this population.

12 See Bedford and Ho 2008 op cit.

A notable feature of the Korean age-sex pyramid is the high proportion of women in the 35 to 49 year cohorts, who appear to be the caregivers of the school-age international students as well as in some cases ‘astronaut spouses’ whose husbands are working in Korea or elsewhere.

Koreans make up the second-largest population in Canterbury, and their age-sex structure is remarkably different from that of the general population, but also from that of the Chinese population, as shown in Figure 9. The Korean structure also suggests the importance of the presence of international students, but in this case at younger ages since many of these are students in intermediate and high schools.

FIGURE 9: KOREAN AND TOTAL POPULATION (SHADED) IN CANTERBURY REGION

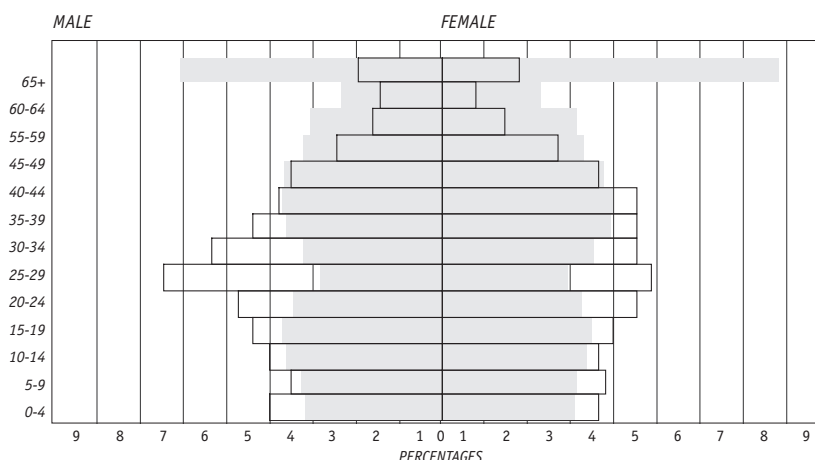


Source: Statistics New Zealand

A notable feature of the Korean age-sex pyramid is the high proportion of women in the 35 to 49 year cohorts, who appear to be the caregivers of the school-age international students as well as in some cases ‘astronaut spouses’ whose husbands are working in Korea or elsewhere.

The age-sex structure of the Indian population of the Canterbury region looks more like that of the total population than the Chinese or Korean, but still has some distinctive characteristics (Figure 10).

FIGURE 10: INDIAN AND TOTAL POPULATION (SHADED) IN CANTERBURY REGION



Source: Statistics New Zealand

The child and youth cohorts are slightly larger than those of the general population, and the older cohorts significantly smaller. It is the cohorts from 20 to 40 years that stand out as being much larger proportionately, and this is to some extent a result of the presence of international students, but especially the impact of the age selectivity of immigration policy.

DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE IN CHRISTCHURCH

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ASIAN GROUPS IN CHRISTCHURCH 2006

| Ethnic group | population number | Age structure | | | Sex ratio (males/100females) |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| | | % aged less than 15 | % aged 15-64 | % aged 65+ | |
| Chinese | 12,480 | 14 | 81 | 5 | 96 |
| Korean | 4,572 | 29 | 69 | 2 | 89 |
| Indian | 3,057 | 22 | 74 | 4 | 106 |
| Japanese | 2,205 | 20 | 77 | 3 | 54 |
| Filipino | 1,002 | 22 | 76 | 2 | 50 |
| Thai | 717 | 20 | 80 | 1 | 66 |
| Sri Lankan | 405 | 23 | 73 | 4 | 91 |
| Cambodian | 258 | 20 | 73 | 7 | 83 |
| Other Asian | 2,193 | 29 | 69 | 2 | 95 |
| Total Asian* | 26,631 | 20 | 77 | 4 | 88 |
| All ethnic groups | 348,435 | 19 | 68 | 14 | 94 |

* Note that these are total responses data, so total of all groups will be higher than Total Asian since some individuals may appear in more than one group.

Source: Statistics New Zealand

The age and sex characteristics of eight Asian groups in Christchurch are shown in Table 1. The proportions of these populations aged less than 15 are at a similar or slightly higher level than that of the total population, with the exception of the two largest groups. As already shown, the Chinese population is highly skewed by the large proportions aged 15 to 30 and the Korean population by those aged under 15. At the other end of the age continuum, all Asian groups have much lower proportions of their population aged over 65 years, as a result of the recent nature of much migration of these groups, and the strong emphasis on younger migrants in the immigration points system.

The sex ratio of Christchurch's population is 94 males for every 100 females, but the Asian population of the city is even more strongly female, with a sex ratio of 88 (Table 1). This imbalance is most marked in the Japanese, Filipino and Thai populations, which have an element of a higher incidence of intermarriage, but also occupationally selective migration, for example of Japanese into the tourist industry, and Filipinos into care-giving jobs.

The one group that does not follow the pattern is the Indian population, in which there are more men; this appears to be explained by slightly higher levels of male immigration for purposes of study and work.

Only very limited information is available on other demographic variables by ethnicity. For example, detailed analyses of fertility are rare and dated, and available mainly at the national level. One analysis of fertility by broad ethnic group is derived from the 1996 Census, so may not be fully representative of the ethnic groups a decade later. When the average number of children born per woman (Total Fertility Rate; TFR) is compared, the Asian rate of 1.88 is slightly higher than that of Europeans (1.83) but considerably lower than that of Maori (2.79) or Pacific peoples (2.84).¹³ There was, however, a great deal of diversity within the Asian population. The TFR of refugee-origin groups was highest at 2.63 for Khmer and 2.47 for Vietnamese women. Of the larger groups, Indian women had a TFR of 2.15, Chinese of 1.83 and Korean

13 Robert Didham (2004) *Fertility of New Zealand women by ethnicity. Based on the 1996 Census of Population and Dwellings*. Wellington, Statistics New Zealand, p. 9. These rates are age adjusted to overcome the unbalanced age structures of migrant populations as reflected in the age-sex structures of ethnic groups already shown in this report.

14 Ibid: 35.

15 Ibid: 39.

16 These percentages exclude those who were too young to talk and various categories of 'not specified'. These and other unreferenced Census data come from both published and specially commissioned tables from the 2006 Census.

of 1.54, and the lowest rate was for Japanese women at 1.01.¹⁴ These rates partly reflect fertility rates in countries of origin, but also levels of education and marital status, with an expected reduction in rates among those with tertiary qualifications, and an increase among those who were legally married.¹⁵

LANGUAGE SKILLS AND EDUCATION

Language ability can be used as one indicator of the degree to which a population may be considered to have become integrated into a host society. Also, multiple language skills can be viewed as a valuable resource that migrants bring with them. In the 2006 Census, the language question asked: 'In which language(s) could you have a conversation about a lot of everyday things?', although there may have been some variability in the interpretation of this question. Nevertheless, the responses are of interest in gaining some indication of the language skills of the population.

In the 2006 Census, 14 percent of Asians in New Zealand said that they could not speak any of the official languages of New Zealand (English, Maori, New Zealand Sign Language), and although we do not have any further breakdown, we can assume that most of these were relatively recent migrants or older migrants who did not have to qualify under the minimum English language specifications of the immigration system.¹⁶ At the other end of the spectrum, 25 percent of Asians said that English was their only language, presumably mostly New Zealand-born Asians. The most common response from the Asian population to the language question came from the 61 percent of Asians who could speak English and at least one other language. Although the bulk of these spoke two languages, about 14 percent could speak three or more languages, a proportion much higher than all other ethnic groups except the MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American and African) group, which had a similar proportion.

These multilingual abilities (three or more languages) were about five times as great within the Asian population as they were within the total population of New Zealand; this resource might be considered one of the less-recognised benefits of immigration.

The language abilities of the Asian populations of Christchurch are summarised in Table 2, although these data may not fully represent the complexity of the language capabilities of these populations.

TABLE 2: LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS OF ASIAN GROUPS – CHRISTCHURCH 2006

| Ethnic group | % who could have everyday conversation in English | Multiple language indicator* | Education aged 15+ | |
|-------------------|---|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | | % no high school qualification | % university degree |
| Chinese | 86 | 1.81 | 10 | 24 |
| Korean | 71 | 1.64 | 6 | 22 |
| Indian | 96 | 1.81 | 11 | 29 |
| Japanese | 85 | 1.74 | 7 | 19 |
| Filipino | 99 | 1.72 | 9 | 29 |
| Thai | 94 | 1.83 | 17 | 23 |
| Sri Lankan | 95 | 1.65 | 1 | 41 |
| Cambodian | 79 | 1.71 | 46 | 6 |
| Other Asian | 92 | 1.76 | 19 | 21 |
| Total Asian | 86 | 1.76 | 10 | 24 |
| All ethnic groups | 98 | 1.15 | 21 | 15 |

* Average number of languages specified on census form i.e. no. of total responses divided by number of people in group (not inc. 'too young to speak' and n.s.)

Source: Statistics New Zealand

In Christchurch, 86 percent of all Asians said they could hold an everyday conversation in English, a proportion the same as the national average. The group with the lowest percentage in this category, Korean at 71 percent, is the group with the most recent history of immigration, so it must be assumed that some of the dependants arriving with the primary migrants have not yet had time to acquire sufficient language abilities. In a detailed study of Korean migrant families in Christchurch, language proficiency was identified as one of the greatest challenges faced by Korean migrants.¹⁷ For Asian populations, of whom many have originated from countries with stronger English-speaking traditions from colonial times, there is an expected higher proficiency in English, and especially notable are the Filipino, Indian and Sri Lankan groups.

There are a number of possible measures of levels of educational qualification, but only two are used in Table 2, representing the two ends of the education spectrum: those without a high school qualification and those with a university degree. In Christchurch only 10 percent of the Asian population aged over 15 did not have a high school qualification in 2006, a proportion that was just under one-half of the proportion for the total population of the city. At the other end of the spectrum, 24 percent of the Asian population had a university degree, in contrast to only 15 percent of the total population of Christchurch.

The fact that the Asian population of Christchurch has higher levels of education than the average is not surprising, since New Zealand's immigration policy emphasises the education levels of new immigrants and attributes considerable points on that basis. The main exception to the higher education levels of Asian groups is the Cambodian population, since they did not arrive under the general immigration criteria but mostly as refugees. At the same time, it cannot be assumed that all of the higher educational qualifications of these Asian groups have been imported, since recent Asian migrants have a high rate of participation in the education system. A survey of skilled migrants showed that 52 percent of Asian migrants undertook further education and training in New Zealand, especially to improve their English language skills, upgrade an existing qualification and in general to get a better job.¹⁸

17 Chang et al. 2006, op cit.

18 Department of Labour (2006) *Life in New Zealand: settlement experiences of skilled migrants: results from the 2005 survey*. Wellington, Department of Labour, pp. 49-51.

ASIAN ETHNOSCAPES IN CHRISTCHURCH

- 19 Terry McGrath, Paul Stock & Andrew Butcher (2007) *Friends and allies: the impacts of returning Asian students on New Zealand-Asia relationships*. Wellington, Asia New Zealand Foundation.
- 20 For data on school and tertiary enrolments see http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/international_education.
- 21 See http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/piru/documents/profile/uc_profile_2008-2010.pdf.

There are a number of ways to consider how cultures interact with each other, and the impacts that new ethnic populations may have on a host society. In the social sciences, the term 'ethnoscape' has been used in recent years to describe the impacts that new migrant populations make, especially in urban areas. These range from things visible in the landscape, such as people, housing, shops, restaurants and temples, to less visible aspects such as language and changing attitudes, with the latter often most conspicuously expressed in the media. In between are the visible but transitory phenomena such as festivals and markets. For many years, Christchurch has been considered one of the most 'British' of New Zealand's cities, so it is interesting to consider the impacts of the rapidly changing Asian ethnoscares.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Many of the studies of the impacts of immigration and the resulting ethnoscares have mainly focused on the role of permanent resident migrants in bringing about change. However, even with a downturn in international student numbers in recent years, there are still more international students arriving in New Zealand each year than there are permanent residents. Although their impacts are not as great as those of permanent residents, because their stays are shorter term and they are not usually accompanied by dependants, they are nonetheless major contributors to new ethnoscares, and we have already seen that they make up a significant proportion of the Asian population, especially of Chinese.

The number of international students arriving in New Zealand rose dramatically from the mid-1990s to peak at more than 120,000 in 2002, then declined to stabilise at about 95,000 in 2005 and 2006.¹⁹ Of all international students in 2006, about 9,000 were in schools (about one-half from South Korea), 32,410 were in tertiary institutions such as universities and polytechnics (just over one-half from China) and the rest were in other institutions such as language schools.²⁰ Thus, although data are not readily available, it is apparent that the English language schools attract large numbers of Asian students, and are also used to teach English to recently arrived refugees.

Data for Christchurch and Canterbury (to include Lincoln University) show the importance of Chinese students within the major streams of international students at the tertiary level. Enrolments for 2005 showed the following numbers of international students: University of Canterbury 2,356 (56 percent Chinese), Lincoln University 1,646 (79 percent Chinese), Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology 1,093 (58 percent Chinese) and Christchurch College of Education 331 (50 percent Chinese). As well as these, there are significant numbers of Chinese and other Asian students enrolled in tertiary institutions who are permanent residents or citizens, so, for example, while international students made up 17 percent of the EFTS (effective full-time student) enrolments at the University of Canterbury in 2006, Asian students made up 21 percent of the total.²¹

CULTURAL CELEBRATION: RESTAURANTS AND FESTIVALS

Asian restaurants have proliferated in most parts of New Zealand in recent years, and Christchurch is no exception. The ethnic restaurant pages of the Christchurch 2007/2008 Yellow Pages listed more than 100 Asian restaurants, namely Thai 33, Chinese 23, Japanese 20, Indian 18, Asian six, Korean five, Vietnamese two, Indonesian one and Burmese one. It seems that this is an under-representation of the total number, since not only are outlets in fast-food courts not counted but others appear to have been overlooked, including the Cambodian noodle-house at which the author of this report had lunch during fieldwork.

A notable feature of changing ethnoscares in countries of migration settlement in recent years has been the proliferation of festivals celebrating events of cultural significance to growing migrant groups. In Christchurch, such festivals have expanded with the increasing proportions of the population of Asian descent.

The Asia:NZ sponsored Lantern Festival, held around the world, is a celebration of Chinese culture and is usually timed to mark the end of the Chinese New Year. Since its founding in Christchurch in 2005, the Lantern Festival has grown steadily. The 2008 Festival was cut short by bad weather, but it is estimated that about 50,000 people attended the 2007 Lantern Festival. The Festival illustrates the transnational linkages of the Chinese community of Christchurch, with some lanterns displayed originating in and being donated by Chinese communities and organisations in the city, but also from China and other countries. Other cultural linkages are also manifest with, for example, the 2007 Lantern Festival featuring the Red Poppy all-girl percussion group from Beijing, as well as a Sichuan tea-pourer.²²

Other festivals celebrating Asian culture have been smaller in scale than the Lantern Festival. The Festival of Japan is not held every year, but was held five times between 1990 and 2004 to '... give Christchurch residents a taste of Japanese culture, including film, food, garden design and kite flying'.²³ Other small-scale festivals held in recent years include Diwali as well as events to mark Korean New Year and independence days for Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.²⁴

RELIGION

The diversity of religious affiliations among the Asian population of Christchurch has already been shown, and increasingly this diversity is becoming visible as part of the evolving ethnoscape of the city.

The role of the Christian church in the settlement and integration of the Korean population of Christchurch was strongly emphasised in a study of Korean families carried out in 2006.²⁵ While many attended churches that were specifically Korean, others intentionally went to those that were either bilingual or solely English speaking in an effort to establish linkages with other New Zealanders. The presence of these 'ethnic' churches as well as 'traditional' churches hosting Korean or Chinese language congregations is apparent in a number of areas of Christchurch.

The presence of a number of Asian populations from countries practising Buddhism has also resulted in the visible presence of this religion in Christchurch. Perhaps most visible is the beautifully designed International Buddhist Association of New Zealand Centre on Riccarton Road, with a vegetarian cafe, art gallery, library and prayer hall. Other small temples and centres also serve some of the nation-specific communities of Buddhists in Christchurch.

The Muslim population of Christchurch is relatively small (see Figure 3, page 5) but it has a long history and a visible presence. The first Muslims were present in the 19th century and originated from the Otago goldfields, but the population remained small through much of the 20th century. The presence of many Muslim students from Malaysia appears to have been one of the factors resulting in the formation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury (MAC) in 1977, well before the change in immigration policy a decade later.²⁶ This was followed by the construction of the Masjid Annur near Hagley Park, a mosque designed by a local member of the MAC and opened in 1985.

MEDIA AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

'Ethnic' media is another aspect of the changing Asian ethnoscape of Christchurch. While much of the Asian media in New Zealand is based in Auckland,²⁷ some of their publications are available in Christchurch. Further, some media are based in Christchurch, so there are with at least four Chinese newspapers (two weekly and two monthly) and one magazine based there, as well as a Korean newspaper. The Chinese-language *New Zealand Messenger* is Christchurch based and distributed across New Zealand, and deals with a range of issues such as immigration policy, the problems that beset international students, and both national and international events of interest to its Chinese readers.

22 *The Press* 12 March 2007.

23 *The Press* 15 March 2004.

24 See the Christchurch City Council website, which maintains an online calendar of cultural events for migrants: <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/Christchurch/Migrants/Calendar>.

25 Chang et al. 2006, p.14-18.

26 See Muslim Association Canterbury Inc. website: <http://www.mac.net.nz/history.asp>.

27 Manying Ip (2006) Chinese media in New Zealand: transnational outpost or unchecked floodtide? In W. Sun (ed.) *Media and the Chinese diaspora: community, communications and commerce*. London, Routledge, p. 187.

The role of the Christian church in the settlement and integration of the Korean population of Christchurch was strongly emphasised in a study of Korean families carried out in 2006.

28 Paul Spoonley (2005) Print media representations of immigration and immigrants, 1993-2003, in A. Trlin, P. Spoonley & N. Watts (eds.), *New Zealand and international migration: a digest and bibliography*. Palmerston North, School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University, pp. 86-106.

29 Ibid p. 97.

30 See Ravi Palat (1996) Curries, chopsticks and Kiwis: Asian migration to Aotearoa/New Zealand, in P. Spoonley, C. Macpherson & D. Pearson (eds.) *Nga Patai: racism and ethnic relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand*. Palmerston North, Dunmore Press, pp. 35-54; McGrath et al op cit. p. 9; Manying Ip & Wardlow Friesen (2001) The new Chinese community in New Zealand; local outcomes of transnationalism. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 10, pp. 213-240.

31 Chang et al. 2006, op cit. pp. 19-23.

32 Quotation taken from Christchurch City Council website: <http://www.ccc.govt.nz/community/CulturalDiversity/>

As an aspect of ethnoscares, the way in which the mainstream media represent migrant populations is important. In the early and mid 1990s, there was considerable negative press coverage of new migrants, especially Asian, usually as represented by Chinese. This coverage tended to focus on issues of commitment to New Zealand, impacts on services such as schools and the wealth of some migrants.²⁸ However, Spoonley asserts that by 2000, media coverage had become more balanced and that '... the experiences and views of the Asian communities were given more prominence'.²⁹

Despite the assertion that overall media coverage of migrant minorities may have become more balanced, press representation may still be an issue. In Christchurch, such an issue emerged with the publication in Christchurch's *The Press* of an article in 2007 headed *Chinese students biggest cheats* (28 February). The allegation that cheating was rife among Chinese students at Lincoln University stirred up a great deal of controversy and letters to the editor, ranging from *Press* coverage of *Lincoln student cheats is racist* (2 March) to *Cheating an acceptable part of Chinese culture* (3 March). The issue raised a great deal of unease and resentment in the local Chinese community, and Chinese media such as *New Zealand Messenger* became involved in trying to counter the stereotypes and misinformation that were generated. Although eventually *The Press* made a verbal apology to members of the Chinese community, a lingering sense of suspicion of media coverage appears to remain.

Media representations of Asian populations may not cover the full range of public perceptions of Asian immigration. A number of studies have identified the presence of racism against both new migrants and international students, although incidents often involve unknown people rather than work or school colleagues.³⁰ The study of Korean families in Christchurch does contain some disturbing findings in relation to incidents of racism and harassment recounted by a number of the respondents who were interviewed.³¹ The study also found that while most Korean migrants were keen to have New Zealand friends, and while this was often difficult, institutions such as schools and especially churches aided this process.

GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

Specific anti-racism initiatives, as well as more general programmes to facilitate the integration of migrants, many in relation to the Asian communities of New Zealand, have been undertaken by various agencies including the Human Rights Commission (HRC). At the local level, the Christchurch City Council was recognised in 2007 by the HRC for its contribution to cultural diversity, being one of 11 organisations so recognised and the only local authority in that year. The citation given at the New Zealand Diversity Forum on 28 August 2007 was as follows:

*Christchurch City Council this year undertook a process to align its wide range of projects and programmes that contribute to cultural diversity to all eight of its community goals in the Council's Long Term Community Plan. The goals cover the environment, lifelong learning, prosperity, good governance, inclusion and diversity, community health, safety, recreation and urban design. Major projects this year have included the "diversity season" of events leading up to Race Relations Day in March, the Culture Galore festival, the Global Football festival, the Pacific Pathways World Heritage Week in June telling the stories of the diverse peoples who have made Christchurch their home, an Outward Bound multi-ethnic course for young people, activities for Matariki and Maori Language Week at Christchurch City Libraries, and Around the World Workshops at Christchurch Art Gallery. The Council also supports the Intercultural Assembly and a range of other community initiatives for cultural diversity and community development.*³²

As well as government initiatives towards the integration of Asian migrants, and the facilitation of inter-cultural understanding, there are many other initiatives, many driven from within specific ethnic communities. Asian ethnic associations located in Christchurch, often representing the Canterbury region, include associations representing Afghans, Bangladeshis, Cambodians (Khmer), Chinese, Fiji Indians, Filipinos, Indians, Japanese, Koreans, Malaysians, Nepalese, Sri Lankans, Taiwanese, Tamils and Vietnamese.³³ These associations have a range of functions, usually including the settlement of new migrants, the maintenance of language and cultural forms, and linkages into the broader/mainstream community. However, instead of attempting to review this vast range of organisations, a case study of a notable community initiative is mentioned here.

The Rewi Alley Education and Cultural Centre and Chinese School, located within the grounds of Wharenu School in Riccarton, is an example of a holistic approach to the integration and cultural maintenance of a minority culture.³⁴

The Centre and School and their activities have been developing incrementally since about 2000 when the school buildings became available, and a low-interest loan was received from the Christchurch City Council. The range of functions and activities by 2008 includes the following:

- Teaching of Chinese to primary school children (only one in Christchurch)
- Weekend Chinese language and cultural classes for the wider community
- Teaching of English for migrants (New Zealand Qualifications Authority approved) and Chinese for English speakers
- Community centre with library and meeting rooms
- Orientation programmes for Chinese (and now all Asian) migrants on issues of immigration, tax, health, law etc.
- Resource centre for cultural costumes and Rewi Alley Dance Troupe
- Educational tourism: hosting of teachers from China for teacher training and touring of New Zealand.

The range of these activities and the continuing growth of the Centre and School are testament to the vision and energy of the founder, Qiangfu Jin, but also of many other individuals, community organisations and funders.

Initiatives within the mainstream community have also been important in building bridges between ethnic communities in Christchurch. One of the founders of the Asia 2000 Foundation in the early 1990s, which became the Asia New Zealand Foundation, was the well known Cantabrian, businessman and politician, Philip Burdon, who chairs the Foundation, whose brief includes '... to build and sustain New Zealanders' knowledge and understanding of Asia'.³⁵

33 See the Office of Ethnic Affairs Community Directory website: http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz/oeawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Community-Directory-By-Region-Index?OpenDocument&cat=Canterbury.

34 This section is based on a discussion with Qiangfu Jin, principal, and Belinda Carter, Educational Officer of the Rewi Alley Education and Cultural Centre and Chinese School, as well as on newsletters produced by the Centre. The name of the Centre originates from the fact that the father of Rewi Alley (the latter being possibly the best known New Zealander in China in the 20th century) was once the principal of Wharenu School, which hosts the Centre.

35 The other primary founder of the Asia 2000 Foundation was Don McKinnon, who also has strong linkages to the South Island, having been educated at Nelson College and Lincoln University.

CONCLUSIONS

The national ethnic projections by Statistics New Zealand, based on the 2006 Census and released in April 2008, project a near doubling of the Asian population of New Zealand between 2006 and 2026 (medium projection). This increase, averaging about 3.4 percent a year, is significantly higher than the growth of other broad ethnic groups. New regional ethnic projections are not yet available, but it is possible to make some generalisations based on earlier projections on the 2001 base, and the new national projections. Although Auckland is likely to absorb a disproportionate number of new Asian migrants, Christchurch's Asian population is likely to grow at a rate just above the national average, maintaining its position as the second-largest destination for Asian migrants. Thus by 2026 the Asian population of Christchurch is likely to be about 55,000. However, it should be noted that in all broad ethnic population groups there has been an increasing incidence of intermarriage, so that many of those who declare Asian ethnicity in the future may also belong to another ethnic group.

The future composition of the Asian population of Christchurch will vary according to changes in New Zealand's immigration policy. China and Korea are the two most important sources of migrants for Christchurch, but policy changes that emphasise language skills have been shown in the past to reduce flows from these countries, so such changes could slow down the rate of immigration to Christchurch. Even though migrants of South Asia have tended to concentrate in Auckland, it may be that an increased proportion will 'move on' to other parts of the country, a phenomenon that was starting to become apparent in the 2006 Census. The recent diversification of migrant sources suggests the ongoing importance of Southeast Asia, the Middle East and potentially Central Asia, and in the recent past significant numbers from countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and Afghanistan have been attracted to Christchurch.

The flows of international students have resulted in a youthful population in Christchurch, especially Chinese and Koreans, who have had the most significant numbers in recent years. In the short to medium term it seems likely that this will continue to be the case. For the population of permanent residents, however, the population will slowly age and move closer to the general population in age, but if we assume that the immigration of permanent residents will continue, the Asian population will continue to be rejuvenated to some extent.

Christchurch is likely to continue to be known as the 'Britain of the South Pacific' or as the 'most English/British' of cities, with its parks, historical buildings and large British population, but like Britain itself, it will continue to diversify in terms of its ethnic population. The physical, transitory and cultural ethnoscares representing the various Asian populations will continue to evolve. The degree to which these changes will be positive for both host society and migrant populations will depend on the ways in which these new ethnoscares are accepted and celebrated. Despite some problems, the indications so far are that diversity can be embraced while basic values and institutions remain.

APPENDIX 1:

BIRTHPLACES OF 13 LARGEST ASIAN ETHNIC GROUPS IN CHRISTCHURCH CITY 2006

| Birthplace | Chinese | Korean | Indian | Japanese | Filipino | Thai | Afghani | Malay | Sri Lankan | Vietnamese | Cambodian | Indonesian | Pakistani | Total, these Asian groups |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| New Zealand | 2,118 | 273 | 774 | 363 | 213 | 66 | 36 | 81 | 60 | 78 | 45 | 27 | 33 | 4,167 |
| % NZ born | 17.0 | 6.0 | 25.3 | 16.4 | 21.3 | 9.2 | 7.0 | 16.7 | 14.8 | 25.7 | 17.6 | 15.3 | 33.3 | 15.9 |
| China, PR | 6,786 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6,798 |
| South Korea | 9 | 4,215 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4,227 |
| Japan | 6 | 9 | 0 | 1,776 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,794 |
| Malaysia | 1,215 | 0 | 102 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 357 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,689 |
| Taiwan | 1,245 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,251 |
| India | 3 | 0 | 1,101 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1,107 |
| Philippines | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 765 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 774 |
| Fiji | 18 | 0 | 717 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 735 |
| Thailand | 12 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 636 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 672 |
| Afghanistan | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 444 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 447 |
| Singapore | 315 | 0 | 36 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 33 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 405 |
| Sri Lanka | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 309 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 318 |
| Hong Kong (SAR) | 300 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 306 |
| Vietnam | 78 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 210 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 294 |
| Cambodia | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 186 | 0 | 0 | 201 |
| Indonesia | 48 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 135 | 0 | 189 |
| England | 21 | 3 | 39 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 87 |
| Australia | 27 | 12 | 15 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 81 |
| Pakistan | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 54 | 69 |
| South Africa | 3 | 3 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60 |
| USA | 30 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 57 |
| Other Asia | 21 | 3 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 51 |
| All Other | 201 | 36 | 162 | 27 | 12 | 9 | 21 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 486 |
| Total | 12,477 | 4,566 | 3,057 | 2,208 | 1,002 | 717 | 516 | 486 | 405 | 303 | 255 | 177 | 99 | 26,268 |

Source: Statistics New Zealand

PROFILE: DR WARDLOW FRIESEN

Dr. Friesen is currently Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography, Geology and Environmental Science at the University of Auckland. His research focus has for a number of years been in the areas of migration and ethnic change, and research and publication have focused on various groups including Pacific, Chinese and Indian migrants.

Other areas of research have included population change, international education, development in the Pacific, and urban change. He is a regular commentator in the media on these and related issues.

Between 2005 and 2007 he served as President of the Population Association of New Zealand (PANZ) and he remains active in this association.

At the University of Auckland, he currently serves on the Centre for Pacific Studies Board of Graduate Studies and the Development Studies Advisory Committee, and was recently on the International Committee.

He also has considerable experience in consultancy on demographic issues and their planning implications for local and regional authorities. Over the last 15 years he has supervised more than 40 graduate theses and dissertations, including seven Ph.Ds. on a range of topics.

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