

2. OVERVIEW OF ASIAN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

There is no single explanation for the political participation, or lack of participation, of Asian immigrants in New Zealand and other Western immigrant countries. The level, mode and effectiveness of the political participation of Asian immigrants depends upon various factors – ranging from factors that can be regarded as individual variables (such as socio-economic status), to factors that are outside an individual's control (such as the institutional structure of the host country). In addition, factors influencing the political participation of Asian immigrants are somewhat different from those influencing the political participation of the dominant group (which are already complex and multi-dimensional). This is because Asian immigrants are exposed to different sets of political, economic and social forces in the host country. Nevertheless, studies on political participation of the dominant group provide a valuable basis upon which to identify and understand factors that influence the political participation of Asian immigrants. Although most studies on political participation focus on voting rather than other forms of political participation, the rationale behind many of the theories may also be used to explain other forms of political participation. This chapter will begin by looking at various theories on political participation.

2.1 THEORIES ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Traditional theories

One of the most well-known and widely applied theories on political participation, advanced by Verba and Nie¹, focuses on resources. Also known as the socio-economic theory, it argues that the more free time, money and civic skills one has, the more likely one is to participate in politics. This theory has been used to explain differences in voting rates between different ethnic groups (that is, ethnic minority groups participate in politics at a lesser rate because they have lower socio-economic status than the dominant group), as well as differences among members of the dominant group (for example, wealthy and well-educated people are more likely to vote). Linked to the socio-economic theory is the attitudinal or social psychology theory, which argues that individual attitudes, such as political efficacy, interest, trust, and a sense of civic duty, determine whether or not one might participate in politics². The two theories are linked because social psychology theorists argue that people with high socio-economic status tend to have attitudes that are conducive to political participation due to expectations of society and social

¹ Verba and Nie (1972).

² See for example, Abramson and Aldrich (1992); Milbrath (1965) p32; Muller E.N., *Aggressive political participation* (1979) Princeton University Press, Princeton, as cited in Whiteley and Seyd (2002) p46. Verba and Nie also focused on the effect of the psychological attitudes on the turnout; (1972) p93.

circumstances surrounding them³.

The resource-based theories are not, however, without limitations. The declining turnout in most Western democratic countries, despite the fact that the average income and education levels have gone up, poses a serious challenge to the socio-economic theory. These theories have also been challenged for focusing exclusively on the “supply” side of participation⁴. If there is no “demand” to participate – eg. if the electoral system of the country makes it difficult for individuals to register as voters, or if political parties make no effort to mobilize voters - even those with the necessary resources may have little incentive to participate in politics. Partly for this reason, theories have been developed to look also at the “demand” side of the equation. A theory which focuses on the idea of civic literacy⁵ is one example which looks at both the “supply” side (individuals’ knowledge, ability and capacity to engage in political discourse) and the “demand” side (institutional contribution to the accessibility and intelligibility of political information) of political participation. In so doing, the civic literacy theorists argue the importance of political knowledge – both at individual and aggregate level – on individuals’ political participation.

The demographic theory, on the other hand, assumes that those who are younger, unmarried, and less integrated into society have less experience and commitment to society in general, and therefore are less likely to participate in politics⁶. The demographic theory has recently been challenged by the generational theory, which argues that it is not necessarily age per se that influences an individual’s political participation, but rather the “habit” of voting that an individual has gained in their first few years as a voter⁷. The generational theorists argue that significant changes in turnout occur only when there is a change in generation, and that older people may show a lower level of participation if they have developed a habit of non-voting when they were young. Whether or not this theory applies to people who have moved to a new country, or those who grew up in a non-democratic country without the opportunity to develop the “habit” of voting, is not yet clear, as the generational theory was developed by looking solely at the official polling data in established democracies (which does not distinguish between immigrants and non-immigrants, and is likely to exclude immigrants who are not eligible to vote). These theories which focus mainly on “micro” conditions will be used to analyse the impact of the “individual variables” on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

³ Verba and Nie (1972) p13 and 19.

⁴ Whiteley and Seyd (2002) pp37-40.

⁵ Milner H., *Civic Literacy* (2002) University Press of New England, Hanover.

⁶ See for example, Converse P. and Niemi R., “Non-voting among young adults in the US” in Crotty W., Freeman D. and Gatlin D. (eds) *Political Parties and Political Behaviour* (1971)(2nd ed) Allyn and Bacon, Boston.

⁷ Franklin M.N., *Voter turnout and the dynamics of electoral competition in established democracies since 1945* (2004) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

The mobilization theory, advanced by Rosenstone and Hansen⁸, argues that studies on political participation which focus on individual factors tell only half the story. Defining participation as “the product of strategic interaction of citizens and leaders”, they argue that strategic mobilization by political parties, interest groups and government elites constitutes the other half - that individuals participate in politics in response to the political opportunities and stimuli in their environment⁹. Membership in community organisations is also regarded as encouraging political participation: by exposing individuals to networks which provide the opportunity to participate, and by building up the “stock of social capital” which underpins civic engagement¹⁰. In other words, mobilization theorists and social capital theorists argue that people participate in politics because of social pressure to behave as members of a group rather than as isolated individuals, and because the opportunities to participate in politics are greater for those who have wider social networks. The social capital theory is also linked to the socio-economic theory, because individuals with high socio-economic status are more likely to have the time, willingness, and opportunity to join organizations that stimulate participation¹¹. These theories, however, have also been subject to a number of criticisms. The main criticisms include questions over why people might change their behaviour in response to the efforts of strangers¹², and why some organizations do not have the expected positive effect on political participation of their members. The mobilization theory, social capital theory, and other theories that focus on “intermediary” conditions (between individuals and the institutional structure) will be used to assess the impact of the “community variables” on Asian New Zealanders’ political participation.

The institutional theory, advanced by Powell¹³ and Jackman¹⁴, argues that the political system of a country, such as the electoral system, registration and franchise requirements, frequency and closeness of elections and population size, are the main factors that influence individuals’ political participation. The institutional theorists argue that because turnout varies much more from country to country than it does between different types of individuals, the institutional factors can be regarded as more important than individual or community factors¹⁵. In addition to the political system, the impact of indirect structural factors such as broad societal values and political opportunity are also regarded as relevant. For example, if there is a general societal acceptance of the value of “cultural diversity”, the host country may be more willing to provide opportunities

⁸ Rosenstone and Hansen (1993). See also Kleppner P., *Who Voted?* (1982) Praeger, New York.

⁹ Rosenstone and Hansen (1993); Lien P., “Ethnicity and Political Participation: A comparison between Asian and Mexican Americans” (1994) 16(2) *Political Behaviour* 237 at p255.

¹⁰ See for example, Putnam (2000).

¹¹ Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) pp337-343.

¹² See for example, Whiteley and Seyd (2002) p51.

¹³ Powell Jr. B.G., “American Voter Turnout in Comparative Perspective” (1986) 80 *American Political Science Review* 17-43.

¹⁴ Jackman R.W., “Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Democracies” (1987) 81 (June) *American Political Science Review* 405-23.

¹⁵ Franklin M.N., “Electoral Participation” in LeDuc L., Niemi R.G. and Norris P. (eds) *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective* (1996) Sage, California.

for ethnic minority groups to participate in politics and other aspects of society. On the other hand, if there exist political, economic or social restrictions against those who deviate from the norm, being involved in politics tends to be the privilege of only those who belong to the dominant group. The institutional factors are also interlinked with the individual and community factors in that the institutional factors may promote, for example, civic literacy of citizens and mobilization efforts by political parties. These “macro” conditions, things that are beyond the control of individuals or their community, will be analysed to assess the impact of “institutional variables” on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

In addition to the theories set out above, the thesis will also focus on the rational choice model (“**RCM**”) developed initially by Downs¹⁶. The RCM looks at the “calculus of voting” and argues that citizens participate in politics when the “benefits” of participation outweigh the “costs”. Although the RCM is not without limitations¹⁷, it provides a useful reference point as most of the other participation theories are compatible with the cost and benefit analysis of the RCM. For example, wealth and educational qualification can be seen as increasing the “benefit” of participation, as those with higher socio-economic status are likely to have more at stake in society. Similarly, mobilisation efforts by political parties can reduce the “cost” of participation by passing on relevant information to citizens. Institutional factors may also reduce (or increase) the “cost” of participation, for example, by easing registration requirements and holding elections in the weekends (or vice versa). In addition, factors that are uniquely relevant to Asian immigrants and which cannot be explained by the traditional theories of political participation (such as language skills and pan-ethnic identity), may be explained by RCM’s cost and benefit analysis.

In addition to the RCM, which focuses on “individual” incentives (in that RCM assesses individuals’ rationality based on their pursuit of own self-interest), the general incentives model advocated by Whiteley and Seyd focuses on “collective” incentives, and is better equipped to deal with high-intensity political participation other than voting¹⁸. This is because the RCM cannot explain why people participate in high-intensity activities given their high cost and relative low benefit to the individual participants. Linked to both the RCM and social psychology theory, the general incentives theory argues that individuals think of the group welfare, as well as their own welfare, in their calculus of cost and benefit. In other words, the general incentives theory assumes that individuals act as members of a collective, and not only as individuals serving their own self-interest, when deciding whether or not to participate in politics. For example, the

¹⁶ Downs A., *An economic theory of democracy* (1957) Harper & Row, New York. See also Riker W. and Ordeshook P., “A theory of the calculus of voting” (1968) 62(1) *American Political Science Review* 25-42.

¹⁷ One of the biggest limitations of the RCM is that in terms of cost and benefit calculation, it would be rational for citizens not to vote, yet large numbers of citizens make an irrational decision to turn out to vote. See Blais A., *To vote or not to vote? The merits and limits of rational choice theory* (2000) University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, for other examples of RCM’s limitations.

¹⁸ (2002) pp51-57.

“benefit” of having a sense of political efficacy and civic duty for individual voters would be difficult to estimate¹⁹, whereas they can be regarded as key incentives to participate in politics for those who are concerned with the group welfare of sustaining a democratic political system. By introducing the concept of “collective benefit” to the calculus of participation, the general incentives theory attempts to deal with certain shortcomings of the RCM. These theories of political participation will be incorporated wherever possible in the following chapters to understand and predict the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

Theories on Asian immigrant political participation

In addition to the traditional theories on political participation, there are a number of theories developed to explain patterns of participation amongst Asian immigrants. One of the most prominent theories focuses on immigrants’ level of acculturation. It argues that any new group of immigrants need to acquire the necessary language, knowledge, confidence, and qualifications to enter the political arena of the host country, and that the new group’s participatory behaviours develop in stages. This theory has been applied by almost all studies on the political participation of Asian immigrants to explain their low level of participation, with language difficulty, in particular, being identified as one of the main barriers to participation²⁰. However, the acculturation theory has been challenged by the finding that even the most acculturated Asian immigrants often find it difficult to participate in politics of the host country²¹.

The cultural theorists, on the other hand, assume that particular traits of a group (such as culturally defined perceptions towards authority) provide the key to understanding the immigrant group’s participation in politics, and that their traditional culture continues to shape the political perception of immigrants in the host country²². They also argue that immigrant groups’ prior political experience and practice in their home countries lay the foundation of those groups’ participation in the host country, either by providing opportunities to learn democratic norms, or by discouraging people from being involved in politics²³. The cultural theory has been challenged by those who argue that immigrants’ mode of participation is developed from the socialization

¹⁹ Cf Riker and Ordeshook (1968) which attempted to explain the “general incentive” as additional factor of “D” in the RCM.

²⁰ See for example, Uhlaner et al. (1989), Lien (1994), Tam Cho (1999), Freeman (2000). See also a list of acculturation theorists in Lien (1997), p238.

²¹ See for example, Freeman (2000) p25. See chapter 4.7 for more information.

²² See for example, Jalali R. and Lipset S.M., “Racial and Ethnic Conflicts: A Global Perspective” (1992) 107 (4) *Political Science Quarterly*, and Pye L.W., *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimension of Authority* (1985) Harvard University Press, Cambridge, as cited in Freeman (2000) pp33-36.

²³ See chapters 2.2 and 4.4 for more information. See also Erie S.P., *Rainbow’s End: Irish America and the Dilemma of Urban Machine Politics, 1840-1985* (1988) University of California Press, Berkeley, and other studies listed in Freeman (2002) p36.

process in the host country, primarily in response to the host country's treatment towards them²⁴. In so doing, the critics have shifted the focus away from the traditional cultural traits to immigrants' common experience in the host country. For example, the existence and the extent of discrimination against an immigrant group is regarded as a more important determinant of how an immigrant group becomes politically active or inactive, rather than the perceived Asian cultural trait of "obedience to authority". This approach regards immigrants' participatory patterns as largely reactive to how the host country treats them, without necessarily ignoring the impact traditional cultural traits and prior political experiences may have on Asian immigrants' political participation.

The nature of ethnic community organizations, which play a significant role in immigrants' socialization process in the host country, are also regarded as an important variable. Immigrants' tendency to socialise mainly with members of their own ethnic group is used to support this theory. The strength of group identification and political awareness of their minority status are also regarded as important, because the heightened group consciousness may provide the basis upon which to mobilize a diverse group of immigrants for a political cause²⁵. As most of these theories on political participation of Asian immigrants were developed through studies on the political participation of Asian Americans, a brief background history of Asian Americans and Asian New Zealanders will be set out for comparative purposes. Before doing so, the contemporary political history of key Asian countries will be looked at to understand the political environment from which many Asian immigrants originated.

2.2 CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL HISTORY OF ASIAN COUNTRIES

Some cultural theorists argue that Asian immigrants' attitude towards political participation in the host country is influenced by their prior political experience in their country of origin – that Asian immigrants' low level of political participation can be seen as deriving from the political environment of their home countries. This is because being involved in politics or criticising the government in some Asian countries could lead to severe disadvantages or even punishment not only for the individuals involved but also for their whole family. Asian immigrants from countries where politics has been a dangerous past-time are therefore likely to feel constrained, and restrain their children, from being involved in politics, even in the host country. In addition, Asian immigrants from countries which have a non-democratic political environment would have had little opportunity to learn about democratic political norms, thereby making it difficult for them to participate in host country politics²⁶. This is especially so given that the first few elections that

²⁴ Examples include Ireland (1994) and Barth (1969), as cited in Freeman (2000) p35.

²⁵ See for example, Uhlaner et al. (1989).

²⁶ Tam (1995) p237.

people are exposed to as voting-age adults are regarded as crucial for the development of the habit of voting (or non-voting), and that once individuals become habitual voters (or non-voters), they are less likely to respond to other stimuli encouraging (or discouraging) political participation²⁷.

Interestingly, however, in their study of six overseas-born immigrant groups, McAllister and Makkai found that immigrants from countries lacking established democratic traditions were more likely to exhibit greater democratic commitment and trust in the host countries' political system²⁸. This was explained in terms of Asians from non-democratic countries showing greater appreciation for the democratic norms, whereas others take them for granted. This finding makes it difficult to predict the influence of home countries' political environment on the political participation of Asian immigrants. This chapter will set out a brief contemporary political history of the five Asian countries of Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Malaysia²⁹, where most of the survey respondents originated from³⁰. Whether and how these different political environments affect the political participation of Asians living in New Zealand will also be analysed in the following chapters, when the survey data on voting and other participation rates will be analysed for inter-ethnic comparison between Asians from these five countries.

Korea

A divided country since the Korean War of 1950-1953, South Korea has come a long way from military dictatorship to the noisy democracy it currently is. In light of the continuous threat from communist North Korea, South Korea's domestic politics was dominated by the military and authoritarian regimes from 1961 to 1987. During this period, basic individual rights were severely limited in the name of national security, and political opponents were often persecuted as communists or traitors. Despite the restrictions, civil society groups and students led the pro-democracy movement through years of strong protests against authoritarian rule, and in 1987, Korea held its first democratic election. In 1993, the country's first civilian President was elected, and a further political milestone was achieved in 1997 when the leader of the opposition was elected to the Presidency for the first time. These democratic developments are reflected in the Freedom House scores³¹, which rate the state of a country's political rights and civil liberties on a scale of 1-7 (1.0-2.5 being "free", 3.0-5.0 being "partly free", and 5.5 and 7.0 being "not free"). Korea's ratings improved from 4-6 during the period of 1973-1987 to 2-3 during the period of

²⁷ See Franklin (2004).

²⁸ McAllister and Makkai (1992) p290.

²⁹ Most of the factual information was obtained from the country profile available at www.mfat.govt.nz, www.dfat.gov.au, www.state.gov, and www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook.

³⁰ See chapter 3.1 for composition of the survey respondents.

³¹ www.freedomhouse.org

1988-1993. From 1993 onwards, Korea scored 2 for both political rights and civil liberties, making it among the most democratic countries in Asia.

Korea has adopted a Presidential style democracy similar to that of the US where executive power is in the hands of the President who serves a single five year term. A separate legislature, a unicameral National Assembly, is elected every four years. Korea has a first-past-the-post (“**FPP**”) system which elects 243 seats in the National Assembly. A further 56 seats are elected on a proportional representation (“**PR**”) basis. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (“**IDEA**”) database³² shows that Korea’s turnout for the parliamentary election remained in the 70% region throughout the 1960s-1980s, but that the turnout declined to 64% for the 1996 election and to 57% for the 2002 election. However, Presidential elections recorded a higher turnout of 85% in 1992 and 92% in 1997.

China

China is a one-party totalitarian state ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (“**CCP**”). In theory, the National Party Congress is the highest organ of the party, but the real power lies in the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee. Within representative and executive bodies, minorities must abide by decisions of the majority, and lower bodies must obey the orders of higher level organs. Political and civil rights in the form of public expression and freedom of association remain tightly regulated, and the state keeps control of the media. China is yet to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

While there remains little prospect of China moving towards a pluralist political system, there has been recognition of a need to provide for a greater degree of political choice, especially at grass roots level. At the village and street committee level, elections are now held on the basis of universal suffrage and a choice of candidates. In 2002, about 20 cities, including Beijing and Guangzhou, introduced direct elections at district committee level. Having said that, the Chinese government is preoccupied with the age-old Chinese dynastic concerns about social unrest and chaos, and is willing to adopt drastic measures, such as those against the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstrators, to suppress demonstration and organized opposition. Not surprisingly, the Freedom House scores for China remain at 6-7 to this date, the worst score among the five Asian countries discussed here.

³² www.idea.int

Taiwan

Following the defeat of a civil war fought on mainland China between Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang ("KMT") and the Chinese communist party, Taiwan's politics was effectively controlled by the KMT under a state of martial law. The Emergency Decree, imposed in 1949, restricted the formation of new political parties, allowing the KMT government to maintain authoritarian one-party rule. Taiwan began its transformation to democracy in 1987, when the then President lifted the Emergency Decree and allowed the formation of opposition parties. With the mandatory retirement of the "indefinite" members of the first National Assembly (who held the seats since 1949), the majority of the 325 members of the second National Assembly were directly elected in 1991. Members of the main law-making body, the Legislative Yuan, have also been elected since 1992 for a three year term (with 100 chosen from party slates in proportion to the popular vote). In March 1996, Taiwan held its first popular election of the President, and the opposition leader's victory in the 2000 Presidential election saw the transfer of power from the KMT for the first time. With the rapid transformation to democracy, Taiwan's Freedom House scores improved from 5-6 throughout the 1970s-1980s to 3-4 in the first half of the 1990s. After 1996, the scores have remained steady at 1-2.

Taiwan has a representative democracy that has combined elements of both the cabinet and Presidential system of government - it has the Presidency, the National Assembly, and five government branches (Yuan): Executive, Legislative, Judicial, Control and Examination. Taiwan has a semi-proportional voting system which combines multi-member districts with the FPP system of vote counting. The voting rate for the parliamentary election has been around 70%, although the 1996 election saw 75% of the population turning out to vote. The Presidential elections of 1996 and 2002 recorded the turnout of some 77% according to the IDEA database.

Hong Kong

On 1 July 1997, after 155 years as a British colony, Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty as a Special Administrative Region ("SAR") of mainland China in accordance with the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration on the future of Hong Kong. Since the handover, progressive steps have been taken towards full democracy, but Hong Kong is yet to achieve universal suffrage for electing the Chief Executive. Britain did not introduce democratic reforms to Hong Kong until the 1980s. In the absence of an electoral franchise, and the sensitivity surrounding the presence of both communist and non-communist Chinese during the height of the Cold War, politics was widely seen as potentially dangerous to society and as the exclusive domain of left-wing activists and radicals. As a result, people avoided talking about politics, let alone participating in it, and

the government promoted a “culture of depoliticization” to maintain social order³³.

Against this background, members of a District Board were elected by citizens for the first time in 1981, and the election component was introduced to the Legislative Council in 1985 (although more than half of the 60 seats in the Legislative Council are still elected by functional constituencies and the Election Committee). The voting rates were low at around 30-40% for the District Board elections, although they were slightly higher for the Legislative Council elections, with the highest turnout of 53% being recorded for the 1998 election³⁴. Despite a more participatory political environment in the 1980s-1990s, Hong Kong people participated relatively little in almost all forms of political activities, due to the continuous influence of the “culture of depoliticization”. Nevertheless, their increasing political activism was reflected by mass demonstrations in 2003 and 2004 which called for more democracy³⁵. The Freedom House database (which does not have the historical scores on Hong Kong prior to 1998) gave Hong Kong good scores of 2-3 for civil liberties but 5-6 for political rights, partly because of the Chinese government’s plans to introduce national security laws which could restrict basic political rights.

Malaysia

Malaysian Chinese are an ethnic minority group in Malaysia, constituting approximately 25% of the total population. Ethnic tension between the Chinese and majority Malay population has been a feature of the country’s post-war history, the main examples of which include the bloody race riot of 1969 and subsequent imposition of a State of Emergency. It has meant that the Chinese community has had to curtail and restrict its own political aspirations and activities to avoid the sort of backlash which occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It has also led to a political and economic system which deliberately and heavily favoured the Malays at the expense of Chinese and other ethnic minorities.

In practical terms, both the Chinese and Indian communities have chosen to work in coalition with the dominant political party, the United Malay National Organisation (“**UMNO**”). This coalition, broadened under the “Barisan Nasional” (“**BN**”) banner in 1973, has held power continuously

³³ For more information on the “culture of depoliticization”, see Wai-man L., *Understanding the political culture of Hong Kong: The paradox of activism and depoliticization* (2004) M.E.Sharpe, New York.

³⁴ No information was available on the IDEA database, given that the database only included elections held in independent nation-states. The figures were obtained from Wai-man (2004) p235.

³⁵ On 1 July 2003, half a million people marched to protest against the government’s proposal for national security legislation, leading to the withdrawal of the government’s bill. On 1 January 2004, a further demonstration of 100,000 people called for direct election of the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council by 2007 and 2008 respectively.

since independence³⁶. But the coalition has been dominated by UMNO and its autocratic leader Mahathir, who adopted a number of repressive measures to suppress critics of his regime, until he stepped down in 2003 after 22 years in power. These measures were reflected in the Freedom House scores, where Malaysia's scores of 2-3 in the early 1970s increased to 3-4 in the latter half of the 1970s, and again to 3-5 in the 1980s when Mahathir took power. The scores further increased to 4-5 during the height of the Mahathir regime in the late 1980s-early 1990s, and from 1998 onwards, its scores have been at an all time high of 5-5.

Malaysia has a federal parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy, but it is often described as an "authoritarian populist system", because of the dominance of a single party and the exclusion of ethnic minority groups from the main political arena. Malaysia's bicameral parliament consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Among 70 Senate members, 26 are elected by the 13 state assemblies, and 44 are appointed by the King. The 219 members of the House of Representatives are elected from single-member districts. The turnout among Malaysians during the parliamentary elections was around 60% in the 1980s-1990s according to the IDEA, although the 1999 election showed a significantly lower turnout of 50%.

2.3 ASIAN AMERICANS – BACKGROUND HISTORY

As briefly mentioned before, most of the theories on the political participation of Asian immigrants were developed through studies on Asian Americans. For this reason, it is important to look at the brief background history of Asian Americans for comparative purposes to help understand the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. The history of Asian immigration to the US goes back to the 1840s and 1850s when the discovery of gold in California and the need for cheap labour in the rapidly developing Western US attracted a significant number of Chinese labourers³⁷. Domestic instabilities in China around that time, caused by the Opium War (1839), the disintegration of Qing government (which led to famine, internal rebellions and banditry), and the Tai Ping Rebellion (1850-1864), also prompted Chinese in Southern parts of China to leave their homeland. For this reason, similar patterns of Chinese movement were recorded in other Western immigrant countries, where small yet significant numbers of Chinese immigrants began to arrive in the 1850s-1870s.

³⁶ The political dominance of the BN has been explained in many ways, including the observation that a number of political constituencies and boundaries have been redrawn after every election, generally to the advantage of BN and UMNO, and that elections were only held if BN dominance was likely to be retained; Freeman (2000) pp64-65.

³⁷ Fong T., *The First Suburban Chinatown: The Remaking of Monterey Park, California* (1994) Temple University Press, Philadelphia, as cited in Freeman (2000) p120.

As the number of Chinese immigrants grew, and as their willingness to work longer hours for less pay posed an economic threat to the other labourers, hostilities against this “visible” group began to spread in the US, as well as in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The Chinese were not the only immigrant group which faced discrimination in the host country (as there were reports of discrimination against German, English and Scottish immigrants), but they faced more severe and long-lasting discrimination because of their physical distinctiveness, wide cultural differences, unwillingness to assimilate³⁸, and the gaining popularity of Darwinian racial theories³⁹. Various anti-Chinese, anti-Asian laws were also enacted in the US and other Western immigrant countries. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act 1882 barred the entrance of Chinese immigrants to the US until 1943⁴⁰, and the Geary Act 1892 required Chinese Americans to be registered for identification, non-compliance of which resulted in imprisonment and deportation⁴¹. The Chinese Exclusion Act remains as the only federal legislation that singled out a particular nationality for exclusion from entering the country. These exclusionary policies made it difficult for Asian immigrants to undertake collective political actions or to seek redress through political means⁴². Imposition of anti-Asian legislation also meant that the Asian population in Western countries did not increase in any significant numbers until the abolition of the “Whites Only” immigration policies in the latter part of the 20th Century⁴³.

The recent opening up of Western borders led to a dramatic increase in the Asian population in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where Asians became a major, if not the largest, source of immigrants. For example, Asians were the largest group of immigrants to Australia in the 1980s (comprising 36% of total migrants in 1982-1983)⁴⁴, and 42% of Canada’s intake since the mid-1970s has been from Asia (compared with 9% from the British Isles, 11% from Eastern Europe, and 7% from elsewhere in Europe)⁴⁵. In the case of the US, Asian Americans were the

³⁸ This was due to the fact that most Chinese immigrants at that time were sojourners who sent all their earnings back to China and who planned to go back to China eventually.

³⁹ Price C.A., *The Great White Walls are Built* (1974) Australia National University Press, Canberra, as cited in Yee (2001).

⁴⁰ The ban was initially for 10 years, but was extended for an additional 10 years in 1892, and again indefinitely in 1902; Fong (1994) p120.

⁴¹ Freeman (2000) p121. For more details on the discriminatory policies against Asian Americans, see Daniel R., *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (1988) University of Washington Press, Seattle; Haney Lopez I.F., *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (1996) New York University Press, New York, as cited in Aoki A.L. and Nakanishi D.T., “Asian Pacific Americans and the New Minority Politics” (2001) 3 *Political Science and Politics* 605-610. See also Kwong P., *Chinatown, NY: Labor and Politics, 1930-1950* (1979) Monthly Review Press, New York, as cited in Freeman (2000) p21. For examples of discriminatory policies in Australia, see Markus A., “Government control of Chinese immigration to Australia, 1855-1975” in Chan H., Curthoys A. and Chiang N. (eds) *The Overseas Chinese in Australia: History, Settlement and Interactions* (2001) Symposium held in Taipei, pp69-81.

⁴² Tarrow S., *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (1994) Cambridge University Press, New York, as cited in Freeman (2000) p37.

⁴³ 1965 for the US, 1967 for Canada, 1972 for Australia, and 1989 for New Zealand.

⁴⁴ Castles S., “The “new” migration and Australian immigration policy” in Inglis et al. (1992) 45-72 at p57.

⁴⁵ Economic Council of Canada, *Economic and Social Impacts of Immigration* (1991) Ottawa, as cited in Parkin and Hardcastle in Jupp and Kabala (1994) 42-58 at p47.

fastest growing ethnic group which increased at a rate of 43% in the 1990s, mainly through immigration, and as at 2001, 12.5 million Asian Americans comprised 4.4% of the total American population⁴⁶. With the increasing number of Asian Americans, their visibility in US politics and the chances of Asian candidates being elected to the public office also increased⁴⁷. As of mid-2000, there were two Asian American Senators (who became cabinet appointees in the first Bush administration⁴⁸), five federal representatives, two governors, 29 state representatives, 89 city council members, 26 city mayors, and 210 judges of Asian origin⁴⁹. In addition, the fact that Asian Americans have a clear preference for a particular party, and their tendency to live in specific geographic locations⁵⁰, made them an even more significant political force, as it raised the possibility of Asians bloc-voting and creating political coalitions with other ethnic minority groups⁵¹. For example, the 2001 survey found that 36% of the respondents identified themselves as Democrats (compared to 14% identifying as Republicans), and that such a pattern was consistent with the political partisanship of other ethnic minority groups in the US (such as African Americans and Latino Americans)⁵². Similarly in Canada, the growing number of politically eligible Asian Canadians contributed to the success of the Conservative Party and the election of a record number of Asian politicians (two Chinese and nine Indo-Canadians politicians) at the latest 2004 Federal election⁵³.

Despite the growing visibility of Asians in US politics, various studies on the political participation of Asian Americans have consistently found their level of political participation to be lower than that of other ethnic groups. For example, only 44% of the Asian American respondents who participated in the 2001 survey reportedly turned out to vote at the 2000 Presidential election,

⁴⁶ Chang (2001) p2. The Asian American population increased by 108% between 1980 and 1990 (3.5 million to 7.3 million), most of which derived from immigration; Coleman K., "The Asian American Population in the US" in Lee J.W. (ed) *Asian American electoral participation* (2002) Novinka Books, New York, pp5-7 (Coleman 1).

⁴⁷ Nakanish D.T., "No longer spectators: The growing impact of Asian Pacific Americans on American Politics" (2000-2001) *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* 10 at 12.

⁴⁸ Senator Norman Y. Mineta was appointed the Secretary of Transportation and Senator Elaine L. Chao the Secretary of Labour. There are, however, criticisms that Asian American cabinet appointees are mere token representatives, employed to take pressure off the US government to hire other minorities; Rich W.C., "Introduction" in Rich (2001) 1-9 at p5. Chang (2001) p1. See also Nguyen-vo T., "Orange into White: Asian Americans and the post-colonial conservatism of Bush's era" (2001-2002) *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* 27 at 28.

⁴⁹ A full list of Asian American Federal, State and Municipal elected officials is set out in (2001-2002) 10 *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac*, pp152-304. Most of the elected Asian representatives in the US were US-born citizens, Democrats, and represented states with a high proportion of Asian peoples; see for example, Coleman in Lee (2002)(Coleman 2) p41. See also chapter 5.1.

⁵⁰ See chapter 5.1 for more information.

⁵¹ Having said that, there is a danger of the Republican party neglecting Asian Americans based on the assumption that their mobilisation efforts could energise the opponent supporters; Goldstein and Ridout (2002) p22.

⁵² See for example, Coleman K., "Asian Pacific American political participation and representation in elective office" in Lee (2002) 43-50 at p48, tables 3 and 4 (Coleman 3), which illustrated that African and Latino Americans have historically supported the Democratic party. See also Tam (1995) p233, table 3.

⁵³ Myers R., "Canada looks to the east", *Time*, 12 July 2004, p7.

which was a lower turnout than White Americans⁵⁴ (61%) and other ethnic minority groups (56.8% for African Americans⁵⁵ and 45.1% for Latino Americans)⁵⁶. In addition, only a small segment of the 2001 survey respondents participated in other forms of political activities; the most common forms of which included “working with others in the community to solve a problem” (21%) and “signing a petition for a political cause” (16%). Studies on Chinese Canadians have also found that the turnout among Asians was the lowest of all ethnic groups in Canada⁵⁷. Similarly, Asian Australians’ level of participation in other forms of political activities was found to be lower than the general Australian population (although other ethnic minority groups, not just Asian Australians, also showed a lower level of political participation than White Australians)⁵⁸. This, together with the fact that Asians are still under-represented in the politics of the host country, highlights the need to understand the factors that influence the political participation of Asian immigrants in Western countries.

2.4 ASIAN NEW ZEALANDERS – BACKGROUND HISTORY

The early history of Asian immigration to New Zealand is quite similar to that of the US. Like Asian Americans, Chinese immigrants first came to New Zealand in the 1860s to work in the Otago goldmines, and the increasing number of Chinese workers in the 1870s and 1880s created a similar fear of job competition among other workers. In addition, there was a prevalent anti-Chinese feeling even before a single Chinese person arrived in New Zealand, based on the reputation they had earned overseas that they are “naturally inferior, weak, unclean and prone to carry infectious disease”⁵⁹. Partly due to this reputation earned overseas, an Anti-Chinese

⁵⁴ For the purpose of this thesis, the term “White American” will be used interchangeably with “White” or “Anglo American”. They may also be referred to as the “dominant group”, “majority” or “mainstream” in the US.

⁵⁵ The term “African American” will be used interchangeably with “Black American” or “Black” for the purpose of this thesis.

⁵⁶ The 2001 survey did not conduct a comparative study between Asian Americans and White/Black Americans, but the information was available through the US Bureau of Census. The Census recorded the turnout of Asian Americans as 43.3%, which was quite similar to the 2001 survey result of 44%. A similar pattern of inter-ethnic turnout rate was found by Uhlaner et al’s California survey, where 76% of Whites, 80% of Blacks, 44% of Latinos and 47% of Asians were found to have voted in the 1984 election; Uhlaner et al. (1989). See also Freeman (2000) p130 table 5.1; and Coleman K., “Asian Americans and electoral politics” in Lee (2002) 19-42 at p46, table 2 (Coleman 2).

⁵⁷ Lapp M., “Ethnic group leaders and the mobilization of voter turnout: Evidence from five Montreal communities” (1993) 31(2) *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal* 17 at pp23-25. Lapp explained this as Chinese Canadians’ lack of interest in, and understanding of, the Canadian political system, their preoccupation with other affairs, and poorly organised community media.

⁵⁸ McAllister and Makkai (1992) p286, table 6. An Australian survey conducted in 1988 also found that immigrants from non-English speaking countries were less likely than White Australians to have contacted politicians or government officials; Office of Multicultural Affairs, *Issues in Multicultural Australia* (1988) Canberra, as cited in Zappala (1999) p7.

⁵⁹ Ip M., “Chinese New Zealanders: Old Settlers and New Immigrants” in Greif S.W. (ed) *Immigration and National Identity in New Zealand: One People, Two Peoples, Many Peoples?* (1995) Dunmore Press Ltd, Palmerston North, p163.

Committee was formed in New Zealand as early as in 1857 to fight the “Mongolian Filth”⁶⁰. This anti-Chinese sentiment led to a number of Acts being passed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries⁶¹, to restrict the number of Chinese and other Asians entering New Zealand.

For example, the infamous “Poll Tax” legislation (the Chinese Immigration Restriction Act 1881) required each Chinese immigrant to pay 10 pounds tax on entry (subsequently increased to 100 pounds), and limited the number of Chinese immigrants to one Chinese person per every 100 tonnes of cargo (subsequently changed to one in 200 tonnes of cargo)⁶². These restrictions, which were imposed in 1881, were not repealed until 1944. English language tests were also introduced in 1899 and again in 1907 to effectively deter Chinese and other Asian immigrants⁶³. In addition, the Immigration Restriction Act 1908 revoked the right of naturalization for all Chinese people in New Zealand (including those who were born in New Zealand) for the next 44 years, thereby severely restricting Asian New Zealanders’ political and legal rights. New Zealand’s door was officially closed for Asians and other “undesirable aliens” by the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act of 1920, which gave the Minister of Customs the sole discretion to grant or refuse immigrants’ entry into New Zealand without any explanation, as well as giving privileged entry to British and Irish descendants. This Act, introduced in pursuit of a “White New Zealand” doctrine, lasted 67 years until it was replaced by the Immigration Act of 1987⁶⁴, making New Zealand the last immigrant country to discard discriminatory immigration provisions.

The introduction of non-discriminatory immigration policies which focused on the skills and financial capacity of immigrants led to the influx of relatively wealthy Asian immigrants in the 1990s. Most Asian immigrants have settled in the main cities of Auckland, Wellington,

⁶⁰ Fong N.G., *The Chinese in New Zealand: A Study in Assimilation* (1959) Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong.

⁶¹ For a list of discriminatory laws and their implications, see Fleras and Spoonley (1999) p159; McKinnon M., *Immigrants and Citizens; New Zealanders and Asian Immigration in Historical Context* (1996) Institute of Policy Studies, Wellington. See also Wong L.S., *The Moulding of the Silent Immigrants: New Zealand Born Chinese* (2002) Occasional Paper presented at the Auckland University of Technology, Chinese Centre. Chinese New Zealanders petitioned Parliament no fewer than 17 times between 1881 and 1920 to protest about the discriminatory legislation, but none of the petitions were successful in bringing positive outcomes; Ip M., *The legal and political status of Chinese New Zealanders: Implications of the Treaty of Waitangi* (1992) A paper prepared for an international conference on overseas Chinese, University of California, Berkeley, p3.

⁶² The Poll Tax was an enormous sum of money for Chinese immigrants at that time, most of whom earned half a pound to one pound a week; Young 2, p3. Somewhat surprisingly, these restrictions were limited to Chinese and not to other Asians such as Japanese and Indian, reflecting the weakness of China at that time; Ip in Greif (1995) p172.

⁶³ Yee 2, p4.

⁶⁴ The doctrine was adopted to create a “Britain of the South Pacific”. Even with the 1987 Act, Ip argued that no one envisaged the new immigration policy would bring a sizeable influx of ethnic Chinese people. The then Minister of Immigration in fact admitted that he did not see that Asian people would be interested in coming to New Zealand when the 1987 legislation was introduced; Ip in www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice, p3.

Christchurch and Dunedin, and in each city, most have settled in places where there are already established Asian ethnic communities. In Auckland, for example, the number of Asian immigrants in affluent suburbs of Remuera, Epsom, North Shore and Howick-Pakuranga increased rapidly in the last few years, with the Howick area gaining the nickname “Chowick”. This development brought positive responses from New Zealand businesspeople and politicians who saw the potential benefits that these immigrants could bring, but more prevalent were negative responses from some parts of the New Zealand public who feared an “Asian invasion”. Despite the public backlash against Asian New Zealanders in the mid-1990s (and the consequential toughening of immigration policies⁶⁵), the influence of Asian New Zealanders in the political landscape of New Zealand became more visible. The election of Pansy Wong (a Hong Kong Chinese immigrant) to Parliament as a National party list Member of Parliament (“MP”) in 1996 was a clear example of Asians’ growing political influence. Considering that the mass Asian immigration was a phenomenon of the 1990s, the election of the first Asian MP as early as in 1996 can be regarded as a significant political achievement for Asian New Zealanders.

One of the most compelling reasons for the relatively early Asian political representation was the change of the electoral system from the FPP to Mixed Member Proportional (“MMP”), which coincided with the timing of the mass Asian immigration⁶⁶. Asians immigrants were able to enjoy greater political influence under the MMP system, which allowed minorities’ party votes to play a more decisive role. As such, a number of Asian candidates have been nominated as political candidates in recent elections⁶⁷, and New Zealand saw a second Asian MP (under the definition of “Asian” used in this thesis) entering Parliament in 2004⁶⁸. There were also 11 local politicians⁶⁹, two district court judges⁷⁰, and 174 lawyers⁷¹ of Asian origin in New Zealand as of mid-2004, evidencing the expanding political influence of Asian New Zealanders.

⁶⁵ New Zealand toughened the immigration policy by introducing a language test and a \$20,000 bond in 1995, which greatly reduced the number of immigrants from Asia. For example, immigrants from Taiwan reduced from 23% in 1995 to 12% in 1996; *Immigration Fact Pact* (1997) New Zealand Immigration Service, p4. Further changes were recently made to the immigration policy, which required higher English skills (20 November 2002) and a job-offer (2 July 2003).

⁶⁶ Other possible reasons include the existence of highly qualified Asian candidates, Asian New Zealanders’ high socio-economic status, and New Zealand’s relatively uncomplicated and inexpensive recruitment procedure, where money and party experience do not play crucial roles in legislative recruitment; see Norris P. (ed) *Passage to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies* (1997) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

⁶⁷ See Beal (2002) for a list of Asian candidates.

⁶⁸ Kenneth Wang of the Act party.

⁶⁹ There is no centralized registry of elected local politicians: information on local politics are scattered around 86 territorial authorities and regional councils. For this reason, the figure is an estimate based on the common Asian surnames extracted from the list of candidates elected in 2004. The list was provided by the Department of Internal Affairs.

⁷⁰ The information was provided by the Chief Judges’ Chamber. There is no Asian Justice in the High Court, the Court of Appeal, or the Supreme Court.

⁷¹ Information received from the Law Society of New Zealand. The figure is from 7,476 lawyers who have answered the question on ethnicity, excluding Indians.

However, this does not mean that Asian New Zealanders are as visible as they ought to be in New Zealand politics. The proportion of Asian MPs per population is worse than that of other ethnic minority groups in New Zealand, where 19 Maori MPs and three Polynesian MPs represent 14.7% of Maori population and 6.5% of Polynesian population in New Zealand⁷². In terms of descriptive representation, there ought to be seven Asian MPs to proportionately represent Asian New Zealanders⁷³. Having said that, it would be unrealistic to expect Asian immigrants with a relatively short period of immigration to have a proportionate number of political representatives, given that factors such as local knowledge, political experience, and the length of time spent in the district are important qualities for New Zealand political representatives⁷⁴.

The growing visibility of Asians in New Zealand politics, however, has not attracted a lot of academic interest. Before the current survey on Asian New Zealanders, there was only one other survey conducted to assess the level of political participation of Asian New Zealanders. That survey, conducted in 1995 by the *Chinese Express* (a local Chinese newspaper) among 292 Chinese New Zealanders (“**CEX poll**”), found a number of interesting facts⁷⁵. Firstly, it found that the respondents regarded it necessary for Chinese New Zealanders to participate in New Zealand politics – in fact, none of the respondents thought otherwise. Secondly, it found that although 86% of the respondents were aware of the fact that they had the right to vote, only 41.4% had actually registered to vote. Thirdly, more than half of the respondents said that they would support a party with a Chinese candidate, and 56% said that they would vote for National (which at that time was in government and had a Chinese candidate) in the next election in 1996. The support for other parties included 13% for Labour, 3.4% for Alliance, 2.4% for Act, 0.5% for New Zealand First, Right of Centre, and Future of New Zealand, and 8.6% for other parties. About 16% of the respondents said that they would not vote in the next election. Zhang interpreted the Chinese support for National at that time as a combined result of National being a ruling party (therefore better known), Chinese being very much establishment-oriented, and National’s economic policies being more in line with Chinese views⁷⁶. The CEX poll, although limited in scope and a little outdated, provided a useful basis upon which to compare and contrast

⁷² The proportion of Maori MPs (15.8%) is higher than the proportion of the Maori population (14.7%).

⁷³ Descriptive representation can be defined as representatives with visible characteristics, such as skin colour, gender, or shared experiences with members of a certain group. However, descriptive representation is not necessarily the best form of representation, as “no one should argue that morons should be represented by morons”; see Mansbridge in Kimlicka and Norman (2000) p101. Substantial representation, where the interests of Asian immigrants are represented by members who are not necessarily Asian, is also important for Asian immigrants who do not often have numerical significance in a region; Takeda O., “The Representation of Asian Americans in the US Political System” in Menifield C.E. (ed) *Representation of Minorities in the American Political System: Implications for the 21st Century* (2001) University Press of America, Lanham, MD, p93.

⁷⁴ Catt H., “New Zealand” in Norris (ed) (1997) pp137-157.

⁷⁵ Zhang Y., “The Chinese community and political parties: What can a poll tell us” in Zhang and Ip (1996).

⁷⁶ Asian immigrants have been regarded as potential National Party supporters because of their middle-class background, comparative affluence, and business interest; Ip M., “Clark’s apology to Chinese only a first step in amends”, *New Zealand Herald*, 13 February 2002, pA15.

the changing political patterns and preferences of Asian New Zealanders in the past eight years.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Understanding political participation is never an easy task. None of the traditional theories on political participation, developed in the last several decades based on numerous official polling data, can fully explain the precise factors that influence political participation. Understanding the political participation of Asian immigrants is an even harder task, because Asian immigrants are influenced by additional factors and circumstances that have not been considered by traditional theories on political participation. The theories identified earlier in this chapter are therefore expected to explain only certain aspects of the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. In addition, there are only a small number of studies which focus on the political participation of Asian immigrants. In this sense, the survey conducted as a part of this thesis on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders could provide a useful basis upon which to develop our understanding of the political participation of Asian immigrants.

After looking at the brief background history of Asian Americans and Asian New Zealanders, the following similarities and differences between New Zealand and the US can be summarised. The main similarities include a liberal democratic political system, a free market economy, a large White majority population, and a dominant culture with a common English root. Both countries share a long history of racism and anti-Asian hostilities, a history of race relations focusing mainly on one particular ethnic minority group (Black-White discourse for the US and Maori-Pakeha for New Zealand), and a rapidly growing Asian population with increasing political significance. At the same time, significant differences exist between the two countries. Asian New Zealanders have a shorter immigration history but arguably a stronger socio-economic background than Asian Americans. The status of the biggest ethnic minority group in relation to the majority group is also quite different - Maori people have a special status in New Zealand as the indigenous people of the land, whereas African Americans do not have any special status in the US (apart from their history of slavery and its legacy)⁷⁷. There are also a number of differences in the two countries' political systems, such as the federalism (US) and non-federalism (New Zealand), and winner-take-all plurality election system (US) and the PR election system (New Zealand)⁷⁸. In addition, the size of the registered voters in New Zealand (2.6 million) is considerably smaller than that of the US (156 million), so as to give more weight to individual votes in New Zealand. Because of these similarities and differences, the case of Asian Americans could provide a potentially interesting comparative perspective on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

⁷⁷ See chapter 6.7 for more details.

⁷⁸ See chapter 6.1 for more details.

As briefly mentioned before, factors that are found to be relevant to the political participation of Asian immigrants will be divided into three groups – individual, community, and institutional variables. This grouping of factors is intended to help not only in assessing which variable has the most influence on the political participation of Asian immigrants, but also in identifying the most effective way of improving the level of political participation of Asian immigrants. For example, if the main cause of political inactivity of Asian immigrants is found to be individual variables, programmes could be developed to assist individual Asian immigrants to overcome such barriers. On the other hand, if institutional variables are proven to be the main barrier preventing political participation of Asian immigrants, the government could take extra steps to ensure that Asian immigrants are able to exercise their full political rights. In chapters 4-6, various theories on political participation introduced at the beginning of this chapter and the comparative case of Asian Americans will be used to understand and predict how each group of factors influences the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. Before doing so, the survey findings on the participation rates of Asian New Zealanders in voting and other forms of political activities will be set out in the next chapter to understand their current participatory patterns.

3. PARTICIPATION RATES AND PARTISANSHIP

3.1 METHODOLOGY OF SURVEY ANALYSIS

In this thesis, two sets of data will be used to analyse the factors that influence the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. The first set of data is the survey conducted as a part of this thesis among 915 Asian respondents. Of those 915 respondents, 389 were Koreans, 234 mainland Chinese, 103 Hong Kong Chinese, 65 Taiwanese, 27 Malaysian Chinese, 3 Singaporean Chinese, 11 came from other countries (including Japan, Cambodia, Philippines, Lao, Macao and the UK), and 82 did not specify their country of origin (see table 3.1). Responses from Singaporean Chinese and “other countries” will not be included in the inter-group comparisons because of their statistical insignificance.

Table 3.1 Ethnic composition of the survey respondents

	Korean	Mainland Chinese	HK Chinese	Taiwanese	Malaysian Chinese	Singaporean Chinese	Others	Did not specify
Number	389	234	103	65	27	3	11	82
%	46.8	28.1	12.4	7.8	3.2	0.4	1.3	9.0

The second set of data is from part of the NZES 2002 conducted among 1533 Pakeha and Maori New Zealanders. Of the 1533 respondents, 1111 were Pakeha and 422 were Maori. This part of the data excludes Pacific Islanders, Asians, and other ethnic minorities who participated in the NZES, so that the NZES data only represents the views of Pakeha and Maori. The NZES data to be used in this thesis is reported unweighted, for accurate comparison with the Asian survey data. The published NZES results were weighted by the actual results of the election, whereas there was no official data for Asians voting at the 2002 election which can be used to weight the Asian survey data. The unweighted NZES 2002 data will be merged with the data on Asian New Zealanders to conduct a comparative analysis⁷⁹.

The analysis of the data will proceed in the following manner. Firstly, the survey results on questions relating to the political participation of ethnic Chinese and Korean New Zealanders (hereinafter referred to as “Asian New Zealanders”) will be set out at the outset to assess the current level of Asian participation in various aspects of New Zealand politics. Then the survey results on questions relating to the existence and strength of various factors expected to influence the political participation of Asian New Zealanders will be set out under the relevant sub-headings

⁷⁹ The sampling methodology and questions used in the Asian-only survey and the NZES were identical. However, given that a number of questions in the Asian-only survey were not included in the NZES (eg questions relating to the experience of discrimination), it was not possible to conduct the comparative analysis of all the questions in the Asian-only survey.

(eg. “level of wealth” and “education” under the sub-heading “socio-economic status”). Thirdly, the survey results will be analysed through cross-tabulation to assess the relevance of these factors to Asian New Zealanders’ political participation, with the voter turnout and participation rates in different forms of political activities as dependent variables. Differences between the five Asian ethnic groups will also be set out to the extent that they are relevant to the assessment of the impact of each factor on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. The Asian survey data will be compared with the NZES data wherever possible through cross-tabulation of the merged data with “ethnicity” as the dependent variable, to assess whether and how the factors affecting the political participation of Asian New Zealanders differ from those affecting Pakeha or Maori. The survey result will also be compared with the US data obtained from the 2001 survey, although it was not possible to merge the US data with the Asian survey data for direct comparison.

The factors under each sub-heading (the explanatory variables) will then be used to analyze their effect on voting and other participation rates of Asian New Zealanders (the dependent variables) through logistic regression, a statistical method for handling dichotomous dependent variables. The effect of the explanatory variables on Asian participation will be tested by decomposing the probability of Asian participation with the addition of those variables to the models. Both the Asian survey data and the NZES-Asia merged data will be analysed through regression to identify what factors in particular are relevant to Asian New Zealanders’ political participation when other seemingly important factors are controlled, and how they differ from those factors that influence the political participation of Pakeha and Maori. The regression of the merged data will also seek to assess whether any or all of the factors can explain differences in participation rates between Asians, Pakeha and Maori. Because some of the questions asked in the Asian survey were not covered by the NZES 2002 (including questions on acculturation, pan-ethnicity, and discrimination, which relate solely to Asian New Zealanders), it will not be possible to test every single factor against the ethnicity dummy variables.

As discussed earlier, factors affecting the political participation of Asian New Zealanders will be divided into three main variables - individual, community, and institutional variables. In order to capture the effect of factors under each variable independently from that of the other two variables, the effect of the factors under each of the nine sub-headings (three subheadings under each variable, each variable constituting one chapter) will be assessed through regression. It will then be followed by regression of all the relevant factors under each variable (together with the two additional demographic factors of age and gender) at the conclusion of each chapter. Because of the large number of factors under each variable, only those factors which show statistically significant relevance to Asians’ participation rates will be included in the overall

regression. Some factors which are known to play an important role, but show little statistical significance, will also be included in the overall regression to see whether these factors become statistically relevant to Asians' participation rates once all the important factors are controlled.

The analysis of the NZES-Asia merged data will proceed in a similar manner, with the two additional ethnic variables of "Asian" and "Maori". This will allow direct comparison between Asian and Pakeha participation, as well as between Maori and Pakeha participation. Most importantly, it will show the effect of "Asian" ethnicity on political participation, and whether the significance of the "ethnicity" variable disappears when certain factors are controlled. In other words, regression of the merged data will show whether the differences between Asian and Pakeha participation rates disappear if, for example, there is no difference in socio-economic status between the two groups. To conclude, relevant factors in all three variables will be included in the final regression to see which factor has the most significant effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. This in turn could help identify what can be done to encourage the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

3.2 ASIAN PARTICIPATION RATES

In the survey undertaken in support of this thesis, various questions were asked to assess Asian New Zealanders' level of political participation. The respondents were asked whether they had voted in the last election (2002 election), and if not, what were the main reasons for not voting. The respondents were also asked to indicate whether they had participated in other forms of political activities, such as assisting in political campaigns, contacting government officials, making donations, attending political rallies, signing petitions, and working in the community to solve a problem. The survey found that similar to overseas studies on political participation of Asian immigrants, the participation rate of Asian New Zealanders was lower than that of the general New Zealand population. Of particular concern was the extremely low level of Asian participation in political activities other than voting, possible reasons for which will be analysed in the following chapters.

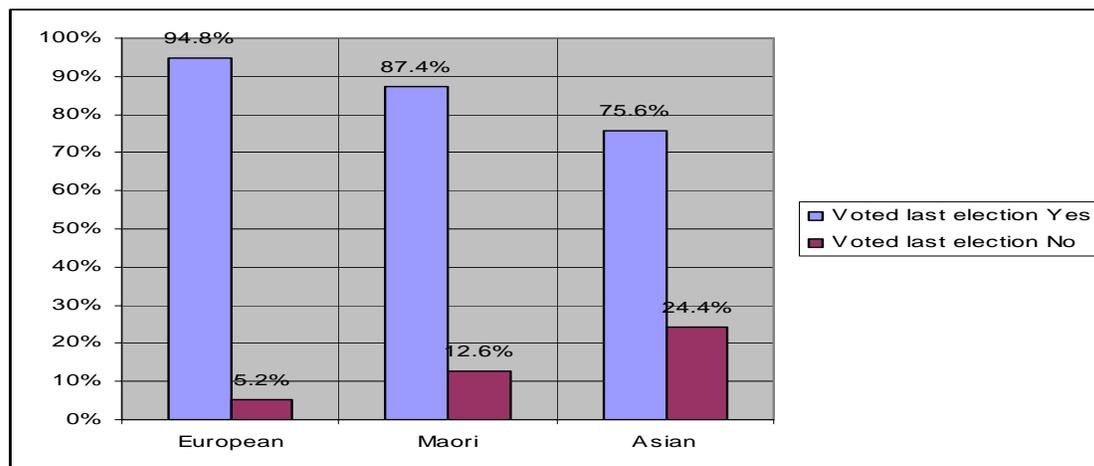
Voting rate

The survey found that 75.6% of Asian New Zealanders who participated in the survey voted at the last election. At first glance, the turnout of 75.6% appeared exceptionally high, especially considering that the actual turnout among the general New Zealand population at the last election was 77.0%. It should be noted, however, that the Asian respondents who participated in the survey are more likely to vote and participate in politics than those who did not participate in the

survey. This is because the respondents are those who have a sufficient level of interest in politics to have registered to vote, and to have participated in the survey. For example, it was found that 92.8% of the NZES respondents voted at the last election, which is 15.8% higher than the actual turnout of the general New Zealand population. This indicated that the actual turnout of Asian New Zealanders would be some 15-20% lower than that of the general New Zealand population at around 60%. However, because we could not weight the Asian survey data against the actual election outcome, the unweighted NZES data will be used in this thesis for accurate comparative analysis.

Cross-tabulation of the NZES data showed that the turnout of Pakeha (94.8%) was higher than that of Maori (87.4%), and that Asian New Zealanders recorded the lowest turnout (75.6%) among the three ethnic groups (see graph 3.1). Analysis of the NZES-Asia merged data showed that Asian New Zealanders were 19.1% less likely to vote than Pakeha when no other factors were controlled, and that Maori were 7.4% less likely to vote than Pakeha (see table 3.2). This was consistent with various overseas studies which found that the turnout of ethnic minority groups is generally lower than that of the dominant group, and that the turnout of Asian immigrants is even lower than other ethnic minority groups. Factors contributing to Asians' low turnout vis-a-vis the general New Zealand population will be assessed in detail in the following chapters.

Graph 3.1 Turnout of three different ethnic groups at the 2002 election



-Chi-square .000

*Source of Pakeha and Maori data: NZES 2002

-Phi and Cramer's V .253

Table 3.2 Effect of ethnicity on voting rate – Merged data

	% probability change	b	s.e
Asian	-19.1	-1.76**	0.16
Maori	-7.4	-0.96**	0.20
Constant	94.8	2.90**	0.14
% concordant	86.5		
Cox & Snell R ²	.063		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

Somewhat surprisingly, Asian New Zealanders' turnout was even lower than the turnout of eligible Asian American voters of 82%⁸⁰. This was despite the fact that New Zealand's electoral system is more favourable than that of the US (eg. MMP/PR system, permanent residents with right to vote⁸¹), and that Asian New Zealanders are believed to have comparatively higher socio-economic status than Asian Americans. One possible explanation for this unexpected outcome is that Asian Americans who are eligible to vote would be more politically active than the eligible Asian New Zealanders. This is because Asian Americans would have had to take a number of political steps to make themselves eligible (such as applying for a citizenship and going through a complicated registration process), whereas Asian New Zealanders would have automatically become eligible to vote after residing 12 months in New Zealand⁸². It may also be that Asians register as voters in New Zealand at a faster rate than in the US, without necessarily having developed sufficient political knowledge and confidence to vote⁸³. In this sense, although institutional barriers could be blamed for the low voting rate among Asian Americans, they could also assist in making Asian American voters more politically active than Asian voters in New Zealand. The fact that Asian New Zealanders have a shorter history of immigration and a correspondingly lower level of acculturation than Asian Americans (the effect of which will be analyzed in chapter 4.8) could also be seen as another reason for Asian New Zealanders' comparatively lower turnout.

Cross-tabulation of the turnout and five Asian ethnic groups found that Hong Kong Chinese had the highest turnout of 89.1%. This was despite the fact that Hong Kong Chinese, known for their

⁸⁰ The 2001 survey found that although the turnout of the total Asian American respondents was 44%, the turnout among the eligible Asian American voters was quite high at 82%.

⁸¹ See chapter 6.1. Interestingly, when asked to indicate whether they are New Zealand citizens or permanent residents (a trick question, given that everybody on the electorate roll are either citizens or permanent residents) 32 respondents answered that they were not permanent residents or citizens, indicating that not all of the respondents were aware of their own political status in New Zealand.

⁸² See chapter 6.1 for more details.

⁸³ Because the current survey was conducted among eligible Asian voters in New Zealand, it was not possible to find out the turnout among the general Asian population. Asian New Zealanders' participation rate could be higher than that of Asian Americans if New Zealand defined eligibility as they do in the US (eg. those who are citizens).

“culture of depolitization”, have a notoriously low turnout of 30-40% in Hong Kong⁸⁴. Their relatively high levels of English language skills and interaction with other ethnic groups⁸⁵, as well as familiarity with the British political system, may have contributed to this high turnout. Also surprising was the finding that the lowest turnout was recorded amongst Koreans of 66.6%; Korea being the most democratic country among the five countries with the highest turnout rate at home. The other ethnic groups’ voting rates were 85.2% for Malaysian Chinese, 84.4% for Taiwanese, and 80.1% for mainland Chinese (see graph 3.2). Overall, the average voting rate for all four Chinese groups was 82.3%⁸⁶. Koreans’ low voting rate, despite them having the highest socio-economic status⁸⁷, may be explained in part by the fact that the largest proportion of Koreans have lived in New Zealand for less than 10 years⁸⁸ and that they were more likely than other groups to have experienced discrimination⁸⁹. Other possible explanations include there being no Korean MP and the associated feeling of disempowerment⁹⁰ (cf. Hong Kong Chinese who have a MP from their own ethnic group). Koreans also showed lower levels of interest and knowledge in New Zealand politics than Chinese⁹¹. Although the effect of these factors on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders will be closely assessed in the following chapters, these findings suggested that the political environment at home has only limited effect on the political participation of Asians in New Zealand, and that the circumstances in New Zealand may have greater influence on Asian New Zealanders’ political participation⁹².

The finding that mainland Chinese (who have had no opportunity to develop a habit of voting in their home country) voted at a higher rate than Korean New Zealanders (who have had the experience of democratic elections at home) exposed possible shortcomings in the generational theory which attempts to understand turnout as an habitual activity. The generational theory

⁸⁴ Wai-man (2004).

⁸⁵ Hong Kong Chinese showed the second highest levels of English language skills and interaction after Malaysian Chinese; see chapter 4.8 for more details.

⁸⁶ Turnout between different Chinese groups varied between 80-89%, but the differences were not statistically significant (Chi-square .229, Phi and Cramer’s V .115).

⁸⁷ Cross-tabulation of the socio-economic factors showed that Koreans have the highest level of property ownership at 68.1%, followed by 67.2% of Taiwanese, 60.8% of Hong Kong Chinese, 59.4% of mainland Chinese, and 40.7% of Malaysian Chinese. Koreans also had the highest education qualification with 75.2% of the respondents having a university degree or higher (compared to 62.6% of Taiwanese, 56.0% of mainland Chinese, 55.6% of Malaysian Chinese and 36.3% of Hong Kong Chinese); see chapter 4.2 for more information.

⁸⁸ 80.3% of Koreans and 67.7% of mainland Chinese have been living in New Zealand for less than 10 years, followed by Taiwanese (55.7%), Malaysian Chinese (51.8%), and Hong Kong Chinese (47.1%); see chapter 4.8 for more information.

⁸⁹ Koreans were most likely to have experienced “a great deal” (5.4%) or “fair amount” (12.9%) of discrimination than Chinese; see chapter 6.5 for more information.

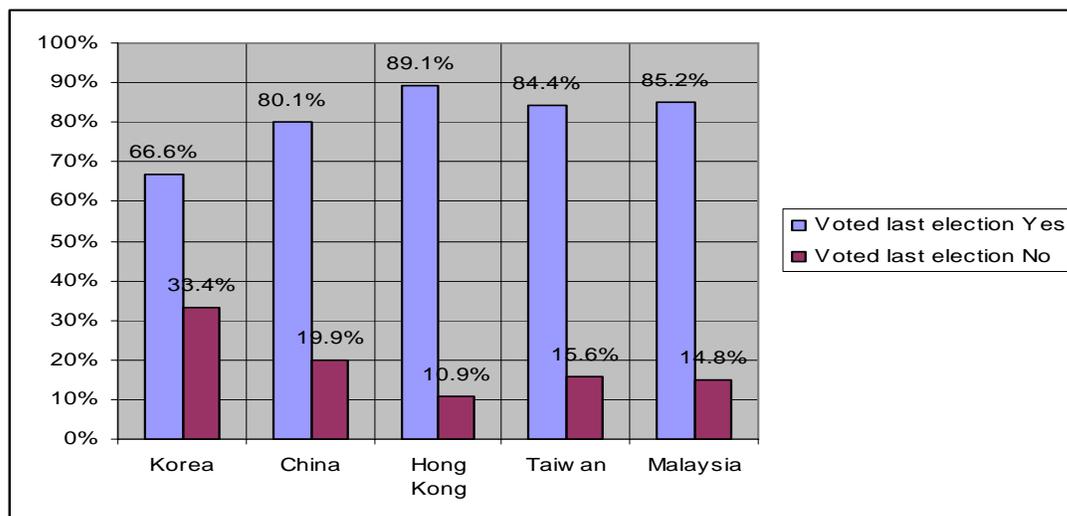
⁹⁰ Koreans were least likely to feel that Asian interests were well represented in New Zealand. Nearly 80% of Koreans indicated that Asian interests were “somewhat inadequately represented” or “not represented at all”; see chapter 5.2 for more information.

⁹¹ Only 30.8% of Koreans indicated that they were either “very” or “fairly” interested in New Zealand politics, compared to 56.8% of Chinese. Koreans also showed the lowest level of knowledge in three out of four questions on New Zealand politics; see chapters 4.5 and 4.8 for more information.

⁹² See chapters 2.2 and 4.4.

failed to consider what would happen to the habit of voting once people move to a different country – do they carry their old habits with them or do they develop new habits in the new environment? If the latter, would people with the previous habit of voting be more susceptible to political stimuli in the host country or vice versa? Although no data is currently available to address this question (as we have no information on the previous voting patterns of the Asian respondents), the survey findings raised an interesting question on the adequacy of the generational theory in explaining the political participation of Asian immigrants in the host country. The findings also challenged the cultural theory that immigrant groups' previous political experience in their home countries would be the main determinant of Asian immigrants' political participation in the host country, although (as will be discussed below), their level of participation in activities other than voting appeared to reflect Asian immigrants' previous experience at home.

Graph 3.2 Turnout of Asians from different countries of origin



-Chi-square .000

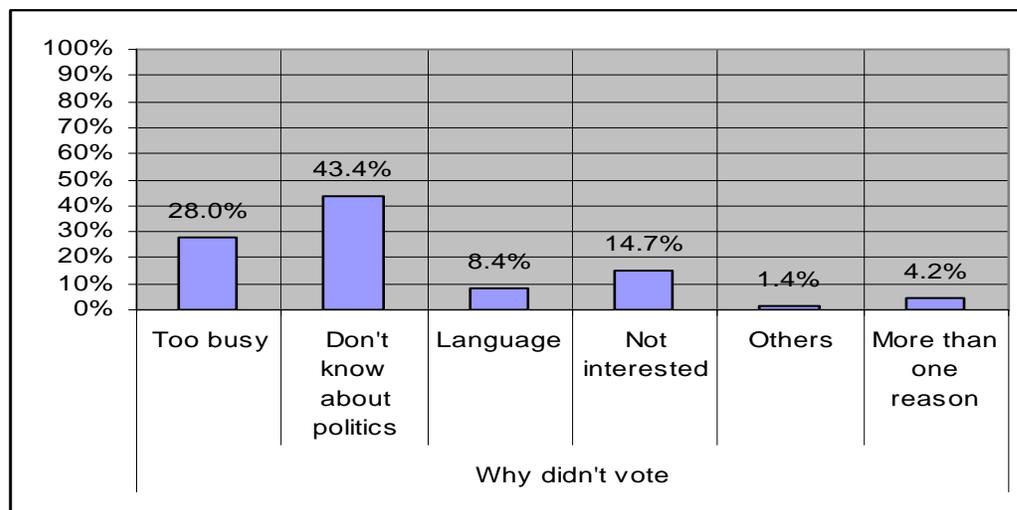
-Phi and Cramer's V .203

Reasons for not voting

The survey asked those who did not vote at the last election to identify the main reasons for not voting. "Not knowing enough about New Zealand politics" was cited as the most common reason for not voting at 43.4% (see graph 3.3). The result was not surprising, given that most Asian New Zealanders were recent immigrants with limited political knowledge. Asian New Zealanders' lack of political knowledge was also reflected by the fact that only 29.5% of the respondents were aware of the fact that the party vote is more important than the electorate vote in determining the number of seats under the MMP system; compared to 49.5% of the general New Zealand

population⁹³. “Being too busy working or studying” was the second most common reason for not voting at 28.0%, possibly reflecting the preoccupation of new immigrants, followed by “not being interested in politics” (14.7%) and “language difficulties” (8.4%). This was somewhat different from studies on Asian Americans which found language difficulties to be one of the biggest reasons for Asian immigrants’ non-participation⁹⁴.

Graph 3.3 Asians’ reasons for not voting



For those who specified “other” reasons for not voting, not being eligible to vote (because they have not lived in New Zealand for a year, have not registered to vote, or were underage at the time of the election) and not being in New Zealand at the time of the election were cited as the main reasons for not voting. Other cited reasons included not having confidence in any of the political parties, indecisiveness as to which party to vote for, and the need to express neutrality (possibly referring to the “liability of newness” syndrome that Asians as new immigrants should not be interfering with the politics of the host country)⁹⁵. In contrast, the most commonly cited reasons for non-voting among Asian Americans were ineligibility to vote (almost 60%) and non-registration (25%)⁹⁶, followed by being too busy working/studying (3%) and lack of interest in politics or elections (3%). This indicated that the franchise and registration regulations are the main barriers preventing Asian Americans from participating in politics⁹⁷. As the New Zealand

⁹³ Having said that, Asian New Zealanders in general exhibited a reasonable level of knowledge on other political issues; see chapter 4.8 for more details.

⁹⁴ See chapter 4.7.

⁹⁵ See chapter 4.7 for more information on “liability of newness” syndrome.

⁹⁶ The registration rate among Asian Americans was 46%, considerably lower than 69% of White Americans and 53% of Latino Americans; US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, as cited in Freeman (2000) p130. Similarly, Uhlaner’s survey found the registration rate of Asian Americans to be 55%, compared to 82% of Whites, 87% of Blacks and 53% of Latinos; Uhlaner et al. (1989) p199, table 1.

⁹⁷ See Brackman H. and Erie S.P., “Beyond “Politics by Other Means”? – Empowerment Strategies for Los Angeles’ Asian Pacific Community” in Nakanishi D. T. and Lai J.S., *Asian American Politics – Law,*

survey did not include those who have not registered to vote, it was not possible to assess what proportion of Asian New Zealanders were prevented from voting due to non-eligibility and non-registration. However, the proportion is expected to be lower than that of Asian Americans, given New Zealand's favourable franchise regulations and compulsory enrolment.

Participation rates in other forms of political activities

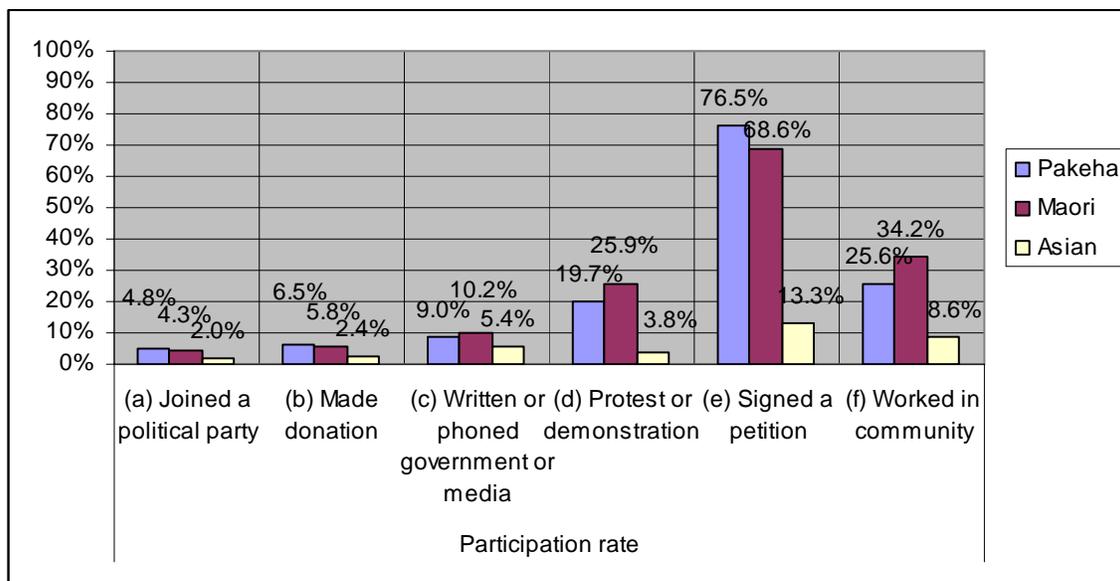
In other forms of political activities (other than voting), a very low participation rate of less than 10% was recorded among Asian New Zealanders in all but one form of political activity. The highest participation rate was recorded for the activity of "signing petitions" at 13.3%. The participation rates for other forms of political activities were 8.6% for "working in the community to solve a problem", 5.8% for "assisting in a political campaign", 5.4% for "writing or phoning government officials, newspaper, or TV station", 3.8% for "taking part in a protest or demonstration", 2.4% for "making donation to a political party", 2.0% for "joining a political party", and 1.5% for "being nominated as a political candidate". Asian New Zealanders' participation rates were considerably lower than those of Asian Americans as recorded by the 2001 survey, where 21% had the experience of being involved in community activities, 16% in signing petitions and 14% in attending a public meeting, political rally, or fundraising. Possible reasons for this will be set out later in chapters 4.8 and 5.5.

In some forms of political activities, there was a significant disparity in participation rates between Asian New Zealanders and the general New Zealand population as recorded by the NZES 2002 (see graph 3.4). For example, the NZES 2002 found that 74.4% of New Zealanders had the experience of signing petitions, 27.9% working in the community to solve a problem, 21.3% taking part in a protest or demonstration, 9.3% writing or phoning government officials, newspaper, or TV station, 6.3% donating money to a political party or candidate and 4.6% joining a political party. The disparity was especially noteworthy because there was only a small difference in participation rates between Pakeha and Maori, with Maori showing higher participation rates than Pakeha in political activities such as working in the community, writing or phoning government or media and attending a protest or demonstration. The low participation rate of Asian New Zealanders may be explained by the fact that other forms of political activities usually require more "active" forms of participation than the act of voting, and that Asian New Zealanders lack the language skills, time, knowledge, and confidence to participate in more demanding forms of

Participation, and Policy (2003) Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc, Lanham, which predicted that the number of Asian American voters would increase nearly fivefold if citizenship and registration, among other things, matched those of the Anglo population; p232.

political activities⁹⁸. It may also be that the nature of these political activities are different from that of voting⁹⁹, and that the factors affecting individual's participation in other forms of political activities (which may be lacking among Asian New Zealanders) are accordingly different from the factors that affect the turnout. Whether and how they differ from the factors affecting the turnout of Asian New Zealanders will be assessed in the next chapters.

Graph 3.4 Participation rates of three different ethnic groups in other forms of political activities



-Chi-square (a) .003 (b) .000 (c) .000 (d) .000 (e) .000 (f) .000

*Source of Pakeha and Maori data:

-Phi and Cramer's V (a) .070 (b) .090 (c) .284 (d) .479 (e) .834 (f) .695

NZES 2002

Cross-tabulation of participation rates and Asian ethnic groups showed that Taiwanese were the most active participants in political activities of "assisting in a political campaign" (9.2%), "donating money" (2.6%), "joining a political party" (1.9%), and "being nominated as a political candidate" (4.6%)¹⁰⁰. Malaysian Chinese were the least active participants in the above four activities, recording 0% participation rate except for one person who donated money. Interestingly, however, Malaysian Chinese were the most active participants in the political activities of "writing or phoning government officials or media" (14.8%), "being involved in a

⁹⁸ Perhaps for similar reasons, White Americans' participation rates in other political activities were found to be higher than that of Asian Americans. Examples include contacting officials (47% of White Americans vs 26% of Asian Americans), working with others in the community (33% of White Americans vs 24% of Asian Americans) and attending a political rally (15% of White Americans vs 8% of Asian Americans); See Uhlaner et al., p199, table 1.

⁹⁹ Lien (1997) pp42-43.

¹⁰⁰ Although some of the activities did not show statistically significant differences, activities such as making a donation (Chi-square .039, Phi and Cramer's V .118), attending a protest or demonstration (Chi-square .012, Phi and Cramer's V .133), signing petitions (Chi-square .005, Phi and Cramer's V .143), and working in the community (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .220) showed statistically significant differences between the five Asian ethnic groups.

protest or demonstration” (7.4%) and “signing petitions” (13.2%). The results indicated that Asian New Zealanders’ political experience in their home countries may have an influence on their patterns of political participation in New Zealand. For example, most Taiwanese immigrants would have experienced Taiwan’s recent transition to democracy, and some may have played active roles in that transformation. Their high level of participation in political activities relating to election campaigns and party politics suggested that they had the opportunity to experience the benefit of direct political representation in their home country, and that they are willing and confident enough to participate in similar forms of political activities in New Zealand. Similarly, Malaysian Chinese’s experience at home as an ethnic minority group whose political influence is severely constrained may well have shaped their preference for indirect forms of political activities in New Zealand.

The political environment of the home country also appeared to have influenced the political behaviours of mainland Chinese, who showed the highest participation rate for “working in the community to solve a problem” (17.1%), but the lowest participation rate for “protest or demonstration” (3.7%), which would have been illegal in communist China. However, the same cannot be said of Koreans, who showed low participation rates in almost all political activities. Despite the fact that many Koreans would have played active roles in their home country’s transformation to democracy in recent years, they were the least active participants in the political activities of “donating money” (1.3%), “phoning or writing to government officials or media” (4.6%), “signing petitions” (10.0%) or “working in the community” (2.8%). The case of Koreans demonstrated that there are factors other than prior political experiences at home that affect the level and mode of the political participation of Asians in New Zealand. In so doing, it highlighted the difficulty in explaining the political participation of Asian New Zealanders by looking solely at the cultural theory.

Because of Asian New Zealanders’ extremely low participation rates, only the two most popular political activities of “signing petitions” and “working in the community” will be included in the regression. The two activities could also be seen as representing a high-intensity political activity (working in the community) and a low-intensity political activity (signing petitions)¹⁰¹ – they could therefore demonstrate whether and how factors affecting one form of political activity differ from the other. Initial analysis showed that Asian New Zealanders were 63.2% less likely to sign petitions than Pakeha New Zealanders when no other factors were controlled, whereas Maori were 7.9% less likely to sign petitions than Pakeha (see table 3.3). It also found that Asian New Zealanders were 16.9% less likely to work in the community than Pakeha, whereas Maori were 8.7% more likely than Pakeha to have worked in the community when no other factors were

¹⁰¹ See chapter 1.4 and Whiteley and Seyd (2002) for the definition of high- and low-intensity political participation.

controlled. Through regression of the explanatory variables, the remainder of the thesis will attempt to identify factors that could reduce the huge disparity in participation rates between Asian New Zealanders and the general New Zealand population.

Table 3.3 Effect of ethnicity on participation rates in other forms of political activities – Merged data

	Signed petition			Worked in community		
	% change	b	s.e	% change	b	s.e
Asian	-63.2	-3.05**	0.12	-16.9	-1.29**	0.14
Maori	-7.9	-0.40**	0.13	8.7	0.42**	0.13
Constant	76.5	1.18**	0.07	25.6	-1.07**	0.07
% concordant	79.1			79.4		
Cox & Snell R ²	.320			.062		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

3.3 DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Demographic factors of gender and age are one of the most basic factors that apply to all voters, regardless of their ethnicity. As such, they could dilute the effect of ethnicity on political participation if not controlled. The demographic factors will therefore be included in the overall regression as additional explanatory variables, to allow for more accurate analysis of the factors that influence the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. Analysis of the demographic factors will test the applicability of the demographic theory on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders, as well as that of the generational theory.

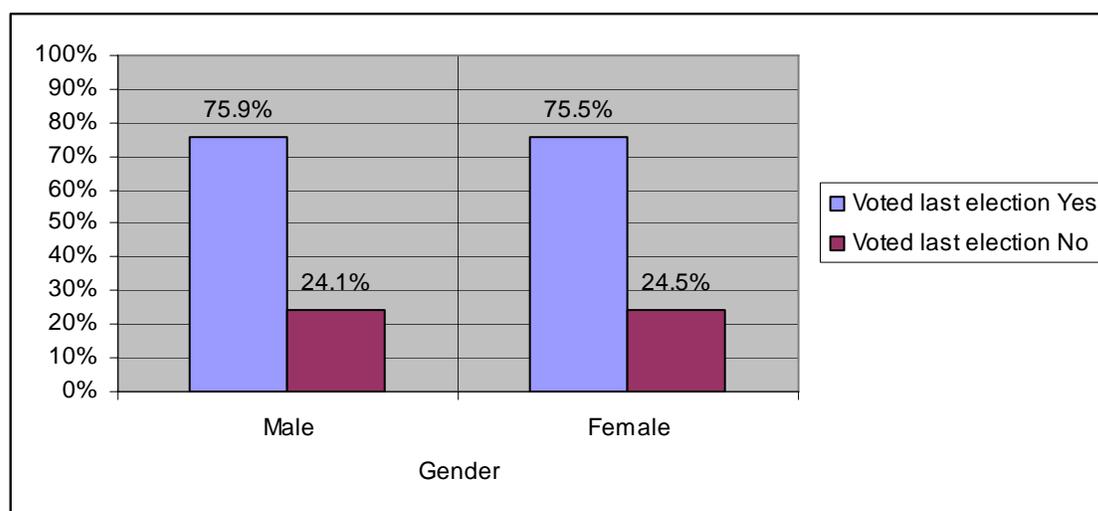
Gender

Both the Asian survey and the NZES found that among survey participants, the proportion of women (54.4% for the Asian survey and 54.9% for the NZES) was higher than men (45.6% for the Asian survey and 45.1% for the NZES). However, having more female respondents did not appear to have much effect on the overall turnout of Asian New Zealanders, as about the same proportion of men (75.9%) and women (75.5%) were found to have voted at the last election (see graph 3.5). For the general New Zealand population, women (53.9%) were more likely than men (46.1%) to have voted at the 2002 election¹⁰². Gender again did not show any statistically significant relevance to Asian New Zealanders' participation rate in other forms of political activities, except the activity of "writing or phoning government or media" which showed slightly higher participation rates amongst men than women¹⁰³.

¹⁰² Chi-square .061, Phi and Cramer's V .043.

¹⁰³ 6.5% of men and 4.2% of women (Chi-square .085, Phi and Cramer's V .128)

Graph 3.5 Differences in turnout between Asian men and women



-Chi-square .476

-Phi and Cramer's V .005

Age

Another important demographic factor is respondents' age. Of the 888 Asian respondents who disclosed their age, the largest proportion of the respondents (30.9%) were aged between 40-49. The next biggest group was aged between 50-59 (20.8%), followed by 30-39 (19.4%), 18-29 (18.7%), 60-69 (7.7%), and 70-79 (2.3%) age groups. Among the NZES respondents, the 50-59 age group showed the highest response rate (20.6%), followed by age groups of 30-39 (18.0%), 40-49 (19.3%), 60-69 (15.2%), 18-29 (13.6%), and 70-85 (13.3%). The survey also found that Asian New Zealanders are a relatively youthful population - only 10.0% of the Asian respondents were over 60 years of age, compared to 28.5% of the NZES respondents.

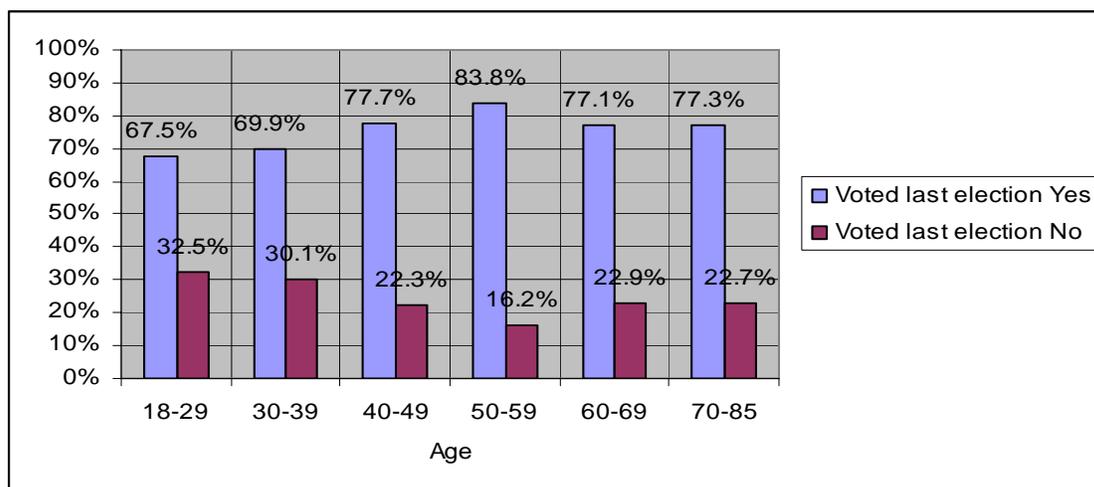
As noted earlier in chapter 2.1, the demographic theory argued that younger people are less likely to participate in politics because they have less experience in and commitment to society compared with older people. Analysis of the survey data reaffirmed this theory by finding a clear correlation between turnout and age. For example, Asians in the 50-59 age group showed the highest turnout of 83.8%, whereas people in the 18-29 age group showed the lowest turnout of 67.5% (see graph 3.6). The second highest voting rate was recorded amongst the 40-49 age group (77.7%), followed by 70-85 (77.3%), 60-69 (77.1%), and 30-39 (69.9%) age groups¹⁰⁴. The finding was contrary to the case of Asian Americans whose propensity to participate declined

¹⁰⁴ Similar voting patterns were noticed among the general New Zealand population, where the youngest voters (18-39 age group) showed the lowest turnout of 85.5%. The turnout of 40-49 age group was 93.2%, 50-59 age group 96.4%, 60-69 age group 96.3%, and 70-85 age group showing the highest turnout at 98.4% (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .193).

with older age, although this may be because most younger generation Asian Americans are native-born and do not face the extra cost of participation associated with older foreign-born Asian Americans (such as language barriers)¹⁰⁵. A similar survey will be needed in 10-15 years time (when there are a sufficient number of New Zealand-born Asians) to see whether younger native-born Asians also participate in politics at a higher rate than older immigrant New Zealanders - if so, this would indicate that the acculturation theory has greater influence on the political participation of Asian immigrants than the demographic theory. In terms of other forms of political activities, only the activities of “assisting in a political campaign” and “working in the community” showed statistically significant relevance to age, with older people showing higher participation rates in both activities¹⁰⁶.

While reaffirming the demographic theory, the survey findings highlighted possible shortcomings of the generational theory, which argued that people who develop a habit of voting in their first few elections as young voters were more likely to vote than others. Does this mean that people who did not, or could not, develop a habit of voting would be less likely to vote? The survey found that older Asian New Zealanders, many of whom had no or limited opportunity to develop the habit of voting, nevertheless showed a higher voting rate than the younger generation. It may be that a distinction is necessary to explain voting patterns of those who had the opportunity to vote but chose not to do so, and those who had no opportunity to develop a habit of voting, if the generational theory were to have wider application to include Asian immigrants living in established democracies.

Graph 3.6 Turnout of Asians in different age groups



-Chi-square .009

-Phi and Cramer's V .136

¹⁰⁵ Tam Cho (1999) p1152.

¹⁰⁶ Chi-square .013, Phi and Cramer's V .128 for the activity of assisting in a political campaign; Chi-square .048, Phi and Cramer's V .112 for the activity of working in the community.

Regression of demographic factors

Regression of the Asian data showed that the likelihood of voting increased by 0.4% with every extra year of the respondent's age (see table 3.4). The results indicated that the fact that Asian New Zealanders were a relatively youthful population may have contributed to their low voting rate, and that voting rates would likely increase as the proportion of the older Asian population increases in the future. Gender, on the other hand, did not show statistically significant relevance to turnout. In other forms of political activities, demographic factors did not appear to have any statistically significant effect.

Table 3.4 Effect of demographic factors on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Male	-0.3	-0.02	0.16	2.3	0.20	0.20	0.9	0.12	0.24
Age	0.4	0.02**	0.01	-0.1	-0.01	0.01	0.0	0.01	0.01
Constant	59.4	0.25	0.28	18.3	-1.45**	0.34	6.0	-2.70**	0.42
% concordant	75.5			86.6			91.5		
Cox & Snell R ²	.014			.004			.001		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

Analysis of the NZES-Asia merged data showed that Asians were 16.7% less likely to vote, 63.7% less likely to sign petitions, and 16.3% less likely to work in the community than Pakeha when demographic factors were controlled (see table 3.5). This means that demographic factors reduced the likelihood of Asian non-participation vis-à-vis Pakeha in the activities of voting and working in the community by 2.8% and 0.6% from when no other factors were controlled; whereas they increased the likelihood of Asian non-participation by 0.5% in the activity of signing petitions. In other words, demographic factors accounted for 2.8% of the disparity in turnout between Asian and Pakeha New Zealanders. Maori were 5.2% less likely to vote and 7.7% less likely to sign petitions than Pakeha (which is a decrease of 2.2% and 0.2% respectively) but 10.2% more likely to work in the community than Pakeha (an increase of 1.5%) when demographic factors were controlled. For the general New Zealand population, the likelihood of voting increased by 0.3% as the respondents' age increased by one year, and men were found to be 3.4% less likely to work in the community than women when demographic factors were controlled.

Table 3.5 Effect of demographic factors on participation rate – Merged data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Asian	-16.7	-1.56**	0.16	-63.7	-3.09**	0.13	-16.3	-1.26**	0.14
Maori	-5.2	-0.75**	0.21	-7.7	-0.40**	0.14	10.2	0.49**	0.13
Male	0.7	0.07	0.13	-1.5	-0.09	0.10	-3.4	-0.22*	0.11
Age	0.3	0.03**	0.01	-0.1	-0.00	0.00	0.1	0.01	0.00
Constant	79.8	1.37**	0.25	80.7	1.43**	0.19	22.6	-1.25**	0.19
% concordant	86.5			79.2			79.3		
Cox & Snell R ²	.082			.322			.067		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

3.4 POLITICAL PARTISANSHIP

Survey results on the political partisanship of Asian New Zealanders are likely to draw a high level of interest not only from academics (given that there has been little, if any, statistical data on this issue), but also from political parties wishing to attract Asian votes. The fact that Asian Americans showed a clear preference for one political party, and their ability to provide a significant support base for their preferred party, suggested the possibility that Asian New Zealanders could provide a similar, if not more significant, support-base for their preferred party in New Zealand. For this reason, this part of the thesis will look at the political partisanship of Asian New Zealanders as found by the survey, although it does not have direct relevance to the participation rates of Asian New Zealanders.

Partisanship

In order to assess the political partisanship¹⁰⁷ of Asian New Zealanders, the survey asked the respondents whether they think of themselves as generally supporting a political party. Only 44.3% of the Asian respondents responded that they do, indicating that Asian New Zealanders' partisanship rate is lower than that of Pakeha or Maori, 55.6% and 52.2% of whom respectively indicated that they usually identify themselves with a political party¹⁰⁸. Nevertheless, the partisanship rate of Asian respondents (most of whom are recent immigrants¹⁰⁹) was higher than

¹⁰⁷ For the purpose of this thesis, the term "political partisanship" will be understood as an expression of support for a political party, rather than as a party membership. The survey found that only 2% of Asian respondents belonged to a political party.

¹⁰⁸ It should be noted that slightly different questions were asked in the Asian survey and the NZES. For Asian New Zealanders, the survey asked the respondents whether they usually think of themselves as supporting a political party in New Zealand, whereas the NZES asked the respondents whether they think of themselves as National, Labour, or another political party.

¹⁰⁹ The survey found that nearly 95% of the respondents arrived in New Zealand in the last 15 years. See chapter 4.8 for more details.

expected, considering that partisanship is a sign of integration into the host country¹¹⁰. Asians' high socio-economic status, their tendency to support the status quo, and efforts made by political parties to mobilise Asian voters¹¹¹ could be seen as contributing to this relatively high level of partisanship, although full analysis of the factors that encourage recent immigrants to develop a sense of political partisanship is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Among Asian respondents who indicated that they generally support a political party, 46.4% supported Labour, 39.2% National, 6.6% Act, 3.5% United Future, 2.9% Green, 1.0% "other" parties and 0.4% NZ First. The findings were quite different from that of the CEX poll conducted in 1995¹¹², which found that 56% of Asians supported National. The difference may be explained by the fact that National was in government when the CEX poll was conducted (and therefore was better known and more appealing to those who supported the status quo), whereas National had been out of government for five years when the current survey was conducted. Also interesting was the finding that there is a noticeable difference in political partisanship between different Asian ethnic groups. For example, Koreans and mainland Chinese preferred Labour (47.8% and 51.6% respectively) over National (36.2% and 32.3% respectively), whereas Hong Kong Chinese, Taiwanese and Malaysian Chinese showed greater support for National (54.2%, 54.0%, 54.5% respectively) than Labour (36.1%, 26.0%, 36.4% respectively)¹¹³. Possible reasons for this difference will be analysed later in this chapter. A significant number of Asian respondents also showed support for Act (10.8% of mainland Chinese, 10.0% of Taiwanese, 4.5% of Malaysian Chinese, 4.4% of Koreans, and 3.6% of Hong Kong Chinese) and United Future (4.8% of Koreans and 4.0% of Taiwanese). Asian New Zealanders' political partisanship was closer to that of Pakeha, whereas Maori showed overwhelming support for Labour at 77.6% (see graph 3.7).

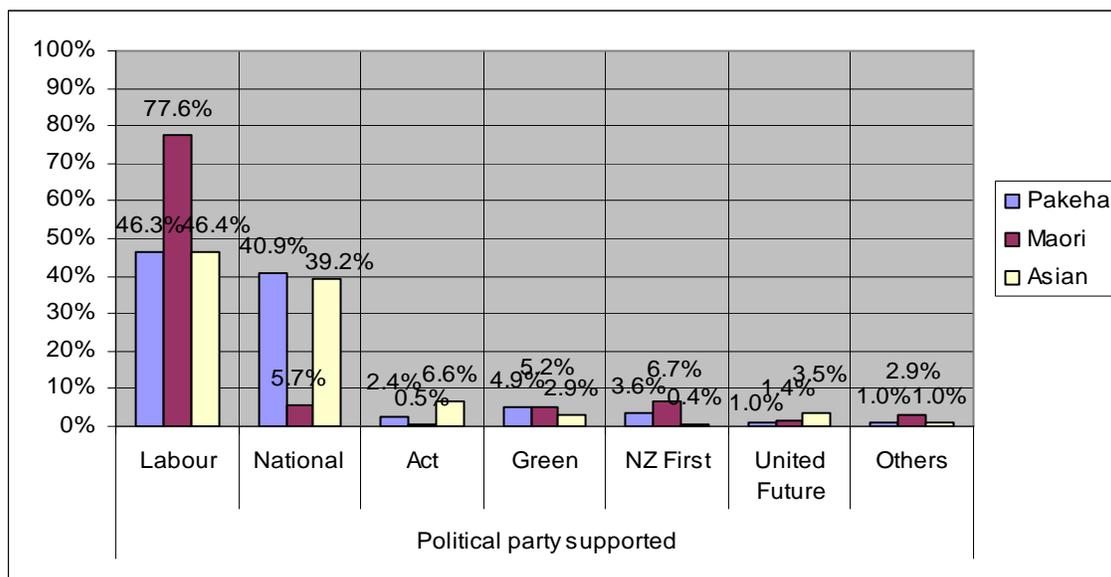
¹¹⁰ Gordon (1964); Finifter and Finifter (1989). See chapter 4.8 for more information on the relationship between partisanship rate and the level of acculturation. The recent immigrants were less likely than immigrants with a longer period of residency to express partisanship, although the difference was not statistically significant (Chi-square .406, Phi and Cramer's V .080).

¹¹¹ For example, 58.7% of Asians with a postgraduate degree indicated that they support a political party, compared to 44.4% who have less than high school education (Chi-square .005, Phi and Cramer's V .130). Similarly, property owners (46.9%) were more likely than non-property owners (39.9%) to express partisanship (Chi-square .025, Phi and Cramer's V .068). Those who have been contacted by political parties (44.8%) were also more likely than those who have not been contacted (32.9%) to express partisanship (Chi-square .005, Phi and Cramer's V -.094).

¹¹² See chapter 2.4.

¹¹³ Different ethnic groups showed statistically significant difference in terms of partisanship (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .370).

Graph 3.7 Support patterns of three ethnic groups



-Chi-square .000

*Source of Pakeha and Maori data: NZES 2002

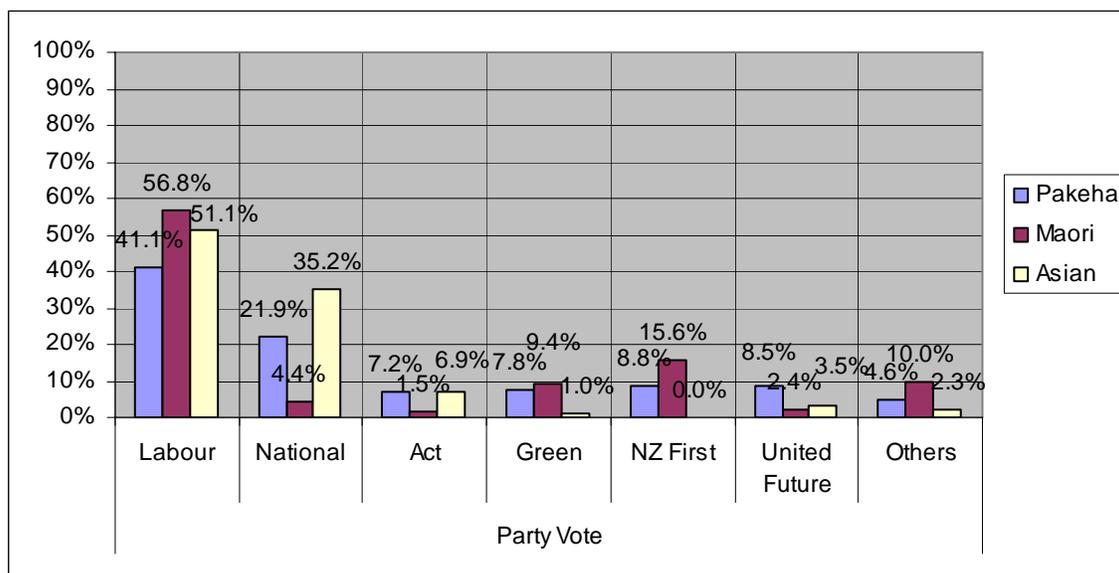
-Phi and Cramer's V .347

Party vote

Questions on the 2002 election¹¹⁴ revealed that neither of the two main parties received overwhelming support from Asian New Zealanders, as Labour gained more votes for the party vote and National for the electorate vote. For the party vote, 51.1% of Asian respondents voted for the Labour party, whereas 35.2% voted for the National party. Asian New Zealanders' voting patterns were more akin to the voting patterns of Pakeha New Zealanders than that of Maori, although Asian New Zealanders showed greater support for the two main parties than Pakeha (see graph 3.8). For smaller parties, Act gained 6.9% of Asians' party vote, United Future 3.5%, Green 1.0%, and "other parties" 2.3%. Not surprisingly, not a single Asian respondent voted for NZ First for the party vote, which ran anti-immigration/anti-Asian campaigns during the last few elections. In comparison, NZ First was the most popular minor party among the general New Zealand population (10.5%), especially among Maori (15.6%), followed by Green (8.2%) and United Future (7.0%).

¹¹⁴ Questions on elections, which are typically difficult to obtain responses, drew a low response rate. For example, only 636 respondents (69.6%) answered the questions asking which party and candidate they have voted for at the last election. A number of respondents refused to answer the question either because they believed that this was "confidential" information or because they felt that there was "no right to ask these questions".

Graph 3.8 Party vote of three ethnic groups



-Chi-square .000

*Source of Pakeha and Maori data: NZES 2002

-Phi and Cramer's V .388

Mainland Chinese and Koreans were again the only groups to show greater support for Labour than National for the party vote. The survey found that 59.8% of mainland Chinese and 54.1% of Koreans voted for Labour for the party vote, whereas 51.7% of Hong Kong Chinese, 47.8% of Malaysian Chinese, and 45.5% of Taiwanese voted for National for the party vote¹¹⁵. Among smaller parties, Act gained a significant proportion of party votes from Taiwanese (12.7%) and mainland Chinese (11.5%), as well as from Malaysian Chinese (8.7%) and Hong Kong Chinese (6.7%). United Future was the most popular minor party amongst Koreans at 5.3%, and it also gained some support from Taiwanese (5.5%) and Hong Kong Chinese (2.2%).

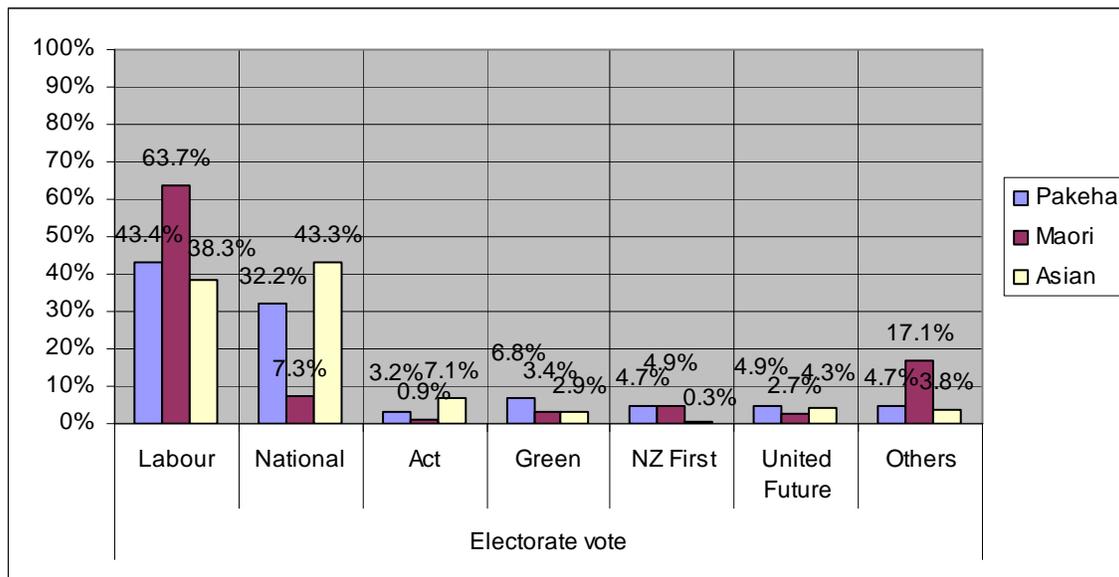
Electorate vote

Contrary to the voting patterns of the general New Zealand population (48.4% of whom voted for Labour and 26.1% for National for the electorate vote), more Asian New Zealanders voted for National (43.3%) than Labour (38.3%) in the electorate vote. Maori again showed overwhelming support for Labour for the electorate vote at 63.7%, and also for "other parties" at 17.1% (see graph 3.9). For smaller parties, Act gained the most electorate vote from Asian New Zealanders at 7.1%, followed by United Future (4.3%), Green (2.9%) and NZ First (0.3%). This was again quite different from the voting patterns of the general New Zealand population, 6.0% of whom voted for Green for the electorate vote, 4.8% for NZ First and 4.4% for United Future. "Other"

¹¹⁵ Again, the differences between different ethnic groups were statistically significant (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .394).

political parties also gained 7.8% of the electorate vote from the general New Zealand population, compared to 3.8% of Asian New Zealanders who voted for “other parties”. A small number of the Asian respondents reported that they could not remember which party/candidate they voted for in the last election (0.9% for the party vote and 2.4% for the electorate vote).

Graph 3.9 Electorate vote of three ethnic groups



-Chi-square .000

*Source of Pakeha and Maori data: NZES 2002

-Phi and Cramer's V .360

Support for National among the three Chinese ethnic groups was even stronger for the electorate vote, with 66.0% of Taiwanese, 51.2% of Hong Kong Chinese and 43.5% of Malaysian Chinese voting for National¹¹⁶. An equal percentage of Koreans voted for National and Labour (38.8% each) for the electorate vote, leaving mainland Chinese as the only ethnic group which showed greater support for Labour (42.9%) than National (39.6%) for the electorate vote. Even among mainland Chinese, the gap between Labour and National for the electorate vote (3.3%) was significantly less than that of the party vote (33.9%). Act was again the most popular small party among Chinese - it gained 12.3% of the electorate vote from mainland Chinese, 8.7% from Malaysian Chinese, 7.1% from Hong Kong Chinese, 5.7% from Taiwanese, and 4.7% from Koreans. Green and United Future were the two most popular parties among Koreans, 6.9% of whom have voted for Green and 6.5% for United Future. United Future also gained some support from Hong Kong Chinese (4.8%), Malaysian Chinese (4.3%) and Taiwanese (3.8%).

¹¹⁶ The differences between different ethnic groups were statistically significant (Chi-square .001, Phi and Cramer's V .400).

Support patterns of Asian New Zealanders

As the factors influencing Asian New Zealanders' turnout will be assessed in the following chapters, the remainder of this chapter will focus on identifying the main support patterns of Asian New Zealanders. The main findings can be summarised as follows:

- Contrary to the predictions and the CEX poll result, Asian New Zealanders showed greater overall support for Labour than National. However, further analysis showed that mainland Chinese and Koreans were the only groups which favoured Labour. Because Korean respondents comprised nearly half of the respondents, the overall results disguised the fact that Taiwanese, Hong Kong Chinese, and Malaysian Chinese all showed greater support for National. Asian New Zealanders' support patterns were somewhat different from that of Asian Americans, who have consistently shown support for a centre-left party (Democrats).
- There was a high level of split-voting - Labour received more party votes from Asian New Zealanders at the 2002 election, whereas National received more electorate votes. This was contrary to the voting patterns of the general New Zealand population, where Labour gained more votes for both the party vote and the electorate vote. Taiwanese, Hong Kong Chinese, and Malaysian Chinese voted more for National than Labour in both the party vote and the electorate vote. For the electorate vote, mainland Chinese were the only group that voted more for Labour, as an equal number of Koreans voted for National and Labour.
- At the 2002 election, Act was the most popular minor party amongst Chinese New Zealanders, whereas United Future was the most popular choice for Korean New Zealanders. Again, this was quite different from the voting patterns of the general New Zealand population, which favoured NZ First and Green over Act and United Future. Asian New Zealanders were more likely to vote for the two main parties than the general New Zealand population.

Perhaps the most interesting outcome of the survey is the high level of split-voting (eg. Asians voting Labour for the party vote and National for the electorate vote). For example, only 63.1% of those who voted Labour for the party vote also voted Labour for the electorate vote, although the figure was slightly higher for National at 77.9%. One of the possible reasons for this high level of split-voting is Asian New Zealanders' lack of knowledge of the different impact the two votes have on the election outcome. This possibility is supported by the finding that almost half of the Asian

respondents had no or an incorrect understanding of the fact that under the MMP system, the party vote is more important in determining the number of seats in Parliament¹¹⁷. Other tentative explanations include that Asians tend to live in relatively wealthy areas (either because they can afford to do so or because of their desire to send their children to well-known, high-performing schools), which are more likely to have incumbent National MPs. For this reason, Asians may be more familiar with, and may have been contacted by, National MPs during the last election campaign. This, together with Asians' tendency to support the status quo, could explain why more Asians voted for Labour (the incumbent government) for the party vote and National (the likely incumbent MP) for the electorate vote.

The other interesting outcome is the finding that Asian New Zealanders in general showed support for the National party (with the exception of mainland Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Koreans), which was contrary to the election result of 2002 where National did not fair well. A number of factors could explain this outcome. Firstly, because a comparatively large proportion of Asian New Zealanders are economically well-off and run their own business¹¹⁸, they may be more likely to support National for its business-friendly policies (eg. taxation). The fact that a large proportion of Asians are members of religious groups¹¹⁹ (and are likely to be influenced by conservative religious values) could also explain Asians' support for National and other centre-right parties such as Act and United Future¹²⁰. Secondly, the survey found that Asian New Zealanders regarded the "economy" as the most important issue (24.7%), followed by "law and order" (11.7%) and "unemployment" (8.6%)¹²¹. As these are issues that are more closely associated with the centre-right parties, this could also explain Asians' support for National. Asian New Zealanders also showed support for Republicanism (45.9% compared to 16.0% opposing), reintroduction of the death penalty (61.7% compared to 25.0% opposing), and an increase in the number of immigrants (51.2% compared to 26.7% opposing), all of which reflect more closely the views of centre-right parties¹²². In addition, the fact that the first Asian MP in New Zealand belonged to the National party, and that National had another Chinese candidate

¹¹⁷ See chapter 3.2.

¹¹⁸ It was found that people who run their own business and who are religious tend to support National; Vowles and Aimer in Vowles (2004), p29. The survey found however that the property ownership did not account for statistically significant differences in Asian New Zealanders' partisanship. See chapter 4.2 for the survey results on Asian New Zealanders' socio-economic status.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. The survey found that Asian membership in organisations was highest in ethnic religious groups (more than 30%) and New Zealand religious groups (13%). See chapter 5.5 for more details.

¹²⁰ The survey found that National gained more party votes and electorate votes from those who belonged to ethnic religious groups. Although the influence of church membership on Asians' partisanship needs further work, if there is a link between religious belief and conservative values, National and other centre-right parties would be in a better position to exploit that link.

¹²¹ Other listed issues included health (7.7%), tax (7.6%), education (6.6%), race relations (6.0%), and environment (0.6%). About 25% of the respondents chose more than one issue.

¹²² Asian New Zealanders' view on these issues were more centre-right than those of the general New Zealand population, 32.9% of whom supported New Zealand becoming a Republic (52.6% opposing), 18.3% supported increased number of immigrants (77.4% opposing), and 56.9% supported reintroduction of the death penalty (33.2% opposing).

high on its party list (Eric Liu at number 34), could have provided additional incentives for Asian New Zealanders to support the National party. Equally, it could be that Asian immigrants of the early 1990s have become “habitual supporters” of the National party, which was in government from 1990-1999, enough time for the early Asian immigrants to become immune to the appeals of other parties¹²³.

That leaves the question of why mainland Chinese and Korean New Zealanders showed greater support for Labour over National. One possible explanation is that Asian people in general support whoever is in government at the time of their arrival in New Zealand. Such a tendency would be especially strong amongst mainland Chinese, who came from a political environment where political participation equated to supporting the government. The fact that more Koreans and mainland Chinese came to New Zealand while Labour was in government¹²⁴ further supports this view. For mainland Chinese, who came from a communist country, the political ideology of the home country may have made it more natural for them to support the Labour party, although the same cannot be said of Koreans. Perhaps the fact that Koreans had the highest educational level could explain their support for Labour, as people with high educational qualifications tend to support Labour. For example, among the Asian respondents who have a postgraduate degree, 49.3% showed support for Labour, compared to 34.2% for National. This was consistent with the patterns of the general New Zealand population, where people with a postgraduate degree (60.5%) or less than high school education (64.0%) showed a higher level of support for Labour than the average (53.9%). Labour’s traditional focus on equality for ethnic minorities and social justice¹²⁵ could have also contributed to Koreans’ support for the Labour party.

The Act party’s effort to attract Chinese voters, such as providing a Chinese website, sending out letters in Asian languages, and nominating a Chinese candidate at a relatively high rank of 10 (who subsequently became New Zealand’s second Asian MP), appeared to have been successful in attracting a significant level of support from Asian New Zealanders. The political philosophy of Act, a right-wing party with a focus on entrepreneurship, could have also played a role in attracting votes from the conservative Asians. On the other hand, the Progressive Coalition party failed to attract Asian votes despite the nomination of two Asian candidates (Meng Ly at number 8 and Nong Li at number 15), indicating that the nomination of Asian candidates

¹²³ Butler and Stokes found that anyone who had voted the same way three times could become “immunized” against change; Butler D. and Stokes D., *Political Change in Britain* (1974) Macmillan, London, as cited in Franklin (2004) p21. Also supporting this possibility is the fact that Taiwanese, Hong Kong Chinese, and Malaysian Chinese are more likely than mainland Chinese or Koreans to have lived in New Zealand for more than 10 years.

¹²⁴ 80.3% of Korean and 67.7% of mainland Chinese came to New Zealand in the last 10 years, compared to 47.1% of Hong Kong Chinese, 55.7% of Taiwanese, and 51.8% of Malaysian Chinese.

¹²⁵ The NZES 2002 found that Labour voters are disproportionately represented among non-European, low-income groups, and women; Miller R., “Labour” in Miller (2003) pp235-250 at p248. For similar reasons, the “local” Chinese have also been Labour’s staunch supporters; Ip (2002).

cannot on its own attract Asian votes. The success of United Future with Korean voters can be attributed to its Christian-focus (given that 55.4% of Koreans belonged to ethnic religious organizations), emphasis on family values, support for multiculturalism, and the recent merger with a former Asian ethnic party¹²⁶. Overall, a smaller proportion of Asian New Zealanders supported minor parties than the general New Zealand population. This outcome was perhaps not surprising, given that most recent Asian immigrants would not have had enough opportunity to become familiar with all the minor parties. Nevertheless, the success of the Act party illustrated that a targeted approach by minority parties can attract a significant proportion of Asian votes.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter looked at the participation rates of Asian New Zealanders in voting and other forms of political activities. Voting was found to be the most popular form of political activity amongst Asian New Zealanders, especially since almost all other political activities showed participation rates of less than 10%. For this reason, the analysis of Asians' participation rates other than voting focused only on the two most popular political activities of "signing petitions" and "working in the community". In addition to the statistical reasons for focusing on these two activities, they represented a low-intensity and a high-intensity political activity, thereby allowing comparative analysis of factors that affect Asians' participation in different forms of political activities. As predicted, the survey found that Asian New Zealanders participate at a lesser rate than Pakeha or Maori New Zealanders in all three political activities of voting, signing petitions, and working in the community. Identifying the factors that can explain the disparity in participation rates between different ethnic groups will be one of the main focuses of this thesis.

Cross-tabulation of the participation rates and different Asian ethnic groups revealed that Asians from more advanced democracies did not necessarily vote at a higher rate than those from non-democratic countries. This finding challenged the cultural theory that Asian immigrants' low level of political participation derived mainly from previous political experience in their home countries; although their mode of participation appeared to reflect certain aspects of their home countries' political environment. This, together with the finding that older Asians participate more in politics than younger ones, revealed possible shortcomings of the generational theory in explaining the turnout of those who have migrated to established democracies. What happens to the habit of (non)voting if one moves to a different country? Do they carry their "habit" to the new country or would the habit be broken because of the new environment? If one did not have any opportunity to experience voting in their home country, are they less likely to develop a habit of voting in the

¹²⁶ James in Boston (2003) pp55 and 57.

host country than those who have already had the experience of democratic elections, or are they more susceptible to new political stimuli? These are some of the questions that need to be addressed if the generational theory were to have a wider application.

Analysis of the demographic factors indicated that different factors are expected to influence Asian New Zealanders' participation rates in different forms of political activities. This is because demographic factors, which accounted for 2.8% of disparity in turnout between Asians and the general New Zealand population, showed nil effect on Asians' participation rates in other forms of political activities. Further analysis of the data revealed that the effect of demographic factors on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders can be different from the effect they have on Pakeha or Maori New Zealanders. These patterns are expected to be repeated in future analysis of other explanatory variables.

The survey findings on political partisanship revealed that Asian New Zealanders' support patterns are unique in that they differ from the support patterns of Asian Americans and the general New Zealand population. There was also a significant disparity in partisanship among different Asian ethnic groups. In general, Asian New Zealanders showed a surprisingly high level of political partisanship, considering that most have recently arrived in New Zealand. Factors such as Asians' tendency to support the status quo, conservative values of Asians coupled with their religious beliefs, Asians' relatively high socio-economic status, the existence of Asian MPs and candidates, and mobilisation efforts by political parties have been used to explain this phenomenon. Although full analysis of these factors would be beyond the scope of this thesis, it would be an interesting area of future research to assess which factors have the biggest influence on the political partisanship of Asian New Zealanders, and how (if any) Asians' support patterns might change over a period of time. Similarly, the effect of party membership on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders deserves further attention, although the proportion of party membership among Asian New Zealanders was found to be too low (2%) to conduct in-depth statistical analysis in this thesis.

4. INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES

In this chapter, three factors that can be regarded as “individual variables” – socio-economic status, cultural values, and the level of acculturation – will be studied to predict their influence on the political participation of ethnic Chinese and Korean New Zealanders (hereinafter referred to as “Asian New Zealanders”). The effect of these individual variables on Asian New Zealanders’ participation rates will be assessed in three political activities of voting, signing petitions and working in the community, with the latter two representing low-intensity and high-intensity political activities respectively. In so doing, this chapter will test the applicability of the socio-economic theory, cultural theory, social psychology theory, acculturation theory, and the RCM on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

PART A – SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Socio-economic factors such as the level of income, educational qualifications, and occupation are regarded as amongst the most important variables affecting individual political participation. Almost 50 years of the American National Election Study and other polling data have repeatedly demonstrated that people with higher education and income participate more in politics than people with lower socio-economic status¹, because they have adequate resources (such as information, time, and money) which makes it easier and less costly for them to participate in politics. Education in particular is regarded as one of the factors that most strongly encourages political participation, as education increases cognitive skills that help people to learn about politics, overcome the bureaucratic obstacles involved in learning processes, and receive gratification from electoral participation². In terms of the RCM, higher socio-economic status represents a greater “stake” in society - a greater benefit to be received from being involved in politics³. In this part of the thesis, questions on Asian New Zealanders’ level of wealth, education, and occupational status will be asked to assess their socio-economic status and its relevance to their political participation. In so doing, the study seeks to test the applicability of the socio-economic theory on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

4.1 COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

The socio-economic theorists have used the generally lower socio-economic status of ethnic minority groups vis-à-vis that of the dominant group to explain the low participation rates of ethnic minority groups in Western countries⁴. This was supported by the finding that the rate of African American political participation was same as, or higher than, White Americans, once income and education levels were controlled⁵. Similarly, the difference in participation rates between White Americans and Latino Americans diminished once socio-economic factors were controlled⁶. But the same cannot be said of Asian Americans, making them the only group to whom the socio-economic theory does not appear to apply. Asian Americans in general have a higher socio-economic status than most other ethnic groups in the US (to the extent that they are regarded as

¹ See Verba and Nie (1972); Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995).

² See for example, Wolfinger R.E. and Rosenstone S.J., *Who votes?* (1980) Yale University Press, New Haven, chapter 3; Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995); DeSipio L., *Counting on the Latino Vote: Latinos as a New Electorate* (1996) University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville.

³ Downs (1957); Tam Cho W.K., “Naturalisation, Socialisation, Participation: Immigrants and (Non-)Voting” (1999) 61(4) *The Journal of Politics* 1140-1155.

⁴ Uhlaner et al. (1989) p202; Junn J., “Participation in liberal democracy: The political assimilation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the United States” (1999) 42(9) *The American Behavioural Scientist* 1417-1438; Castles S. and Kosack G., *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (1973) Oxford University Press, Oxford; Schmitter B.H. and Heisler M.O., *From Foreign Workers to Settlers?* (1986) Sage Publisher, California; Bobo L. and Gilliam F.D., “Race, Sociopolitical Participation, and Black Empowerment” (1990) 84(2) *American Political Science Review* 377-393 as cited in Freeman (2000) p15

⁵ Uhlaner et al. (1989) p210; Lien (1994) p237.

⁶ Uhlaner et al. (1989) p210; Lien (1994) p237.

the “model minority”⁷), yet their level of political participation is found to be lower than other groups.

Asian Americans’ socio-economic success has been well documented - for example, Asian Americans’ median household income in 1999 was the highest amongst all ethnic groups at \$45,249⁸, and they also had the greatest proportion of college graduates of any racial or ethnic groups at 42% (compared to 25% for White Americans, 13% for African Americans and 10% for Latino Americans)⁹. In addition, a high percentage of Asian students were found to be at top universities such as Harvard (14%), MIT (20%), and the University of California at Berkeley (25%), at a time when Asian Americans constituted only 2.9% of the population¹⁰. The 2001 survey also found that 38% of Asian American men and 32% of Asian American women worked in managerial and professional specialty occupations, such as engineers, dentists, teachers, lawyers and reporters¹¹. Despite this exceptional socio-economic success, the 2001 survey and various other studies on the political participation of Asian Americans have consistently shown that Asian Americans have the lowest voter turnout rate amongst all ethnic groups in the US. Studies on the political participation of Asian immigrants therefore pose a serious challenge to the socio-economic theory.

To understand this puzzle - that socio-economic factors do not appear to have the expected positive influence on the political participation of Asian Americans as a group - various studies have come up with a number of possible explanations. One of the explanations is that it is not education per se that increases the likelihood of one’s voting but rather the socialisation process that is provided through education, and that Asian immigrants who were educated overseas may not have been exposed to the socialisation process that promotes political participation¹². Asian Americans’ relative political inactivity has also been explained as a logical consequence of

⁷ It should be noted that the perception of “model minority” only reflects a portion of Asian Americans. For example, the 2001 survey found that although the most common categories of annual income for Koreans and Southern Asians were “between \$40,000 - \$59,999” and “over \$80,000”, the most common category for Chinese and Vietnamese was “between \$10,000-\$19,999”. See also Takeda in Menifield (2001) p81.

⁸ US Census 1999. However, because Asian Pacific American households were on average larger than White American households (3.17 people versus 2.58 people), their estimated income per household member was in fact lower than White Americans (\$18,569 compared with \$20,093). The Census only had a category for “Asian Pacific Americans”, and there appeared to be no separate category/data for “Asian Americans”; See <http://www.census.gov/press-release/cb98-177.html> as cited in US Census Bureau’s Public Information Office, “Facts about Asian Pacific Americans” in (2000-2001) *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* 52 at 52.

⁹ Hing (1993) p11.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ A similar result was found in a 1988 survey, where 63% of native-born Korean Americans, 76% of native-born Chinese Americans and 59% of native-born Japanese Americans were found to be in “white-colour” occupations, compared to 50% of White Americans; Harrison L.E., *Who prospers? How cultural values shape economic and political success* (1992) Basic Books, New York, p165, table 5-1.

¹² Leighley J.E. and Nagler J., “Individual and Systematic Influences on Turnout: Who Votes?” (1992) 53(3) *Journal of Politics* 718-740, as cited in Tam Cho (1994) p1143.

contentment with their material success, on the basis that minority groups' interest in gaining political power stems from economic deprivation¹³. However, some studies have found that among Asian Americans, people with higher socio-economic status participate more in politics than people with lower socio-economic status¹⁴. The case of Asian Americans therefore suggests that although socio-economic factors do encourage political participation of Asian immigrants, there may be other factors that discourage even those with high socio-economic status from participating in the host country's politics.

Asian New Zealanders

There is a widely held belief in New Zealand that Asian New Zealanders in general have a high socio-economic status. This is because a large proportion of the recent Asian immigrants, who now comprise approximately 60% of the total Asian population in New Zealand, came to New Zealand under the Business Immigration Scheme (where potential immigrants were assessed on their economic contribution to New Zealand) or the points system (where points were granted on the basis of the applicants' wealth, educational qualifications, work experience, and other factors)¹⁵. This was quite different from the case of Asian Americans, many of whom came to the US under the "family category" for the purposes of family re-unification¹⁶, and who had to work up the ladder and educate their children to raise the community's socio-economic status. In contrast, most recent Asian New Zealanders arrived in New Zealand with relatively high levels of wealth and educational qualifications. Various media reports on Asians driving expensive cars and settling in affluent suburbs have further strengthened this perception of "rich Asians"¹⁷. This perception may have contributed to the growing interest in the political participation of Asian New Zealanders¹⁸, despite overseas studies on Asian immigrants which found that Asians' high socio-economic status did not necessarily result in the group displaying higher participation rates than

¹³ Jo M.H., "The Putative Political Complacency of Asian Americans" (1984) 5(4) *Political Psychology* 583-605 at pp588-589.

¹⁴ Lien P., *From immigrants to citizens and beyond? The political participation of Asian Americans in Southern California* (1994) Paper delivered at the 1994 annual meeting of the American political science association, New York, as cited in Lien (1997) p40.

¹⁵ It should be noted that despite the hype, business immigrants who brought between \$500,000-\$750,000 have accounted for only about 3-4% of the total number of immigrants since 1992; Ip M., "Asian Migrants – the Myth and the Reality", *New Zealand Herald*, 29 October 1997. For more information on New Zealand's immigration policies of the 1990s, see Papanidis J.L., *Chequebook Immigration? The Development of New Zealand's Business Immigration Policies 1978-1993* (1999) MA thesis in Political Studies, University of Auckland; Trlin in Trlin and Spoonley (1997).

¹⁶ For more information on how the "family category" works in the US, see Hing (1993) Appendix B, p198. In contrast, only 5% of the recent Asian immigrants in New Zealand came under the family reunification category; Friesen W. and Ip M., "New Chinese New Zealanders; Profile of a Transnational Community in Auckland" in *East Asian New Zealanders: Research on New Migrants* (1997) Migration Research Network Research Paper, Massey University, Auckland, at p5.

¹⁷ See chapter 6.4 for examples of these media reports.

¹⁸ For example, the recent Asian immigrants have been regarded as "ones who mostly write letters to editors and call up radio talk-back programs, attempting to defend themselves and speaking on behalf of their fellow immigrants"; Vasil and Yoon (1996) p26. See also Ip in www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice; Beal (2002).

other groups.

Whether or not Asian New Zealanders are in fact wealthy is, however, questionable. The Census 2001, for example, found the median personal annual income of Asian people to be \$10,400, which was considerably lower than the national median income of \$18,600¹⁹. This surprising result was explained by the Census 2001 as reflecting the fact that Asian New Zealanders are a relatively youthful population, many of whom are still studying²⁰, and that a large proportion of Asian New Zealanders are recent immigrants who have not yet found a job²¹. Or it could simply mean that not all Asian New Zealanders are wealthy, and that it would be dangerous to assume that they are. Reports showing Asian immigrants having the lowest full-time employment rates of all recent immigrants²², and a number of highly qualified Asian immigrants working as taxi-drivers, cleaners and other manual workers²³, further support this view. Having said that, it could be a case of Asian New Zealanders' reported level of annual income not accurately reflecting their actual level of wealth - Asian New Zealanders who have substantial assets either in New Zealand or overseas may no longer be required to work for additional income in New Zealand. There is evidence supporting this possibility, such as the fact that Asian immigrants brought \$1.8 billion in investment to New Zealand between 1992-1997²⁴, and that more Asian New Zealanders have access to internet, fax machines and telephones than the general New Zealand population²⁵. For this reason, the survey asked the respondents whether they own residential, investment, or other

¹⁹ It was in fact the lowest of all ethnic groups. The median income for other groups were \$19,800 for European, \$14,800 for Maori and Pacific Islanders, and \$11,400 for "other" ethnic groups, such as Arabs, Iranians, Somalis and Latin Americans. The only group of Asians who had a higher median income than the average were local Chinese at \$22,000.

²⁰ According to the Census 2001, 21% of Asians were in the 15-24 age group, compared to 14% of the total New Zealand population. 60% of Asians in the 15-24 age group were found to be studying, compared to 44% of the general New Zealand population in the same age group.

²¹ The Census 2001 found that only 57% of Asian New Zealanders were in the labour force (ie. in full-time or part-time paid employment or actively seeking work), compared to 68% of European and 67.7% of Maori. The unemployment rate for Asians was also high at 13%, compared to 7% of the total New Zealand population. However, among those who were in the labour force, a slightly higher proportion of the employed Asians (43%) were in white collar occupations (professional, legislators, administrators and managers, technicians and associated professionals) than the general population (40%).

²² Winkelmann L. and Winkelmann R., *Immigrants in New Zealand: A study of their labour market outcomes - Part I* (1997) Report prepared for the Department of Labour, Wellington.

²³ This is partly because of the strict registration rules in New Zealand for overseas trained doctors and other professionals; see for example, Johnston M., "Low pass rate for foreign doctors", *New Zealand Herald*, 6 August 2003, pA4; Chowdhury F., "Migrant professional treated with discrimination, abuse", *New Zealand Herald*, 16 September 1998, pA13. The inability to fully utilize highly trained overseas immigrants is apparently a common problem in all four Western immigrant nations; Castles S. and Miller M.J., *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (1993) MacMillan Press, London. See also Ip in Greif (1995) pp194-195; Boyer (1995) p192; Barber F., "Rejection and menial jobs often the newcomers' lot", *New Zealand Herald*, 1 August 2000; and Stone A., "Broken Promises", *Weekend Herald*, 5-6 September 1998.

²⁴ Barber D., "Government does about-turn and raises immigration targets", *National Business Review*, 3 October 1997; Smith B., "Straight Talking", *National Business Review*, 12 September 1997, as cited in Fleras and Spoonley (1999) p172.

²⁵ The Census 2001 found that Asian New Zealanders were more likely to have access to internet (61.5%) and a fax machine (38.9%) than the general New Zealand population, and that 98% of Asians had access to a telephone.

properties in New Zealand or overseas, instead of questions on annual income²⁶.

In terms of educational qualifications, the Census 2001 found that a high proportion of Asian adults held a formal qualification (86% compared to 70% of the general New Zealand population), including a bachelors degree or higher qualification (23% compared to 12% of the general New Zealand population). The fact that a large proportion of Asian youth were currently studying at universities and other tertiary institutions²⁷ also indicated that the proportion of Asian New Zealanders with high educational qualifications is likely to increase in the future. It is interesting to note, however, that 35% of Asian people with high educational qualifications obtained their qualifications from overseas universities, suggesting they may not have been exposed to the socialisation process which helps promote political participation in New Zealand.

4.2 SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Questions on wealth, education, and occupational status were asked in the survey to assess Asian New Zealanders' socio-economic status and its relevance to their political participation. As predicted, the survey revealed that a high proportion of Asian New Zealanders were financially well-off and highly educated, but their high socio-economic status did not necessarily translate into a high level of political participation. The difficulties Asians face in obtaining suitable jobs in New Zealand appeared to have discouraged the political participation of Asian New Zealanders, as those in certain types of occupations were less likely to participate in politics than others. This suggested that it is not money or education per se that encourages individuals' political participation but rather the socialization process of acquiring wealth and educational qualifications. This finding challenged the applicability of the socio-economic theory on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

Property ownership

The question on property ownership²⁸ revealed that a large proportion (63.7%) of Asian respondents own property, and that property owners (78.4%) were more likely than those who do

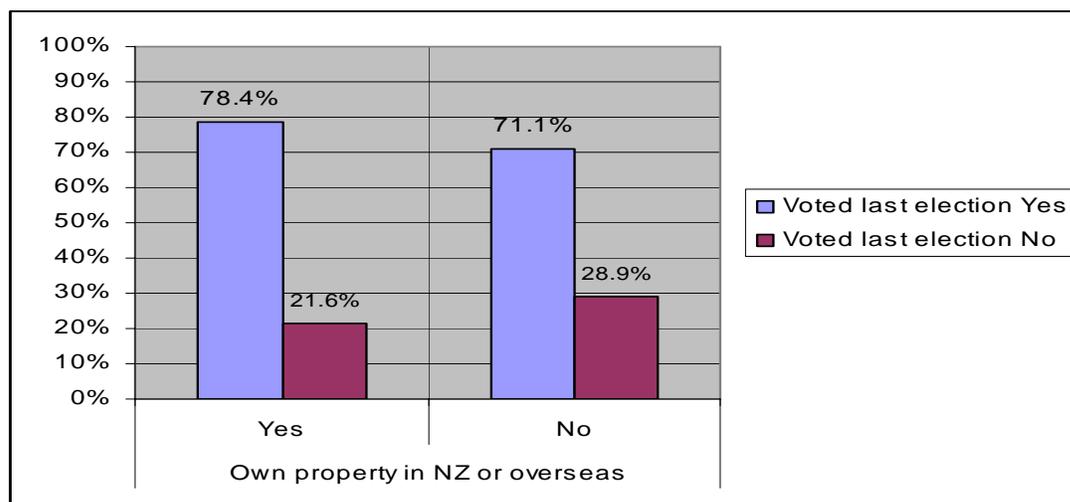
²⁶ In addition, questions on the level of income do not usually attract a good response rate. For example, in a 1996 study conducted on 375 recent Asian immigrants, over 200 respondents reportedly failed to fill in their current income levels; Friesen and Ip (1997) p10.

²⁷ The Ministry of Education found that university students of Asian ethnicity reached 12.8% in 2001, compared to 8.5% of Maori and 3.5% of Pacific Islands students. In the case of the University of Auckland, the number of Asian students reached 34.3% in 2002, compared to 5.8% of Maori and 6.6% of Pacific Islands students; *Report of the University of Auckland International and Immigrant Student Survey (2002)* Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), University of Auckland, at pp9 and 11. See also Walsh R., "Asians push up varsity numbers", *New Zealand Herald*, 22 August 2000, pA3.

²⁸ The question on property ownership yielded a high response rate of 98.2%, contrary to questions on annual income which usually yield a low response rate; see Friesen and Ip (1997) p10.

not own property (71.1%) to have voted at the last election (see graph 4.1). Similarly, analysis of the NZES data showed that New Zealanders who own property voted at a higher rate than non-property owners²⁹, thereby reaffirming the socio-economic theory. Asian New Zealanders who own property were also more likely to participate in certain political activities such as making donations³⁰. Further analysis of the data showed that the proportion of property owners among Asians was higher than that of Maori (51.0%), but that Asians participated in politics at a lower rate than Maori. This finding challenged the applicability of the socio-economic theory on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders as it relates to other ethnic groups.

Graph 4.1 Turnout of Asians who own property



-Chi-square .012

-Phi and Cramer's V .081

Employment status

The question on current employment status revealed that the most common form of employment among Asian New Zealanders was working full-time for pay (22.9%), followed by running own business (19.8%), studying (16.0%), doing unpaid work at home (10.3%), and being retired (9.5%)³¹. For the general New Zealand population, the most common form of employment was working full-time for pay (35.4%), followed by running own business (16.9%), and being retired (16.3%). Cross-tabulation of the current employment status and voter turnout showed that

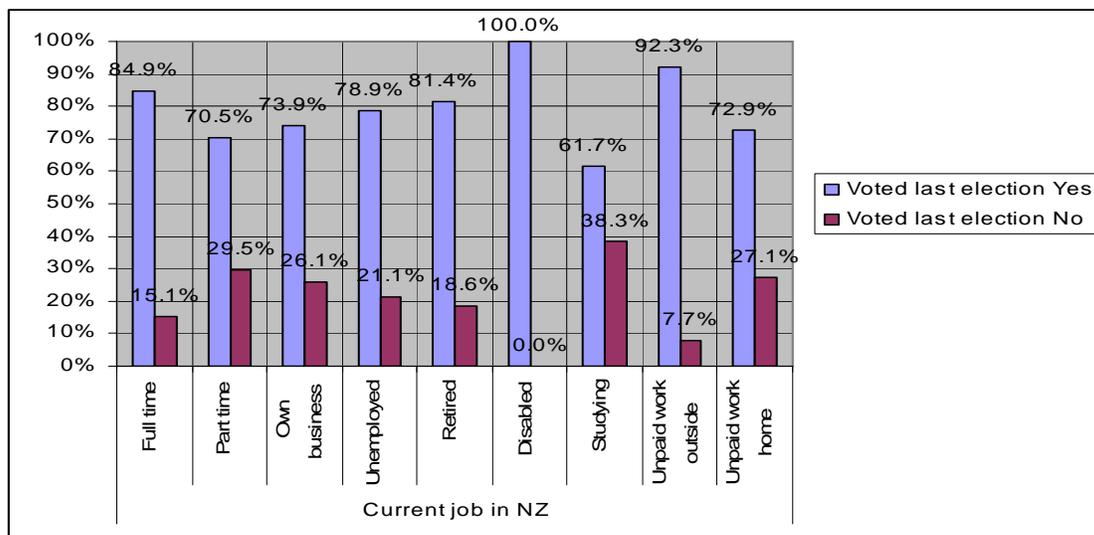
²⁹ 94.7% for property owners and 87.2% for non-property owners (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .126).

³⁰ Although property owners were more likely to participate in political activities such as joining a political party, assisting in a political campaign, and writing or phoning government or media, the differences were not statistically significant.

³¹ The survey recorded a surprisingly low rate of unemployment (4.8%), although it appeared that unemployed respondents may have chosen a different description of their current situation, such as studying or doing unpaid work.

Asians who were studying (61.7%), doing unpaid work at home (72.9%) or running their own business (73.9%) were less likely than others to have voted at the last election (see graph 4.2). In this sense, the fact that a larger proportion of Asian New Zealanders were currently studying (16.0% compared to 4.8% of the general New Zealand population) or doing unpaid work at home (10.3% compared to 7.5% of the general New Zealand population) may account for their low level of participation. Given that Asians who cannot find suitable employment tend to start their own business (usually ethnic-related) or re-train in New Zealand, Asians' difficulty in finding suitable jobs in New Zealand may be interpreted as limiting their opportunities to participate in politics. Another interesting finding was the exceptionally high proportion (9.5%) of Asians who have retired, and their relatively high turnout (81.4%), considering that Asian New Zealanders are youthful population with only 10% of the respondents being older than 60 years of age. This means that a large proportion of retired Asians are relatively young and (possibly) wealthy compared to their New Zealand counterparts³², and therefore have sufficient time, money, and stake in society to participate in politics.

Graph 4.2 Turnout of Asians in different occupations



-Chi-square .000

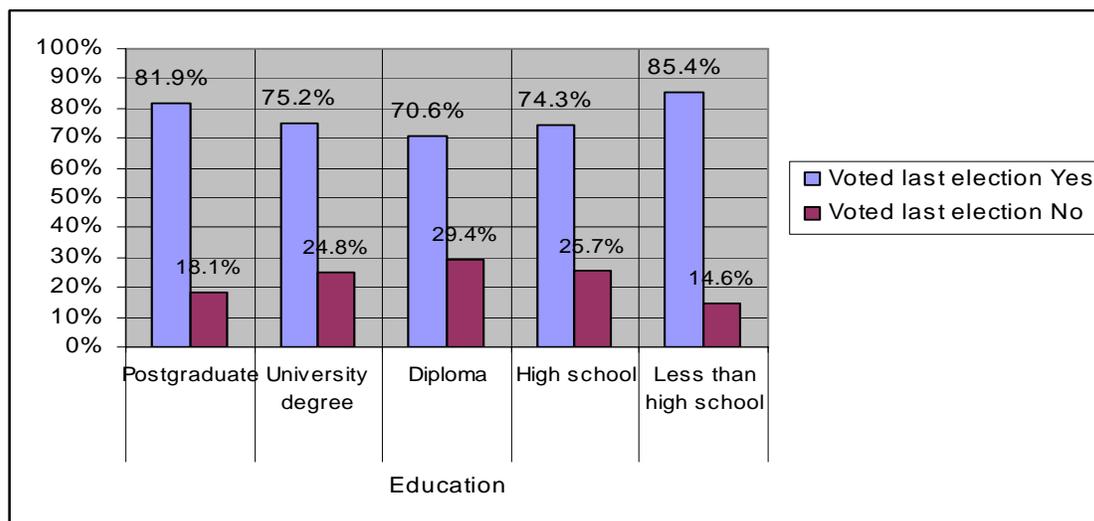
-Phi and Cramer' V .195

³² Among the Asian respondents who described themselves as retired, 40% were under the age of 60. In comparison, only 4% of the NZES respondents who were under the age of 60 described themselves as retired.

Education

The survey revealed that more than 75% of Asian respondents have completed some form of tertiary education - 14.0% postgraduate degree, 47.3% university degree, and 15.3% university or polytechnic diploma or certificate³³. As predicted, Asians' educational qualifications were considerably higher than those of the NZES respondents, only 41.4% of whom received some form of tertiary education. However, as was the case with Asian Americans, Asian New Zealanders with higher educational qualifications did not necessarily vote in higher numbers than those with lower educational qualifications (see graph 4.3). The fact that almost all of the respondents (95.6%) came to New Zealand in the last 15 years, and therefore were likely to have received their educational qualifications overseas, may explain why their level of education does not correlate with their participation rates in New Zealand³⁴.

Graph 4.3 Turnout of Asians with different educational qualifications



-Chi-square .167

-Phi and Cramer's V .088

³³ The figures obtained in the survey were considerably higher than those obtained from the Census, where only 23% of the Asian population was found to have bachelors degree or higher. This indicated that people who have high educational qualifications were more likely to participate in the survey. The same can be said of the general New Zealand population - compared to the Census finding that only 12% of New Zealanders received university degree or higher, the NZES 2002 found that 5.6% of the respondents received a postgraduate degree, 10.4% a university degree, and 25.4% a university or polytech certificate or diploma.

³⁴ See Leighley and Nagler in Tam Cho (1994) p1142, which argued that it is not education per se that promotes participation but rather the socialization process that is provided through education. Interestingly, however, there appeared to be little correlation between education level and voting rate even among the general New Zealand population (Chi-square .457, Phi and Cramer's V .050).

Another interesting finding – that those with less than high school education showed the highest turnout of 85.4% - could be explained by the fact that most Asians with low educational qualifications are elderly people who may not have had the opportunity to receive a proper education, because of historical circumstances such as poverty, the Korean War, and China's Cultural Revolution³⁵. This means that they would exhibit different characteristics from New Zealanders with low educational qualifications who had the opportunity, but chose not, to receive education. It could also mean that the demographic factor of age has greater influence on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders than the socio-economic factor of educational qualification. In so finding, the current study on Asian New Zealanders highlighted possible shortcomings of the socio-economic theory in predicting the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

Regression of the socio-economic factors

Regression of the factors relating to socio-economic status revealed that one's occupation type has the greatest relevance to the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. For example, people who were studying were 13.8% less likely to vote when all other socio-economic factors were controlled; whereas people in full-time employment were 8.3% more likely to vote (see table 4.1). The level of wealth and educational qualification, on the other hand, did not appear to have any statistically significant relevance to Asian New Zealanders' participation rates. The type of occupation again had the greatest effect on Asian New Zealanders' participation in other forms of political activities, as people in full-time employment and those who run their own business were 15.7% and 6.1% more likely to sign petitions. Interestingly, people who run their own business were 5.9% less likely to work in the community, indicating that the same factor can have the opposite effect on high- and low-intensity participation.

³⁵ For example, more than 60% of the Asian respondents who received less than high school education were aged 50 years or older. New Zealand's recent immigration policies which focused on, inter alia, educational qualifications, also meant that those with less than high school education would not qualify unless as parents of the applicant.

Table 4.1 Effect of socio-economic factors on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Wealth	5.1	0.28	0.19	-0.7	-0.06	0.23	-0.4	-0.05	0.27
High education ³⁶	-0.8	-0.05	0.18	0.0	-0.00	0.22	0.2	0.03	0.26
Fulltime	8.3	0.55*	0.26	15.7	1.29**	0.29	3.8	0.38	0.30
Own business	-3.0	-0.16	0.24	6.1	0.65*	0.33	-5.9	-1.06*	0.47
Unemployed	1.9	0.11	0.43	6.5	0.68	0.50	0.2	0.02	0.57
Studying	-13.8	-0.65**	0.25	3.2	0.39	0.36	-1.0	-0.13	0.38
Constant	74.0	1.05**	0.21	8.3	-2.43**	0.29	9.5	-2.26**	0.30
% concordant	76.1			86.1			91.1		
Cox & Snell R ²	.034			.028			.015		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

Regression of the NZES-Asia merged data showed that socio-economic factors played an important role in encouraging the political participation of the general New Zealand population. For example, New Zealanders who own property were 5.6% more likely to vote, 4.9% more likely to sign petitions, and 5.6% more likely to work in the community than non-property owners when all other socio-economic factors were controlled (see table 4.2). Having high educational qualifications also increased the likelihood of New Zealanders signing petitions and working in the community by 6.2% and 11.4% respectively. The type of occupation also appeared to have a statistically significant effect on New Zealanders' political participation, as those who were studying were 9.7% less likely to vote, and those in full-time employment were 11.1% more likely to sign petitions.

Because Asians rate relatively high on socio-economic variables, the controls on socio-economic factors did little to reduce the disparity between Asians and other ethnic groups. For example, although the likelihood of Asian non-voting vis-à-vis Pakeha reduced by 2.1% to 17.0% when socio-economic factors were controlled, Asians were still 63.9% less likely to sign petitions and 21.3% less likely to work in the community than Pakeha (an increase of 0.7% and 4.4% from when no other factors were controlled). In sharp contrast to the case of Asian New Zealanders, the likelihood of Maori non-participation in the activity of signing petitions ceased to have statistically significant relevance once all the socio-economic factors were controlled. The likelihood of Maori non-voting also reduced by 0.8% to 6.6%, indicating that improving Maori's socio-economic status could reduce the differences in participation rates between Pakeha and Maori.

³⁶ "High education" is defined as people with university degree or postgraduate degree.

Table 4.2 Effect of socio-economic factors on participation rate – Merged data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Asian	-17.0	-1.63**	0.18	-63.9	-3.23**	0.15	-21.3	-1.63**	0.16
Maori	-6.6	-0.93**	0.22	-5.8	-0.28	0.15	11.2	0.60**	0.14
Wealth	5.6	0.48**	0.15	4.9	0.32*	0.13	5.6	0.41**	0.14
High education	1.2	0.07	0.15	6.2	0.49**	0.15	11.4	0.81**	0.14
Fulltime	1.2	0.13	0.18	11.1	0.68**	0.13	1.3	0.07	0.13
Own business	-1.9	-0.20	0.20	2.8	0.17	0.15	-2.1	-0.13	0.16
Unemployed	1.9	0.12	0.34	0.6	0.07	0.28	1.2	0.13	0.29
Studying	-9.7	-0.56**	0.21	-1.5	-0.18	0.23	2.5	0.14	0.24
Constant	90.4	2.57**	0.20	67.7	0.65**	0.14	19.3	-1.56**	0.16
% concordant	86.9			79.3			79.4		
Cox & Snell R ²	.075			.338			.081		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

4.3 SUMMARY

Analysis of the survey findings indicated that neither the level of wealth nor the level of education could be an accurate predictor of Asian New Zealanders' level of political participation, whereas both factors showed a strong correlation to the political participation of the general New Zealand population. The findings were consistent with studies on Asian immigrants in other Western countries³⁷ where socio-economic factors were not found to have a significant effect on the political participation of Asian immigrants. Yet, there was a correlation between the turnout of Asian New Zealanders and their type of occupation, even when levels of education and wealth were controlled. This indicated that it was the socialization process of acquiring wealth and educational qualifications, rather than the levels of wealth and education, that affected the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. For example, people in full-time employment did not necessarily have more money or higher educational qualifications than those who run their own business, yet they were more likely to participate in politics than business-owners, possibly due to the social networks and workplace environment that reflect their socio-economic status³⁸. In other words, the socio-economic theory would apply to Asian New Zealanders only to the extent that their socio-economic status was an accurate indicator of their socialization process. In this sense, the participation rates of New Zealand-born Asians (who would have been exposed to

³⁷ Such as Uhlaner et al. (1989), Lien (1996), and Tam Cho (1999).

³⁸ For more information on the effect of social networking on Asian New Zealanders' political participation, see chapter 5.5.

the same socialization process as the general New Zealand population) are expected to respond more closely to their socio-economic status³⁹.

³⁹ The current survey did not find statistically significant relevance between socio-economic status and the turnout among New Zealand-born Asians. However, because only 3% of the respondents were New Zealand-born, it would take another decade or two to test such a hypothesis on a substantial number of Asian New Zealanders.

PART B – CULTURAL VALUES

Many studies have found that political activism is shaped by one's cultural attitudes and values⁴⁰, such as a sense of civic duty, democratic commitment, political efficacy, and political interest that individuals learn from their surroundings and personal experiences. Further to this theory, the low level of political participation of Asian immigrants has often been explained in cultural terms – that Asians are “apathetic” towards politics in their host countries because of Asian cultural characteristics that are inimical to political participation. In order to test the cultural theory, the survey incorporated questions on Asians' level of interest in politics, their views on various government policies, and their level of democratic commitment. These questions will help assess the influence of cultural and attitudinal factors on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. If Asian culture per se discourages Asian immigrants from participating in politics, respondents who exhibit strong Asian values would be less likely to participate in politics.

4.4 COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

Although it is hard to identify cultural characteristics that are shared by all Asian immigrants, age-old ideologies and religions such as Confucianism⁴¹, Buddhism and Taoism have generally been regarded as representing the “Asian culture”⁴². The cultural theorists have used certain characteristics of the “Asian culture”, such as respect for hierarchy, obedience to authority, emotional docility, politeness, and a focus on self-help, to explain Asian immigrants' political inactivity⁴³. For example, Asian people tend not to seek redress for personal grievances through political means but by working harder to overcome personal difficulties⁴⁴, and this tendency has been interpreted as Asian cultural values discouraging Asian immigrants from participating in politics. Confucius' teaching that not everyone is entitled to speak in all situations⁴⁵ has also been used to explain the reluctance of Asian immigrants to speak out in their adopted countries –

⁴⁰ For studies using the cultural approach, see Rita J. and Lipset S.M., “Racial and Ethnic Conflicts: A Global Perspective” (1992) *Political Science Quarterly* 107; Glazer N. and Moynihan D.P., *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963) MIT Press, Cambridge; Pye L.W., *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya: Its Social and Political Meaning* (1956) Princeton University Press, Princeton; Huntington S., *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) Simon & Schuster, New York; Barth F. (ed) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (1969) Allen and Unwin, London, as cited in Freeman (2000) p15.

⁴¹ The influence of Confucianism is stronger in North Asian countries such as Korea, Japan and China, and in other countries consisted mainly of Chinese (such as Singapore and Vietnam), but not in the Philippines or other Southeast Asian countries; Gudykunst (2001) p48.

⁴² The term “culture” can be defined as “the system of socially created and learned standards for perceiving and acting, shared by members of an identity group”, which shapes the standards and criteria used to define fairness, justice and efficiency; Donahue W.A and Bresnahan M.I., “Communication Issues in Mediating Cultural Conflict” in Foler J.P. and Jones T.S. (eds) *New Directions in Mediation* (1994) Sage Publication, Thousand Oaks, pp135-158 at p146.

⁴³ Freeman (2000) p131; Jo (1984) p585; Hing (1993) p153.

⁴⁴ See Lien (1997) which supports the view that most Asian Americans do not link grievances in their personal life with the group position in the socio-political system, nor seek redress through voting; p41.

⁴⁵ Gudykunst (2001) p49.

as immigrants, they are not “entitled” to interfere with the host country’s politics. In addition, Asian immigrants’ desire to conform to the “norm” rather than to voice their differences, in a belief that any additional distinction would be intolerable, has been regarded as another “cultural reason” for Asians’ reluctance to participate in politics⁴⁶.

The cultural theory, however, can be misleading - it contains the danger of being manipulated by the political elites of the host country to nurture the idea that the lack of political participation by Asian immigrants is a natural phenomenon, thereby denying the existence of other factors which prevent political participation of Asian immigrants (such as systematic disenfranchisement, ostracism, and institutionalised discrimination against Asian immigrants)⁴⁷. The cultural theory is also based on the flawed assumption that culture is static, and that people of certain ethnic origins are always to be defined and behaviourally determined by it⁴⁸. In reality, culture is capable of being constantly changed and enriched by forces inside and outside its domain, as that is the only way for culture to maintain its relevance in a rapidly changing society⁴⁹. The cultural theory also fails to explain the fact that Asian Americans have fought every piece of discriminatory legislation since the 19th century⁵⁰, and that many recent Asian immigrants have fought for democracy in their home countries through active political participation. In addition, more than 60% of the respondents in the 2001 survey indicated that they were either “very” or “somewhat” interested in the US politics, thereby challenging the claim that Asians are not interested in politics for cultural reasons.

For Asian immigrants, the cultural values that they learn from their shared experience in the host country may have a greater influence on their political participation than traditional cultural values⁵¹. For this reason, many have argued that the inhibited and compliant attitudes of Asian immigrants derived not from their traditional culture, but from the fear, uncertainty, and constant

⁴⁶ See for example, Chen M., “Discrimination, Law and Being a Chinese Immigrant Woman in New Zealand” (1993) 9 *Women’s Studies Journal* 1 at p10. See also Matsuda M.J., *Where is your body?: and other essays on race, gender, and the law* (1996) Beacons Press, Boston, at p55.

⁴⁷ Freeman (2000) p36. Hing (1993) pp154-155. See also Jo (1984) for a list of studies challenging the cultural theory.

⁴⁸ Modood T., “Anti-essentialism, multiculturalism, and the “recognition” of religious groups” in Kymlicka and Norman (2000) 175 at 176; Gilroy P., *There ain’t no Black in the Union Jack* (1987) Hainemann, London; Anthias F. and Yuval-Davis N., *Racialised Boundaries: Race, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist struggle* (1992) Routledge, London.

⁴⁹ Rao A., “The Politics of Gender and Culture in International Human Rights Discourse” in Peters J. and Wolper A. (eds) *Women’s Rights, Human Rights: International Feminists Perspective* (1995) Routledge, New York, p173. In fact, culture is made through change and therefore it cannot be defined by an essence which exists apart from change; Modood in Kymlicka and Norman (2000) p179.

⁵⁰ These include legal cases of *Fong Yue-ting v The United States of America* (149 US 698, 1893) which challenged the legitimacy of the Geary Act 1892, and *Ozawa v United States* (260 US 178, 1922) which sought Asian Americans’ rights to become naturalised citizens; Hatamiya L.T., *Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and the Passage of Civil Liberties Act 1988* (1993) Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, as cited in Takeda in Menfield (2001) p94. See also Kim E.H., “Korean Americans in US Race Relations: Some Considerations” (1997) 23(2) *Amerasia Journal* 69 at p72.

⁵¹ Freeman (2000) p35.

pressure for conformity that they have experienced in the host country⁵². Having said that, the influence of traditional culture on the political participation of Asian immigrants should not be ignored, as people absorb and retain certain values from the political culture within which they have been socialised⁵³. Studies on the political participation of Asian immigrants therefore raise interesting questions in respect to the cultural theory of participation.

Asian New Zealanders

Although the political behaviours of Asian New Zealanders cannot be wholly explained in cultural terms, the influence of Asian cultural values that have been preserved by Asian New Zealanders and passed on to the next generation should not be underestimated. Asian people believe that their miraculous economic growth derived not only from the adoption of Western ideas and institutions but also from their cultural heritage and social underpinnings⁵⁴ - as such, they tend to retain certain cultural traditions in the host country⁵⁵. For this reason, there may be a number of Asian cultural characteristics that continue to influence Asian immigrants' views on various policy issues. This would be especially so for Asian New Zealanders, most of whom were recent immigrants, as the influence of cultural characteristics would inevitably diminish over time as Asian immigrants gradually adopt the host country's values and practices⁵⁶. For this reason, it is expected that Asian New Zealanders would not, in general, support policies involving governmental assistance, given the Asian cultural value of "self-help". What is not clear, however, is whether those who exhibit strong Asian cultural values would be less likely to participate in politics, as argued by cultural theorists.

As discussed earlier in chapter 2.2, most Asian New Zealanders (with the possible exceptions of mainland Chinese and early Asian immigrants) are familiar with democratic concepts, and have

⁵² Fenz W.D. and Arkoff A., "Comparative need patterns of five ancestry groups in Hawaii" (1962) 58 *Journal of Social Psychology* 67-89; Sue D.W. and Kirk B.A., "Differential characteristics of Japanese American and Chinese American college students" (1973) 20 *Journal of Counselling Psychology* 142-148; Sue S. and Sue D.W., "Chinese Americans' personality and mental health" in Sue S. and Wagner N.N. (eds) *Asian Americans; psychological perspectives* (1973) Science and Behaviour Books, Ben Lomond, California, pp111-124, as cited in Jo (1984) pp597-598.

⁵³ McAllister and Makkai (1992) p270.

⁵⁴ Yasuaki D., "Towards an intercivilizational approach to human rights" in Bauer J.R. and Bell D.A. (eds) *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights* (1999) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, at p104. See also Krugman P., "The Myth of Asian Miracle" (1994) 73(6) *Foreign Affairs* 62 at 62.

⁵⁵ It should be noted that Asian people have been more reluctant to accept Western cultural values compared with economic values. This reluctance is represented by the phrase *ti-yong* (Chinese learning for the fundamental principles, Western learning for practical use), and *woken-yosei* (Japanese spirit, Western technique) articulated by Chinese and Japanese reformers a century ago; Huntington S.P., "The West: Unique, not Universal" (1996) 75(6) *Foreign Affairs* 28 at 35.

⁵⁶ For the early Asian immigrants to New Zealand, who were forced to adopt tactics of "absorbing racism" - using English names, wearing Western clothes, and not using one's native language in public to conform to the "norm" - the Asian cultural influence would be significantly less evident than the recent immigrants; Wong (2002) p6. Wong also talked about how primary loyalty to New Zealand and renunciation of Chinese nationality/way of life were requirements for naturalisation in 1951. See also Ip in Greif (1995) p183.

had some experience of democratic political participation in their home countries. It was also found in chapter 3.2 that Asian immigrants who had democratic political experience in their home countries did not necessarily participate in politics at a higher rate than those with no such prior experience. This may well be because Asians with prior experience of democratic political activities (although more familiar with democratic concepts and values) are less appreciative of their political rights in the host country than Asian immigrants from non-democratic countries. The survey will look at whether this is in fact the case, by comparing the level of democratic commitment of respondents from different countries of origin. In accordance with the social psychology theory, it is hypothesized that Asian New Zealanders with a higher level of political interest, trust, and democratic commitment would be more likely than others to participate in politics.

4.5 SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The survey challenged the cultural theory that Asians are not interested in politics for cultural reasons by finding that Asian New Zealanders exhibited a high level of political interest and democratic commitment. In addition, the survey found that although a significant proportion of Asian New Zealanders continued to display certain Asian cultural characteristics, those who exhibit Asian cultural traits did not necessarily participate in politics at a lower rate. At the same time, the survey reaffirmed the applicability of the social psychology theory on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders, as those who showed a high level of democratic commitment and political interest were more likely to participate in politics.

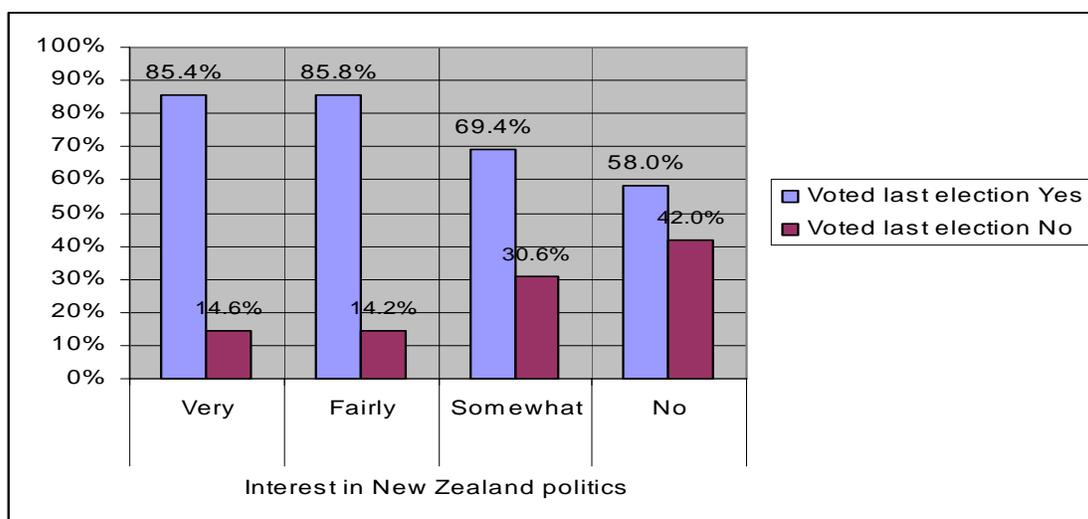
Political interest

The survey results refuted the myth that Asians are not interested in politics for cultural reasons by finding that Asian New Zealanders were in general interested in both the politics of New Zealand and of their home countries. When asked how much interest they usually have in what is going on in politics of their home countries⁵⁷, 45.6% of the respondents indicated that they were either “very” (12.9%) or “fairly” (32.8%) interested. The largest proportion (37.8%) of the respondents replied that they were “somewhat” interested, whereas 16.6% responded that they were “not at all” interested in politics of their home countries. A similar level of interest was recorded in New Zealand politics among Asian respondents, 44.7% of whom replied that they were either “very” (9.4%) or “fairly” (35.2%) interested in politics of New Zealand. Again, the

⁵⁷ However, it should be noted that the expression of interest in politics, a subjective assertion, may change depending on the wording and ordering of a questionnaire; Schwarz N. and Schuman H., “Political knowledge, attribution, and inferred interest in politics: The operation of buffer items” (1997) 2 *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 191-195, as cited in Milner (2002) p39.

largest proportion (44.6%) of the respondents was found to be “somewhat” interested in New Zealand politics. Only 10.8% of the respondents indicated that they were “not at all” interested in the politics of New Zealand, which was less than the 16.6% who responded that they were not interested in the politics of their home countries. Although Asian New Zealanders’ interest level in New Zealand politics was lower than that of the general New Zealand population (66.9% of whom have indicated that they were either very (19.9%) or fairly (47.0%) interested in New Zealand politics), the interest level was high enough to challenge the perception that Asians were not interested in politics for cultural reasons. As predicted, and further to the social psychology theory, Asians who showed interest in New Zealand politics were more likely than others to vote and to participate in different forms of political activities⁵⁸ (see graph 4.4).

Graph 4.4 Turnout of Asians with different levels of interest in New Zealand politics



-Chi-square .000

-Phi and Cramer's V .229

Influence of cultural values

Although it was difficult to measure the influence of “Asian cultural characteristics”, the survey revealed that Asian values of self-help and a focus on socio-economic advancement continued to influence Asian New Zealanders’ perspectives on a number of issues. For example, when asked what would be the most effective way of representing Asians’ interests in New Zealand, more than one third of the respondents chose “advancement of socio-economic status” (34.7%) over

⁵⁸ Asians who expressed interest in politics were more likely to assist in political campaigns (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .145), make donations (Chi-square .008, Phi and Cramer's V .115), write or phone government officials or media (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .142), attend a protest or demonstration (Chi-square .014, Phi and Cramer's V .108), sign petitions (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .198), and work in the community (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .145).

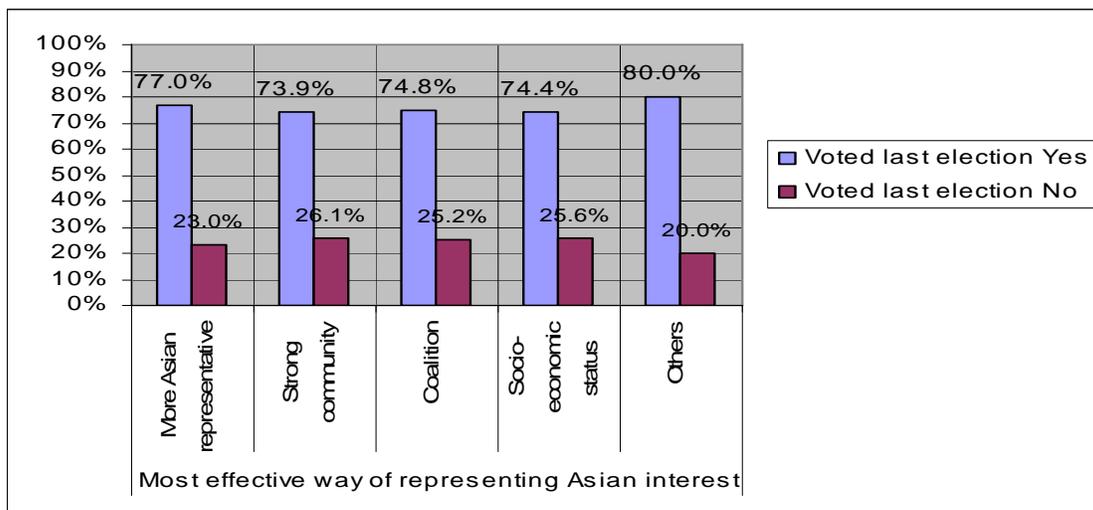
other choices such as “having more Asian representatives in government” (28.0%), “creating coalitions with other Asian communities” (16.4%) and “creating strong ethnic communities” (8.2%)⁵⁹. Interestingly, none of the Malaysian Chinese chose “advancement of socio-economic status” as the most effective way of representing Asian interests in New Zealand, perhaps drawing from their experience at home where high socio-economic status did not necessarily lead to better political representation of their interests. The cultural influence was also evident in a question asking where they would turn for help if faced with problems in the host country. The largest proportion of the respondents indicated that they would seek help from “friends and families” (32.0%) or “try to deal with them on my own” (24.0%), followed by seeking help from “government and other New Zealand authorities” (17.1%), and “ethnic community or religious group” (11.9%). The results again reflected the ongoing influence of Asian cultural values of self-help and strong family ties on Asian New Zealanders⁶⁰. Somewhat surprisingly, the period of residency in New Zealand did not appear to affect the influence of Asian cultural values, as little difference was recorded between earlier and more recent Asian immigrants on these two issues.

Contrary to the cultural theory that Asian cultural traits discourage the political participation of Asian immigrants, cross-tabulation showed little difference in voting rates between those who exhibited strong Asian cultural traits (such as people who chose “advancing socio-economic status” as the best way of representing Asian interests) and those who chose other ways of furthering Asian interests (such as “having more Asian representatives”) (see graph 4.5). Similarly, those who indicated that they would deal with problems “on their own” did not necessarily show a lower participation rate than those who did not exhibit strong Asian cultural traits (see graph 4.6). The results indicated that Asian cultural characteristics cannot, on their own, account for Asian New Zealanders’ low level of political participation.

⁵⁹ Some of the “other” responses included Asian people’s integration into the New Zealand society, elimination of racial distinction, equal treatment of everybody, improved character, personality and calibre of Asian students and immigrants, and more education, advertisement and campaigns on Asia and Asian ethics.

⁶⁰ Although there was no comparative data for Pakeha/Maori respondents, Asian people’s focus on self-help and reliance on family and friends was also reflected in a survey conducted by the author in 1999 among 120 Koreans and European students at the University of Auckland. In the 1999 survey, the respondents were asked what they would do if they become involved in a conflict. More than 80% of Korean students said that they would ask their family or friends to be a mediator, whereas the most popular choices for European students were to hire an independent mediator (45%) and going to a court (30%). Survey results are on file with the author.

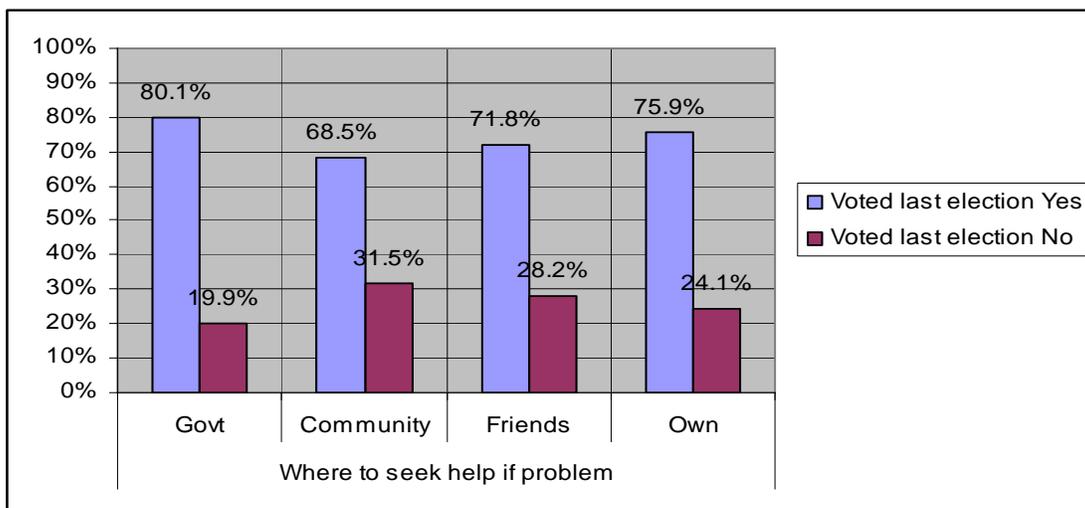
Graph 4.5 Turnout of Asians with different views on the best way to represent Asian interests



-Chi-square .947

-Phi and Cramer's V .032

Graph 4.6 Turnout of Asians with different approach to problem solving



-Chi-square .160

-Phi and Cramer's V .086

Views on policies

The Asian cultural influence was also evident in Asian New Zealanders' views on various policies that might be implemented to assist them. The respondents were asked whether they support: (1) job training and educational assistance for Asian New Zealanders; (2) race-based preferential (quota) systems for Asians; and (3) provision of bilingual services. The respondents showed overwhelming support for provision of training (95.5%) and bilingual services (92.9%), but as

predicted, a smaller proportion of the respondents (61.1%) supported a quota system for Asians. The five Asian ethnic groups showed general consistency in their views on these three issues, although an overwhelming proportion of Malaysian Chinese (77.0%) opposed the idea of a quota system, possibly due to their experience at home where they had been disadvantaged by various quota systems designed to benefit the Malays.

The respondents were also asked whether they thought that the government should provide or ensure: (1) a job for everyone who wants one; (2) a decent living standard for elders; (3) a decent living standard for the unemployed; (4) free healthcare; and (5) free education from pre-school to university. Contrary to expectation that Asians would be reluctant to receive government assistance, the respondents in general showed a high level of support for all five policies, some even higher than the NZES respondents⁶¹. The support was strongest for provisions relating to elders (93.9%), reflecting the Asian cultural value of respect for elders, followed by provision of jobs (79.7%), free healthcare (74.3%), free education (61.8%), and assistance for the unemployed (53.1%). There were few differences in terms of voting rates between those who supported government assistance (for both Asian-specific policies and five other categories) and those who did not support such policies, consistent with the earlier findings that Asian cultural characteristics do not have much effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

Democratic commitment

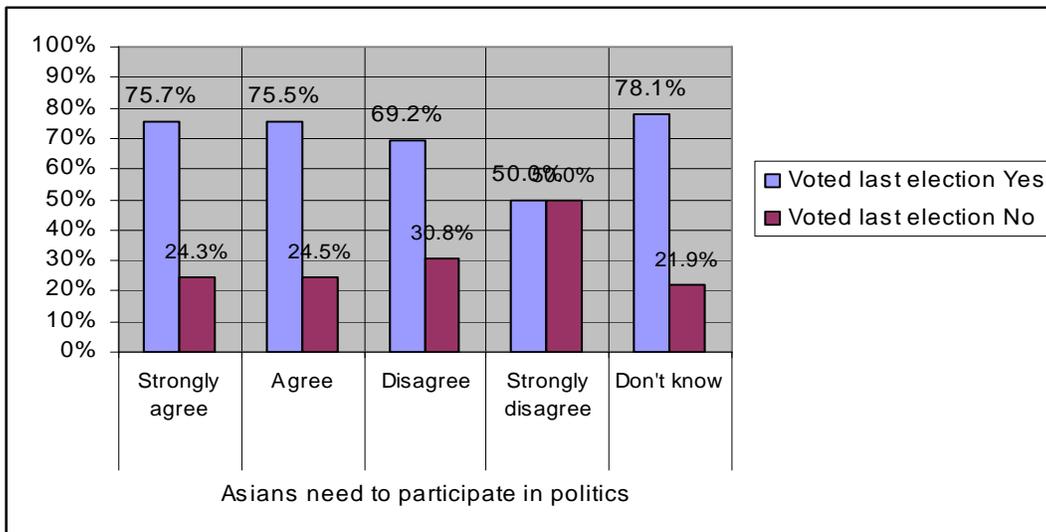
Questions asked to assess Asian New Zealanders' sense of civic duty revealed that Asians in general had a strong sense of democratic commitment. For example, when asked whether they agreed with a statement that there was a need for Asians to participate in New Zealand politics, 94.5% of the respondents either "strongly agreed" (43.0%) or "agreed" (51.4%) with the statement. Similarly, more than 90% of the respondents agreed with a statement that it was a citizen's duty to vote (39.3% "strongly agreed" and 52.8% "agreed"). Asian New Zealanders' democratic commitment was as strong as that of the general New Zealand population, 91.2% of whom agreed with the statement that it was a citizen's duty to vote. Further analysis revealed that the largest proportion of mainland Chinese (96.6% and 95.7%) and Malaysian Chinese (96.3% and 96.3%) agreed with the two statements⁶², China and Malaysia being the countries which had the lowest Freedom House score for their state of democracy. This finding suggested

⁶¹ 94.3% of New Zealanders showed support for a decent living standard for elders, 69.1% for free education, 64.3% for free healthcare, 62.1% for providing jobs for everyone who wants one, and 61.1% for a decent living standard for the unemployed. It should be noted however that the response rate would have been different if tax implications of any such policy had been included in the questionnaire.

⁶² Compared to Koreans (94.5% and 90.9%), Taiwanese (93.6% and 90.8%), and Hong Kong Chinese (91.0% and 93.0%). The differences were statistically significant for the statement that Asians need to participate in politics (Chi-square .006, Phi and Cramer's V .218), but not for the statement that it was a citizen's duty to vote (Chi-square .360, Phi and Cramer's V .162).

that Asians from non-democratic countries may be more appreciative of democratic values than those from more advanced democracies.

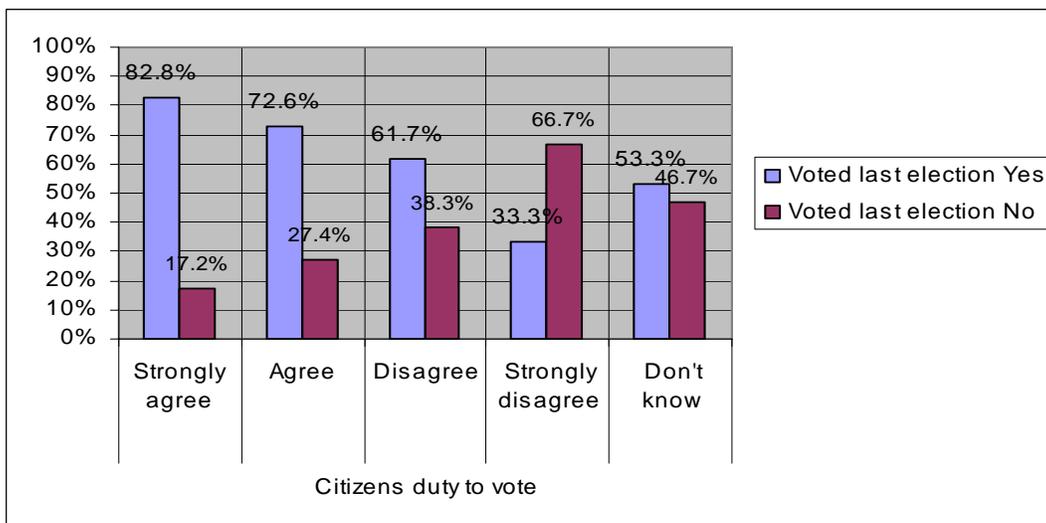
Graph 4.7 Turnout of Asians who believe that Asians need to participate in NZ politics



-Chi-square .893

-Phi and Cramer's V .036

Graph 4.8 Turnout of Asians who believe that it is a citizen's duty to vote



-Chi-square .000

-Phi and Cramer's V .166

As predicted, and further to the social psychology theory, Asians who displayed a strong democratic commitment were more likely to participate in politics. For example, only 50% of those who disagreed with the statement that Asians needed to participate in politics voted, and

the voting rate for those who strongly disagreed with the statement that it was a citizen's duty to vote was equally low at 33.3% (see graphs 4.7 and 4.8 above). At the same time, the survey results challenged certain aspects of the RCM by finding that Asian New Zealanders also thought of group welfare and the preservation of democracy, and not only of their own self-interest, in their calculation of whether or not to vote.

Regression of the cultural factors

Regression of the cultural factors reaffirmed the social psychology theory by finding that Asians who showed interest in New Zealand politics and those who agreed with the statement that it was a citizen's duty to vote were 19.3% and 21.3% more likely to vote when all other cultural factors were controlled (see table 4.3). In other forms of political activities, apart from having political interest which increased the likelihood of signing petitions by 9.3%, factors that did not show much effect on turnout showed statistically significant relevance to Asian New Zealanders' participation rates. For example (and somewhat surprisingly), people who felt that there was a need for Asians to participate in politics were 16.0% less likely to work in the community, and those who supported Asian-specific policies were 10.3% less likely to sign petitions. The analysis also revealed that Asians who supported government assistance policies were 4.5% more likely to work in the community.

Table 4.3 Effect of cultural factors on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Political interest	19.3	0.91**	0.27	9.3	1.29*	0.60	2.5	0.38	0.50
Rep Asian interest	-1.8	-0.10	0.19	-0.3	-0.03	0.23	0.4	0.04	0.27
Need to participate	4.7	0.24	0.65	5.1	0.55	1.07	-16.0	-1.40*	0.70
Duty to vote	21.3	1.01**	0.35	-2.1	-0.19	0.45	4.6	0.73	0.75
Asian policies ⁶³	-2.6	-0.15	0.22	-10.3	-0.83**	0.24	-2.3	-0.28	0.30
Govt assistance ⁶⁴	-6.0	-0.34	0.19	1.9	0.17	0.24	4.5	0.57*	0.29
Constant	38.6	-0.55	0.75	8.4	-2.98*	1.24	17.3	-2.14*	1.04
% concordant	75.4			86.7			91.0		
Cox & Snell R ²	.034			.028			.012		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

⁶³ The three questions on Asian-specific policies were merged into one question, with the alpha statistics of .687.

⁶⁴ The five questions on government assistance were merged into one question, with the alpha statistics of .057.

Regression of the NZES-Asia merged data showed that a sense of civic duty and political interest also had a positive effect on the turnout of the general New Zealand population: those who showed an interest in New Zealand politics were 15.5% more likely to vote, and those with a sense of civic duty were 23.2% more likely to vote (see table 4.4). In other forms of political activities, New Zealanders who showed an interest in politics were 15.5% more likely to sign petitions and 6.8% more likely to work in the community, and those who supported government assistance policies were 3.5% more likely to work in the community. Although the cultural factors accounted for 0.3% of disparity in turnout between Asians and the general New Zealand population, they appeared to have greater influence on Pakeha than on Asians in other forms of political activities – for example, Asians were 63.9% less likely to sign petitions than Pakeha (an increase of 0.7% from when no other factors were controlled), and 17.8% less likely to work in the community (an increase of 0.9%) when the cultural factors were controlled. In contrast, cultural and attitudinal factors reduced the likelihood of Maori non-participation vis-à-vis Pakeha in voting and signing petitions by 3.2% and 0.9%.

Table 4.4 Effect of cultural factors on participation rate – Merged data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Asian	-18.8	-2.07**	0.20	-63.9	-3.11**	0.13	-17.8	-1.31**	0.14
Maori	-4.2	-0.85**	0.27	-7.0	-0.37*	0.15	10.2	0.47**	0.14
Political interest	15.5	0.96**	0.22	15.5	1.22**	0.27	6.8	0.67*	0.32
Duty to vote	23.2	1.66**	0.22	0.7	0.02	0.23	1.8	0.11	0.23
Govt assistance	-2.3	-0.26	0.14	-0.3	-0.02	0.12	3.5	0.23*	0.11
Constant	60.0	0.96**	0.32	63.2	0.13	0.33	17.3	-1.85**	0.38
% concordant	87.1			80.8			78.9		
Cox & Snell R ²	.113			.352			.073		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

4.6 SUMMARY

Contrary to the cultural theory that Asian people's "apathy" is the main reason for their low level of political participation, and that such indifference to politics derives from Asian cultural traits, the survey found that Asian New Zealanders in general were interested in the politics of New Zealand and of their home countries. The survey also found that although Asian cultural characteristics and their previous political experience at home continued to influence Asian New Zealanders' views on a number of policy-related matters, they did not necessarily discourage Asians from participating in New Zealand politics. On the other hand, the survey reaffirmed many aspects of the social psychology theory by finding that Asians with a high level of political interest and a sense of civic duty were more likely than others to participate in various forms of political

activities. At the same time, the finding that having a democratic commitment encourages political participation highlighted one of main shortfalls of the RCM, which struggles to include the psychological gratification of voting into its cost and benefit equation⁶⁵.

⁶⁵ Although Riker and Ordershook (1968) added the “D” term in their participation model ($R=PB-C+D$) to capture the incalculated beliefs about voting and democratic process, the debate on the appropriateness of including the “D” factor into the calculus of voting continues; see for example Blais (2000).

PART C – LEVEL OF ACCULTURATION

Almost all of the studies on Asian immigrants' political participation found the level of acculturation to be one of the most important individual variables affecting the political participation of Asian immigrants⁶⁶. In particular, language deficiency and the "liability of newness" syndrome⁶⁷ are regarded as two biggest barriers limiting Asian immigrants' ability to participate in the politics of the host country. By "acculturation", it means the adoption by immigrants of the language, cultural practices and behavioural traits of the host country – an acquisition of a second culture⁶⁸. The level of acculturation also influences the political participation of other immigrants who are new to the host country, and is not confined to the case of Asian immigrants⁶⁹. In RCM terms, language difficulties, liability of newness syndrome, and the need to obtain the necessary qualifications to vote could be seen as adding extra "cost" to participation for Asian immigrants. Asian New Zealanders' level of acculturation will be assessed in the survey by asking questions on their period of residency, language skills and usage, level of interaction with other ethnic groups, political knowledge, and political partisanship. It is hypothesized that Asian New Zealanders with a high level of acculturation (ie. those who have lived in New Zealand for a longer period of time, have sufficient English skills and political knowledge, interact with other ethnic groups, and identify with a political party) would, in general, participate more in politics than those with a low level of acculturation.

4.7 COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

Asian immigrants' low level of political participation has often been explained in terms of their low level of acculturation, as most Asian immigrants (especially recent immigrants from non-English speaking countries) lack the necessary information, language, confidence, and eligibility to participate in the politics of the host country. In particular, the problems associated with language difficulties have been illustrated in various studies on the political participation of Asian Americans. The 2001 survey found that the largest proportion of Asian Americans identified "language barriers" (22%) as the most significant problem facing the Asian community, and that 48% of the

⁶⁶ See for example, Freeman (2000); Rich (1996); Chang (2001); Lien (1994); Tam Cho (1999); and Uhlener et al. (1989).

⁶⁷ For detailed information on the "liability of newness syndrome", see Cho Y.H. and Kim P.S., "Korean-Black Conflicts and Street Level Politics" in Rich (1996) p79. See also Miller R., "Chinese Community and Party Politics" in Zhang and Ip (1996) 47 at 48.

⁶⁸ Gordon M., *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origin* (1964) Oxford University Press, New York. Gordon differentiated acculturation from assimilation - he saw acculturation as the first stage of assimilation, where a minority group's cultural and behavioural traits become more in line with that of the dominant group. Gordon identified assimilation as large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society, whereas acculturation was something that can occur without a further process of assimilation taking place. See also Teske R. and Nelson B., "Acculturation and assimilation" (1974) 76 *American Anthropologist* 351-367, as cited in Gudykunst (2001) p173.

⁶⁹ Zappala (1999) p2.

respondents were still living in linguistically isolated households⁷⁰. Another survey found that 46% of Asian Pacific American voters had problems reading English, and that 54% would be more likely to vote if they had received bilingual assistance⁷¹. As political participation usually requires an understanding of political issues and the expression of political opinions, it would be extremely difficult for anybody to become active in politics until they acquire sufficient language skills. The language problem is exacerbated by the fact that Asian immigrants tend to socialise mainly with their own ethnic groups, and that they are often too busy adjusting to the new environment to learn English⁷².

Political partisanship is another indicator of immigrants' level of acculturation, because it is an important part of one's sense of national identity and integration⁷³. The fact that only 38% of the respondents expressed politically partisan views in the 2001 survey can therefore be seen as reflecting the low level of acculturation of Asian Americans. Given that political partisanship is often the single most important determinant of whether or not one might participate in politics⁷⁴, Asian Americans' low level of partisanship may be one of the reasons why their turnout is lower than that of the dominant group. In addition, the fact that a large proportion of Asian Americans do not hold US citizenship can be seen as another reason for the low level of turnout among Asian Americans, as only citizens are eligible to vote in the US. For example, the 2001 survey found that 76% of Asian American respondents were foreign-born, and that 32% were non-citizens⁷⁵ who were not eligible to vote.

As illustrated, the cost of participation is higher for Asian immigrants with a low level of acculturation, as they have to incur the extra "cost" of acquiring citizenship, obtaining the necessary information (unless such information is provided in their native language⁷⁶), and

⁷⁰ In business transactions, however, 71% of the respondents said that they mainly use English. The 2001 survey also found that 24% of the respondents used both English and their native language at home, and 26% used English only.

⁷¹ "The 2000 Asian Pacific American Exit Polls, conducted in 1998: Los Angeles, New York City, and San Francisco Bay Area; National and California" (2001-2002) *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* 36 at 38. Asian Pacific American voters were more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to express a need for bilingual assistance.

⁷² Wang L.L., "Exclusion and Fragmentation in Ethnic Politics: Chinese Americans in Urban Politics" in Rich (1996) 129 at 140. Asian immigrants' preoccupation with survival in a highly competitive society supersedes other less tangible goals such as equity, human rights, and other policy decisions; Jo (1984) p598.

⁷³ Gordon (1964); Garcia J.A., "The political integration of Mexican immigrants: Examining some political orientation" (1987) 21 *International Migration Review* 372-389; Finifter A.W. and Finifter B.M., "Party identification and political adaptation of American migrants in Australia" (1989) 51(3) *Journal of Politics* 599-630 as cited in Lien (1994) p247.

⁷⁴ Lien (1994) p247.

⁷⁵ When only citizens were considered, the difference in turnout between Asian immigrants and other ethnic groups diminished significantly. Among citizens, 80% of Whites, 81% of Blacks, 60% of Latinos, and 69% of Asians voted in the 1984 election; see Uhlaner et al. (1989).

⁷⁶ The participation rate could be improved by the government of the host country introducing programs to assist Asian immigrants with language difficulties to obtain the necessary rights and information, although such provision would only be a short-term measure for those who have not yet acculturated into the host

actively exposing themselves to political stimuli. It is therefore not surprising that many studies have found a direct link between Asian immigrants' level of acculturation and their level of political participation⁷⁷. Studies have also found that Asian Americans born in the US participate more in politics than those born overseas⁷⁸: indicating that Asian Americans' level of political participation is likely to increase in the future as the number of second- and third-generation Asian Americans grows⁷⁹. It should be noted, however, that even the most acculturated second- or third-generation Asian Americans who vote on party lines rather than on ethnic lines⁸⁰, cannot escape political discrimination.

Asian New Zealanders

Given that the main influx of Asian immigration took place after the 1987 policy change, a large proportion of the respondents are expected to be recent immigrants who came to New Zealand in the last 10-15 years. The New Zealand Census 2001 found that only 22% of Asians were born in New Zealand, and that among those born overseas, nearly three quarters (125,085) had been in New Zealand for less than 10 years⁸¹. As Asian immigrants' period of residency is likely to correlate with their language proficiency, it was not surprising that the Census 2001 also found that 14.2% of Asian New Zealanders spoke no English⁸². In addition to the short history of immigration, the low level of English proficiency among Asian New Zealanders may be due to the immigration policies of the early 1990s which placed little emphasis on immigrants' language ability (in a belief that migrants who satisfy other criteria would quickly acquire a working knowledge of English)⁸³. Similarly, a survey conducted by the author in 1998 among 131 Korean students at the University of Auckland found that 51% of students regarded language deficiency as one of the biggest problems facing Korean students⁸⁴. Asian New Zealanders' tendency to

country; see Handlin O., *The Uprooted* (1951) Little, Brown and Company, Boston; Piore M.J., *Birds of a passage* (1979) Cambridge University Press, London; Ireland P., *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity: Immigrant Politics in France and Switzerland* (1994) Harvard University Press, Cambridge, as cited in Freeman (2000) p23.

⁷⁷ See for example, Lien (1994); Klepper (1982) as cited in Coleman in Lee (Coleman 2) p34. See also Uhlaner et al. (1989) p283.

⁷⁸ See for example, Junn (1999) p9 and Tam Cho (1999) p1147. Tam Cho found that native-born minorities have the same basic cost and benefit structure as the majority population and therefore behave politically in a manner akin to other groups in the electorate.

⁷⁹ Interestingly however, Lien suggested that participants in other forms of political activities other than voting tend to be foreign-born, and have a shorter length of residency than voters; Lien (1997) p42.

⁸⁰ Freeman (2000) p25; Tam (1995) p246.

⁸¹ The Census found that among immigrants who have been living in New Zealand for less than 10 years, 55% were born in North East Asian countries. The Census also found that 82,086 Asians have been in New Zealand for less than 5 years, and that 24,723 Asians have arrived in New Zealand in the 12 months preceding the 2001 Census.

⁸² English proficiency was especially low among Korean New Zealanders, 26.3% of whom spoke no English.

⁸³ *Report of the Working Party on Immigration* (1991) Working Party on Immigration, Wellington.

⁸⁴ 81% of students regarded getting a job after graduating from the university as the biggest problem facing Korean students, followed by English language problems (51%), lack of motivation (31%) and getting good

conduct business within their own ethnic groups⁸⁵, and to socialise mainly with members of the same ethnic group⁸⁶, may have also slowed the process of acculturation. In general, the respondents' period of residency in New Zealand is expected to show a clear correlation with their level of political participation, as recent Asian immigrants are likely to lack the knowledge and resources necessary to participate in politics.

However, there are a number of factors that indicate that despite Asian New Zealanders' comparatively short history of immigration, their political participation rates may be higher than that of Asian Americans. Firstly, because permanent residency holders are eligible to vote in New Zealand, Asian New Zealanders' cost of participation would be less than that of Asian Americans (who are required to take the extra step of applying for citizenship in order to vote). Secondly, this extended right to vote for permanent residents would have made Asian New Zealanders an instantly valuable political constituency. This means that political parties would find it desirable to attract Asian voters (for example, by providing information in Asian languages and campaigning in Asian neighbourhoods), which in turn could help Asian New Zealanders overcome their "liability of newness syndrome". This is because Asian immigrants who have been contacted by political parties are likely to feel that they are being recognised and respected by the host society, and that they are entitled to participate in the host country's politics⁸⁷. Thirdly, Asian New Zealanders may find it easier to move into mainstream New Zealand society because of the small size of the New Zealand population and the absence of segregated Asian districts. For example, there is no "Chinatown" or "Koreatown" in Auckland⁸⁸, and instead, Asian shops and restaurants are spread throughout the central Auckland city and other main suburban areas⁸⁹. This means that Asian New Zealanders are more likely to interact with other ethnic groups, which in turn would help the process of acculturation into New Zealand society. These factors indicate that the speed of acculturation may be faster for Asian New Zealanders than Asian immigrants in other Western countries, and that the cost associated with the low level of acculturation may be

grades (28%). The survey results were published in *New Zealand Times*, 12 February 1998, p16 (Korean text).

⁸⁵ For example, the majority of Korean businesses appear to be restaurants, Korean food shops, overseas students and immigration related firms, travel agents, and real estate agents targeting mainly Korean New Zealanders; "Ten years of immigration history in New Zealand – Part Two", *Korea Times*, 28 January 2003, p112 (Korean text).

⁸⁶ According to a survey conducted in 1996 among 80 New Zealanders, the most frequently cited negative characteristic of Asian immigrants was that they do not mix with natives; Zavareh M.G., *Investigating Public Attitude Towards Asian and European Immigrant Groups: The Dynamics of Prejudice* (1997) Thesis in MA, Psychology, University of Auckland.

⁸⁷ See chapter 5.2 for more information on the effect of mobilisation efforts by politicians.

⁸⁸ Therefore the stereotypes that are usually associated with Chinatown, such as dirtiness and a sense that the place is out of order, do not exist in New Zealand.

⁸⁹ The extent of Asian penetration into the city centre was such that one reader of the *New Zealand Herald* wrote during the height of the Maori claim to the seabed and foreshore in August 2003 that "I don't know about Maori claiming the seabed and foreshore, but I would like to see kiwis claiming back Auckland's Queen Street"; G.B. of Browns Bay, "Letters to the Editor", *New Zealand Herald*, 23-24 October 2003, pA22.

lower for Asian New Zealanders.

4.8 SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A number of questions were incorporated to assess the level of acculturation of Asian New Zealanders and its relevance to their political participation. As predicted, the survey found that most Asian respondents were recent immigrants who faced varying degrees of language difficulties. Many also lived in linguistically isolated households, and continued to have a close association with their home countries. Their lack of political knowledge and interaction with other ethnic groups also appeared to have a negative effect on their participation rates. The survey findings indicated that Asian New Zealanders' "newness" may be one of the reasons why Asians participate in politics at a lesser rate than other ethnic groups, as various factors relating to the level of acculturation showed a clear correlation with Asian New Zealanders' participation rates in all three forms of political activities.

Period of residency

The survey found that more than 95% of Asian respondents were "recent" immigrants who came to New Zealand after the introduction of the new immigration policy in 1987. Only 3% of the respondents were New Zealand-born⁹⁰, and of those who were born overseas, 13.2% had been living in New Zealand for less than 5 years, 55.7% between 6 to 10 years, and 26.6% between 11 to 15 years. Only 4.4% of the respondents had been living in New Zealand for more than 16 years. In comparison, only 12.9% of the NZES respondents were born overseas, of whom 73.3% had been living in New Zealand for more than 16 years⁹¹. Asians who were born in New Zealand showed a slightly higher voting rate (80.8%) than those born overseas (75.5%), but the difference was not statistically significant⁹². For the general New Zealand population, people who were born in New Zealand in fact showed a lower voting rate (92.2%) than those born overseas (96.3%)⁹³.

As expected, there was a clear correlation between the voting rate and the period of residency in New Zealand, with the most recent immigrants, who had lived in New Zealand for less than five years, showing the lowest voting rate of 38.7% (see graph 4.9). Similarly, the NZES respondents

⁹⁰ This was significantly lower than the Census 2001 data which found 25% of Chinese and 5% of Koreans to be born in New Zealand. This indicated that a large proportion of New Zealand-born Asians were either not registered to vote, or chose not to participate in the survey.

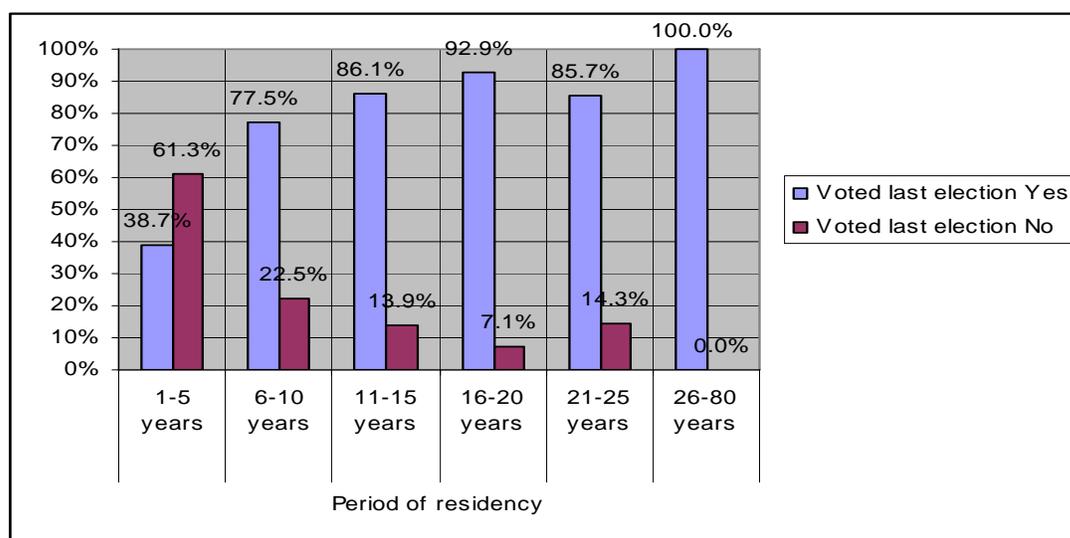
⁹¹ Not surprisingly, almost all (99.3%) of the Maori respondents were born in New Zealand.

⁹² Chi-square .363 Phi and Cramer's V .021. It should be noted that the proportion of New Zealand-born Asians may be too small to have statistical accuracy.

⁹³ Chi-square .023, Phi and Cramer's V -.053.

who had lived in New Zealand for less than five years showed the lowest voting rate of 75.0%⁹⁴. This finding indicated that the turnout among Asian New Zealanders will increase over time, especially since 86.1% of the respondents indicated that they plan to live in New Zealand for the next 10 years. However, the period of residency did not appear to have much effect on Asian New Zealanders' participation rates in other forms of political activities⁹⁵.

Graph 4.9 Turnout of Asians with different periods of residency in New Zealand



-Chi-square .000

-Phi and Cramer's V .341

English language skills and usage

Language difficulty is often regarded as the single most important barrier preventing Asian immigrants from participating in the politics of the host country. To test this theory, the respondents were asked to assess their English reading and speaking skills on a scale of 0 to 5 (0 being no English and 5 being very fluent). Somewhat surprisingly, and despite the fact that nearly half (48%) of the respondents chose language difficulty as the biggest problem facing Asian New Zealanders, Asian respondents recorded a relatively high level of English language skills⁹⁶. For example, 48.6% of the respondents said that they either have level 5 (18.8%) or

⁹⁴ Voting rate for others included 94.4% for New Zealanders who had lived in New Zealand for 6-10 years, 100% for 11-15 years, 83.3% for 16-20 years, 100% for 21-25 years, and 98.7% for more than 26 years (Chi-square .024, Phi and Cramer's V .331).

⁹⁵ Although recent immigrants showed higher participation rates in certain forms of political activities, such as joining a political party, assisting in a political campaign, and working in the community, the differences were not statistically significant (Chi-square .871, .440, .720, Phi and Cramer's V .048, .077, .060).

⁹⁶ This may be because self-assessment of English language skills is often inaccurate in that people tend to overestimate their language skills, or because the survey respondents were registered voters who had been living in New Zealand for at least a year.

level 4 (29.8%) English reading fluency, and 38.6% chose level 5 (15.7%) or level 4 (22.9%) fluency in English speaking skills⁹⁷. At the other end of the spectrum, only 3.7% and 2.7% of the respondents indicated that they could not read or speak English at all (level 0)⁹⁸. Further analysis revealed that language skills have a clear correlation with age (with younger people having better English skills than older people)⁹⁹, and period of residency in New Zealand (with the recent immigrants showing lesser fluency)¹⁰⁰, indicating that Asian New Zealander' English language skills are likely to improve in the future. Perhaps more interesting was the finding that almost 75% of respondents were living in linguistically isolated households¹⁰¹, although a greater proportion of the respondents (28.7%) indicated that they spoke mostly English outside home¹⁰².

Contrary to predictions and overseas studies on Asian immigrants, language fluency did not show statistically significant relevance to Asians' voting rate. For example, 72.7% of those who could not speak English (level 0) voted at the last election, compared to 79.1% of those who spoke fluent English (level 5)¹⁰³. The difference was even less significant for the English reading skills, as 77.4% of those who could not read English (level 0) voted, compared to 77.9% of those who had level 5 fluency¹⁰⁴. Neither speaking nor reading skills showed much correlation with participation rates in other forms of political activities. Instead, those who spoke mostly English outside the home showed a higher turnout than those who spoke mostly Korean/Chinese (see graph 4.10), although the correlation was not as significant for the language usage at home¹⁰⁵. The findings indicated that the frequency of English usage has greater effect on Asians' political participation than the (self-assessed) level of their English language skills.

⁹⁷ As expected, Malaysian Chinese showed the highest English language skills (given that most of them spoke English in their home country), with 63.0% (reading) and 55.6% (speaking) choosing level 5 and none choosing below level 3.

⁹⁸ The largest proportion of mainland Chinese chose levels 0-2 for both reading and speaking skills (38.4% and 40.0% respectively), whereas few differences were shown between Koreans, Hong Kong Chinese and Taiwanese.

⁹⁹ Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .547 (for reading skills), Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .574 (for speaking skills).

¹⁰⁰ Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .285 (for reading skills), Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .342 (for speaking skills).

¹⁰¹ Only 6.6% of the respondents replied that they spoke mostly English at home, 3.1% more English than Korean or Chinese, and another 3.6% spoke equal mix of English and their native languages.

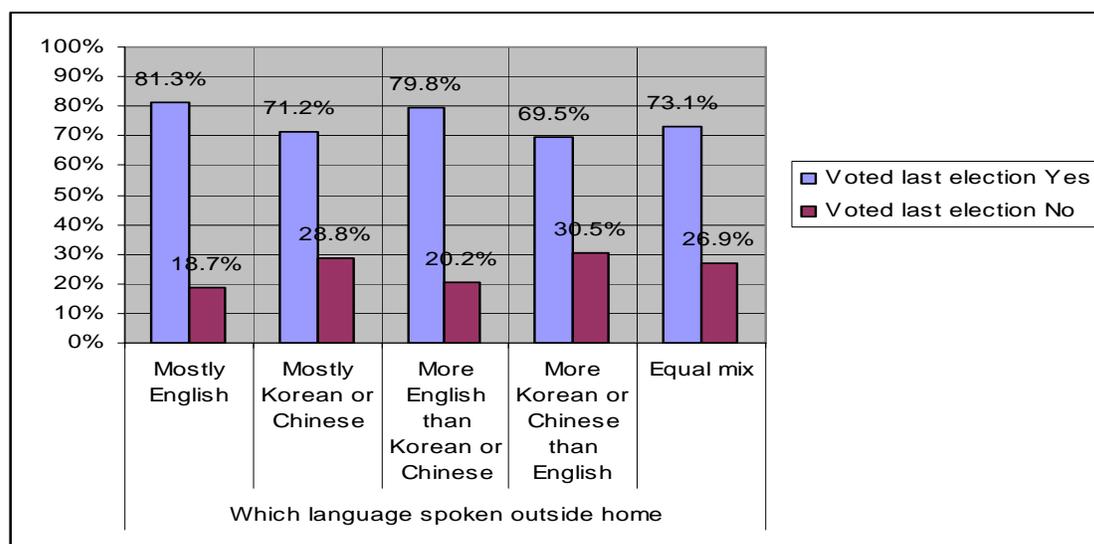
¹⁰² About 20% of the respondents indicated that they spoke more English than their native language outside home, and 13% an equal mix of English and their native language.

¹⁰³ Chi-square .065, Phi and Cramer's V .112.

¹⁰⁴ Chi-square .568, Phi and Cramer's V .068.

¹⁰⁵ The turnout of those who spoke different languages at home were, in the order of the highest turnout; those who spoke more English than Korean/Chinese (84.0%), more Korean/Chinese than English (83.0%), mostly English (80.4%), equal mix (78.6%), and mostly Korean/Chinese (73.5%); Chi-square .184, Phi and Cramer's V .086.

Graph 4.10 Turnout of Asians who use different language outside home



-Chi-square .022

-Phi and Cramer's V .117

Level of interaction

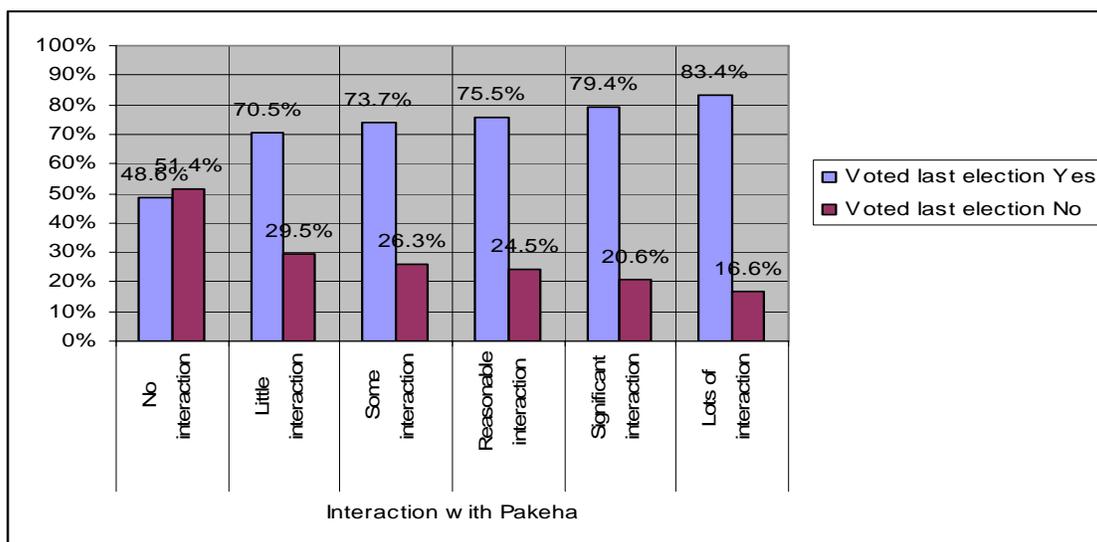
To test Asian New Zealanders' level of acculturation, the respondents were asked to assess their levels of interaction with Pakeha, Maori, Pacific Islanders and other Asians on a scale of 0-5 (0 being no interaction and 5 being lots of interaction). Contrary to popular perception that Asian immigrants socialize mainly with members of their own ethnic group, the survey results revealed that 66.4% of the respondents had level 3 or higher interaction with Pakeha New Zealanders (18.8% level 5, 21.0% level 4, 26.6% level 3). The level of interaction with "other Asians" was also high, with 64.9% of the respondents having more than level 3 interaction (19.3% level 5, 21.6% level 4, 24.0% level 3). However, the respondents' levels of interaction with Maori and Pacific Islanders were significantly lower, with only about 20% of the respondents having level 3 or higher interaction with Maori (20.8%) and Pacific Islanders (19.6%). Whereas less than 5% of the respondents had no interaction with Pakeha (4.4%) and other Asians (5.0%), more than 35% had no interaction with Maori (35.2%) and Pacific Islanders (38.3%).

Analysis of the survey data revealed that Asians who interacted with other ethnic groups were more likely to vote than those with no or little interaction. For example, the voting rate of those who had no interaction with Pakeha was 48.5%, whereas 83.4% of those who had a lot of interaction with Pakeha voted at the last election¹⁰⁶ (see graph 4.11). They were also more likely

¹⁰⁶ The voting rate for those who interacted with Maori were 69.8% for no interaction and 86.4% for a lot of interaction (Chi-square .033, Phi and Cramer's V .126). Similarly, people who had no interaction with Pacific

to participate in other forms of political activities, such as attending a protest or demonstration, signing petitions, and working in the community¹⁰⁷. The results indicated that Asians' integration into New Zealand society (as reflected by the level of interaction with other ethnic groups) had a greater effect on their political participation than Asians' English language skills. Such interaction could also reduce the cost of participation by helping Asian New Zealanders obtain political information and stimuli through their contacts. Indeed, people who have a high level of interaction with other ethnic groups were also found to have greater knowledge of and interest in New Zealand politics¹⁰⁸.

Graph 4.11 Turnout of Asians with different levels of interaction with Pakeha



-Chi-square .000

-Phi and Cramer's V .164

Political knowledge

In chapter 3.2, it was found that Asian respondents identified "not knowing enough about New Zealand politics" as the biggest reason for not voting at the 2002 election. Interestingly, however, Asian New Zealanders in general showed fairly good knowledge of New Zealand politics (apart from the question on MMP as set out earlier in chapter 3.2). For example, 99.1% of the

Islanders and other Asians showed lower voting rates (68.2% and 58.5%) than those with a lot of interaction (90.0% and 76.1%) (Chi-square .005, Phi and Cramer's V .149 for Pacific Islanders, Chi-square .032, Phi and Cramer's V .123 for other Asians).

¹⁰⁷ Although other forms of political activities with extremely low participation rates did not show statistically significant differences, activities such as attending a protest or demonstration (Chi-square .003, Phi and Cramer's V .144), signing petitions (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .212), and working in the community (Chi-square .048, Phi and Cramer's V .112) showed statistically significant differences.

¹⁰⁸ Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .233 for interaction (with Pakeha) and political interest, and Chi-square .004, Phi and Cramer's V .172 for interaction and political knowledge (on coalition with NZ First).

respondents were aware of the fact that Helen Clark was the Prime Minister of New Zealand. 79.8% were aware that enrolling as a voter in New Zealand was compulsory, which was higher than the 70.2% recorded in the NZES 2002 among the general New Zealand population. 56.0% of respondents knew that NZ First was not in coalition with Labour, and 46.2% were aware that Cabinet Ministers must be MPs. However, only 31.9% of the respondents were aware that the term of New Zealand Parliament was not four years, compared to 77.4% of the general New Zealand population, possibly due to the fact that it is common for most countries (including many Asian countries) to have a four-year parliamentary term.

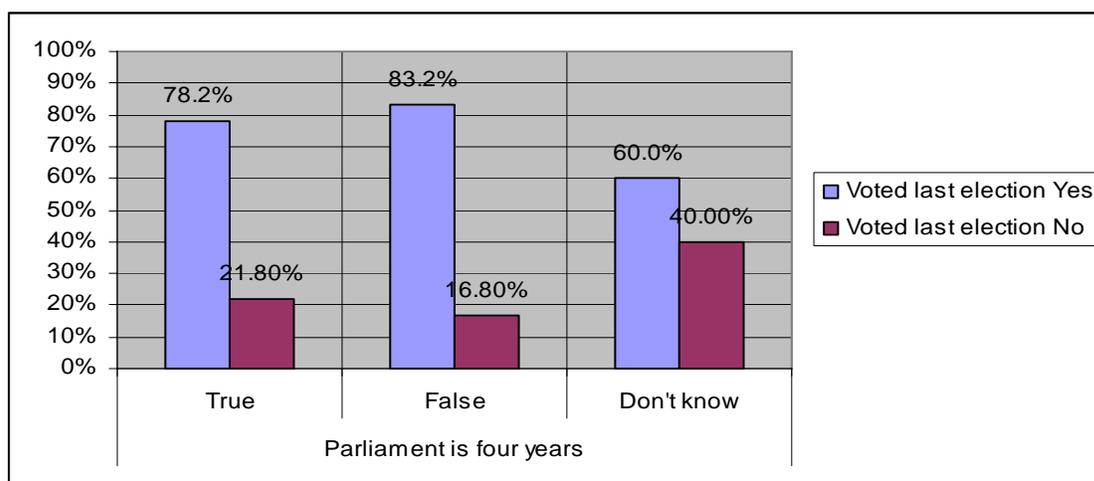
Further analysis showed that people with greater knowledge of New Zealand politics were more likely than others to vote and participate in other forms of political activities¹⁰⁹ (see graph 4.12). In so finding, the survey reaffirmed the civic literacy theory that the level of knowledge is an important factor in explaining individual political participation¹¹⁰. In RCM terms, having sufficient political knowledge can be seen as reducing the cost of participation. The level of knowledge also showed a clear correlation with the respondents' period of residency and age, with those who had lived in New Zealand for a longer period of time and those who were older showing a greater level of political knowledge than younger more recent immigrants¹¹¹. These findings indicated that Asian New Zealanders' turnout is likely to increase in the future as they become more familiar with the New Zealand political system. Somewhat surprisingly, Asian New Zealanders' level of political knowledge showed little correlation with their educational qualifications, possibly due to the fact that a large proportion of Asian New Zealanders received their education overseas.

¹⁰⁹ The percentage of those who had correct answers were: 99.5% of voters and 98.1% of non-voters for the question on the PM (Chi-square .123, Phi and Cramer's V .070); 64.5% of voters and 6.5% of non-voters for the question on the NZ First coalition (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .259); 53.1% of voters and 31.8% of non-voters for the question on enrolment (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .165); and 83.7% of voters and 70.1% of non-voters for the question on cabinet ministers (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .207).

¹¹⁰ Milner (2002).

¹¹¹ For example, only 17.1% of those who had lived in New Zealand for 1-5 years knew the correct answer to the question on parliamentary terms, compared to 42.9% of those who had lived in New Zealand for more than 26 years (Chi-square .005, Phi and Cramer's V .179). Similarly, only 24.5% of those in the 18-29 age group knew that the parliamentary term was not 4 years, compared to 39.1% of 70-85 age groups (Chi-square .005, Phi and Cramer's V .170).

Graph 4.12 Turnout of Asians with different levels of political knowledge



-Chi-square .000

-Phi and Cramer's V .207

Contact back home

Maintaining close contact with home countries can be seen as a sign of low acculturation, although studies have shown that immigrants can adopt the host country's cultural patterns in the public domain while maintaining a distinct subculture in the private domain¹¹². Questions designed to assess the strength of Asian New Zealanders' ties back home revealed that most Asian New Zealanders maintained close links with their home countries, but that the strength of these ties had little effect on turnout. When asked whether and how often they contacted their friends and families back home and followed news at home, 45.6% of respondents responded that they contacted their friends and families at least once a week, and 67.3% that they followed news at home at least once a week. Only 3.7% of respondents replied that they never contacted their friends and families back home. Despite the strong ties Asian New Zealanders maintained with their home countries, there were few differences in voting rates between those who frequently contacted their friends back home or followed news at home and those who never did so or not as frequently¹¹³.

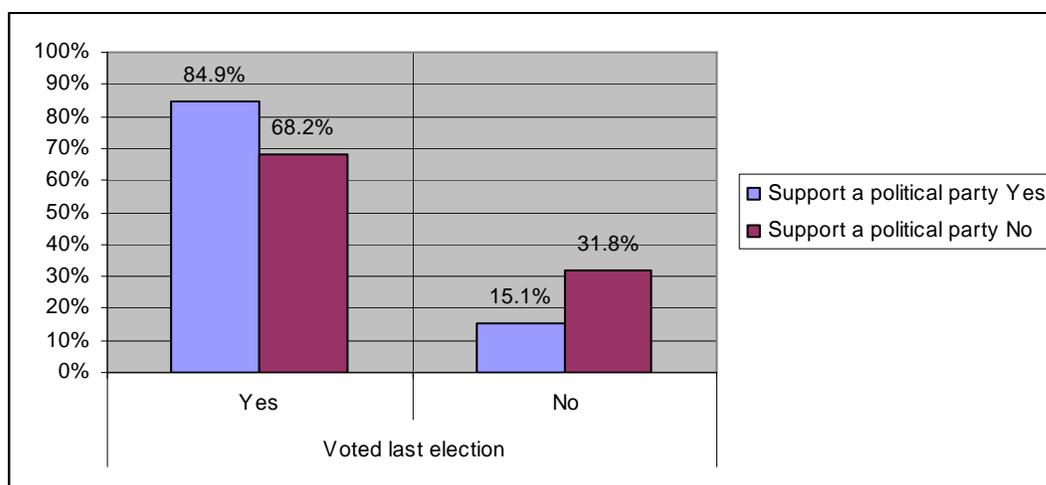
¹¹² Lien (1994) p252. See also Keefe S.E. and Padilla A.M., *Chicano Ethnicity* (1987) University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque; Huchison R., "The Hispanic community in Chicago: A study of population growth and acculturation" in Marrett C. and Leggon C. (eds) *Research in Race and Ethnic Relations* (1988) JAI Press, Greenwich, CT.

¹¹³ The turnout of those who contacted friends back home was: once a week 71.6%, once a month 79.0%, once a year 83.0%, and never 72.3% (Chi-square .083, Phi and Cramer's V .099). The turnout of those who followed news at home was: once a week 74.5%, once a month 81.0%, once a year 80.0%, and never 71.4% (Chi-square .417, Phi and Cramer's V .068).

Partisanship

Political partisanship requires sufficient language skills, political knowledge and confidence that one has the right to be involved in New Zealand politics. As such, it was not surprising to find, as mentioned earlier in chapter 3.4, that Asian New Zealanders' partisanship rate (44.3%) was lower than that of the general New Zealand population (55.6%). Analysis of the survey data revealed that Asian New Zealanders who indicated that they generally supported a political party were more likely to vote (84.9%) than those who did not usually support a political party (15.1%) (see graph 4.13). Similarly, the NZES respondents who identified with a political party were more likely to vote than others¹¹⁴, supporting the theory that the recent decline in voter turnout may have been caused by decline in party identification¹¹⁵. The result also indicated that the level of Asian turnout is likely to increase in the future as Asians develop a stronger sense of political partisanship.

Graph 4.13 Turnout of Asians who support a political party



-Chi square .000

-Phi and Cramer's V .194

Regression of the acculturation factors

Regression of the Asian data reaffirmed the acculturation theory by showing that all of the factors relating to the level of acculturation had statistically significant relevance to the turnout of Asian New Zealanders (see table 4.5). For example, Asian New Zealanders' likelihood of voting

¹¹⁴ Turnout of 96.4% was recorded for those who supported a political party compared to 87.9% for those who did not support a political party (Chi-square .000. Phi and Cramer's V .161).

¹¹⁵ Aimer P. and Vowles J., "What happened at the 2002 election?" in Vowles et al. (2004) pp16-32 at p26, Figure 2.2.

increased by 1.6% with every extra year of residency in New Zealand, and those who identified with a political party were 17.3% more likely to vote. Asians who spoke English outside home were 9.4% more likely to vote, and having a good knowledge of New Zealand politics also increased the likelihood of Asians voting by 9.0%. On the other hand, people who had little interaction with other ethnic groups were 8.8% less likely to vote. Somewhat surprisingly, people who spoke little English were 10.5% more likely to vote when all other acculturation factors were controlled. This may be because those who spoke little English tended to be older Asians¹¹⁶, who usually had more time, resources, and a greater stake in society. It could also be that efforts made by political parties and ethnic community organizations to mobilize Asian voters in their native languages¹¹⁷ have eliminated the extra cost associated with language barriers. Whatever the actual reason may be, the survey results challenged the applicability of overseas studies that found languages barriers to be one of the main deterrents to participation in the case of Asian New Zealanders. Another interesting finding was that maintaining contact with home countries showed the biggest effect on Asian turnout of 28.8%. This indicated that people who were interested in the affairs of their home countries were also likely to be interested in the affairs of the host country, and that keeping close ties with their home countries was neither an indication of non-acculturation nor a barrier to participation.

Factors relating to the level of acculturation appeared to have limited effect on other forms of political activities, although political partisanship and English usage increased the likelihood of Asians signing petitions by 6.7% and 6.1% respectively. Having little interaction with other ethnic groups also decreased the likelihood of Asians working in the community by 6.4%, whereas those who used English outside the home were 4.9% more likely to work in the community. It was worth noting that those with insufficient English language skills were 5.7% more likely to work in the community than those who spoke English fluently, contrary to overseas studies which found the opposite correlation between English language skills and participation rates. This surprising result may be explained by the fact that people who did not have sufficient English skills (usually older recent immigrants) tended to be active in ethnic community organizations¹¹⁸. The survey findings revealed that it was not necessarily the period of residency per se that increased Asians' participation rates in political activities other than voting, but rather the efforts made by Asian New Zealanders to interact with other ethnic groups, use English, and identify with a political party.

¹¹⁶ About 80% of those who indicated that they cannot read or speak English were older than 50 years of age.

¹¹⁷ See chapters 5.1 and 5.4.

¹¹⁸ For example, 25% of those who could not speak English belonged to ethnic community organizations, compared to 15% of those who spoke fluent English, although the difference was not statistically significant (Chi-square .625, Phi and Cramer's V .062).

Table 4.5 Effect of acculturation factors on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Residency	1.6	0.19**	0.03	0.2	0.02	0.02	-0.1	-0.02	0.03
Partisanship	17.3	1.07**	0.20	6.7	0.57**	0.22	2.2	0.28	0.26
Little English ¹¹⁹	10.5	0.60*	0.27	-2.2	-0.28	0.39	5.7	0.80*	0.39
Use English	9.4	0.51*	0.22	6.1	0.57*	0.28	4.9	0.68*	0.35
Contact home	28.8	1.50**	0.58	5.5	0.47	0.70	4.4	0.68	1.07
Little interaction ¹²⁰	-8.8	-0.52*	0.24	-3.1	-0.35	0.35	-6.4	-1.03*	0.45
Knowledge	9.0	0.56**	0.21	1.1	0.09	0.23	3.3	0.40	0.26
Constant	17.3	-2.51**	0.66	0.4	-3.07**	0.81	0.8	-3.58**	1.17
% concordant	77.4			86.5			91.2		
Cox & Snell R ²	.155			.031			.023		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

As questions relating to the level of acculturation were not asked in the NZES, regression of the merged data only included the variables of partisanship, period of residency, political knowledge, and whether one was born in New Zealand¹²¹. It was also necessary to include the variable of age to estimate the length of residency for those born overseas¹²². Analysis of the data revealed that New Zealanders who identified with a political party were 10.0% more likely to vote, and that the likelihood of voting increased by 0.1% with every extra year of residency in New Zealand for those born overseas (see table 4.6). In terms of other forms of political activities, having a sense of political partisanship was the only factor that showed statistically significant relevance, which increased the likelihood of signing petitions by 5.6% and working in the community by 4.6%.

The analysis revealed that acculturation factors accounted for 5.5% of the disparity in turnout between Asian New Zealanders and the general New Zealand population. Yet Asian New Zealanders were still 13.6% less likely to vote than Pakeha, indicating that factors that were not included in this analysis (such as the level of interaction with other ethnic groups and the frequency of English language usage) may account for the remaining disparity between the two groups. The acculturation factors also reduced the likelihood of Maori non-voting vis-à-vis

¹¹⁹ People with level 2 English skills or below were defined as "little English". The two questions on English skills have been merged into one question, with the alpha statistics of .913.

¹²⁰ "Little interaction" is defined as level 2 interaction or below. The four questions on the level of interaction with other groups have been merged into one question, with the alpha statistics of .755.

¹²¹ The "New Zealand-born" factor was not included in the regression of the Asian data because of its statistical insignificance, which showed adverse effect on other factors as well.

¹²² Because the NZES survey used a different format on the period of residency question, the merged data showed the year of arrival in New Zealand (eg. 1988) instead of the year of residency in New Zealand (eg. 17 years), and required the age factor to distinguish those who were born overseas. The "residency" in the merged data therefore measured the recency of immigration – the more recent the immigrants, the higher the figure.

Pakeha by 2.2%. In terms of other forms of political activities, controlling the acculturation factors decreased the likelihood of Asian non-participation vis-à-vis Pakeha in the activity of signing petitions by 2.1% to 61.0%, although it increased the likelihood of Asian non-participation in the activity of working in the community by 1.7% to 18.6%. This indicated that being a recent immigrant does not have as big an impact on Asian New Zealanders' participation rates in other forms of political activities. Maori were 6.8% less likely to sign petitions when the acculturation factors were controlled (which is a decrease of 0.9% from when no other factors were controlled), and 11.8% more likely to work in the community than Pakeha (an increase of 3.1%).

Table 4.6 Effect of acculturation factors on participation rate – Merged data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Asian	-13.6	-1.23**	0.33	-61.0	-2.91**	0.22	-18.6	-1.38**	0.23
Maori	-5.2	-0.68**	0.22	-6.8	-0.36*	0.14	11.8	0.58**	0.14
Partisanship	10.0	0.97**	0.14	5.6	0.35**	0.11	4.6	0.30**	0.11
NZ Born	-1.6	-0.67	0.36	-0.4	-0.04	0.20	-6.6	-0.36	0.19
Age	0.2	0.02**	0.01	-0.1	-0.01	0.01	0.0	0.00	0.01
Residency	-0.1	-0.03**	0.01	-0.1	-0.01	0.01	-0.1	-0.00	0.01
Knowledge	2.6	0.17	0.15	-2.5	-0.16	0.14	0.1	0.02	0.15
Constant	316.7	59.75**	15.14	188.4	10.76	11.02	169.3	6.39	11.79
% concordant	86.4			79.3			79.4		
Cox & Snell R ²	.111			.325			.069		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

4.9 SUMMARY

The survey results reaffirmed the acculturation theory that Asian New Zealanders' newness is a major barrier to their participation in New Zealand politics. All of the factors relating to the level of acculturation - period of residency in New Zealand, level of interaction with other ethnic groups, language usage, political knowledge, and political partisanship - showed statistically significant relevance to Asians' turnout. In RCM terms, these can be seen as factors that increase the cost of participation for recent Asian immigrants. At the same time, the survey revealed that Asian New Zealanders were faced with a unique set of costs and opportunities in New Zealand: having a low level of English skills did not necessarily discourage Asian New Zealanders' political participation, contrary to overseas studies which found otherwise. In any event, Asian New Zealanders' relatively low level of acculturation can be seen as one of the reasons why their turnout was lower than that of Asian Americans. The survey results indicated that Asian New Zealanders' participation rates are likely to increase in the future as they become more acculturated into the New Zealand society, but that efforts are needed both on the part of Asian

New Zealanders and the wider New Zealand society to interact with each other, use English, and learn more about New Zealand politics.

PART D – CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER FOUR

4.10 REGRESSION OF THE ASIAN DATA

In order to assess which individual variables had the most significant effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders, factors that were found to have a significance of .050 or less were put into the overall regression, together with a number of important yet statistically insignificant factors (such as wealth and education). Regression of these factors showed that political interest, sense of civic duty, period of residency, political partisanship, English usage, interaction with other ethnic groups, and the level of political knowledge were the best predictors of Asian New Zealanders' turnout (see table 4.7). Among individual variables, one's sense of civic duty had the biggest influence on the Asian turnout, as people who believed that it was their duty to vote were 22.7% more likely to vote. Political partisanship and English usage also increased Asian turnout by 11.2% and 11.1% respectively. Those who showed interest in New Zealand politics were 12.7% more likely to vote when all other individual variables were controlled. The significance of interaction with other ethnic groups on Asian New Zealanders' turnout was also evident by the fact that Asians who had little interaction with other ethnic groups were 11.7% less likely to vote. The likelihood of voting also increased by 1.5% as the respondents' period of residency in New Zealand increased by one year, and those who had a good knowledge of New Zealand politics were 7.2% more likely to vote. Of interest was that none of the socio-economic factors showed statistically significant relevance to the turnout once all other individual variables were controlled. The findings were consistent with overseas studies on the political participation of Asian immigrants, which revealed the limitations of the socio-economic theory in explaining the political participation of those who have been exposed to different socialization processes.

Occupation type appeared to have the most significant effect on Asian New Zealanders' participation rates in other forms of political activities. Those in full-time employment were 10.6% more likely to sign petitions, and those who run their own business were 6.7% less likely to work in the community. The socio-economic factors, in this sense, appeared to have greater influence on Asian participation in other forms of political activities. In addition, Asians with a sense of political partisanship were 7.1% more likely to sign petitions, whereas those who supported Asian-specific policies were 8.8% less likely to do so. In the activity of working in the community, Asians who used English outside home were 5.0% more likely to work in the community, and those who had little interaction with other ethnic groups were 8.0% less likely to do so when all other individual variables were controlled. The findings indicated that factors that encourage Asian turnout are somewhat different from factors that encourage Asian participation in other forms of political activities. The survey results further indicated that Asian New Zealanders'

participation rates in other forms of political activities would not necessarily increase over time, as factors relating to the level of acculturation did not show as significant an effect on other political activities as they did on voting.

Table 4.7 Effect of individual variables on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Male	-0.7	-0.07	0.23	-0.8	-0.04	0.26	-2.2	-0.24	0.31
Age	0.2	0.02	0.01	0.1	0.01	0.01	0.1	0.02	0.02
Wealth	4.0	0.26	0.24	-3.0	-0.30	0.28	0.9	0.15	0.32
High education	5.3	0.20	0.25	-2.6	-0.20	0.28	-0.3	-0.06	0.33
Fulltime	5.2	0.52	0.35	10.6	0.83*	0.35	2.1	0.16	0.39
Own business	-5.8	-0.37	0.30	3.0	0.32	0.37	-6.7	-1.26*	0.54
Studying	-7.3	-0.22	0.36	1.1	0.12	0.47	-0.4	-0.08	0.51
Political interest	12.7	0.68*	0.33	5.1	0.80	0.63	1.3	0.20	0.53
Need to participate	-4.6	-0.11	0.92	2.3	0.14	1.09	-10.9	-1.11	0.86
Duty to vote	22.7	1.21**	0.42	3.0	0.30	0.57	-0.4	-0.03	0.66
Asian policies	-1.7	-0.20	0.27	-8.8	-0.71*	0.28	1.1	0.21	0.37
Govt assistance	-4.4	-0.21	0.23	4.5	0.39	0.26	3.6	0.44	0.30
Residency	1.5	0.17**	0.03	0.1	0.01	0.02	-0.1	-0.01	0.03
Partisanship	11.2	0.75**	0.23	7.1	0.60*	0.25	2.3	0.29	0.30
Little English	12.6	0.62	0.34	-2.4	-0.23	0.46	3.3	0.55	0.49
Use English	11.1	0.65**	0.25	3.1	0.27	0.33	5.0	0.81*	0.41
Contact home	23.2	1.04	0.70	7.9	0.74	0.90	5.2	0.79	1.15
Little interaction	-11.7	-0.71*	0.28	-2.6	-0.29	0.39	-8.0	-1.43*	0.57
Knowledge	7.2	0.48*	0.24	1.9	0.15	0.25	2.5	0.29	0.30
Constant	-11.8	-4.30**	1.28	-9.4	-4.34**	1.66	4.6	-3.60*	1.66
% concordant	77.5			86.4			91.0		
Cox & Snell R ²	.193			.060			.052		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

4.11 REGRESSION OF THE MERGED DATA

Regression of the NZES-Asia merged data showed that when the individual variables were controlled, the likelihood of Asians non-voting vis-à-vis Pakeha reduced by 6.8% to 12.3% from when no other factors were controlled (see table 4.8). The likelihood of Maori non-voting vis-à-vis Pakeha also reduced by 4.0% to 3.4% when individual variables were controlled. Similar to the case of Asian New Zealanders, factors such as political interest, a sense of civic duty, period of residency, and political partisanship showed statistically significant relevance to the turnout of the

general New Zealand population. A sense of civic duty again had the biggest effect on turnout of 22.7%, followed by political interest (13.2%), political partisanship (7.6%), and the period of residency (0.1% with every extra year in New Zealand). When all the individual variables were controlled, socio-economic factors ceased to have statistically significant relevance even on the turnout of the general New Zealand population.

Table 4.8 Effect of individual variables on participation rate – Merged data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Asian	-12.3	-1.27**	0.41	-64.0	-3.29**	0.26	-22.9	-1.67**	0.26
Maori	-3.4	-0.69*	0.29	-6.0	-0.34	0.18	13.9	0.70**	0.16
Male	0.8	0.10	0.17	-4.4	-0.30*	0.13	-5.0	-0.31*	0.13
Age	0.1	0.01	0.01	-0.2	-0.01	0.01	0.0	-0.00	0.01
Wealth	1.0	0.03	0.18	4.4	0.31*	0.16	3.7	0.28	0.16
High education	1.8	0.14	0.18	5.1	0.42**	0.16	11.0	0.77**	0.15
Fulltime	3.1	0.36	0.23	11.0	0.73**	0.17	3.4	0.21	0.16
Own business	-0.5	-0.10	0.24	2.2	0.16	0.18	-0.8	-0.06	0.18
Unemployed	4.2	0.42	0.41	-0.7	-0.08	0.33	3.8	0.28	0.32
Studying	-5.9	-0.16	0.28	-6.1	-0.52	0.27	3.6	0.21	0.27
Political interest	13.2	0.69**	0.25	12.7	1.10**	0.31	4.9	0.57	0.36
Duty to vote	22.7	1.63**	0.24	1.2	0.06	0.25	-0.2	-0.03	0.25
Govt assistance	-2.5	-0.27	0.16	0.5	0.05	0.13	3.6	0.23	0.12
Partisanship	7.6	0.86**	0.17	4.3	0.31*	0.12	3.4	0.22	0.12
NZ Born	-0.1	-0.44	0.45	0.1	-0.00	0.23	-5.8	-0.33	0.21
Residency	-0.1	-0.03**	0.01	0.0	-0.00	0.01	-0.1	-0.01	0.01
Knowledge	2.9	0.16	0.18	-0.7	-0.04	0.16	1.9	0.15	0.16
Constant	293.3	63.08	18.16	101.6	5.32	12.94	231.8	12.78	12.94
% concordant	88.0			81.5			79.1		
Cox & Snell R ²	.151			.376			.096		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

Individual variables appeared to have a bigger influence on New Zealanders' participation rates in other forms of political activities, to the extent that the significance of Maori non-participation in the activity of signing petitions disappeared once all the individual variables were controlled. In particular, socio-economic factors appeared to play an important role, as having a higher education increased the likelihood of the general New Zealand population signing petitions and working in the community by 5.1% and 11.0% respectively. Property owners were found to be 4.4% more likely to sign petitions than non-property owners, and being in full-time employment also increased the likelihood of Asians signing petitions by 11.0%. The findings reaffirmed the

applicability of the socio-economic theory on the political participation of the general New Zealand population, whose resources were more accurate indicators of their socialization process than that of Asian New Zealanders. Interestingly however, male respondents were 4.4% less likely to sign petitions and 5.0% less likely to work in the community than women, suggesting that political activities other than voting may respond to skills or attributes that women have in greater abundance than men. New Zealanders who showed political interest and political partisanship were also 12.7% and 4.3% more likely to sign petitions, although the same did not have any effect on the activity of working in the community. Perhaps because the individual variables had greater effect on the general New Zealand population, Asian New Zealanders were 64.0% less likely to sign petitions (which is an increase of 0.8% from when no other factors were controlled) and 22.9% less likely to work in the community (an increase of 6.0%) than Pakeha when individual variables were controlled.

4.12 CONCLUSION – INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES

Analysis of the individual variables revealed the limitations of a number of traditional participation theories in explaining the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. Firstly, the survey challenged the socio-economic theory by finding that Asian New Zealanders' relatively high level of wealth and educational qualifications did not necessarily show a positive correlation to their turnout, especially compared to other ethnic groups. This finding was consistent with other overseas studies on the political participation of Asian immigrants, which found that Asians' socio-economic status did not necessarily correspond to their participation rates. Having said that, the survey findings cannot be seen as proving the socio-economic theory wrong – it provided an accurate prediction of the participation rates among the general New Zealand population. Rather, the findings suggested that greater emphasis needs to be given to the socialization process than socio-economic status per se: the socio-economic theory appeared to apply to Asian New Zealanders only to the extent that their socio-economic status was an accurate reflection of their socialization process.

Secondly, the survey revealed that Asian New Zealanders had a strong sense of democratic commitment and a high level of political interest, contrary to the cultural theory that Asians' political inactivity is culturally derived and is based on a sense of political apathy. The cultural theory was further challenged by the finding that Asians who exhibited strong Asian cultural traits did not necessarily participate in politics at a lesser rate. Nevertheless, Asian immigrants' previous political experience in their home countries and certain Asian cultural traits appeared to influence their views on a number of policy-related matters, thereby partly reaffirming the cultural theory. The survey also reaffirmed the social psychology theory by finding that Asians with a

strong democratic commitment were more likely to participate in politics. At the same time, it posed a challenge to the RCM which struggles to include “psychological gratification” in its calculus of voting.

Thirdly, language difficulties, often regarded as the main barrier to political participation for Asian immigrants, did not show the expected negative effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders, thereby questioning the applicability of overseas studies to the case of Asian New Zealanders. Having said that, other factors relating to the level of acculturation, such as the period of residency in New Zealand, political knowledge, political partisanship, level of interaction with other ethnic groups, and the frequency of English language usage showed statistically significant relevance to Asians’ turnout, consistent with the acculturation theory. The results indicated that the participation rates of Asian New Zealanders are likely to increase over time, provided that both Asian New Zealanders and New Zealand society strive to eliminate the barriers to participation which relate to Asian New Zealanders’ level of acculturation. It should be noted, however, that Asians were still participating at a lower rate than the general New Zealand population when all the relevant individual variables were controlled, indicating that the issue of Asian New Zealanders’ political participation cannot be understood solely by looking at the individual variables.

5. COMMUNITY VARIABLES

In this chapter, factors relating to the Asian community – relative size of the Asian population, ethnic community organizations and pan-ethnic identity – will be analyzed to assess their impact on the political participation of ethnic Chinese and Korean New Zealanders (hereinafter referred to as “Asian New Zealanders”). The impact of these factors on Asian New Zealanders’ political participation will again be analyzed, through cross-tabulation and regression, against the three political activities of voting, signing petitions, and working in the community. Various aspects of the mobilization theory and social capital theory will be tested in this chapter.

PART A – RELATIVE SIZE OF THE ASIAN POPULATION

Size matters: in a democratic country where every citizen has one vote of equal value, the size of the ethnic minority population inevitably influences the political strength of that minority group¹. For this reason, unless and until an ethnic minority group becomes numerically significant, it may be difficult for such a group to exercise political influence. This applies not only to Asian immigrants, but also to other visible minority groups such as Latinos in the US and Pacific Islanders in New Zealand². In the case of Asian Americans, it was not until the Asian American population increased significantly in a number of key electoral districts that mainstream society began to take notice of their political presence. The comparatively small size of the New Zealand population meant that the growing number of Asian New Zealanders could potentially have a greater impact on New Zealand politics than in the US, and as such, New Zealand politicians could not ignore this increasingly important and geographically concentrated constituency. This part of the thesis will look at whether efforts have been made by political parties to mobilize Asian voters, and how these mobilization efforts are influencing the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. In so doing, the thesis seeks to test the applicability of the mobilization theory on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

5.1 COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

According to the US Census 2001, there were approximately 12.5 million Asians in the US, comprising 4.4% of the total population. This was up from less than 1% in 1970 and 2.9% in 1990³. About 33% of the growth in the Asian population came from immigration, making Asian Americans one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the US⁴. As such, Asian Americans became the third biggest ethnic minority group after African Americans (12.1%) and Hispanic Americans (9%). The increase in the size of the Asian population had a number of desirable effects on the political participation of Asian immigrants. Firstly, it increased the chance of Asians being nominated as political candidates and Asian candidates securing electoral seats⁵. This

¹ It should be noted that the size of the ethnic minority population may not necessarily represent the size of the eligible voters, as there will be a proportion of illegal immigrants, those who are too young to vote, and who have not registered to vote.

² Having said that, certain ethnic minority groups, such as Jewish Americans, have successfully converted their financial power into political power without necessarily having numerical significance; Wang in Rich (1996) p139. It should also be noted that the case of indigenous minorities may be different from that of migrant minorities: see chapter 6.7 for more details.

³ The Chinese Americans, in particular, experienced a 104% increase in population in recent years (from 806,027 in 1980 to 1,647,472 in 1990).

⁴ Freeman (2000) p125.

⁵ Alozie found that as the proportion of a city's population that is Asian increased, the likelihood of Asians securing a seat in the local council improved; Alozie (1992) p95. Bullock and MacManus have even argued that a minority group's substantial presence in the population is a pre-requisite for that group's council presence; Bullock C. and MacManus S., "Staggered Terms and Black Representation" (1987) 49 *Journal of Politics* 543-552, as cited in Alozie (1992) p92.

was especially so because Asians generally concentrated in certain electoral districts, where they could become a significant political constituency⁶. For example, almost all Asian Americans (95%) have settled in metropolitan areas⁷ (a pattern repeated in Canada, Australia and New Zealand), and most of the Asian members of Congress were elected from districts which have a high proportion of the Asian American population⁸, such as Hawaii (where Asians comprise 47.2% of the population) and California (where Asians comprise 10.9% of the population⁹). Similarly, a steady increase in the Chinese and South Asian populations in Canada, who now comprise half of Canada's four million minorities, enabled Asian voters and candidates to have greater visibility at the 2004 federal election¹⁰. The province of British Columbia with a large proportion of Canada's Asian population nominated at least 20 Chinese and South Asian candidates for the 2004 election¹¹.

Secondly, having Asian politicians and candidates had the added advantage of encouraging the political participation of Asian immigrants, because of their tendency (especially among recent immigrants) to support candidates of the same ethnicity. For example, Tam's study on Asian Americans found that Chinese (and, to a lesser extent, other Asians) had consistently supported March Fong Eu, a Chinese politician, and that another Chinese politician, Matt Fong, drew 15% of the first time Asian American voters in his run for the 1998 US Senate race¹². This tendency appeared to be based on the belief that Asian people's concerns and needs would be more adequately represented by Asian politicians than politicians of other ethnicities¹³. As illustrated, having a sizeable Asian population can have a positive impact both on Asians' political representation and their political participation.

⁶ Oh A., "The future of race relations – diversity, balance and a new frontier" (2000-2001) *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* 1 at 1.

⁷ Nearly 40% of the total Asian American population now resides in California. New York and Hawaii have the second and third largest Asian American populations; US Census Bureau 2000, "The Asian population: 2000" in Lee (2002) p65.

⁸ For example, two Asian American senators were representing Hawaii, and three out of six Asian American House of Representatives were from California and Hawaii; Freeman (2000) pp134-135. In 1994, of the eight Asian American members of congress, three were from Hawaii and three were from California. The other two were from American Samoa and Guam; Coleman in Lee (Coleman 2) p41.

⁹ US Census Bureau in Lee (2002) pp68-70.

¹⁰ Myers (2004) p7.

¹¹ In provinces such as Vancouver South and Vancouver Kingsway, where ethnic minorities make up 69.9% and 67.2% of the population, both the incumbent MPs and candidates were members of ethnic minority groups; McMartin W., "Canada votes – Analysis and commentary", 8 June 2004, in www.cbc.ca/canadavotes.

¹² Although Fong lost the general election to Senator Boxer, he managed to receive nearly four million votes and raise \$13 million; Tam (1995) p242. It should be noted, however, that not all Asian immigrants vote along the ethnic lines. See also Vowles J. and Aimer P., "Political Leadership, Representation and Trust" in Vowles et al. (2004) pp167-183 at p169.

¹³ Lai J.S., Tam Cho W.K., Kim T.P. and Takeda O., "Asian Pacific-American Campaigns, Elections, and Elected Officials" (2001) 3 *Political Science and Politics* 611 at 612.

Thirdly, a sizeable Asian population could increase the likelihood of politicians of the host country making special efforts to reach out to Asian immigrants, campaign in Asian neighbourhoods, and address issues that are important to Asians¹⁴. In the case of Asian Americans, the probability of a representative signing resolutions favourable to Asian Americans was found to have increased as the proportion of Asian Americans living in the representative's district increased¹⁵. Similarly in Canada, the increase in the Asian population led political parties to produce political advertisements in Mandarin and Cantonese on national TV and in daily newspapers for the first time at the 2004 federal election¹⁶.

These mobilisation efforts by political parties are regarded as one of the most important determinants of Asian immigrants' political participation, because contact by political parties could help Asian immigrants overcome the "liability of newness" syndrome by enhancing their feeling of community identification and sense of political legitimacy¹⁷. Asian immigrants who have been contacted by political parties may also feel almost obliged to participate in politics, because Confucian norms teach individuals to see themselves in webs of reciprocal obligation¹⁸. It may also give them an impression that their goals can be achieved through political participation, thereby providing a greater incentive for Asians to participate in politics. Increasing political participation on the part of Asian immigrants could also increase the chance of them being contacted by political parties, as a person's previous voting patterns are often the key variable that political parties use in choosing whom to contact¹⁹. The size of the Asian population therefore has a number of political consequences that might encourage the political participation of Asian immigrants.

Asian New Zealanders

As discussed earlier in chapters 1.1 and 2.4, the total Asian population in New Zealand increased

¹⁴ Lien P., *The Political Participation of Asian Americans: Voting Behaviour in Southern California* (1997) New York, Garland Publishing (Lien 2), as cited in Freeman (2000) p129-130.

¹⁵ Takeda in Menifield (2001) p99. See also Benavides V., "Asian Pacific American Women: Stepping on to the Political Stage and Ready for the Spotlight" (2001-2002) 10 *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* 20 at 21.

¹⁶ "Chinese and South Asian votes could sway Canadian election", 4 July 2004 in www.news.yahoo.com.

¹⁷ Contact by political parties also has a positive impact on the turnout of the dominant group; Karp J. and Banducci S., "Political parties and voter mobilisation" in Vowles et al. (2004) 105 and 113. Goldstein and Ridout found that a citizen who was contacted by a political party has a 0.35 greater probability of voting than someone who was not contacted; (2002) p17. See also Gerber A. and Green D.P., "The effect of canvassing telephone calls, and direct mail on voter turnout" (2000) 94 *American Political Science Review* 653-662; Nagel J., *Participation* (1987) Englewood Cliff, New Jersey, as cited in Goldstein and Ridout (2002); Kramer G., "The effects of precinct-level canvassing on voting behaviour" (1970) 34 *Public Opinion Quarterly* 560-572; Putnam (2000); Rosenstone and Hansen (1993).

¹⁸ See Yum J.O., "The impact of Confucianism on interpersonal relationships and communication patterns in East Asia" (1988) 55 *Communication Monographs* 374-388 as cited in Gudykunst (2001) p49.

¹⁹ Goldstein and Ridout (2002) p13.

rapidly in the 1990s. The number of Asian New Zealanders more than tripled in 10 years between 1986 and 1996 (from 53,541 to 173,502), and the latest Census in 2001 showed 237,459 Asians comprising 6.6% of the total New Zealand population²⁰. As a result, Asians have become the second biggest ethnic minority group in New Zealand, after the Maori population of 14.7%²¹. Like Asian Americans, Asian New Zealanders displayed a tendency to live in concentrated areas, with 94% of Asian New Zealanders living in the main urban areas (areas with population greater than 30,000)²². The Census 2001 found that almost two-thirds of Asians (149,121) were living in Auckland, with the majority (107,802) residing in central and Southern Auckland. Asians now comprise 18.5% of the Auckland city population (within the Auckland region), second only to Europeans (65%), and larger than Maori (8.5%) and Pacific Islanders (13%)²³. The growing number of Asian New Zealanders could potentially have a greater impact on the New Zealand political scene than that of the US, because of the comparatively small size of the New Zealand population and the MMP electoral system which minimises the “waste votes”²⁴ of ethnic minority groups. It is therefore not surprising that the increase in the number of Asian immigrants and their geographic concentration have made New Zealand political parties take notice of this increasingly important constituency in recent elections.

The 2002 national election saw political parties making various efforts to mobilise Asian voters. For example, the two main parties and two minor parties nominated six Chinese candidates to attract Asians’ party votes²⁵, although only Pansy Wong was listed high enough in the National Party’s party list to get a seat in Parliament²⁶. One Korean candidate, Jonathan Ko, was also nominated as a candidate by the Christian Heritage Party for the electorate seat in the Pakuranga

²⁰ With the introduction of discriminatory immigration legislation in the late 19th Century, the Chinese population was reduced from a high of over 5,000 in 1882 to just about 2,000 in 1916; Ip in www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice_p2. The Chinese population increased to 83,320 in 1996 and again to 104,583 in 2001 with the introduction of non-discriminatory immigration policies. The number of Korean immigrants, who first came to New Zealand in the late 1970s, was also insignificant; from 1982 to 1987, less than 100 Korean immigrants came to New Zealand. No accurate data is available on the number of Korean immigrants prior to 1982; “Ten years of immigration history in New Zealand – Part One”, *Korea Times*, 14 January 2003, p112 (Korean text).

²¹ Pacific Islanders comprised a slightly smaller population (6.5%) than Asian New Zealanders at the time of the 2001 Census.

²² Census 2001. Vasil and Yoon noted how immigrants normally establish themselves in places where there is already an established concentration of members of their own ethnic group, and that their dispersal elsewhere in the host country tends to occur later after they know the country better; (1996) pp23-24.

²³ “Into the crucible – A city with growing pain” (2002). See also Macbrayne R., “Changing face of New Zealand”, *Weekend Herald*, 2-3 March 2002, pA5.

²⁴ Under the FPP, all the votes casted for candidates other than the winner are “wasted” in that they are not reflected in any way, whereas under the MMP, the party votes of even the smallest group of people would still be reflected in the number of seats allocated to the party they voted for.

²⁵ Two in National, one in Labour, one in Act and two in the Progressive Coalition Party. For a list of candidates and their rankings, see Beal (2002) p48. Asian candidates did better in local government elections, with the election of seven Chinese local council members and ward members in 1999; Ip in www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice_p11.

²⁶ Later, Act’s 10th ranking candidate Kenneth Wang entered the Parliament, replacing the disgraced Act MP Donna Awaere Huata, to become the second Chinese MP in New Zealand.

area, which has a dense Asian population²⁷. In addition to nominating Asian candidates, a number of political candidates also published their campaign articles and advertisements in Asian languages in local Chinese and Korean newspapers²⁸. In particular, the Act party produced a bilingual website and billboards written both in English and Chinese, and sent out over 30,000 letters in Chinese and 3,000 letters in Korean during the 2002 election campaign to attract Asian voters²⁹. The high level of interest New Zealand politicians had in Asian voters was also reflected in the fact that both National and Labour sent their top politicians to a Chinese pre-election seminar³⁰, and that they both proposed creating a new portfolio to address Asian interests³¹. Further to the mobilization theory, these mobilization efforts by political parties are expected to have encouraged the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

5.2 SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The growing size and corresponding influence of the Asian population in New Zealand politics was evident in the survey. The survey found that extensive efforts have been made by political parties to mobilize Asian voters. The survey also found that these mobilization efforts have helped Asian immigrants overcome their feeling of political disempowerment, thereby encouraging their political participation. In so finding, the survey reaffirmed the applicability of the mobilization theory on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

Contact by politicians

When asked whether they had been contacted by political parties during the 2002 election campaign, nearly 85% of the Asian respondents replied that they had. This was a surprising outcome, especially since only 21% of New Zealanders (20.6% of Pakeha and 22.1% of Maori) who participated in the NZES 2002 had been contacted by political parties³². The reasons why Asian New Zealanders were almost four times more likely than the general New Zealand population to be contacted by political parties can be explained as follows. Firstly, as a small yet geographically concentrated group with distinctive surnames, Asians would have been an easy

²⁷ In the previous election in 1999, Woon-Dae Kim became the first Korean to be nominated as a political candidate in New Zealand. He was nominated as a 6th ranking list MP for United Future.

²⁸ For example, four political parties (Labour, National, Alliance and Act) have used the local Korean media for the 2002 election to inform Korean New Zealanders of their policies; See *Koreatown*, 16 July 2002, No 210, pp59-72 (Korean text).

²⁹ Beal (2002) p43. See also Kriha T., Nicolle B. and Watson G., "Act III: Act's third MMP election campaign" in Boston (2003) pp87-97 at p96.

³⁰ Ip in www.stevenyoung.co.nz/chinesevoice p9.

³¹ For example, Labour went on to create the Office of Ethnic Affairs.

³² The most common form of contacting Asian voters was sending letters or pamphlets, as 71.2% of the respondents received letters or pamphlets. Only 1.0% of the respondents received phone calls and 0.3% emails. More than 10% of the Asian respondents indicated that they had been contacted in more than one way.

target for political campaigners to identify and mobilize (similar to the way the author selected the survey respondents). The fact that most Asians are recent immigrants who may not yet have developed a strong political preference also provided an extra incentive for political parties to make the effort to mobilize Asian voters. In addition, there are a number of characteristics associated with Asians (rightly or wrongly), such as the perception that they are all wealthy and business-oriented, which could have led certain centre-right parties to believe that Asian voters could easily be recruited. The Act party's effort to send out 30,000 letters in Chinese and 3,000 letters in Korean to contact approximately 50,000 Chinese and 10,000 Korean registered voters could partly explain the high percentage of Asians who had been contacted³³. In contrast, New Zealanders who were contacted by political parties would have been carefully selected based on a number of factors such as their previous voting history and support patterns, as it would not have been feasible to randomly contact a large proportion of Pakeha or Maori voters³⁴.

The survey reaffirmed the mobilization theory by finding that efforts by political parties to mobilize Asian voters had a positive impact on Asian New Zealanders' turnout. Of particular interest was the finding that respondents who had been contacted in more than one way showed a significantly higher voting rate (89.9%) than those who were not contacted (55.2%) or had been contacted in only one way (66.7%-78.3%) (see graph 5.1). This indicated that the frequency of contact correspondingly increased the likelihood of Asians participating in politics. The survey also supported the civic literacy theory by highlighting the importance of political structure that encourages political actors to pass on political information to voters, which in turn could encourage the voter turnout³⁵. Among the general New Zealand population, although those who had been contacted were more likely to vote (96.2%) than those who had not been contacted (94.4%), the difference was not statistically significant³⁶. In other forms of political activities, Asian respondents who had been contacted by political parties showed higher levels of participation, but the differences were not statistically significant except for the activity of signing

³³ The figure is an estimate ascertained from the author's random selection of Asian registered voters from the Parliamentary Electoral Data, which came up with 26,294 Chinese surnames and 6,878 Korean surnames (excluding certain common Asian surnames, details of which will be set out in Appendix III).

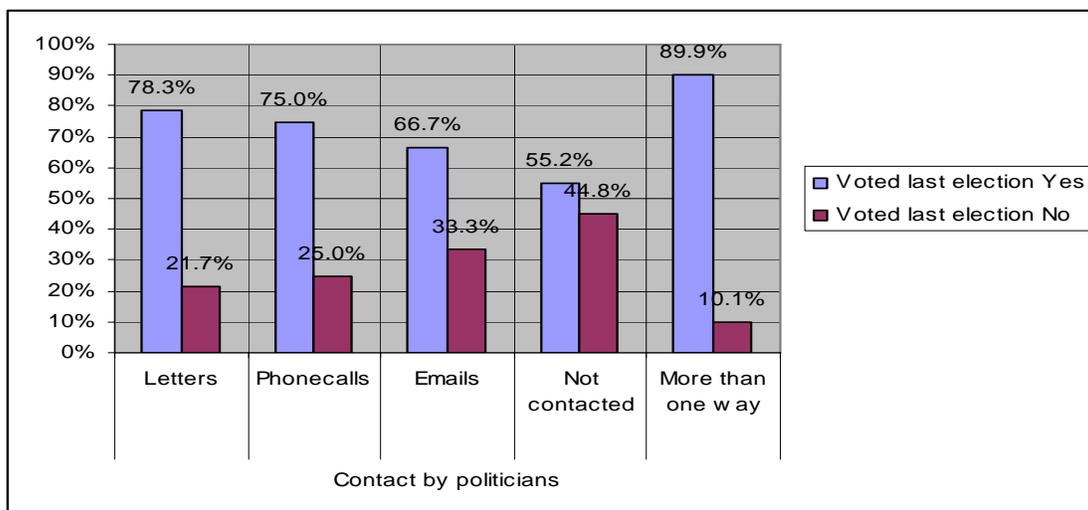
³⁴ See Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) and Goldstein and Ridout (2002) who argued that political parties increasingly target only those who are most likely to vote, for example, by looking at a person's previous voting patterns, in order to maximize the benefit of mobilization efforts. In New Zealand, the Act party sent out 700,000 targeted mails to the "Act audience", which is about 20% of the approximately 2.7 million registered voters. The "Act audience" was defined as those who either (a) already intended to vote Act; (b) intended to vote for another party but considered Act their second preference; or (3) would consider voting Act; Nicolle B. and Kriha T., *Act III: Changing the landscape: A retrospective of Act's 2002 campaign*, sent by the Act headquarters. In comparison, Labour did not appear to have used the electoral roll to target Asian voters - it instead used a mixture of general approach and targeted approach through its sector groups. The Labour campaign manager advised the author that it did not discriminate based on voter party identification.

³⁵ Milner (2002) p42.

³⁶ Chi-square .174, Phi and Cramer's V .034.

petitions³⁷. This was perhaps not surprising, given that mobilization efforts were directed at voting rather than other forms of political activities.

Graph 5.1 Turnout of Asians who have been contacted by political parties



-Chi-square .000

-Phi and Cramer's V .225

Political empowerment

Despite the recent growth in the Asian population and mobilization efforts by political parties, the survey found that a feeling of “political helplessness” was still prevalent among Asian New Zealanders. For example, when asked whether they felt that Asian interests were well represented in New Zealand, less than 25% of respondents replied that their interests were either “very well” (1.8%) or “somewhat” (22.9%) represented. Meanwhile, almost 65% of respondents “strongly agreed” (17.5%) or “agreed” (45.9%) with the statement that it is harder for Asians to participate in New Zealand politics because of their ethnicity. Similarly, only 13% of the respondents felt that they could have “a lot of influence” (2.9%) or “some influence” (10.4%) over New Zealand government policies, compared to 35.4% of the NZES respondents who felt the same way (2.1% and 33.3% respectively). Having said that, Asians who had been contacted by political parties were less likely to feel political helplessness than those who had not been contacted³⁸, indicating that consistent efforts by political parties to mobilize Asian voters could help Asian New Zealanders overcome their feelings of political helplessness. Within different Asian ethnic groups, Korean respondents were more likely to display feelings of political

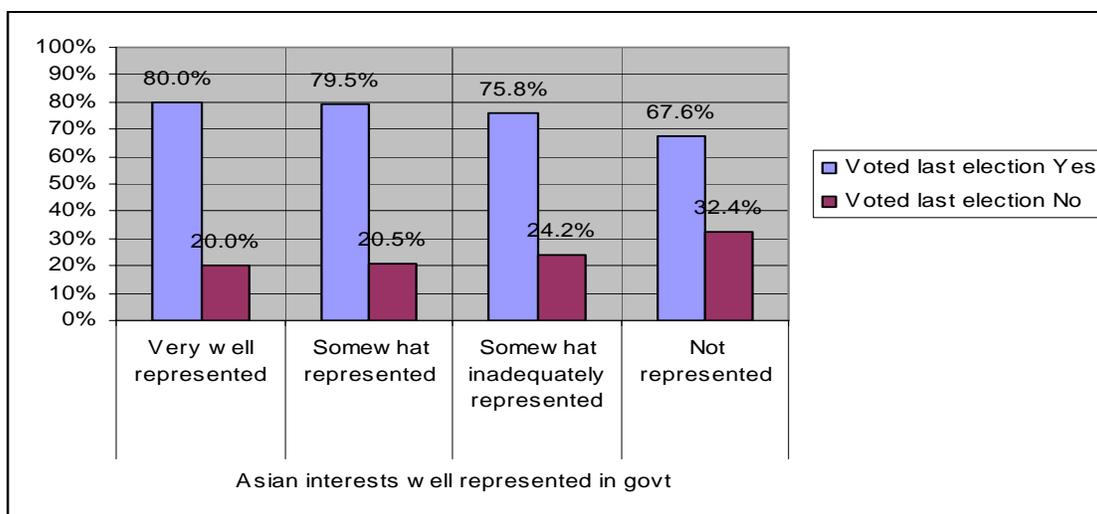
³⁷ Chi-square .018, Phi and Cramer's V .076.

³⁸ For example, 57.1% of those who had been contacted believed that they could have some level of influence over government policies, compared to 42.4% of those who had not been contacted (Chi-square .001, Phi and Cramer's V .116).

helplessness than Chinese respondents³⁹, possibly reflecting the smaller size of the Korean population (and therefore a lesser chance of having their interests represented than Chinese), as well as the fact that there has been no Korean MP in New Zealand.

Further analysis of the data revealed that people who felt that Asian interests were “not at all represented” showed a lower voting rate (67.6%) than those who felt that their interests were well represented (80.8%), although the overall difference was not statistically significant (see graph 5.2). In contrast, people who believed that they could not have much influence over New Zealand government policies, or that it was harder for Asians to participate in politics, did not necessarily show lower voting and other participation rates than those who expressed more confidence⁴⁰ (see graphs 5.3 and 5.4). This indicated that although the feeling of political helplessness was prevalent among Asian New Zealanders, such feelings did not necessarily discourage Asian New Zealanders from participating in New Zealand politics.

Graph 5.2 Turnout of Asians who feel that Asian interests are well represented



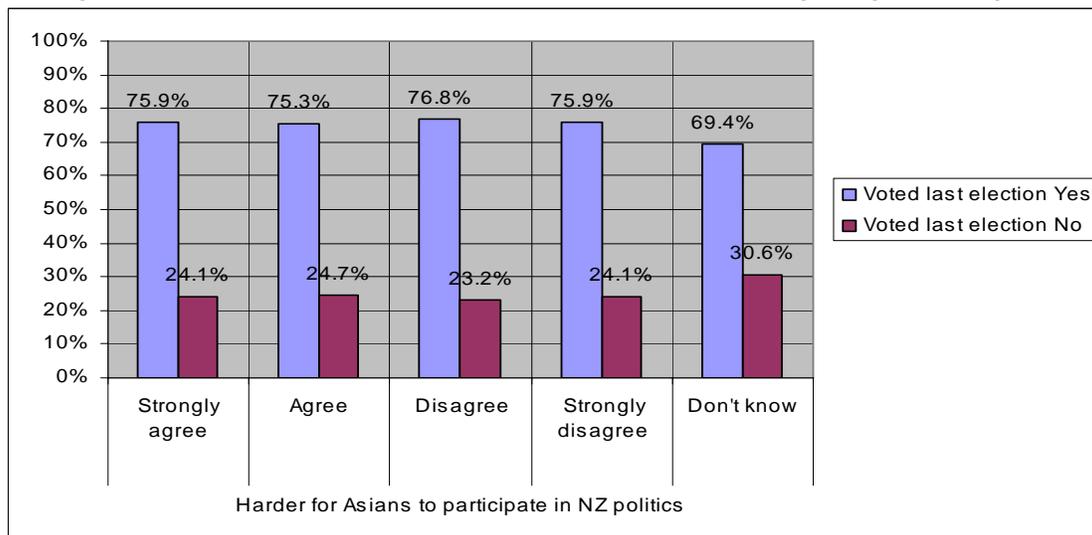
-Chi-square .265

-Phi and Cramer's V .069

³⁹ More Koreans (11.7%) than Chinese (4.9%) felt that Asian interests were “not at all” represented in New Zealand (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .154). Similarly, more Chinese (16.3%) than Koreans (8.8%) felt that they could either have “a lot of influence” or “some influence” over New Zealand government policies (Chi-square .003, Phi and Cramer's V .125). This was despite the fact that a greater proportion of Koreans (88.2%) than Chinese (78.7%) had been contacted by political parties.

⁴⁰ None of the factors relating to the feeling of political disempowerment showed statistically significant relevance to Asian New Zealanders' participation rates in other forms of political activities. Similarly, cross-tabulation of the NZES data showed that there was little difference in turnout between New Zealanders who felt that they could have “a lot of influence” (91.3%) and those who felt that they could have “no influence at all” (91.0%) over government policies.

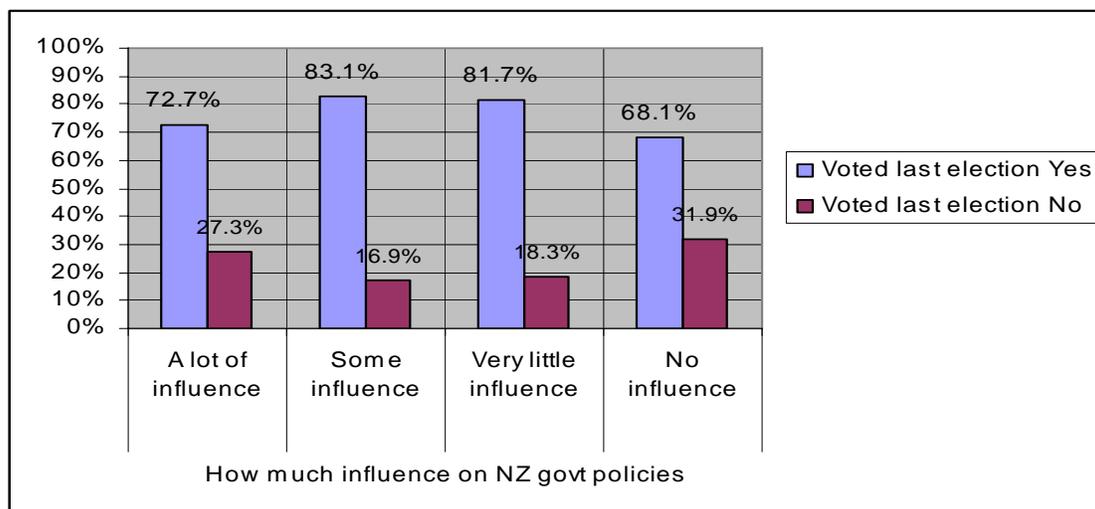
Graph 5.3 Turnout of Asians who feel that it is harder for Asians to participate in NZ politics



-Chi-square .833

-Phi and Cramer's V .042

Graph 5.4 Turnout of Asians who feel that they could have influence over NZ government's policies



-Chi-square .000

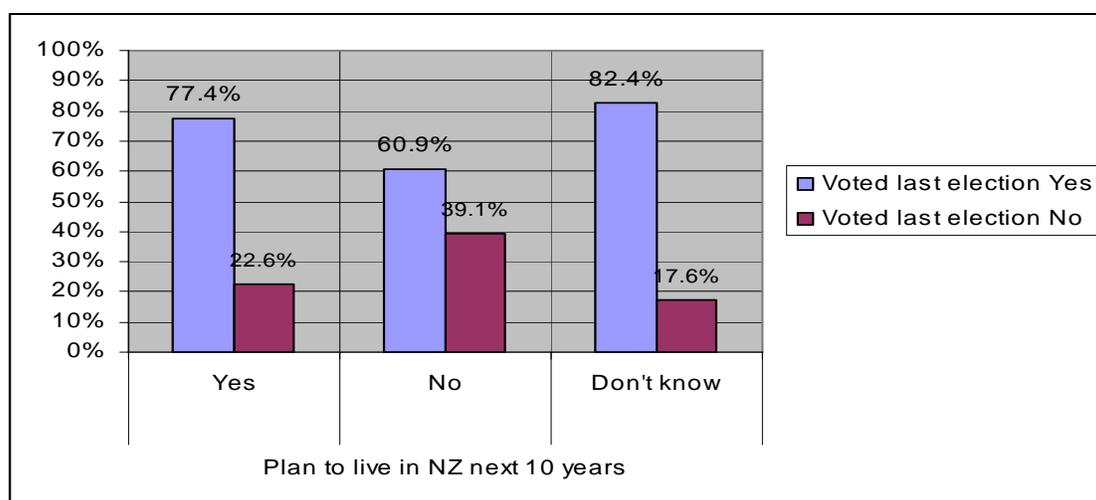
-Phi and Cramer's V .159

Commitment to New Zealand

Given the number of positive effects a sizeable Asian population could have on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders, questions relating to Asians' commitment to New Zealand

were also incorporated to assess the likelihood of the Asian population decreasing in the near future. The survey found that more than 85% of the Asian respondents planned to live in New Zealand in the next 10 years, indicating that the Asian population is unlikely to diminish significantly in the near future (even with restrictive immigration policies). Asian New Zealanders' level of commitment to their adopted country was slightly higher than that of Asian Americans, 78% of whom indicated that they planned to live in the US for the next 15 years. Asians who displayed a long-term commitment to New Zealand showed a higher voting rate (77.4%) than those who did not (60.9%), possibly because the benefit of participation is greater for those who plan to live in New Zealand (see graph 5.5).

Graph 5.5 Turnout of Asians who plan to live in New Zealand in the next ten years



-Chi-square .002

-Phi and Cramer's V .123

Regression of the population factors

Analysis of the survey findings indicated that mobilization efforts by political parties were an important predictor of Asian New Zealanders' turnout, as Asians who had been contacted by political parties were 20.8% more likely to vote than those not contacted (see table 5.1). The finding was consistent with many overseas studies on Asian immigrants' political participation (as well as that of the dominant group), which found that mobilization efforts by political parties encouraged individuals' political participation. A long-term commitment to New Zealand also showed statistically significant relevance to Asian turnout, as those who planned to live in New Zealand in the next 10 years were 16.9% more likely to vote. In contrast, factors relating to the feeling of political helplessness did not appear to have much relevance to the Asian turnout. In

other forms of political activities, none of the factors included in this analysis showed statistically significant relevance to Asian New Zealanders' participation rates.

Table 5.1 Effect of the size of the population on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Contact by politician	20.8	0.98**	0.23	5.3	0.55	0.36	4.0	0.64	0.45
Well represented	5.3	0.29	0.23	3.1	0.28	0.26	2.1	0.28	0.31
Harder to participate	1.3	0.07	0.20	4.5	0.44	0.27	4.1	0.59	0.34
Plan to live 10 yrs	16.9	0.80**	0.26	0.6	0.07	0.36	2.8	0.42	0.49
Constant	39.3	-0.56	0.35	3.7	-2.86**	0.51	-0.8	-3.82**	0.67
% concordant	73.9			87.4			91.6		
Cox & Snell R ²	.045			.009			.010		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

As other questions relating to the size of the population were not included in the NZES 2002, only one variable of “contact by politicians” was included in this analysis of the NZES-Asia merged data, together with the ethnicity variables. Regression of the merged data showed that New Zealanders who had been contacted by politicians were 9.0% more likely to vote, 6.6% more likely to sign petitions and 5.7% more likely to work in the community than those who had not been contacted (see table 5.2), thereby reaffirming the mobilization theory. However, controlling the mobilization factor did not reduce the disparity between Asians and Pakeha, as Asians were 24.6% less likely to vote (which is an increase of 5.5% from when no other factors were controlled), 67.4% less likely to sign petitions (an increase of 4.2%) and 20.5% less likely to work in the community (an increase of 3.6%) than Pakeha when the mobilization factor was controlled. A possible reason for these results, despite the positive effect the mobilization factor had on Asian New Zealanders' turnout, may be that different criteria were used to select Pakeha and Asian targets. For example, New Zealanders who were contacted by political parties would have been selected based on their past history of political participation (therefore more prone to vote), whereas Asian New Zealanders would have been selected (most likely based on their surnames) regardless of their tendency to vote. This, together with the fact that a high proportion of Asian New Zealanders had been contacted by political parties, may explain why the controls did little to reduce the disparity between the two groups.

Table 5.2 Effect of the size of the population on participation rate – Merged data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Asian	-24.6	-2.34**	0.20	-67.4	-3.35**	0.16	-20.5	-1.50**	0.16
Maori	-7.3	-0.96**	0.21	-8.4	-0.43**	0.13	8.5	0.41**	0.13
Contact by politician	9.0	0.89**	0.17	6.6	0.44**	0.14	5.7	0.35**	0.13
Constant	92.8	2.75**	0.14	75.3	1.11**	0.08	24.5	-1.14**	0.08
% concordant	86.5			79.1			79.4		
Cox & Snell R ²	.074			.324			.065		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

5.3 SUMMARY

In advocating the mobilization theory, Rosenstone and Hansen argued that people “want to be accepted, valued, and linked”, and that they accept being mobilized by others in order to be well esteemed⁴¹. This argument has been questioned by many who found it “hard to imagine anyone being able to command the blind allegiance of followers to the point where they would vote just because they were encouraged to do so”⁴². The survey found that this “desire to be accepted, valued, and linked” may be greater for Asian New Zealanders, many of whom displayed a feeling of “political helplessness”. By finding that mobilization efforts by political parties diminished the feeling of disempowerment, as well as encouraging Asian turnout, the survey reaffirmed the applicability of the mobilization theory in the case of Asian New Zealanders. The survey also demonstrated that the size of the Asian population is unlikely to diminish in the near future, indicating that political parties’ mobilization efforts to attract Asian voters are likely to continue. Despite the positive impact mobilization efforts have on Asian New Zealanders’ political participation, direct contact between political parties and individual Asian voters may have contributed to the weakening of the Asian community’s role, details of which will be discussed in the next part of the thesis.

⁴¹ (1993) p23.

⁴² Whiteley P., “Rational choice and political participation: Evaluating the debate” (1995) 48 *Political Research Quarterly* 211-233, as cited by Franklin (2004) p23.

PART B – ETHNIC COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Many studies have found that membership in community organizations contributes to building social capital that in turn encourages citizens to become more engaged in politics⁴³. This is because community organizations play an important “educative” role in teaching citizens democratic norms including how to interact socially and politically, as well as personal skills and resources that give individuals increased abilities and incentives to act in the political arena⁴⁴. Studies have also found that people who are active in community affairs are more likely to be active in politics, because the experience of receiving collective rewards helps people overcome the “rational ignorance” that accompanies non-participation⁴⁵. This part of the thesis seeks to find out whether community organisations, especially ethnic organisations, have the same positive effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. If so, facilitating community activities among Asian New Zealanders would be an effective way of encouraging the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

5.4 COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

The importance of ethnic community organisations in promoting the political participation of Asian immigrants has been well recognised in various studies, to the extent that ethnic organisations are regarded as “probably the best avenue for bringing [Asian immigrants] into the political system as participants”⁴⁶. Ethnic organisations give Asians a chance to participate in community affairs, help them to overcome feelings of disempowerment, and enhance their group consciousness and political awareness⁴⁷. In addition, because Asian immigrants are exposed to different forces of socialization in the host country (such as different media channels, entertainment outlets, religious and community associations⁴⁸), and because they tend to exhibit dense networks among themselves in the host country⁴⁹, ethnic community organisations could

⁴³ See for example, Putnam (2000); Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995); Pateman C., *Participation, Democracy, Theory* (1970) Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; Donovan et al. (2004) pp405-419.

⁴⁴ Putnam (2000) p338; Donovan et al. (2004) pp406 and 410.

⁴⁵ Milbrath (1965). See also Fugita S.S. and O'Brien D.J., *Japanese American Ethnicity: The Persistence of Community* (1991) University of Washington Press, Seattle, as cited in Watanabe in Chang (2001) p377, fn 22. See also Uhlaner et al. (1989) p204.

⁴⁶ Jupp J., York B. and McRobbie A., *The political participation of ethnic minorities in Australia* (1989) AGPS, Canberra, as cited in Zappala (1999) p9.

⁴⁷ See Bobo and Gilliam (1990) as cited in Freeman (2000) p31, which found that group consciousness stimulates heightened Black participation. Kibria also argued that those who were exposed to Asian American organisations were far more likely to attach an explicit political agenda to the shared racial status of Asian Americans; Kibria N., “The construction of ‘Asian American’: reflections on intermarriage and ethnic identity among second-generation Chinese and Korean Americans” (1997) 20(3) *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 523-544 at pp526, 531.

⁴⁸ Freeman (2000) p40; Williams in Segel (1966) p46.

⁴⁹ Rosario L., “Network Capitalism: Personal Connections Help Overseas Chinese Investors” (1993) 156(48) *Far Eastern Economic Review* 17 as cited in Freeman (2000) p1 fn2. Such a tendency is also common in

have a significant political influence over Asian immigrants. This would be especially so for Asian immigrants with limited English proficiency⁵⁰, as they would rely almost totally on ethnic organizations and ethnic media to obtain political information and guidance.

Ethnic organizations could also raise the visibility of Asian immigrants in the host country's political landscape by providing a point of contact for politicians and political parties who wish to reach out to Asian immigrants. They could provide a forum for policy discussions between political parties and the Asian community over policies that could affect Asian immigrants, as well as an internal forum to develop effective political strategies for Asian immigrants⁵¹. For this reason, Asian immigrants are likely to turn to members of the ethnic community group first for assistance and advice when faced with difficulties in the host country⁵². This would be especially so for those who have had the experience of marginalisation in the host country, as such an experience would have resulted in an inadequate foundation of trust and flow of communication between Asian immigrants and political representatives who belong to the dominant group⁵³.

In the case of Asian Americans, there are a number of national ethnic organisations which have been established to raise the political consciousness of Asian Americans and to mobilise them for political causes⁵⁴. These include the Committee of 100⁵⁵ which was successful in launching a 80-20 initiative (aimed at organising an Asian American voting bloc at the 2000 Presidential election)⁵⁶, the Organisation of Chinese Americans ("**OCA**")⁵⁷ which focuses on educating Chinese Americans on legislative issues that might impact on the community, and the Asian Pacific American Legal Centre ("**APALC**") which provides multilingual and culturally sensitive

other ethnic immigrant groups, as it helps to maintain culture, improve life chances, and protect members from racism; Zappala (1999) p6.

⁵⁰ For a list of studies on the unique socialization process of foreign-born immigrants with limited English proficiency, see Tam Cho (1999) p1144.

⁵¹ However, it is worth noting the danger of abuse of power by self-appointed ethnic community leaders, such as them demanding or maintaining special treatment; Kymlicka and Norman in Kymlicka and Norman (2000) p36.

⁵² As a way of example, a survey conducted by the author in May 1999 among 60 Korean New Zealanders and 60 Pakehas revealed that 48% of Korean New Zealanders would turn to friends and family to act as a mediator when a conflict arises, compared to only 2% of Pakeha. In contrast, 45% of Pakeha replied that they would turn to an independent mediator, compared to only 10% of Korean respondents. A copy of the survey results is on file with the author.

⁵³ Mansbridge in Kymlicka and Norman (2000) p122. See also Williams M.S., "The uneasy alliance of group representation and deliberative democracy" in Kymlicka and Norman (2000) p124.

⁵⁴ For a list of national, state and local Asian Pacific American bar associations, civil rights groups and political party organisations, see (2000-2001) *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac*, pp60-69.

⁵⁵ The main aim of the Committee of 100 is to educate and advise political leaders, interest groups and the corporate sector on matters of concern to the Chinese Community; See www.committee100.org

⁵⁶ See www.80-20initiative.net See also Aoki A.L., "Issue focus: The impact of the 2000 November elections on Asian Pacific Americans" (2001-2002) *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* 18 at 19. See also Woo S.B., "What is the impact of the 2000 Presidential election on Asian Pacific Americans?" (2001-2002) *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac* 34 at 35.

⁵⁷ The OCA is a nonpartisan organisation (thus has limited influence on the political process), but makes policy recommendations and suggestions to Congress and executive agencies; for more information, see www.ocanati.org.

legal services and education to the Asian community⁵⁸. In addition, there are ethnic research organisations that provide political resources and references for people who are interested in the political affairs of Asian Americans, such as the UCLA Asian American Studies Centre⁵⁹, the Leadership Education for Asian Pacific⁶⁰, and the Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute in South California.

In terms of political mobilisation, in addition to the well-publicised launch of the 80-20 initiative, Asian community organizations were also successful in mobilising the Asian American community through a campaign against Proposition 187. Proposition 187 sought to impose requirements for Californian public organisations to verify the immigrant status of persons who are “reasonably suspected” of being in violation of federal immigration law (ie. people with distinctive physical features such as Latino and Asian Americans). The campaign against Proposition 187 provoked an unprecedented amount of interest among Asian Americans in terms of voter registration and voter education, although these efforts were unsuccessful in bringing about the desired outcome⁶¹. Despite the shortfalls, these examples illustrated that ethnic community organisations can play a major role in shaping the level and mode of political participation of Asian immigrants.

Asian New Zealanders

Like Asian Americans, many Asian New Zealanders are exposed to ethnic media, socialise in ethnic entertainment outlets, and use services provided by members of their own ethnic group⁶². For this reason, New Zealand also witnessed the creation of a growing number of ethnic community organisations that have the potential to influence the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. For example, with the increasing number of Korean immigrants in the 1990s, Korean Societies were established in every major city of New Zealand. Similarly, there are no fewer than 62 Chinese associations of recent Chinese immigrants in Auckland alone⁶³. Ethnic

⁵⁸ See www.apalc.org

⁵⁹ See www.sscnet.ucla.edu/aasc. The UCLA Asian American Studies Centre publishes the National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac, which provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive information and empirical research on the political participation of Asian Americans.

⁶⁰ See www.leap.org

⁶¹ Reasons for the failure included: (1) an inability to form a pan-ethnic coalition; (2) a widely held view that Proposition 187 does not affect Asian Americans and only affects Latino Americans; and (3) lack of numbers in that even if all Asian Americans voted against Proposition 187, it would still have passed; Bau I., “Immigrant Rights: A Challenge to Asian Pacific American Political Influence” (1995) V *Asian American Policy Review* 7, at pp17, 19, 21.

⁶² Vasil and Yoon (1996) p14. See also Gregory A., “‘Ghettos’ of migrants forming around the city”, *New Zealand Herald*, 16 August 2003, pA7. Examples of professional services provided by Korean people include lawyers, accountants, doctors, dentists, architects, insurance brokers, pharmacists, travel agents, real estate agents, bankers, and many more. Examples of ethnic entertainment outlets include cafes, restaurants, bars, karaoke, pool places, and sports clubs.

⁶³ Ip in Greif (1995) p195. See also Sedgwick C.P., “The Organisational Dynamics of the New Zealand Chinese: A Case of Political Ethnicity” in Spoonley P. MacPhearson C., Pearson D. and Sedgwick C. (eds)

religious organisations also play a pivotal role in the Asian community, not only by providing religious services and a venue for social interaction, but also by organizing language schools for young Asians, educative seminars, and coordinated church services with Pakeha, Maori and Pacific Island churches⁶⁴. As such, many recent Asian immigrants (Christian or not) go to church for help and advice on housing, education, banking and other issues⁶⁵. Although there exists a degree of rivalry and generational/cultural gaps within ethnic organisations⁶⁶, they can be seen to encourage the political participation of Asian New Zealanders by raising the profile of the Asian community in New Zealand, passing on political information, and providing the opportunity to participate in community affairs. Asian New Zealanders who belong to community organisations are therefore expected to be more active in politics than non-members.

The role of ethnic media which passes on relevant political information to Asian New Zealanders in their native languages should also be noted. In the case of Korean New Zealanders, there are currently four ethnic magazines and newspapers which mainly cover the news of New Zealand and Korean New Zealanders, two ethnic newspapers which mainly cover the news of Korea, five Korean radio stations, and one Korean TV channel. In the case of the Chinese community, there are at least nine local Chinese language newspapers, as well as a couple of Chinese language radio stations and TV stations. A 1996 survey on Chinese New Zealanders found that 58% and 28% of the respondents frequently used the local Chinese newspaper and the Chinese language radio station⁶⁷. The ethnic media also plays a role in educating Asian New Zealanders about the importance of political participation. The local Korean media, for example, put considerable effort into educating the Korean community about the New Zealand political system and the importance of political participation. During the 2002 election, the main Korean magazines and newspapers, together with the Korean radio station, ran a joint campaign encouraging Korean New Zealanders to exercise their right to vote⁶⁸.

Tauwiwi, Racism and Ethnicity in New Zealand (1984) Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, pp44-67. The hostility the early Chinese immigrants faced from mainstream society forced them to form numerous regional and national organisations, such as the New Zealand Chinese Associations; Sedgewick C.P., "Persistence, Change and Innovation: The Social Organisation of the New Zealand Chinese 1866-1976" (1985) 16(2) *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 205-229.

⁶⁴ In a survey conducted in 1996, it was found that 31% of the Chinese respondents belonged to a Chinese society and 34% to a Chinese church; Friesen and Ip (1997) p14.

⁶⁵ Sue Norton, "Asian influx a boost to church congress", *New Zealand Herald*, 16 March 1996.

⁶⁶ Lack of cohesion within the Asian community has often been cited as one of the main problems facing Asian New Zealanders. For example, some established local Chinese New Zealanders were among the opponents of the new Asian immigrants; they feared that their Century-old efforts to fit in quietly with the mainstream could be undermined by more visible and outspoken recent immigrants; Chen E., "A new 'Yellow Peril' for New Zealand?", *Sinorama*, October 1996, p11 (Chinese text).

⁶⁷ Friesen and Ip (1997) pp14-15.

⁶⁸ One of the Korean magazines also issued an election special to provide information on voting, such as how to register as voters, who is eligible to vote, how to vote, and how the MMP system works; *Koreatown*, 16 July 2002, No 210, pp52-87.

There have been a number of notable mobilization efforts by Asian community organisations in New Zealand, with varying degrees of success. The most successful example to date has been a political initiative by the New Zealand Chinese Association (“**NZCA**”) to seek redress for the historical imposition of the Poll Tax on early Chinese immigrants⁶⁹. This initiative eventually led to the Labour government’s apology and its subsequent decision to set up a \$5 million trust (to raise awareness of early Chinese history, language and culture). The NZCA set the groundwork for this apology by commissioning research into the full history of the Poll Tax, and formed an advisory group under the Office of Ethnic Affairs to advise the government on an appropriate form of reconciliation. The number of written submissions received in relation to the Poll Tax issue was such that it surprised not only the government but also Chinese New Zealanders who regarded themselves as a “quiet minority”⁷⁰. The Epsom Normal Primary School’s “English Rule” incident of 1996 was another good example of a successful Chinese political mobilisation. A school rule requiring children to pass an English test before starting the school prompted the Chinese parents to join the school board (which had not previously included any Chinese), apply to the Ministry of Education for a subsidy, and raise money to subsidize English classes⁷¹. These efforts by the Chinese parents were successful in making the school board abandon the “English Rule”, which was adopted primarily to deter Chinese and other Asian students from enrolling at the school.

The “Inv-Asia” article written by Pat Booth in 1993⁷², which claimed that New Zealand had been invaded by an alien race, also had the effect of mobilising the Asian community. Various letters were written by Chinese New Zealanders to rebut the claims made in the “Inv-Asia” article, and the Pakuranga-Howick Chinese Parents’ Association made a formal complaint to the Race Relations Conciliator about the article. Although the complaint fell outside the scope of the Race Relations Act, these efforts by the Chinese community resulted in an apology from the suburban newspaper which published the article⁷³. Another example of Asian political mobilisation was the Korean community’s effort to fight off prejudicial media coverage. An article describing Koreans’ favourite foods as “dogs, snakes, octopus, seahorses”⁷⁴ prompted Korean New Zealanders to make numerous telephone calls and written complaints to the *New Zealand Herald*. The Korean

⁶⁹ See chapter 2.4 for more information on the Poll Tax.

⁷⁰ Young 1, pp3-4.

⁷¹ Chen E., “Chinese get involved in Kiwi Politics”, *Sinorama*, October 1996 (Chinese text) (Chen 2).

⁷² Booth P. and Martin Y., “Inv-Asia”, *Eastern Courier*, 16 April 1993, p7. See chapter 6.4 for more information on this article. A similar debate was sparked in Australia by Professor Blainey’s 1984 book which set out the dangers posed by the rapid increase in Asian immigration; Blainey G., *All for Australia* (1984) North Ryde, Methuen Haynes.

⁷³ *Auckland City Harbour News*, 15 May 1993, p1. The New Zealand Chinese Public Issues Group, which was formed to challenge the Asian-Invasion controversy, was also effective in forcing a racially demeaning TV advertisement sponsored by the New Zealand Olympics and Commonwealth Games Association off air; Young 1, p4.

⁷⁴ “Korea at a glance”, *New Zealand Herald*, 24 June 2002.

community also formed a group called “Kyo-Dae-Mo”⁷⁵, with the aim of obtaining a formal apology, ensuring better media coverage in the future and, if necessary, issuing a defamation proceeding against the *New Zealand Herald*. Kyo-Dae-Mo was led mainly by Korean professionals, including lawyers, architects, and local media representatives in New Zealand. The initiative was widely publicised in the local Korean media, and Kyo-Dae-Mo managed to collect NZ\$27,376.75 in 10 weeks from the Korean community. The initiative eventually led the chief editor of the *New Zealand Herald* to send a formal letter to the Korean community expressing regret for the mistake, and promising better coverage on Korea and Korean New Zealanders in the future⁷⁶. These examples illustrated that Asian community organisations are willing and capable to mobilize Asian New Zealanders for political causes, and in doing so, provide opportunities for Asian New Zealanders to participate in politics.

5.5 SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The survey found that Asian New Zealanders who belonged to community organizations were in general more active in politics than non-members, but that their membership rates in various ethnic organizations were surprisingly low (with one exception of ethnic religious groups). The survey also highlighted the shortcomings of the social capital theory by finding that membership in religious organizations did not show the expected positive effect on Asian New Zealanders’ political participation. The ethnic media was also found to play an important role in passing on political information to Asian New Zealanders.

Membership

The survey asked the respondents whether they belonged to various organizations in New Zealand. Contrary to the prediction that a large number of Asian New Zealanders would be active members of ethnic organizations, less than 15% of the respondents indicated that they belonged to ethnic community organizations. In addition, only about 3% of the respondents indicated that they belonged to ethnic sports groups (2.7%) and ethnic business groups (3.1%). Only ethnic religious groups showed a relatively high membership rate of 30.6%. Membership

⁷⁵ This is an abbreviation in Korean for “a group formed to recover the pride of the Korean community in relation to the degrading articles by the *New Zealand Herald*”.

⁷⁶ Whether the *New Zealand Herald* coverage on Korea in fact improved is questionable. Part of the deal between Kyo-Dae-Mo and the *New Zealand Herald* was that they would send a reporter to Korea for more and better coverage on Korea. However, the reporter who was sent to Korea published another negative article entitled “Korea teaching ‘scam’”, which again enraged the Korean community and resulted in many Kiwis in Korea writing in defence of the English teaching programmes in Korea; see letters written by Georgina Guscott, Donna Vitasovich and Peter M.J. Auckram, all from Seoul, to the *New Zealand Herald* on 31 October 2002.

rate of ethnic religious groups was especially high amongst Koreans at 56.0%⁷⁷. The relative newness of these ethnic organizations, conflict within and between various organizations, and lack of strong leadership could all be regarded as contributing towards this low membership rate, as will be discussed further below. The ability of political parties to identify and directly contact individual Asian voters may have further weakened the role of ethnic community organizations, which traditionally acted as intermediaries between the Asian community and political parties.

Asian New Zealanders' membership rates in New Zealand organisations (ie. not ethnically based) were even lower than that of ethnic organizations. The highest proportion of Asian New Zealanders were found to be members of religious groups (12.8%), followed by business groups (10.2%), sports groups (7.1%), community groups (6.7%), and trade unions (1.9%). Asian New Zealanders' membership rate in political parties was also low at 2.0%, compared to 4.6% of New Zealanders who identified themselves as political party members. Interestingly, more Asians belonged to New Zealand business groups (10.2%) than the general population (4.2%), whereas Asians' membership rate in trade unions (1.9%) was considerably lower than that of the general population (11.8%). The findings could be seen as providing yet another reason why Asian New Zealanders showed more support for centre-right parties than centre-left parties.

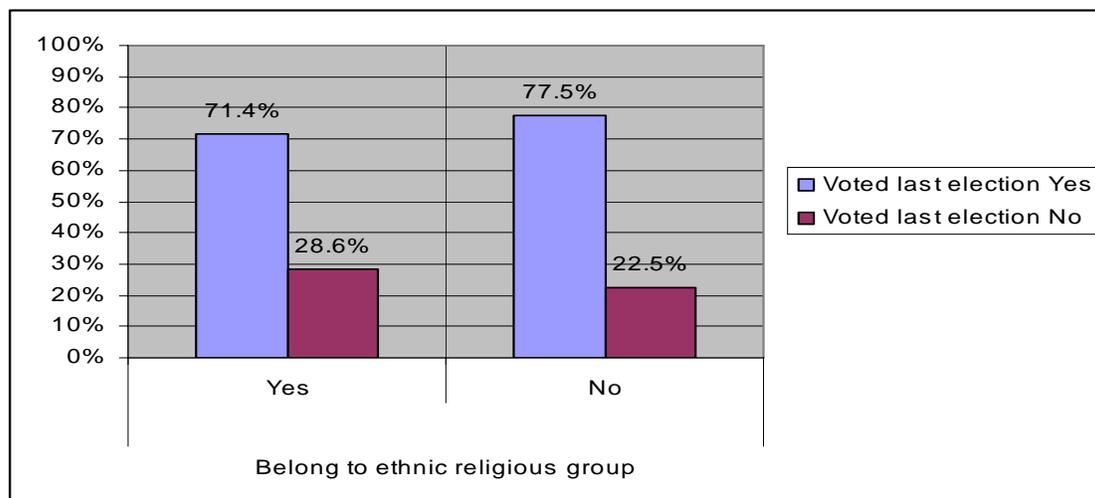
As predicted by the social capital theory, Asian New Zealanders who belonged to ethnic or New Zealand organizations were more likely to vote than those who did not belong to any organizations⁷⁸. The voting rates for those who belonged to various organizations were, in the order of highest voting rate, trade unions (94.1%), New Zealand community organizations (90.7%), New Zealand business organizations (86.5%), New Zealand sports organizations (84.7%), ethnic business organizations (84.0%), ethnic community organizations (83.7%), New Zealand religious organizations (82.6%), ethnic sports organizations (75.0%), and ethnic religious organizations (71.4%). Asians who belonged to New Zealand organizations showed higher voting rates than those who belonged to ethnic organizations, possibly because the former have a higher level of interaction with other ethnic groups, use English more, and are exposed to greater political stimuli through wider social networking. Somewhat surprisingly, membership in ethnic religious organizations showed a negative correlation to Asian New Zealanders' turnout, as only 71.4% of the respondents who belonged to ethnic religious groups voted at the 2002 election (see graph 5.6). Membership in organizations also had a positive effect on Asian New

⁷⁷ Similarly, a study in the US found that over 75% of Korean Americans were affiliated with one of the Korean immigrant churches, and that ethnic religious groups played a major role in stimulating social interaction and preserving Korean culture; Min P. (ed) *Asian Americans* (1995) Sage Publishers, Thousand Oaks, CA.

⁷⁸ Similarly, New Zealanders who belonged to trade unions or business organizations showed higher voting rates than non-members. 97.2% of those who belonged to trade unions voted, compared to 92.1% of non-members (Chi-square .006, Phi and Cramer's V -.063). 98.4% of business organization members voted, compared to 92.5% of non-members (Chi-square .055, Phi and Cramer's V -.045).

Zealanders' participation rates in other forms of political activities, with the exception of ethnic religious organizations and New Zealand religious organizations⁷⁹.

Graph 5.6 Turnout of Asians who belong to ethnic religious groups



-Chi-square .036

-Phi and Cramer's V .065

This leaves the question of why religious organizations did not have the same positive effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders – after all, religious organizations provide the same opportunity for Asians to participate in community affairs and learn civic virtues. A similar puzzle was raised in an earlier study by Donovan et al.⁸⁰, which found that contrary to US studies that church group membership increased individual's participation rate⁸¹, membership in church groups did not have any effect on the general New Zealand population. The reason for this may be that the nature of religious organizations in New Zealand differs from that of the US⁸², or that New Zealand religious organizations discourage their members from taking part in other forms of civic engagement⁸³. Whatever the actual reason may be, the survey findings questioned the universal applicability of the theory that membership in organizations has a positive effect on individuals' political participation.

⁷⁹ Whereas most respondents who belonged to ethnic or New Zealand organisations showed higher participation rates in most political activities, those who belonged to ethnic and New Zealand religious organizations were less likely than non-members to have participated in political activities such as donating money and writing to government or media, although the differences were not statistically significant.

⁸⁰ Donovan, Bowler, Hanneman and Karp (2004) p417.

⁸¹ Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995), Putnam (2000) p339.

⁸² Donovan, Bowler, Hanneman and Karp (2004) p417. This was explained in terms of New Zealand having a unique religious context, such as having a significant proportion of Anglicans (24%) and non-religious affiliated people (25%), compared to the US where 62% were protestant and 9% claimed no affiliation.

⁸³ See for example, Milner (2002) pp18-19.

Satisfaction rate

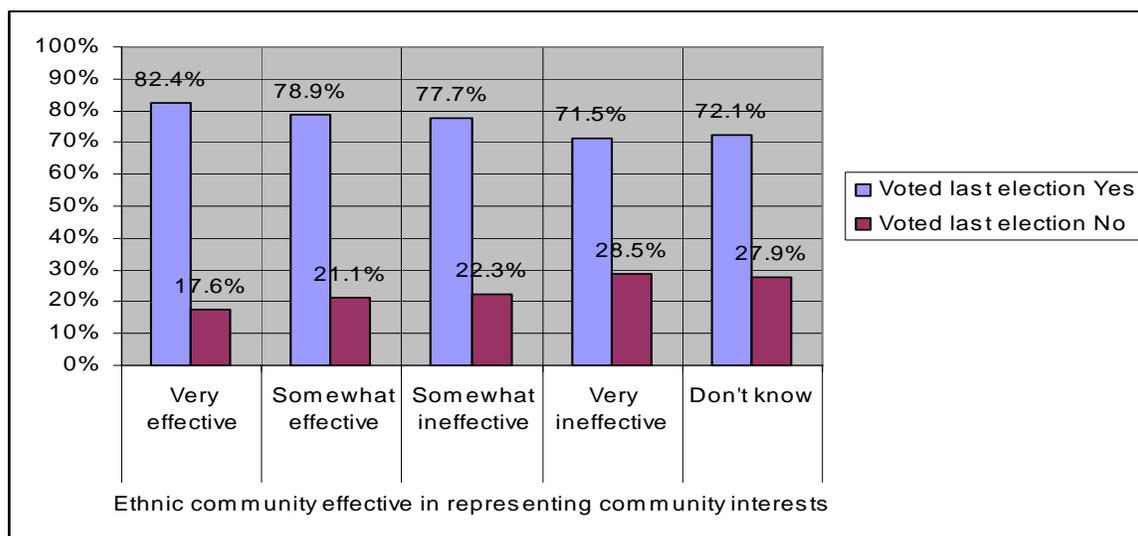
In addition to having a low membership rate, ethnic community organizations in New Zealand did not appear to have earned much respect from Asian New Zealanders for their role in representing the community's interests and solving the community's problems. Only 4.0% of the respondents regarded ethnic organizations as "very effective" in representing the community's interests, although 30.5% regarded them as "somewhat effective" in doing so. Ethnic community organizations also received a low approval rate for their role in solving the community's problems, with only 26.6% regarding the organizations as "very effective" (3.3%) or "somewhat effective" (23.3%). Nearly a quarter of the respondents displayed their lack of awareness of and interest in the affairs of ethnic organizations by choosing "don't know" as the answer⁸⁴. This ignorance may be one of the reasons for Asian New Zealanders' low level of satisfaction with organizations' performance, as the satisfaction rate among those who belonged to ethnic community organizations was higher than non-members⁸⁵. As briefly mentioned above, factors such as the newness of the organizations, conflict between older and younger generations, non-accountability of self-appointed organizational leaders, and the diminished role of the ethnic community organizations could all have contributed to this low level of satisfaction.

Cross-tabulation revealed that people who were satisfied with ethnic organizations' performances were more likely than those who were not as satisfied to have voted at the last election, but the differences were not statistically significant (see graphs 5.7 and 5.8). In other forms of political activities, the satisfaction rate with ethnic organizations' performance did not show much correlation to Asians' participation rates.

⁸⁴ 23.8% for the question on representation, 26.6% for the question on solving problems. The largest proportion of Koreans and Taiwanese (both approximately 84%) expressed their views on these two questions (whether positive or negative), reflecting their high level of interest in the affairs of ethnic community organizations.

⁸⁵ 45.1% of the members believed that ethnic organizations were "very" or "somewhat" effective in representing the community's interests, and 41.2% believed that the organizations were effective in solving the community's problems.

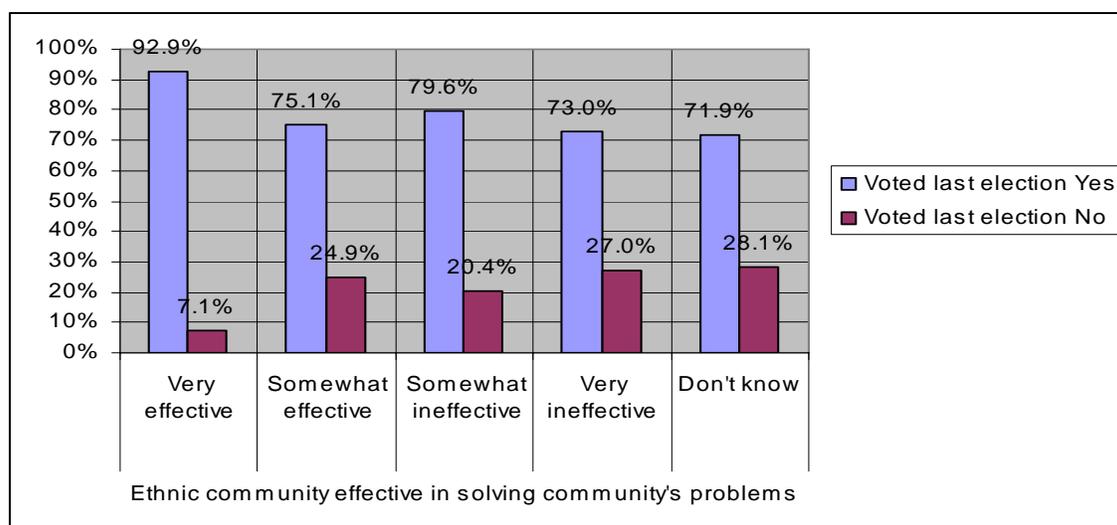
Graph 5.7 Turnout of Asians who believe that ethnic community organizations are effective in representing the community's interests



-Chi-square .234

-Phi Cramer's V .082

Graph 5.8 Turnout of Asians who believe that ethnic community organizations are effective in solving the community's problems



-Chi-square .076

-Phi Cramer's V .101

Source of political information

The influence of the ethnic community was also evident in the finding that Asian New Zealanders rely more heavily on the ethnic media than the New Zealand media to obtain political information.

When asked to identify their main sources of political information, more than 60% of the respondents indicated that they obtained such information from TV news⁸⁶, followed by Korean or Chinese newspapers (54.8%), New Zealand newspapers (35.7%), the internet (34.9%), Korean or Chinese radio (25.8%), friends and families (22.2%), and New Zealand radio (18.8%). The findings indicated that the ethnic media played an important role in shaping Asian New Zealanders' political perceptions, especially at a time when community organizations appeared to be losing their relevance. Asian New Zealanders' reliance on the ethnic media, which provide information in their native languages, could also explain why language difficulties were not a major barrier to participation for Asian New Zealanders⁸⁷. The voting rates for Asians who used different media channels, in the order of highest voting rates, were: New Zealand radio (84.8%), New Zealand newspapers (81.0%), ethnic radio (79.4%), friends and families (79.3%), TV news (79.0%), ethnic newspapers (76.3%), and the internet (74.1%). Perhaps not surprisingly, Asian New Zealanders who obtained political information from the New Zealand media showed higher voting rates than those who obtained information from the ethnic media (as the former would have been more acculturated into New Zealand society).

Regression of the factors relating to community organisations

Because of Asian New Zealanders' extremely low membership rates in a number of organizations, regression of the Asian data included only those organizations which had a higher than 3% membership rate. It revealed that although membership in organizations had a positive correlation to the Asian turnout (with the exception of membership in ethnic religious organizations), only membership in ethnic community organizations showed a statistically significant relevance of 10.9% when all other factors were controlled (see table 5.3). Membership in organizations appeared to play a greater role in other forms of political activities, as Asians who belonged to New Zealand business organizations were 14.9% more likely to sign petitions and 7.3% more likely to work in the community. Those who belonged to ethnic community organizations were also 11.3% more likely to sign petitions and 14.2% more likely to work in the community when the factors included in this analysis were controlled. In addition, Asians who belonged to New Zealand religious organizations were 11.7% more likely to sign petitions, and membership in New Zealand community organizations increased the likelihood of Asians working in the community by 20.7%. In so finding, the survey reaffirmed the social capital theory that people who belong to voluntary organizations are more likely to be political active, especially in political activities other than voting. In contrast, Asian New Zealanders' view on the effectiveness

⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the questionnaire did not distinguish between New Zealand TV and ethnic TV (World TV), although the latter was cited by a number of respondents. Most respondents chose more than one answer.

⁸⁷ See chapter 4.8.

of ethnic organizations did not show much relevance to their turnout or participation rates in other forms of political activities.

Table 5.3 Effect of ethnic community organizations on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Ethnic community	10.9	0.75*	0.30	11.3	0.82**	0.26	14.2	1.30**	0.29
Ethnic religious	-5.1	-0.28	0.21	-3.5	-0.35	0.28	-1.8	-0.29	0.33
NZ community	8.5	0.70	0.49	1.9	0.11	0.38	20.7	1.50**	0.35
NZ religious	6.7	0.38	0.33	11.7	0.94**	0.35	2.0	0.30	0.45
NZ sport	7.4	0.55	0.43	7.3	0.48	0.36	3.2	0.25	0.44
NZ business	8.8	0.63	0.36	14.9	0.99**	0.29	7.3	0.72*	0.36
Effectiveness ⁸⁸	1.9	0.10	0.20	0.5	0.06	0.23	4.1	0.53	0.28
Constant	73.6	1.01**	0.16	9.5	-2.22**	0.20	3.6	-3.07**	0.27
% concordant	77.0			85.7			90.8		
Cox & Snell R ²	.032			.045			.073		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

Regression of the NZES-Asia merged data also reaffirmed the social capital theory by showing that membership in trade unions and New Zealand business organizations increased New Zealanders' likelihood of voting by 6.3% and 9.3% respectively (see table 5.4). Having said that, the likelihood of Asian or Maori non-voting vis-à-vis Pakeha did not show any improvement when the organisational factors were controlled; Asians were 19.2% less likely to vote (which is an increase of 0.1% from when no other factors were controlled), and Maori were 7.7% less likely to vote (an increase of 0.3%) than Pakeha. In other forms of political activities, New Zealanders who belonged to business organizations were 13.3% more likely to sign petitions and 12.3% more likely to work in the community, and those who belonged to trade unions were 12.3% more likely to sign petitions and 20.8% more likely to work in the community. Unlike the effect on the act of voting, the likelihood of Asian non-participation vis-à-vis Pakeha was reduced by 0.3% to 62.9% for the act of signing petitions, and by 1.2% to 15.7% for the act of working in the community. The findings suggested that organizational membership was a better predictor of Asian New Zealanders' participation in political activities other than voting.

⁸⁸ The two questions were merged into one, with the alpha statistics of .901.

Table 5.4 Effect of ethnic community organizations on participation rate – Merged data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Asian	-19.2	-1.74**	0.16	-62.9	-3.10**	0.13	-15.7	-1.26**	0.14
Maori	-7.7	-0.99**	0.20	-8.5	-0.43**	0.13	7.9	0.39**	0.13
Trade Union	6.3	1.21**	0.43	12.3	0.77**	0.21	20.8	0.97**	0.16
NZ business	9.3	0.86**	0.30	13.3	0.90**	0.22	12.3	0.82**	0.20
Constant	93.7	2.79**	0.14	74.6	1.08**	0.07	22.7	-1.24**	0.08
% concordant	86.5			79.0			79.4		
Cox & Snell R ²	.072			.329			.082		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

5.6 SUMMARY

Most of the studies on the political participation of Asian immigrants have emphasized the important roles ethnic community organizations play in encouraging their political participation. Although the survey reaffirmed the social capital theory by finding that Asians who belonged to voluntary organizations had higher participation rates, it appeared that the ethnic community organizations were no longer playing as important a role as they used to. Whether this was due to the favourable electoral system of New Zealand (which allows direct interaction between individual Asians and political parties, thereby reducing the role of the “middleman”)⁸⁹, or because of the different nature of ethnic organisations in New Zealand, remains to be seen. Also interesting was the finding that ethnic religious organizations, which had by far the highest membership rate, had a negative effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. Although possible reasons for this result have been investigated, questions remain as to why certain organizations in certain countries do not have the expected positive effect on individuals’ political participation. Addressing this would be an interesting topic for future research. Nevertheless, Asians who belonged to community organizations were more likely than non-members to participate in politics, especially in political activities other than voting, thereby indicating that Asian New Zealanders’ low level of participation may have been exacerbated by their unwillingness or inability to join community organizations. The findings also suggested that different factors affect individuals’ participation in different forms of political activities (as membership in organisations showed greater effect on political activities other than voting), and that strategies to encourage political participation should accordingly reflect these differences.

⁸⁹ See chapter 6.1 for more information on New Zealand’s institutional structure.

PART C – PAN-ETHNICITY

Another community variable relevant to the political participation of Asian immigrants is the presence and strength of a pan-ethnic identity among Asian immigrants. As briefly mentioned earlier, Asian immigrants are often portrayed as a homogeneous group, and individual actions of Asian immigrants are accounted for and judged collectively⁹⁰. In doing so, the host country is putting pressure on Asian immigrants to think of themselves as “Asian” rather than as “Chinese” or “Korean”. Such development is common for all immigrant groups - for example, immigrants who previously understood themselves in local, regional terms (eg. Sicilians, Neapolitans, Florentines) often begin to see themselves in national terms (Italian) in the host country⁹¹. Responding to this pressure, and to a certain extent voluntarily adopting this dominant group’s categorisation of them, Asian immigrants in Western countries began to institutionalise a “pan-ethnic identity” as their primary political identity. Overseas studies have found that a pan-ethnic identity may strengthen Asian immigrants’ involvement in most political activities, as those who identify themselves in pan-ethnic terms are more likely to be aware of the community’s needs and attach a political agenda to Asian issues⁹². This part of the thesis will assess whether or not a pan-ethnic identity has developed among Asian New Zealanders, and whether having a pan-ethnic identity in fact encouraged the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

5.7 COMPARATIVE CONTEXT

In the case of Asian Americans, the term “Asian American” was a political label chosen by Asian immigrants themselves in the 1960s to form a united ethnic identity (unlike the labels of “Indian Americans” and “Hispanic Americans”, which were imposed by mainstream Americans)⁹³. The adoption and development of a pan-ethnic Asian identity had two primarily political objectives: to mobilise a diverse group of people, and to force others to be more responsive to their grievances⁹⁴. A sense of shared culture and destiny among Asian Americans, based on their shared experience as immigrants with distinctive racial features in a pre-dominantly Caucasian society, also helped them to develop this pan-ethnic identity⁹⁵. The 2001 survey revealed that although the respondents were more likely to identify themselves along ethnic lines (with 34%

⁹⁰ Watanabe in Chang (2001) p375. Watanabe noted that in comparison, when White Americans act as individuals, they are seldom judged as a group.

⁹¹ Glazer and Moynihan (1963) as cited in Kibria (1997) pp525, 527. See also Uhlaner et al. (1989) p201.

⁹² Lien (1994).

⁹³ Hing (1993) p169. See also Takeda in Menifield (2001) p80.

⁹⁴ This is because a coordinated voice from a pan-ethnic Asian group is more likely to be heard and acted upon by politicians and political parties than individual grievances; Espiritus Y., *Asian American panethnicity* (1992) Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

⁹⁵ Omi M. and Winant H., *Racial Formation in the United States From the 1960s to the 1980s* (1986) Routledge and Kegan Paul, New York at p105, as cited in Hing (1993) pp169, 175. Kibria’s interview with 60 second-generation Chinese and Korean Americans revealed that there was a developing pan-Asian American consciousness, one that extends beyond strategic political considerations; Kibria (1997) p526.

choosing to identify as ethnic Americans and 30% by ethnic origin only), more than half the respondents who identified with ethnic-specific identities also thought of themselves as “Asian Americans”. This indicated that a pan-ethnic identity does not necessarily involve denial of their original ethnic identity; it is a highly situational and fluctuating identity in that depending on the circumstances at hand, national identity may be emphasized over pan-ethnic identity and vice versa⁹⁶.

Asian Americans’ general preference for Asian political candidates (regardless of candidates’ ethnic origin) is another indicator of the developing pan-ethnic identity among Asian Americans. About 60% of the respondents in the 2001 survey showed support for an Asian American candidate over another candidate, all else being equal between the two candidates⁹⁷. As a way of example, the presence of prominent Chinese American candidates has attracted a large number of first time voters from a wider Asian American community, including Japanese and Koreans⁹⁸. The elected Asian American politicians in turn tend to serve the broad interests of the Asian American community rather than ethnic-specific interests, as evidenced by David Wu’s resolution condemning stereotypes against all Asian Americans⁹⁹. There have also been impressive accounts of pan-Asian organisational efforts, particularly over issues that can unite Asian Americans as a whole, such as anti-Asian violence, inter-minority group tension, bilingualism, and other community-based criticisms¹⁰⁰.

The development of a pan-ethnic identity is political coalition-building, a process of creating a working relationship between different ethnic groups to maximize their political interests¹⁰¹. However, it can also be a limiting trap for the expression of diverse ethnic cultures and the individual immigrants’ full integration into the host society¹⁰². Internally, coalition partners may marginalise minority groups’ views within the coalition in an effort to raise a unified voice, or a dominant group may attempt to control the coalition, as groups inevitably have different amounts of political resources and internal solidarity¹⁰³. For Asian American politicians, focusing too much

⁹⁶ Hing characterised this process as “situational political mobility”; (1993) pp181-182.

⁹⁷ Tam (1995) pp242, 244.

⁹⁸ See also chapter 5.1.

⁹⁹ Wu’s resolution in the 106th Congress (1999-2000) succeeded in having a concurrent resolution approved by the House, although it failed to pass the Senate. For more information on the resolution, see Takeda in Menifield (2001).

¹⁰⁰ Examples include the Vincent Chin murder and the *Rolling Stone* magazine apology. The Asian American community’s effort to call for legislation to combat anti-Asian violence (triggered by the murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese man) involved Japanese, Chinese, Southeast Asian, Filipino, and Korean Americans. See also Lew K., “Rolling Stone Concedes to 3 Korean Demands” in *Asian Weeks*, 18 March 1988, p1 as cited in Hing (1993) p170.

¹⁰¹ Rich in Rich (1996) p6.

¹⁰² Takagi D.Y., “Post-civil rights politics and Asian American identity: admissions and higher education” in Gregory S. and Sanjek R. (eds) *Race* (1994) Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, as cited in Kibria (1997) p523.

¹⁰³ Rich in Rich (1996) p7.

on issues that are relevant solely to Asian Americans contains the danger of being marginalized in mainstream US politics, or overlooking important issues that are relevant only to certain ethnic Asian groups¹⁰⁴. This may compel some Asian American political leaders to deny their ethnicity in order to gain political support and acceptance from mainstream society; especially as Asian American candidates are most likely among all ethnic minority candidates to be elected by members of the dominant group¹⁰⁵. The existence of a multi-levelled diversity among Asian Americans also makes it difficult for them to raise their voices in unity, not only in the area of foreign policy (where opinions of Asian Americans are inevitably divided along ethnic lines¹⁰⁶), but also in domestic policy¹⁰⁷.

Despite the difficulties and possible adverse effects of developing pan-ethnic political coalitions, there appeared to be a growing willingness on the part of Asian Americans to form such coalitions. This suggested that Asian Americans are gradually learning to speak the “language of politics”, given that coalition building is central in US politics¹⁰⁸. A political coalition of Asian immigrants would also allow new groups to learn from the more visible groups, so that their scarce skills and resources can be maximised in obtaining the desired political outcome. The strength of a pan-ethnic identity and the groups’ willingness to cooperate could determine the success of a political coalition of Asian immigrants¹⁰⁹, which in turn could strengthen the group’s political power in the host country.

Asian New Zealanders

Vasil and Yoon in their book “New Zealanders of Asian Origin” stated that almost no Asian immigrants possessed even a notional sense of pan-ethnic Asian identity and instead had a

¹⁰⁴ Wang in Rich (1996) p141.

¹⁰⁵ Lai J.S., *Beyond Voting: The Recruitment of Asian Pacific Americans and Their Impact on Group Electoral Mobilization* (2000) University of Southern California, California; Uhlaner et al. (1989). A similar observation was made on Asian political candidates in the UK; Layton-Henry and Studlar (1984) p29.

¹⁰⁶ Because Asian Americans’ sense of ethnic distinctiveness is often reinforced in the foreign policy area, Asian American political unity on foreign policy is regarded as impossible; Desai (1997) p56. See also Watanabe P.Y., “Global Forces, Foreign Policy, and Asian Pacific Americans” (2001) *Political Science and Politics* 639 at 640 (Watanabe 2).

¹⁰⁷ For example, Chinese identified language barriers as the main problem whereas Koreans identified a lack of cohesion within the community and Vietnamese an increasing crime rate as the main problems in the 2001 survey. The generation gap is also evident; the leadership of Asian Americans with a longer history in the US is regarded as impotent and ineffective, whereas the new leadership, led mostly by second-generation professional Asian Americans, is regarded as focusing too narrowly on their professional interests instead of broad community issues; Wang in Rich (1996) p136. See also Hing (1993) p172.

¹⁰⁸ Rich in Rich (1996) p8.

¹⁰⁹ In order to create a successful coalition, the groups need to communicate their political intentions, actions, and expected outcomes to their coalition partners, so that they can coordinate actions with each other. They also need a strategy, a reward structure, and a mechanism to resolve disagreement, as well as shared political issues and goals that are strong enough to overcome differences among the coalition partners; Rich in Rich (1996) p6; Kim (1997) p75; Espiritu (1992) pp164-168.

strong sense of ethnic identity¹¹⁰. They also noted that although many Asian immigrants made special efforts to establish contact with the larger New Zealand society, little attempt had been made to intermingle with migrants from elsewhere in Asia or to form pan-Asian organisations¹¹¹. That may have been the case then (1996), but it appears that a pan-ethnic identity has been developing among Asian New Zealanders in recent years. Because most New Zealanders cannot distinguish one ethnic Asian group from the other¹¹², Asians living in New Zealand are often categorised in a pan-ethnic term of “Asian New Zealanders”. As such, other things that used to distinguish one from the other (such as which region of China or Korea they came from) have become less important to Asians living in New Zealand.

As this external categorisation is internalised by Asian New Zealanders, an increasing number of Asian New Zealanders appeared to have begun to see themselves in pan-ethnic terms. For example, following a car accident in which a young Chinese driver killed a four year-old New Zealand girl, a Chinese reader of the *New Zealand Herald* apologised “on behalf of all Asians” for the awful accident. In doing so, he demonstrated a sense of pan-ethnic identity as an “Asian New Zealander”, as well as the willingness to take collective responsibility for the action of an individual Asian driver¹¹³. Similarly, many Asian people writing to the *New Zealand Herald* have expressed how “we Asians” were frustrated by the continuous attack on “us Asians”¹¹⁴. These examples indicate that Asian New Zealanders may have developed a sense of pan-ethnic identity. Pansy Wong, the first Asian MP in New Zealand, also acknowledged in her maiden speech that she was to represent all ethnic Asian groups in New Zealand who have supported her¹¹⁵. She has since worked together with different Asian ethnic groups to represent pan-ethnic Asian interests in and outside Parliament. As such, it is hypothesized that Asian New Zealanders would support Asian MPs over MPs of other ethnic backgrounds.

In addition, there have been movements within the Asian community to create various pan-ethnic Asian groups and events. The Asian Network Steering Committee, which was established after the successful Asian Network Forum of 2000, provides a good example. The Committee has been annually organising an “Asian Forum” since 2001 to facilitate networking and to discuss key issues facing the Asian community, including the issue of political participation¹¹⁶. However, not

¹¹⁰ Vasil and Yoon (1996) pp12-13.

¹¹¹ *Ibid* p13.

¹¹² For example, the author was often asked to translate Chinese or Japanese into English by people who were aware of the fact that the author is Korean, evidencing their belief that all Asian languages are similar.

¹¹³ Wang X., “Letters to the editor”, *New Zealand Herald*, 11 June 2003.

¹¹⁴ Hu Nivia of Grafton, “Letters to the editor”, *New Zealand Herald*, 26 November 2002.

¹¹⁵ Wong P., “Maiden Speech in Parliament”, *Hansard*, 19 March 1997, Vol 559, pp1007-1011.

¹¹⁶ One of the key issues in the 2002 Forum was political involvement of Asian New Zealanders, which produced the following six recommendations: (1) There needs to be a grassroots level movement to motivate Asians politically; (2) A healthy and strong Asian community should be advocated; (3) “Asian” issues should be debated with Asian interests; (4) Asians need to participate in policy formation and

all attempts to create a pan-Asian ethnic organisation have been successful, as evidenced by the failure of the New Zealand Pan Asian Congress, which had the grand aim of “countering prejudice, responding to anti-Asian messages, promoting wider awareness of Asian contribution, and providing a political voice for Asian New Zealanders”¹¹⁷. Despite the extensive media attention the group received, it failed to produce any concrete outcomes, and was subsequently dissolved. Factors such as differences between local and recent Asian immigrants, difficulties in gathering support from various ethnic community leaders, and the lack of experience of key personnel were regarded as the key reasons for its failure¹¹⁸. Nevertheless, the initiative can be seen as an example of growing pan-ethnic identity among Asian New Zealanders, and the positive influence the pan-ethnic identity could have on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders.

5.8 SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A number of questions were asked in the survey to assess the strength of a pan-Asian identity among Asian New Zealanders. The survey revealed that although Asian New Zealanders have begun to develop a pan-ethnic identity, such an identity did not necessarily encourage their political participation. This was contrary to overseas studies which found that a pan-ethnic identity strengthened Asian immigrants’ involvement in political activities. The findings indicated that the political participation of Asian New Zealanders cannot be understood solely by looking at overseas studies on Asian immigrants. The survey also found that although the respondents in general supported the idea of having more Asian political representatives, little support was recorded for pan-ethnic political mobilization. In so finding, the survey illustrated the difficulties in mobilizing a diverse group of Asians for political causes.

Self-identification

When asked to choose the best description of their identity, nearly 80% of Asian New Zealanders chose an ethnic identity of “Korean/Chinese New Zealander” (51.2%) or “Korean/Chinese” (28.4) (compared to 64% of Asian Americans who chose an ethnic identity). Only 14.1% of the respondents chose a pan-ethnic identity of “Asian New Zealander” (9.0%) or “Asian” (5.1%), and

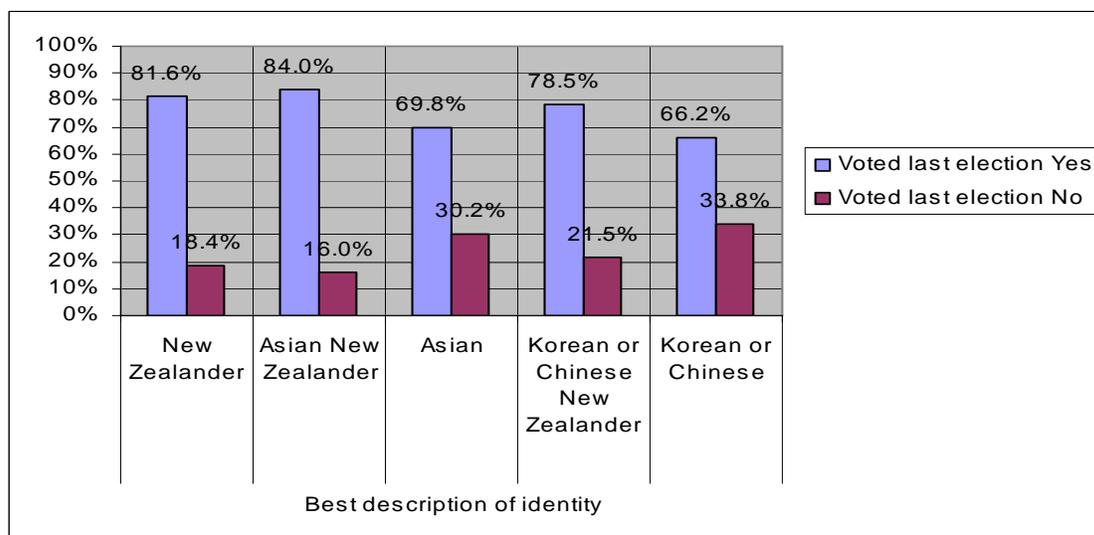
consultation; (5) Asian decision-makers need to participate in policy formation and consultation; and (6) Political activity needs to concentrate on specific issues such as immigration, labour law and economic development; *The changing face of Asian community in New Zealand: A discussion summary report from the 2002 Asian Forum*, June 2002, Asian Network Steering Committee.

¹¹⁷ Small V., “Asian Congress aims to battle prejudice”, *New Zealand Herald*, 4 October 2002, pA7.

¹¹⁸ The difficulty in creating a pan-ethnic identity is not confined to Asian New Zealanders. In a similar vein, Maori are not a pan-tribal group of people, and rarely have they united as a single group; Sullivan A. and Margaritis D., “Maori voting patterns in 1999” in Boston J., Church S., Levine S., McLeay E. and Robert N., *Left Turn – The New Zealand General Election of 1999* (2000) Victoria University Press, Wellington, pp175-183, at p183.

an additional 5.4% chose “New Zealander” as the best description of their identity. Given that the history of Asian immigration in New Zealand is shorter than that of the US, this was perhaps not surprising - people’s common experience as members of an ethnic minority group being one of the reasons for Asian immigrants to identify themselves in pan-ethnic terms. As such, the pan-ethnic identification of “Asian New Zealander” or “New Zealander” was more prevalent among respondents who had lived in New Zealand for a longer period of time¹¹⁹. Further analysis revealed that people who identified themselves in pan-ethnic terms of “Asian New Zealander” or “New Zealander” voted at a higher rate (84.0% and 81.6%) than people who identified themselves in ethnic terms of “Korean/Chinese” or “Korean/Chinese New Zealander” (66.2% and 78.5%) (see graph 5.9). Somewhat surprisingly, people who identified themselves as “Asian”, a pan-ethnic term, showed the second lowest voting rate of 69.8%, possibly reflecting their lack of identification as “New Zealander”. No statistically significant difference was recorded for political activities other than voting.

Graph 5.9 Turnout of Asians with different description of identity



-Chi-square .002

-Phi and Cramer's V .145

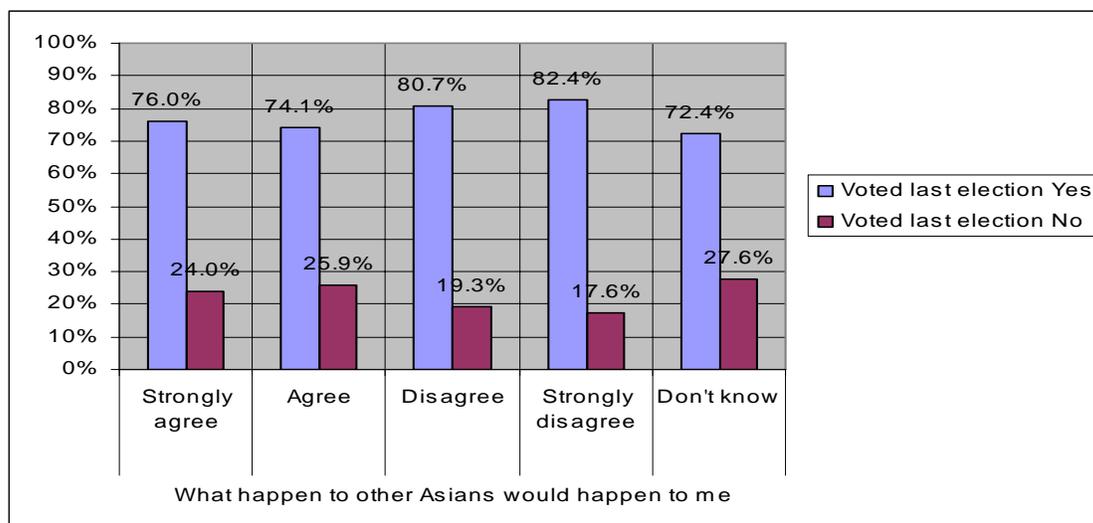
Common destiny

The development of a pan-Asian identity among Asian New Zealanders was more strongly felt when the respondents were not forced to choose a pan-Asian identity over an ethnic identity, but were asked to consider whether they believe what happens generally to other “Asian” or

¹¹⁹ For example, 82.1% of those who had lived in New Zealand for 1-5 years identified themselves in ethnic terms, whereas 53.8% of those who had lived in New Zealand for more than 26 years identified themselves in ethnic terms (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .311).

“Korean/Chinese” in New Zealand would also happen to them¹²⁰. These questions were asked to assess whether Asian New Zealanders regard themselves as having a common destiny with other Asians in New Zealand. The survey result showed that 76% of respondents believed what happens generally to other Asians in New Zealand would also happen to them, and 78.2% believed what happens generally to other members of the same ethnic group would also happen to them. This was significantly higher than the sense of shared destiny as expressed by Asian Americans, less than 50% of whom believed what happens to other Asians would also happen to them. In contrast, only 53.8% of respondents regarded different Asian groups in New Zealand as culturally similar. This indicated that Asian New Zealanders in general have developed a sense of common destiny with other Asians, despite cultural differences among different Asian ethnic groups. Contrary to expectations however, respondents with a strong sense of shared destiny showed lower voting rates than those who did not have a sense of common destiny, although the differences were not statistically significant (see graphs 5.10-5.12).

Graph 5.10 Turnout of Asians who have a sense of shared destiny with other Asians

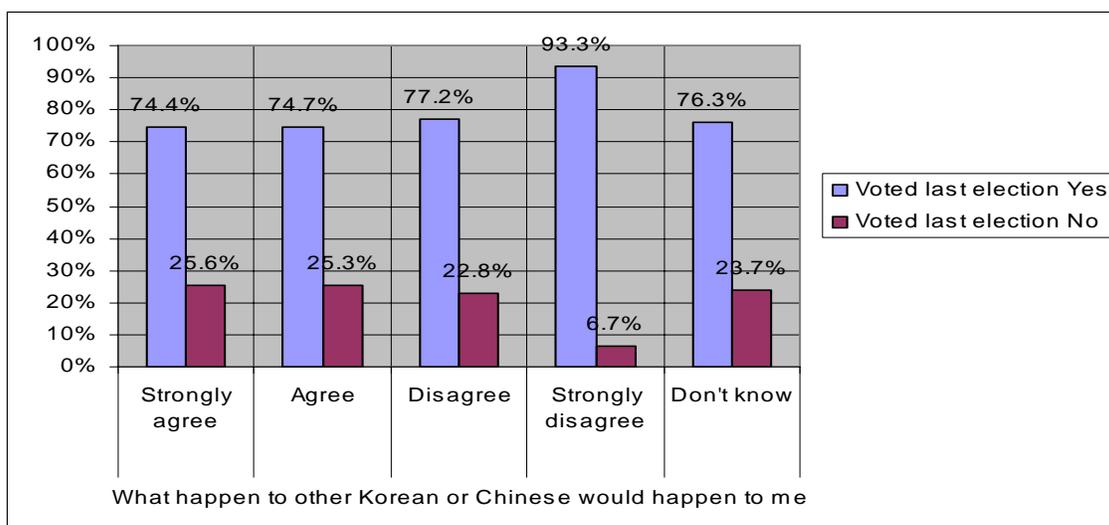


-Chi-square .555

-Phi Cramer's V .060

¹²⁰ The responses may vary as they were not given the definition of, or asked to define, what “Asians” meant in the survey. “Asia” is, after all, a European construct, and the respondents will use the term “Asian” to mean “what they choose it to mean, and to exclude whomever and whatever they choose to exclude”; Trood R. and McNamara D. (eds) *The Asia-Australia Survey 1994* (1994) MacMillan Education Australian Pty Ltd, South Melbourne, p61.

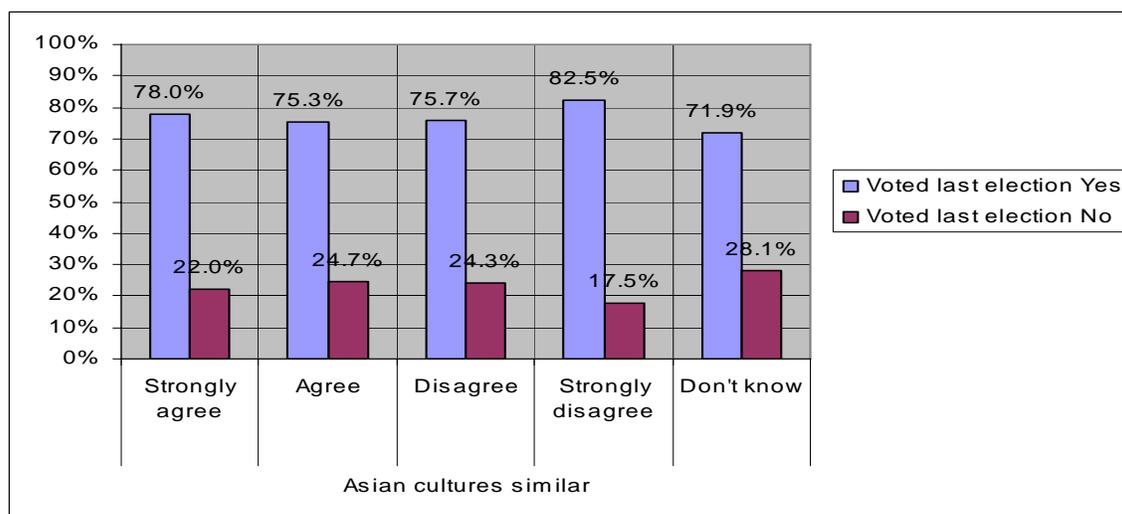
Graph 5.11 Turnout of Asians who have a sense of shared destiny with other Korean/Chinese



-Chi-square .550

-Phi Cramer's V .060

Graph 5.12 Turnout of Asians who feel that Asian cultures are similar



-Chi-square .671

-Phi Cramer's V .053

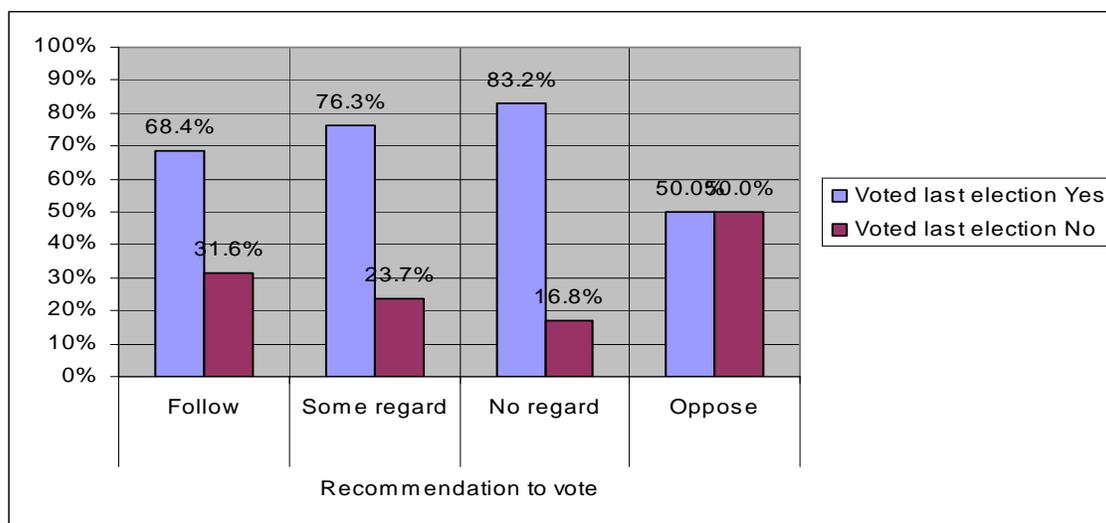
Pan-ethnic political mobilization

One of the reasons why the development of a pan-ethnic identity attracts interest is the belief that such an identity might provide the basis upon which to mobilize a diverse group of Asians for political causes. In order to assess the likelihood of successful pan-ethnic political mobilization of Asian New Zealanders (similar to the 80-20 initiative in the US), the respondents were asked

whether they would follow community leaders' recommendation to vote for a particular political party which was most likely to serve Asian community's interests. The survey revealed that less than 25% of respondents would follow such a recommendation, although an additional 56.7% indicated that they would vote according to their own decision with some regard to the recommendation. Around 18% of respondents indicated they would vote according to their own decision without any regard to the recommendation, and 0.9% that they would oppose such a recommendation.

Somewhat surprisingly, people who indicated that they would follow the recommendation had lower voting rates (68.4%) than those who indicated that they would vote without any regard to the recommendation (83.2%) (see graph 5.13). In addition, people who identified themselves in pan-ethnic terms showed a lower level of support for the recommendation than those who identified themselves in ethnic terms¹²¹. These findings indicated that the development of a pan-ethnic identity among Asian New Zealanders would not necessarily lead to successful political mobilization. Whether a pan-ethnic identity could provide the basis of a pan-ethnic political mobilization if there was a pressing need to do so (such as the imposition of discriminatory regulations on racial lines similar to California's Proposition 187) remains to be seen.

Graph 5.13 Turnout of Asians who would follow the recommendation to vote



-Chi-square .005

-Phi and Cramer's V .125

¹²¹ For example, 13% of those who identified themselves in pan-ethnic terms indicated that they would follow the recommendation, compared to 25.8% of those who identified themselves in ethnic terms (Chi-square .000, Phi and Cramer's V .271).

Views on Asian MPs

A number of questions were asked to assess Asian New Zealanders' views on Asian MPs. Firstly, the respondents were asked whether they considered that Asian politicians (not necessarily of their own ethnic group) would represent their interests better than Pakeha or Maori politicians. More than 60% of the respondents replied in the affirmative, compared with 18.6% who said no, and 19.9% who replied don't know. In contrast, Asian New Zealanders showed a lower level of support for the idea of a separate Asian political party, with 38.3% supporting, 43.8% opposing, and 17.9% expressing no opinion. This was consistent with the results of the 1996 election where the two Asian parties received an extremely low level of support (less than 1%)¹²². The findings indicated that although Asian New Zealanders felt that their interests would be better represented by Asian MPs, they preferred to work within the existing system rather than to create a political party of their own.

Secondly, the respondents were asked whether there should be more Asian MPs, to which 59.0% said yes, 1.1% no, and 35.4% said it depended on the candidates¹²³. Interestingly, Hong Kong Chinese (who have a MP from their own ethnic group) were most likely to reply that having more Asian MPs should depend on the candidates, whereas Taiwanese and Koreans were most supportive of the idea of having more Asian MPs (66.2% and 64.1% compared to 40.2% of Hong Kong Chinese)¹²⁴. The findings denoted that once Asians have a MP from their own ethnic group, they would be more likely to focus on the quality, rather than on quantity, of Asian candidates. Contrary to expectations, however, people who showed support for more Asian MPs did not necessarily vote at a higher rate (see graphs 5.14 and 5.15).

In contrast to the overwhelming support for Asian MPs, a large proportion of the respondents indicated that the existence of Asian MPs would not make any difference to their political partisanship. For example, 63.5% of respondents indicated that it made no difference to their partisanship whether a party had an Asian MP or not, whereas 19.9% indicated that they preferred one party over the other because it had an Asian MP, 7.5% that they would change their political preference if another party had an Asian MP, and 5.3% that they did not like parties which did not have Asian MPs. This apparently contradictory view, that Asian MPs would be better in representing Asian interests and there should be more Asian MPs but the existence of

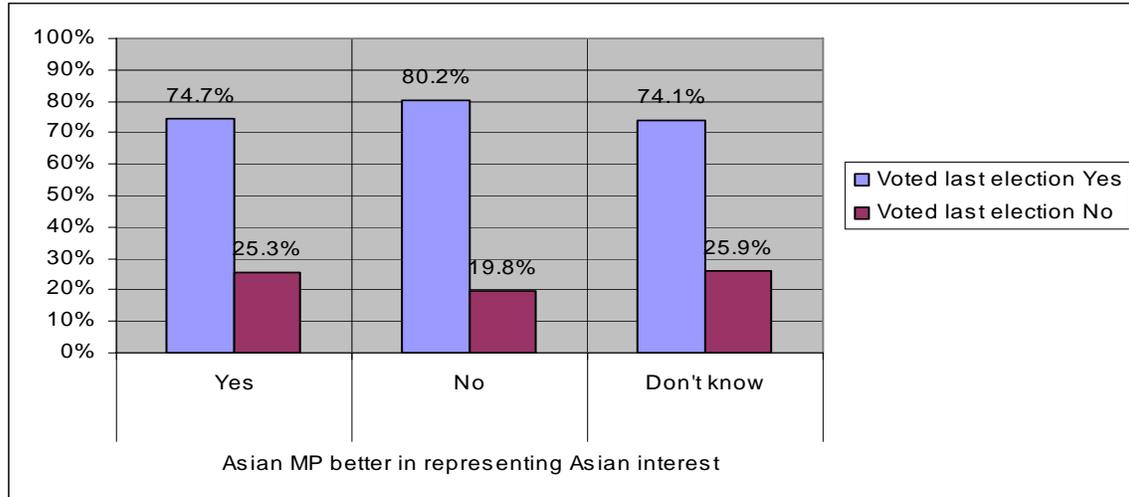
¹²² See chapter 6.1 for more information.

¹²³ Contrary to the high level of support for having more Asian MPs, only 9.6% of the respondents believed that there should be more Maori MPs and 9.1% supported having more Pacific Island MPs; although nearly 60% indicated that whether or not to have more Maori/Pacific Island MPs should depend on the candidates. Less than a quarter of the respondents (22.6%) showed support for having more women MPs.

¹²⁴ This may be because Taiwanese and Koreans are least likely to see themselves as "Chinese", or feel they are being adequately represented by a Chinese MP.

Asian MPs would not affect their political partisanship, represents one of many difficulties that the Asian community faces in order to create a successful political coalition based on pan-ethnic identity.

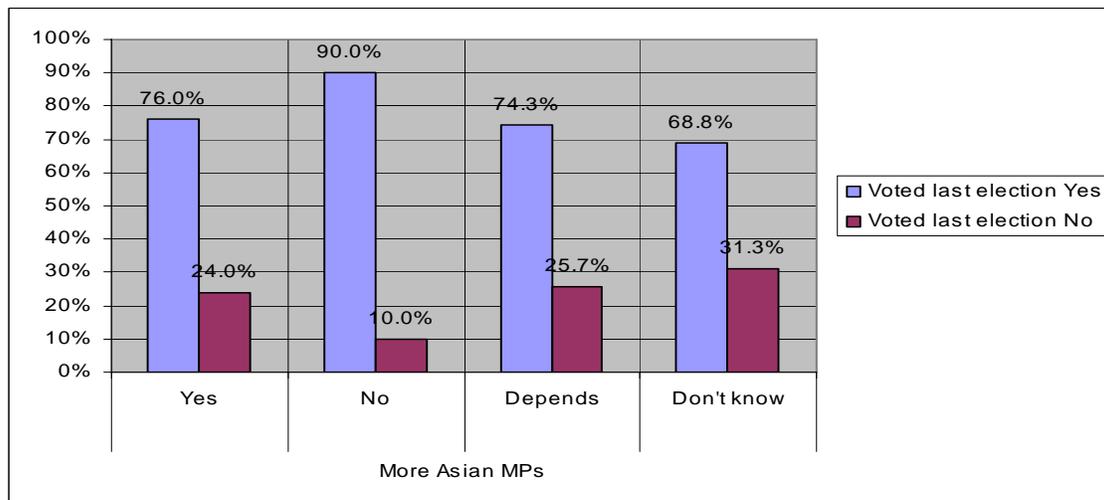
Graph 5.14 Turnout of Asians who believe that Asian MPs are better in representing Asian interests



-Chi-square .313

-Phi and Cramer's V .052

Graph 5.15 Turnout of Asians who support having more Asian MPs



-Chi-square .615

-Phi and Cramer's V .047

Regression of pan-ethnic factors

Analysis of the factors relating to pan-ethnic identity found that none of the factors appeared to have statistically significant relevance to Asian turnout or participation rates in other forms of political activities (see table 5.5). The NZES 2002 did not include any questions relating to pan-ethnic identity; therefore it was not possible to run regression on the merged data.

Table 5.5 Effect of the pan-ethnic identity on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Self-identification	1.8	0.11	0.25	3.6	0.26	0.27	2.3	0.26	0.34
Common destiny	-4.9	-0.27	0.21	-0.4	-0.03	0.24	1.8	0.22	0.30
Recommendation	-5.4	-0.33	0.27	-2.6	-0.19	0.28	-0.2	-0.03	0.37
Asian party	-0.4	-0.02	0.21	-1.2	-0.09	0.24	0.9	0.11	0.30
Asian MP better	-1.0	-0.06	0.25	4.1	0.32	0.29	-1.1	-0.13	0.34
Constant	83.7	1.62**	0.31	14.6	-1.79**	0.34	8.4	-2.40**	0.42
% concordant	76.3			76.3			90.7		
Cox & Snell R ²	.009			.004			.002		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

5.9 SUMMARY

Contrary to expectations and studies on Asian Americans, a pan-ethnic Asian identity appeared to have limited effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. Although the respondents who identified themselves in pan-ethnic terms showed higher voting rates than those who chose an ethnic identity, having a sense of shared destiny appeared to have discouraged Asian New Zealanders' turnout. Similarly, although there was general support for more Asian representatives, not much support was recorded for the ideas of Asian bloc voting or an Asian political party. The results indicated that although there appeared to be a growing pan-ethnic Asian identity, this did not necessarily mean that it would make it easier to politically mobilize Asian New Zealanders. The circumstances of the development of a pan-ethnic identity – whether developed in response to a collective threat from the host country or simply because of weakening ethnic ties – may influence whether or not a pan-ethnic identity encourages the political participation of Asian immigrants. Given the successful examples of Asian political mobilization in New Zealand, Asian New Zealanders may still be able to transform their pan-ethnic identity into a political force if a need arises. The context is important.

PART D – CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER FIVE

5.10 REGRESSION OF THE ASIAN DATA

Similar to the overall regression conducted in chapters 4.10-4.12, factors that are found to have significance of .050 or less, together with a number of important yet statistically insignificant factors (such as membership in ethnic religious organizations and pan-ethnic identity), have been put into regression to see which one of the community variables had the most significant effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. Regression of these factors revealed that age, contact by politicians, commitment to New Zealand, membership in ethnic religious organizations and New Zealand business organizations had statistically significant relevance to the turnout of Asian New Zealanders (see table 5.6). Contact by politicians, in particular, increased the likelihood of Asians voting by 23.5%, evidencing the applicability of the mobilization theory on Asian New Zealanders' turnout. Those who showed a long-term commitment to New Zealand were also 12.1% more likely to vote when the community variables were controlled, and the likelihood of voting increased by 0.4% with every extra year of age. Membership in organisations had two opposite effects; those who belonged to New Zealand business organizations were 13.7% more likely to vote, whereas membership in ethnic religious organizations reduced the likelihood of Asians voting by 7.9%. Further research on how membership in ethnic religious organizations differs from other organizations, and how the effect of religious organizations in New Zealand differs from the effect of religious organizations in the US on individual political participation, would be needed to fully understand the reasons behind this interesting outcome.

In other forms of political activities, membership in organizations was the only factor which showed statistically significant relevance to Asians' participation rates when the community variables were controlled. Membership in ethnic community organizations, New Zealand religious organizations, and New Zealand business organizations all increased the likelihood of Asians signing petitions by 10.2%, 10.9%, and 15.2%. Similarly, membership in ethnic community organizations, New Zealand community organizations, and New Zealand business organizations increased the likelihood of Asians working in the community by 14.8%, 18.3%, and 9.0%. None of the other important factors, including contact by politicians, showed statistically significant relevance to the other forms of political activities. The findings indicated that encouraging Asian New Zealanders to join various organizations may be one of the most effective ways of increasing their participation rates in activities other than voting.

Table 5.6 Effect of community variables on participation rate – Asian data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Male	-1.2	-0.05	0.18	2.2	0.23	0.23	-0.2	-0.01	0.29
Age	0.4	0.02**	0.01	-0.1	-0.01	0.01	-0.00	0.00	0.01
Contact by politician	23.5	1.15**	0.22	5.3	0.62	0.36	1.8	0.28	0.43
Plan to live 10 yrs	12.1	0.56*	0.27	0.1	0.06	0.38	1.4	0.34	0.53
Ethnic community	7.4	0.47	0.29	10.2	0.83**	0.29	14.8	1.44**	0.32
Ethnic religious	-7.9	-0.43*	0.21	-1.8	-0.20	0.29	-2.0	-0.29	0.34
NZ community	9.2	0.78	0.56	-2.2	-0.20	0.48	18.3	1.39**	0.41
NZ religious	11.2	0.60	0.32	10.9	0.93*	0.36	0.6	0.16	0.50
NZ business	13.7	1.01*	0.40	15.2	1.07**	0.31	9.0	0.88*	0.38
Self-identification	4.7	0.29	0.25	2.7	0.23	0.29	1.3	0.22	0.36
Common destiny	-2.1	-0.13	0.19	0.3	-0.00	0.24	1.7	0.21	0.30
Constant	27.2	-1.28**	0.41	7.9	-2.52**	0.57	1.0	-3.68**	0.75
% concordant	73.9			87.7			92.2		
Cox & Snell R ²	.092			.043			.059		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

5.11 REGRESSION OF THE MERGED DATA

Regression of the NZES-Asia merged data revealed that factors such as age, contact by politicians, and membership in organizations showed statistically significant relevance to the turnout of the general New Zealand population when all the community variables were controlled (see table 5.7). Contact by politicians again had the biggest effect on the turnout of the general New Zealand population; those who had been contacted were 9.4% more likely to vote than those who had not been contacted. New Zealanders who belonged to business organizations and trade unions were 8.8% and 7.9% more likely to vote than non-members, and the likelihood of voting also increased by 0.3% with every extra year of age. Overall, the combined effect of the community variables appeared to be greater on the turnout of New Zealanders than that of Asian New Zealanders; Asians were 22.1% less likely to vote than Pakeha (which is an increase of 3.0% from when no other factors were controlled), whereas the likelihood of Maori non-voting vis-à-vis Pakeha decreased by 1.9% to 5.5% when the community variables were controlled.

In other forms of political activities, New Zealanders who had been contacted by political parties were 6.6% more likely to sign petitions and 5.9% more likely to work in the community. Membership in business organizations and trade unions also increased the likelihood of New Zealanders signing petitions by 14.2% and 12.7%, and working in the community by 21.7% and 11.5%. As was the case with individual variables, men were 3.8% less likely to work in the

community than women when the community variables were controlled. The controls did little to reduce the disparity between Pakeha and Asian, as Asian New Zealanders were still 67.3% less likely to sign petitions (which is an increase of 4.1% from when no other factors were controlled), and 18.7% less likely to work in the community than Pakeha (an increase of 1.8%). Maori were also 8.8% less likely to sign petitions than Pakeha (an increase of 0.9%), whereas they were 9.2% more likely to work in the community (an increase of 0.5%) when the community variables were controlled.

Table 5.7 Effect of community variables on participation rate – Merged data

	Voting			Signing petition			Working in community		
	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e	%	b	s.e
Asian	-22.1	-2.12**	0.20	-67.3	-3.41**	0.17	-18.7	-1.46**	0.17
Maori	-5.5	-0.78**	0.21	-8.8	-0.46**	0.14	9.2	0.45**	0.14
Male	0.4	0.04	0.13	-1.9	-0.12	0.11	-3.8	-0.26*	0.11
Age	0.3	0.03**	0.01	-0.1	-0.00	0.00	0.1	0.01	0.00
Contact by politician	9.4	0.93**	0.18	6.6	0.45**	0.14	5.9	0.38**	0.13
Trade union	7.9	1.37**	0.47	14.2	0.92**	0.22	21.7	1.03**	0.16
NZ business	8.8	0.82**	0.31	12.7	0.86**	0.22	11.5	0.77**	0.21
Constant	75.6	1.05**	0.26	77.3	1.25**	0.20	18.6	-1.51**	0.20
% concordant	86.6			79.2			79.4		
Cox & Snell R ²	.104			.336			.091		

**significant at <.01 *significant at <.05

5.12 CONCLUSION – COMMUNITY VARIABLES

Arguably the most interesting finding of this chapter on community variables is the extensive efforts made by political parties to attract Asian voters. The finding indicated that Asian New Zealanders, whose number has been increasing rapidly in the last 15 years, are already regarded as an important constituency by the New Zealand political parties (although the effect of the MMP electoral system in encouraging political parties to target Asian New Zealanders should not be underestimated). At the same time, the study reaffirmed the relevance of the mobilization theory in understanding the political participation of Asian New Zealanders; the mobilization efforts by political parties showed a strong correlation to Asian New Zealanders' turnout, and they also mitigated the feeling of political helplessness which was found to be prevalent among Asian New Zealanders.

At the same time, analysis of the community variables indicated that the effort by political parties to contact individual Asian voters may have weakened the strength of ethnic community

organizations, which recorded low membership rates and low approval rates for their performances. This was contrary to many overseas studies on the political participation of Asian immigrants, which consistently found the intermediary role that ethnic organizations played in promoting Asians' political participation to be important. Having said that, the survey reaffirmed the positive effect organizational membership had on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders, although the reason why membership in ethnic religious organizations had the opposite effect on Asian New Zealanders' political participation requires further research. The survey indicated that promoting organisational membership among Asian New Zealanders may be one of the most effective ways of encouraging their political participation, especially in political activities other than voting. At the same time, it indicated that different strategies may need to be adopted to encourage the participation of Asian New Zealanders in different forms of political activities, as factors that encourage Asian New Zealanders' voting rates differed from factors that encourage their participation rates in other forms of political activities.

A pan-ethnic identity, although developing among Asian New Zealanders, did not show the expected positive effect on the political participation of Asian New Zealanders. In addition, the survey found that the existence of a pan-ethnic identity would not necessarily make it easier to mobilize Asian New Zealanders for political causes, as those who identified themselves in pan-ethnic terms did not appear to see themselves as a political force. It is not clear whether that was because there was no triggering incident that could mobilize Asian New Zealanders at the time of the survey, or because the circumstances and context in which a pan-ethnic identity may develop were simply different for Asian New Zealanders. What was clear from the survey results were that some of the theories developed to understand the political participation of Asian immigrants in other Western countries – such as the role of ethnic community organizations and pan-ethnic identity – are not necessarily applicable to Asian New Zealanders. The different nature of the institutional structure may have affected the role of the community variables in the political participation of Asian New Zealanders, details of which will be assessed in the following chapter.