# The Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during the COVID-19 Lockdown

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# Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented global crisis, instilling fear and devastation through infecting and taking lives worldwide. Fuelled by political and social discourse, the virus was associated with Chinese residents, increasing anti-Chinese and xenophobic sentiment and marginalising Chinese communities, as exclusionary nationalisms reinforced local imaginations of citizenship. In the context of the settler society of Aotearoa New Zealand with a long-standing history of Chinese migration, the pandemic reignited racism towards Chinese New Zealanders as news spread of the subtle othering of the Chinese community, the persistence of everyday racism, and violent racial attacks. This research provides an empirical contribution to the emerging literature on the COVID-19 pandemic exploring local outcomes for Chinese communities with a focus on Aotearoa New Zealand. Nine Chinese New Zealanders were interviewed to gain a perspective on national, regional, and individual observations and experiences of the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown in March of 2020, to explore the diversity of identities, experiences, and biographies across the Chinese New Zealand community. While many participants gained a heightened sense of awareness of their racial visibility choosing to adapt and conform to a 'Kiwi' identity, those with a long history in Aotearoa found themselves long accepted into their local communities highlighting the differences across cohorts of Chinese migrants. Beyond common trends and experiences, the participants highlighted their intersection of social identities, contributing to the nuance in the interpretations and perceptions of their experiences of lockdown and emphasised the persistence of racism towards the Chinese community long before the COVID-19 pandemic.

# Dedication

Last year was an unprecedented year for us all.

It was difficult being stuck in our homes, isolated, alone, without any sense of routine or normalcy. While things were difficult, nothing was more painful than losing my beloved nana during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To my wonderful 娜娜, I miss you every day, and I dedicate this to you.

# Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor Laurence Murphy. Thank you so much for taking me on, for our inspiring conversations, and your support right up until submission. At times where all I wanted to do was to give up, thank you for helping me through this thesis, as well as a difficult year in my life.

I would also like to thank the participants of my research. Thank you for your openness and willingness to let me into your worlds. As a Chinese New Zealander myself who struggled with bullying for my ethnic identity, I was honoured to have connected with you all and to share our struggles of growing up in this country.

I would not have gotten here without the support of my officemates and friends – Alison, Ahmad, Briar, Elina, and Ellie. As a fully-fledged extrovert, I knew this would be a struggle alone so thank you for your never-ending support and kindness.

Lastly to my mum, dad, and sister. Thank you for your unconditional love and support throughout my life.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 COVID-19 and rising anti-Asian sentiment

The novel COVID-19 virus was first discovered in Wuhan, China in November 2019 and over several months spread across the world causing a global pandemic (Kuo, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic marked the start of an unprecedented worldwide event, significantly disrupting the lives of people as nations were sent into lockdown over the year 2020, continuing into the year 2021. Businesses closed, many shutting down unable to cope with the financial consequences. Social distancing was recommended to ensure the safe distancing among the public. And people were recommended to work from home, avoid unnecessary outings, and restrict their movements to their local area. Globally, people struggled with feelings of isolation, loneliness, and declining mental health (Saltzman et al., 2020) while governments worked to reinforce their nations and protect their citizens from the effects of the pandemic.

The nationwide lockdowns across Western countries caused anger and frustration fuelled by political rhetoric racializing the virus (Goodwin & Chemerinsky, 2020; Pulido et al., 2019). With terms such as 'China virus' and 'Wuhan flu' being used, blame was quickly put upon China, the Chinese government, and everyday Chinese residents across the world, reigniting old racial tropes associating 'Chinese' with disease (Anderson, 1987). News started to spread of acts of racism – from microaggressions to violent attacks – targeting Chinese locals as anti-Chinese and xenophobic sentiment slowly became widespread fuelling a shift to old racism.

Chinese residents across the world found themselves targeted, facing racial attacks in public, frightened to go outside aware of their racial appearance. While the media emphasised stories that shocked us all, research into the impact of the pandemic on the Chinese community is still emerging but suggests a significant emotional impact on the community and their mental health and wellbeing (Cheah et al., 2020).

## 1.2 COVID-19 in Aotearoa New Zealand

Aotearoa entered a nationwide lockdown on the 25th of March where routines were widely disrupted for the population who had to work from home, avoid unnecessary outings, and restrict their movements to their local community. Media reported on the racism experienced by the local Chinese community with the New Zealand Human Rights

Commission reporting a significant spike in reports of racism from the Chinese and wider Asian community (Nielsen, 2021). While overall trends, observations, and media coverage focussed on racism as an outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a lack of acknowledgement of the historic and ongoing racism towards Chinese New Zealanders since their arrival in the country.

## 1.3 Research objectives

This thesis aims to explore the observations and experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during the COVID-19 lockdown and the impact of their ethnic identity. To meet this objective, the following research questions are proposed:

1. How has ethnic identity affected Chinese New Zealanders growing up and living in this country?
2. What were the experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during the COVID-19 lockdown and did their ethnic identity impact them during this time?
3. What were the observations of Chinese journalists and Chinese organisational representatives of the impact of the COVID-19 on the Chinese community?

# Chapter Two: Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together geographic literature and contributions from the wider social sciences to address the concepts of race, nation, and intersectionality. These concepts have been operationalised during the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw the racialisation of COVID-19 virus in Western countries including Aotearoa New Zealand. These concepts elucidate the imagination of an ideal citizen at a time of crisis which fuelled anti-Chinese and Asian sentiment worldwide. While the community at large experienced racism, stereotyping, and discrimination, incorporating an intersectionality approach helps to reveal the nuance across individual experiences within the Chinese community. This thesis seeks to contribute to the emerging literature on the COVID-19 pandemic which has emphasised the need to examine racism, nationalism, and intersectionality during the pandemic to highlight the experiences of ethnic minorities during a time of crisis (Bieber, 2020; Bowleg, 2020; Maestripieri, 2021; Woods et al., 2020)

Geographic engagement with the category of race has been inconsistent and scattered across subdisciplines, while engagement with the racialisation of Chinese in Western countries is minimal. As research has been shown to contribute to problematic conceptions of race through racial mapping without wider critical engagement, critique has turned inwards to the discipline itself leading to calls from scholars of colour for the need to reflect inwards at the reproduction of privilege (Mahtani, 2014). This thesis aims to contribute to research from people of colour, revisiting and emphasising the existence of 'old' racism during a crisis where overt racism targeted the Chinese community, particularly contributing to research on Chinese New Zealanders.

Nationalism has been used to invoke unity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as countries worldwide began restricting access to Chinese immigrants as the virus spread globally. While this response to Covid-19 has reinforced certain understandings of citizenship, academics have highlighted the ways in which citizenship represents a deeper sense of identity and belonging which was significantly affected during this time when a particular ethnic group was targeted. This follows calls from academics for research into the effects of nationalism during the pandemic (Woods et al., 2020) particularly during a time of crisis where political discourse both united and divided its citizens.

Lastly, while the Chinese and wider Asian community has been targeted due to racialisation of the COVID-19 virus, incorporating an intersectionality approach helps to unpack the diversity of differences across the community and the individual nuance in identity and experience. Intersectionality helps to unpack individual constructions of citizenship over the pandemic highlighting the inclusions and exclusions from within the Chinese community

## 2.2 Race, racialisation, and the construction of the Chinese identity

Race is used to categorise people with real-world consequences on power relations and resource allocation (Fields, 2001; Guess, 2006; Kincaid, 2018). Over the 18th century, race was believed to be an objective scientific classifying system used to assert the superiority of white Europeans through both perceived physical and intellectual abilities (Brubaker et al., 2004; Glassman, 2000; Hirschman, 1986; Kowner, 2004; Kramer, 2006). Europeans have long been associated with positive attributes such as being fair, civilised, and self-governing whereas Asians or 'Asiatics' have been described as greedy and haughty, inhibited by tradition and governed by opinion (Blakey, 1999; Hudson, 1996; Said, 1978; Witzig, 1996). The concept of race far from represented biological difference and instead highlighted public discourse within Europe which justified colonial expeditions and embedded racism into the fabric of society through mediums such as art and literature, contributing to the Western imaginary of the other (Said, 1978; Witzig, 1996). Modern research into the biological reality of racial categories has disproved idea which is now largely rejected by the scientific community (Witzig, 1996). However, recent debates unpacking the epistemological difference between constructionist and essentialist arguments for race differentiate between the biological versus lived reality of the race highlighting its continued influence (Spencer, 2018; Wolf et al., 2020). A constructionist stance has defined contemporary geographic research which is influenced by critical race theory, focussing on the social, political, economic, and cultural processes of racialisation (Peake & Schein, 2000). Racialisation is defined as "…the representational process whereby social significance is attached to certain biological and/or cultural characteristics" (Walter, 1999, p. 266) which results in racism, "…the systematic attachment of beliefs of inferiority to people of colour" (Peake & Schein, 2000, p. 135). While geographic research has contributed towards unpacking the fluid and discursive nature of race, this is not to discount the discipline's past problematic engagements with race.

Geographers have long engaged with race, at times directly contributing to the reproduction of racial hierarchies. Early geographers mapped Eurocentric constructions of race during European colonial expeditions helping to inform colonisation efforts (Bonnett, 1997; Kobayashi & Peake, 1994). Europeans othered Middle Eastern, Asian, and African people and cultures contributing to a dichotomy between the 'East' and 'West' based on perceived differences in sophistication, societal progression, and biological attributes (Said, 1978). Geographic engagement with race declined during the World Wars before being reigniting through racial mapping in both Britain and North America from the 1960s to 80s (Bonnett, 1997; Nayak, 2011). Geographers mapped the distribution of racial minority groups in relation to the host society; African Americans in the US (Dwyer, 1997) and non-British, Commonwealth migrants in Britain (Bonnett, 1997), reinforcing racial divide through quantitative data (Jackson, 1985). Notable geographers such as Peter Jackson and Audrey Kobayashi have long criticised the discipline for a lack of critical inquiry into the wider circumstances influencing racial distributions highlighting the need to explore the individual motivations and consequences of spatial concentration (Jackson, 1985; Kobayashi & Peake, 1994). As new perspectives arose, they began to influence geography's engagements with race. From the mid-1980s, geographers began to critically reflect on the state's contribution to racial divides as well as the crucial role of place (Nayak, 2011). This revealed the discursive nature of race across space as well as the multiple meanings assigned to place across different groups of people. Despite deeper engagements with race, Bonnett (1997) noted the deafening silence regarding the unmarked and invisible white majority. While whiteness was acknowledged by some geographers (see Jackson (1987) and Clarke, Ley, & Peach (1984)), there remained a clear lack of engagement into the dynamic construction and multiple experiences of whiteness as race was considered an attribute of non-whites only (Bonnett, 1997). This slowly changed in the 1990s as whiteness was increasingly acknowledged in research as well as the influence of social identities such as gender, age, ethnicity, and place in contributing to individual experience (Frankenberg, 1993).

Geographic research on race in the new millennium has evolved to incorporate new and mixed methods and analytical lenses (Nayak, 2011). Recognition of the power of emotion, has paved the way for emotional geography with an emphasis on feeling, emotion, and affect in the microscopic encounters and operationalisation of race (Matthee, 2004; Nayak, 2011). The focus of research has also turned inward on the production of research with increased scrutiny on the academic reproduction of racial hierarchies. Mahtani (2014) has criticised the

burgeoning geographic literature on race despite the ongoing marginalisation and continued subordination of academics of colour within geography departments. The author notes while geographic research has been increasingly emphasising subjectivity and identity in regard to diversity and difference, there has been a lack of attention on working towards solutions addressing racial and social equality. Overviews in the Progress in Human Geography have highlighted the increased recognition from geographers of intersectionality in acknowledging the interlocking systems of social identities in the production of lived experience and highlighting its importance in future race research (Hopkins, 2018, 2019). Geographies of race and ethnicity, a newly dubbed field consisting of legal, feminist, and critical race geographers, has unpacked the effects of settler colonialism on non-native people of colour, and the links between environmental racism and racial capitalism and their effects on vulnerable communities of colour (Pulido, 2018). Despite progress across geographic research on race, it remains starkly apparent that research still remains fragmented across the discipline and distinct subdisciplines of geography.

Beyond geography's broad engagement with race, there has been little research on the racialisation of people of Chinese descent in Western countries despite their significant presence. People of Chinese descent are racially visible due to "…aesthetic differences in skin, bone, and features" (Tolia-Kelly, 2020, p. 589) resulting in race being "…clearly defined to the eye" (Hall, 2017, p.40), carrying with it a series of assumptions regarding "…intellectual potential, spiritual capacities, and affective palates" (Hall, 2017, p.40). These racial signifiers are used to identify people of Chinese descent who are racialized by the white majority in Western countries. This is particularly prevalent across the history of Chinese settlement in Western countries such as Australia (Wilton, 2017), Canada (Anderson, 1987; Holland, 2007), and the US (Holland, 2007) where Chinese migrants faced racism and were marginalised by the white majority. The most notable and the earliest geographer to have written on the racialisation of Chinese is Kay Anderson, whose analysis of Vancouver's Chinatown highlighted the government's role in the discursive construction and subsequent othering of 'Chinese' in the British settler society of Canada. From the late 19th to early 20th century, Chinese people were treated like a contagion and associated with disease, drug use, and gambling in Vancouver, quintessentially non-European traits reinforcing the divide between the Chinese and white population (Anderson, 1987). This geographic imagination of 'Chinese' reflected what Europeans thought of themselves as physically, intellectually, and morally superior. As Chinatown modernised and westernised and found ally organisations, discourse

of the area was gently romanticised over the 1930s as an 'exotic' place reminiscent of ancient civilisation. Over the 1970s and 80s following political discourse encouraging multiculturalism, Chinatown was described as an 'ethnic neighbourhood' with increasing government funding to emphasise its 'ethnic character' (Anderson, 1991). Despite the shift in public attitude towards Chinatown and people of Chinese descent, the fundamental distinctions between 'them' and 'us' remained and the micro-distinctions between the groups continued to manifest into "macrostructures of European hegemony" (Anderson, 1991, p. 1940) through the continued marginalisation of Chinese residents.

Anderson's interest in Western reception to Chinese migration extended to Australia, where government enthusiasm for multiculturalism sparked plans for two Chinatown areas in Melbourne and Sydney over the 1970s (Anderson, 1990). While the intentions for establishment of Chinatowns in Australia differ from those which physically excluded Chinese in Vancouver, both stem from the fundamental belief in difference supporting the justification for designating an area for Chinese people. Following Anderson, Mitchell (1993, 1995) explored the intersection of global capitalist investment and local socio-cultural relations through the economic investment in Vancouver from Hong Kong businesspeople. The author unpacks the cultural business practices of Hong Kong businesspeople and their efficacy in a global economy and analysed anti-Hong Kong sentiment in Vancouver in a case of foreign investment in luxury condominiums in downtown Vancouver. The moment brought out two competing interests, the desire for capitalist investment encouraging foreign investment and the resistance to racial difference in Vancouver (Mitchell, 1995). Mitchell (1993) breaks through the façade of 'multiculturalism' in Canada, revealing the persistence of ideological conceptions of race and nation which become apparent during moments of perceived threat by the white majority (Mitchell, 1993). This follows similar events in Aotearoa where increasing house prices has resulted in Chinese migrants being blamed for foreign investment in the media, by politicians, and in public discourse. In recent research, Grydehøl et al. (2021) argue that the deployment of 'China as a threat' by Western powers is used to maintain Western colonial influence in former colonies through focusing on several case studies of island nations. The authors employ a decolonial methodology and find that island nations differentiate between colonial and undesirable political intervention and interpret colonial undertones in Western warnings of Chinese neo-colonialism.(Grydehøj et al., 2021).

In Aotearoa, geographers have researched how Chinese migrants have settled and adjusted to life in the country with many authors highlighting experiences of racism. Most

notably, this has included literature on experiences of settler Chinese in Aotearoa particularly focusing on the poll tax and their experiences of resettlement (Fairburn, 2003; Ip, 2003). Early research noted the influence of the model minority stereotype in Aotearoa where Chinese were increasingly seen as being hardworking and were relatively well accepted into the country (Chung & Walkey, 1988), although English language skills, education levels, age, length of residency, and unemployment were noted as major predictors for adjustment (Abbott et al., 2000). However, within the field of geography, Ip & Friesen (2001) explored local outcomes of transnationalism for Chinese migrants to Aotearoa and found that many believed racism contributed to their inability to find employment, that media portrayed Chinese in stereotypical or racist ways, anti-migration policies targeted Chinese, there was also a lack of support for new immigrants, and that English requirements signalled institutional racism. However, despite the claims and experiences of racism from many respondents, others believed that fellow migrants needed to better integrate into society, may be behaving poorly, or were too quick to associate interactions with racism highlighting the contrasting perceptions among participants (Friesen & Ip, 2001).

In research on 1.5 generation migrants in Aotearoa, described as children between six to 14 years old who have migrated with their parents, Wang & Collins (2016a) found that respondents had experienced racism although many had developed strategies through managing or downplaying their emotions or asserting one's own sense of belonging in response to discrimination. The authors found substantial opportunities and barriers to participants becoming cosmopolitan due to their unique position between two cultures. Many participants gravitated towards other 1.5 generation Chinese migrants forming ethnic cliques resulting in a distancing between themselves and the white majority. However, their resilience to encounters with racism and their ability to draw upon their cross-cultural identity capital and knowledge emphasised that cosmopolitanism is socially situated (Wang & Collins, 2016a). In another study by Wang & Collins (2016b) on emotions and cosmopolitan sociability among Chinese migrants, the authors found that emotional dissonance or feelings or unease, anxiety, or uncertainty, affected their ability to form connections beyond the Chinese community. Some respondents mentioned negative memories and experiences from their settlement or early life experiences which have affected their perspectives of their selves, others, and difference creating emotional barriers (Wang & Collins, 2016b). These barriers were slightly less apparent for 1.5 generation migrants who spoke fluent English and had grown up with local cultural norms although they too expressed a distance with local white New Zealanders but showed

greater capacity for cosmopolitan sociability. Wang & Collins (2016a, 2016b) touch on the subtleties of the experiences of race while maintaining a focus on cosmopolitism which is embraced and encouraged in the increasingly multicultural society of Aotearoa. They unveil the subtle strategies adopted by Chinese migrants underscoring the continued distance between Chinese New Zealanders and the white majority.

Racism towards Chinese New Zealanders should better incorporate stereotypes and their influence both across the media and public more widely. I argue that this would help unpack their continued influence within Western countries while acknowledging and addressing this issue could help counter their continued influence. Anti-Chinese sentiment in Western countries is commonly fuelled by 'yellow peril' fears where increased Chinese presence is perceived as a threat in white majority Western countries. Lyman (2000) notes the orientalist undertones in the yellow peril discourse, where it "…represents the exotic, erotic, strange Orient" (Lyman, 2000, p. 97) which "…is not keeping to its place but threatens to claim the opportunities and privileges from which it has been excluded" (Lyman, 2000, p.97). Context specific events and discourse may trigger yellow peril fears and change the Asian ethnic group of focus. In Aotearoa, yellow peril fears were first triggered by increasing numbers of Chinese labourers in the 1880s who were targeted by the British through racist migration policies and excluded from local communities. Hannis (2009, 2015) has noted the influence of the stereotype in the depiction of Chinese in national media although it has been noted to decline, potentially indicating increased tolerance for Chinese migrants. 'Forever/perpetual foreigner' and 'model minority' are also widespread stereotypes commonly used in mainstream film media to portray Asian characters (Besana, Katsiaficas, & Loyd, 2019; Kawai, 2005; Paner, 2018). Forever foreigner is the assumption that Chinese people as foreign (Kim et al., 2011) which is exemplified through the continued othering of racially visible ethnic groups in Aotearoa highlighting the associations of a white identity with a the country. The model minority stereotype is assumption that Asians are hardworking and academically successful and commonly traced back to the US in the 1960s where it became a common assumption of Asian Americans both in the media and academic research (Yu, 2006).

## 2.3 Conceptions of the ideal citizen during crisis

Nations, nation-states, and nationalism represent a complicated assemblage of resources, power, and social, cultural, political relations and have become the primary socio-

political ordering system across the globe (Kundra, 2019). They work to reinforce the human-made borders between vast areas of land, their systems of governance, and their formal citizens as decided by the state, despite the artificial nature of these divisions (Penrose, 2009). The borders prescribed to the land define the nation-state which has a single governing system operating within a geographic territory over a group of citizens (Agnew, 2017; Kundra, 2019; Wimmer & Feinstein, 2010). Constituting a nation-state are its citizens referred to as the collective nation, defined as a 'culturally homogenous' group of people (Agnew, 2017; Kundra, 2019). This thesis engages with literature on citizenship and nationalism from geography and the wider social sciences to highlight the construction of citizenship over the COVID-19 pandemic. This follows urgent calls from a range of academics for the need to examine the exclusionary nature of nationalism during the pandemic which has fuelled anti-Chinese sentiment globally (Bieber, 2020; Su & Shen, 2021; Vogel, 2020; Woods et al., 2020) highlighting the distinction between the white majority and people of Chinese descent.

A nation is described as an imagined community due to its artificial but lived reality which has been able to establish unity among a vast group of strangers through nationalism (Anderson, 1983). Nationalism is an ideology consisting of two key attributes, that the equal citizens of a nation who have a shared history, and future, rule the state and that this is done in the interests of the nation (Wimmer, 2019). Underlying this ideology is the belief that membership to the nation exceeds membership to other groups (such as gender or socio-economic groups) (Bieber, 2018). Nationalism takes varying forms, the most well-known being everyday or banal nationalism, and civic and ethnic nationalisms. Banal nationalism refers to the mundane and everyday ways in which the nation is reinforced and has been extensively studied within geography and across the social sciences (Antonsich, 2016; Antonsich & Skey, 2017b; Koch & Paasi, 2016; Paasi, 2016). In contrast to banal nationalism, hot nationalism is associated with passion and emotion fuelling violent or extreme acts but is less commonly researched possibly due extreme circumstances required to facilitate violent nationalism (Jones & Merriman, 2009). Civic and ethnic nationalisms have also been widely researched and are some of the oldest typologies of nationalism. Civic nationalism refers to the commitment to and exertion of sovereignty by equal citizens who share a political identity and future, whereas ethnic nationalism refers to the perceived kinship and/or shared ancestry within a group (Roshwald, 2015). Many academics have noted that it is rarely the exclusive performance of one type of nationalism but all nationalisms to varying degrees which work together to reinforce nationhood (Chernilo, 2020). Recent research utilises an inclusionary and

exclusionary typology to categorise nationalism (Bieber, 2018, 2020; Goalwin, 2017) exemplified by Bieber (2019) who developed a simple, yet effective typology based on levels of intensity and exclusion (see Table 1). Latent nationalism is used to described Billig's (1983) banal or everyday nationalism which can be inclusionary or exclusionary, while virulent nationalism refers to the more revolutionary side of nationalism "…that rejects the status quo and seeks to reassert the will of an imagined community over a political or cultural space" (Bieber, 2018, p. 526). Bieber (2018) notes as the need for a moment of crisis to facilitate exclusionary virulent nationalism such as the COVID-19 pandemic which has created global uncertainty (Woods et al., 2020).

**Table 1**

*Conceptualising nationalism*

|  | Level of intensity | |
|---|---|---|
| Level of exclusion | Inclusionary latent nationalism | Inclusionary virulent nationalism |
|  | Exclusionary latent nationalism | Exclusionary virulent nationalism |

Note. Reprinted from "Is Nationalism on the Rise? Assessing Global Trends," by F. Bieber, 2018, *Ethnopolitics, 17*(5), 519-540

**Figure 1**

*Dynamics of nationalism*
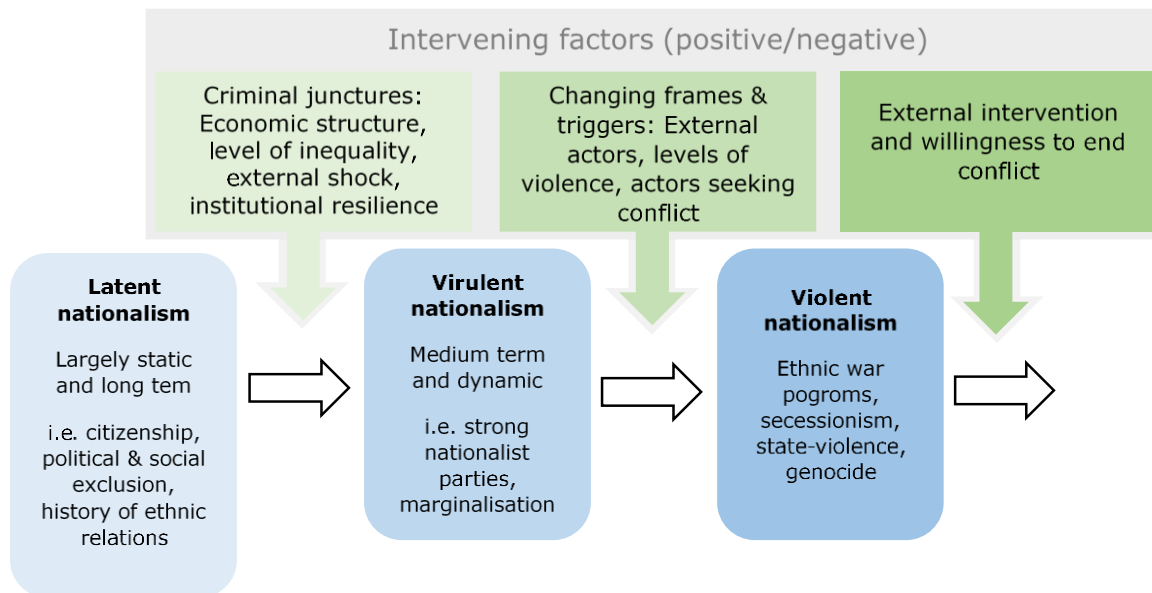


Note: Adapted from "Is Nationalism on the Rise? Assessing Global Trends," by F. Bieber, 2018, *Ethnopolitics, 17*(5), 519-540

With the complex nuanced meanings and significance associated with a nation and nation-state in discourse as well as the influence of different forms of nationalism, citizenship has been found to represent more than just legal status as academics have shown that it constitutes a complex combination of legal status, identity, and a sense of belonging (Dumbrava, 2017; Staeheli & Hammett, 2013). While legal citizenship may grant formal status to a country in line with 'born' citizens, belonging is described as "…the subjective feeling of attachment and identification with the nation" (Simonsen, 2017, p.2) and represents the intangible feelings and emotions attached to one's identity in relation to their nation. Whiteness continues to be embedded in the national identities across Western countries highlighting the intersection of race in nation in the production of citizenship and the interconnections between the two concepts. Whiteness and national identity have been explored through research into education on national identity and cultural diversity in Australian schools (Walton et al., 2018), the experiences of North African second-generation nationals in France's supposed colour-

blind society (Beaman, 2019), and the assimilation strategies adopted by migrants in Switzerland to align with notions of 'Swiss-ness' and whiteness (Cretton, 2018). Research has also shown how Russian speakers in Finland have struggled to gain inclusion from the local community despite their outward white appearance noting the intersections in the construction of citizens and the nuances across different spatial contexts (Krivonos, 2018). Significant socio-political events such as the 2016 European Union referendum and former President Trump's presidential reign have emphasised the racial undertones in constructions of the nation and citizenship through anti-immigration and restrictive citizenship policies (Guma & Jones, 2019; Pulido et al., 2019). Geographers have long debated the definition and conceptualisation of citizenship but have formed a consensus that it cannot be separated from wider processes shaping society (Staeheli, 2011). Staeheli (2011) states that citizenship can be considered "...as both a status and set of relationships by which membership is constructed through physical and metaphorical boundaries and in the sites and practices that give it meaning" (Staehali, 2011, p. 394).

In line with geographic tradition, geographers have long engaged with nationalism using a place-based focus regarding its role in creating and establishing nation-states. Nationalism has been described as a recent phenomenon in line with the recent proliferation of nation-states (Kundra, 2019; Roshwald, 2015). Early research analysed the influence of nationalism and the establishment of national identities in countries in the United Kingdom such as Scotland (Agnew, 1984) and Ireland (Fitzpatrick, 1978) through analysing nationalist political parties and the role of violent revolutions. Following historic geographic research, these utilised a positivist approach looking at electorate and demographic data. As geography evolved, so did research into nationalism which looked at the social construction of citizenship and the ethnic conflicts between groups within countries. Research focused primarily on countries experiencing political conflict as well as internal and external conflict with other ethnic and minority groups such as Israel (Yiftachel, 1997) and the Soviet Union (Kaiser, 2017), as well as the impact of migration on nationalist movements (Pollard, 1999). While modern geographic research explores new conceptualisations of nationalism such as resource nationalism (Childs, 2016; Koch & Perreault, 2019), and affective nationalism (Antonsich & Skey, 2017a; Antonsich et al., 2020), geographers have continually researched the influence of nationalism in unique political circumstances; the Scottish independence referendum (Pattie & Johnston, 2017), Catalonia's election on independence (Lepič, 2017), or more recently, the

'Brexit' movement where England voted to leave the European Union (Closs Stephens, 2019; Guma & Jones, 2019).

## 2.4 Unpacking nuance and individual experience

Feminism and anti-racism have been significant concepts incorporated into public and academic discourse to address the white, misogynistic, colonial, and sexist reproduction of research and policy (Hopkins, 2019; Kobayashi & Peake, 1994; Mahtani, 2014). However, this does not account for the diversity of experiences across individuals whose experiences cannot be understood through exploring a single axis of oppression. This has led to increasing recognition of intersectionality, a framework for unpacking the mutually transformative and intersecting nature of social identities often accredited to Kimberlé Crenshaw (Hopkins, 2019). Crenshaw is a legal scholar who centred Black women in her analysis of Black women's employment opportunities (Crenshaw, 1989) and violence towards women of colour (Crenshaw, 1991) and found that they were marginalised from feminist theory and antiracist political discourse. This was due to their position at the intersection of race, gender, and class, whereas policies addressed these issues separately failing to account for intra-group differences, which further marginalised Black women. While Crenshaw may have presented intersectionality to the academic realm, intersectional-like thought had existed up to two centuries earlier among activists from women's racial minority groups and social movements (see Hancock (2016), Collins & Bilge (2016), Frances Beals (1969)). Hopkins (2019) and Mahtani (2014) note the importance of acknowledging the roots of intersectionality in Black feminism in order to prevent the continued reproduction of white and masculine discipline of geography while Mott & Cockayne (2017) emphasise the power of citation to recognise academics beyond the white, heterosexual, cis-gendered, able-bodied, and middle-class men who currently dominate positions of power within academia (Mott & Cockayne, 2017). While race and nation are central concepts which contribute to the construction of Chinese in Aotearoa over the COVID-19 pandemic, some individuals may have been regarded as 'local' while others may have been visibly or aurally identified as 'foreign' or an 'outsider' through accent discrimination (de Souza et al., 2016). Through incorporating intersectionality, the nuance in the constructions of Chinese identity in Aotearoa over the pandemic can be further explored.

Early academic literature engaging with intersectionality arose primarily from sociology as academics sought to refine the concept further, develop methodologies for its use in research, and establish a field of intersectionality research by creating a typology to allow for research comparability (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Cho et al., 2013; McCall, 2005; Nash, 2008). Since the early 2000s, intersectionality research has expanded across and beyond social science disciplines into areas such as population health (Hankivsky & Christoffersen, 2008; Mullings & Schulz, 2006), education (Bhopal & Preston, 2012), and climate change research (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014; Versey, 2021). Within geography, feminist geographers were the first to engage with the concept, with Valentine (2007) setting the direction for geography's contribution to intersectionality research through incorporating a space-based perspective. The author highlights the situated nature of identities which are co-implicated with space in the production of subject formation, which contributes to the production of dominant groups in particular contexts. Following feminist geographers, academics on geographies of production, age, and masculinities have noted the importance of incorporating intersectional perspectives in research on the production of inequality (Reimer, 2009) to encourage research beyond the socio-chronological margins of age (Hopkins & Pain, 2007), and to account for the intersection of masculine identities with other forms of identification (Hopkins & Noble, 2009). In more recent years, summaries and overviews appear to dominate geography's engagement with intersectionality, focussing on the discipline's engagement with intersectionality within specific countries (Blidon, 2018; Evans & Maddrell, 2019; Sircar, 2019). Articles also continue to theorise geography's contribution to intersectional research through setting forward new directions, ideas, and areas for further research, always emphasising a space and place-based focus (Hopkins, 2018, 2019; Rodó-de-Zárate & Baylina, 2018; Vaiou, 2018). Geographic research focused on case studies in recent years have explored farmer vulnerability to climate extremes in Northern Ghana (Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2020) social policy addressing diversity in London (Raco, 2018), and the constructions of children and youth in Catalonia (Rodó-de-Zárate, 2017). Despite the increasing amount of research on intersectionality from geographers, Hopkins (2018) asserts that geographers have yet to contribute to intersectionality studies particularly in regard to the role of place, space, and scale. However, the framework shows promising insights for geographers unpacking the distribution of power.

Intersectional methodologies have been a key area of academic inquiry due to the lack of consensus on appropriate methodologies and consistency across research to date. This dilemma has been long noted by early academics such as McCall (2005), Nash (2008), Shields

(2008), Crenshaw herself, as well as geographers as it continues to be a topic of discussion (Hopkins, 2018; Rodó-de-Zárate & Baylina, 2018; Vaiou, 2018). Intersectionality has been employed in different ways as an analytical framework, a political orientation, and an ontological framework (Hopkins, 2019). It has been complemented by qualitative methods such as autoethnography (Sircar, 2021), interviewing (Windsong, 2018), narratives, and content analysis (Valentine, 2007). There have been several typologies and approaches to intersectional research, with Crenshaw herself differentiating between structural, political, and representational intersectionality. Structural intersectionality refers to the 'physical and legal' systems which reinforce and maintain inequality, political intersectionality refers to the 'organisational and legal policies and procedures' which subdue the rights of individuals, while representational intersectionality refers to the portrayal of groups across media which contributes to the stereotyping of minority groups. McCall (2005) defines three approaches to intersectionality research defined as anti-, intra-, and inter-categorical which describes the use of categories by researchers. While McCall (2005) notes a preference for anti-categorical approaches among academics where social categories are disregarded, considered too limiting and restrictive to account for the complexity of social life, the author advocates for the inclusion of inter-categorical approaches where social categories are provisionally adopted by academics to explore existing inequalities. Between these two poles or approaches sits intra-categorical research where categories are adopted with a precautionary stance, acknowledging their restrictions and reproduction of social categories. In another theorisation regarding the approach to categories, Hancock (2007) differentiates between unitary, multiple, and intersectional approaches in reference to research primarily focusing on a single category of difference (unitary), several categories of difference (multiple), or an intersectional approach which differs from a multiple approach due to recognition of the mutually constitutive relationship between categories which does not favour a particular category. Across recent geographic research, intersectionality appears to have been primarily utilised as an analytical framework with an inter-categorical and either a multiple or intersectional approach depending on the social divisions which dominate in specific contexts (Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2020). Hopkins (2018) encourages researchers to use methodologies that are open and exploratory to allow participants to open up about their experiences and the social divisions which shape everyday life, which complement the recommendations of Rodó-de-Zárate & Baylina (2018), who believe that lived experience and case studies are an effective way to conduct intersectionality research. While there is no clear methodology for conducting intersectional

research, qualitative, empathetic, and open methodologies which allow for collaboration have been the most advocated and utilise approaches which focus on everyday experiences.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, academics have been increasingly calling for intersectional approaches to researching inequality over the pandemic, particularly regarding public health outcomes and the experiences of frontline and undocumented workers (Bowleg, 2020). Research has shown that migrants have been disproportionately affected by the virus compared to the white middle and upper class (Maestripieri, 2021) and that particular groups have been more susceptible to unemployment over the pandemic in analyses of age, gender, education, and race in the United States (Moen et al., 2020). While researching the health disparities over the pandemic is of utmost importance to ensure the physical health of marginalised individuals, there has yet to be research applying an intersectional approach to anti-Chinese sentiment over the pandemic. Applying an intersectional approach to explore anti-Chinese sentiment could unpack the individuals at the intersection of social divisions beyond just race who have been further marginalised by the majority and within the Chinese community itself. While race is a physical marker of difference for Chinese New Zealanders, aural markers such as accent or other subtle markers such as dress sense or eating habits can further differentiate Chinese who considered more 'local' or 'foreign' among Chinese in New Zealanders.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Geographers have a long history of problematic engagements with the topic of race oftentimes directly contributing to the reproduction of racial hierarchies. However, this is not to discount the efforts of those who have consistently acknowledged the discipline's lack of critical engagements with race and whiteness, influencing significant shifts in the new millennia incorporating new analytical lenses and methodologies. Geographic research has highlighted the othering of Chinese communities across Western countries since their arrival, as they found themselves marginalised from the majority and forced to create distinct spaces in society for themselves. In the Aotearoa context, research has focused on the adjustment and experiences of newer migrants and everyday cosmopolitan attitudes towards difference highlighting the distinct demographic and spatial trends across the Chinese community in response to changing migration policy. Reinforcing the constructions of race is the influence of nationalism, reinforcing the boundaries between inclusion and exclusion not just at the

geographic boundaries of nation-states, but influenced by wider social and political processes in the construction of citizenship. While there may be shared experience and commonalities across the Chinese community, each individual is at the intersection of multiple social identities highlighting the nuance in individual experiences.

# Chapter Three: Methodology and Context

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach, methods, and context used to inform this thesis. This thesis incorporates a case study approach utilising the COVID-19 lockdown as a case study for exploring the experiences of Chinese New Zealanders. In particular, this thesis utilises intersectionality to explore the diversity among the Chinese community and uses life story interviews to unpack their personal biographies to understand the impact of ethnic identity on the attitudes, interpretations, and perceptions of difference. The interviews are analysed using a thematic analysis to identify the key themes across participants while acknowledging my positionality as researcher and its influence on the nature of this research.

## 3.2 Methodological approach

This thesis employs a qualitative case study approach to explore the experiences of Chinese New Zealanders over the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown beginning on March the 25th, 2020. Case studies have been widely used across geographic literature to study "…a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources" to allow for "…multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and explored" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). This allows researchers to unpack the influence of place and processes on a group or individual (Hardwick, 2016) by using a constructivist approach that recognises the subjectivity in one's truth and reality (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Qualitative research is defined as "…a situated activity that locates the observer in the world… [that] consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible... [and] turn the world into a series of representations…" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). A qualitative approach allows for the interpretation of the experiences of Chinese New Zealanders and provides insight into the feelings and interpretations of participant identities and experiences in a detailed and holistic way. Geographers contribute a special consideration of the spatial dimension of research, highlighting the importance of space and place in shaping interactions and experiences (Hay & Cope, 2021). This is described as the 'geographic imagination', a way of thinking that allows individuals to recognise the role of space and place in influencing their own lives and the interactions between people and the space that separates them (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). The context of Aotearoa and the

regions, cities, towns, suburbs which make up the country contribute to the nuanced experiences across Chinese New Zealanders at a time of crisis and prominent anti-Chinese sentiment. The wide range of diversity across the country contributes to the nuance across experiences and influence the perception, construction, and embodiment of the Chinese identity.

An intersectionality lens is used to unpack the social categories beyond race and nation, which have impacted the Chinese New Zealand participants in this research. Although Chinese people are racially visible, there exists division within the Chinese community which consists of a diversity of people from early settlers to new migrants, young and old, varying levels of connection to one's homeland and culture, and a range of language abilities and accents which create small pockets of connection within the community. An intersectional perspective helps to unpack the social identities which marginalise individuals in particular contexts as influenced by broader social and political structures unveiling the nuance in individual experiences. This helps highlight the role of space and place across contexts in the constitution of identities and the inclusion or exclusion of others across experiences. While there remain to be improvements across intersectionality research within geography through the assertion of a space and place-based perspective, this thesis aims to address this need through explicit acknowledgement of the role of place in influencing participant experiences.

## 3.5 Interviews (from situation-specific to a life story)

Interviews are commonly used in qualitative research to unpack the experiences and interpretations of people in specific settings and tend to be unstructured or semi-structured to allow for the exploration of topics as they arise (DeLyser et al., 2009; Dunn, 2021). An interview consists of an interview participant whom a researcher asks questions to unpack their experience of a phenomenon in-depth and in detail. This is opposed to other methodologies that may aim for greater breadth and coverage, such as surveys and questionnaires containing standardised questions and responses. Maintaining an unstructured or semi-structured approach allows for flexibility and adaptability during discussions and allows participants to ask researchers questions and thoroughly explain their interpretations. (Dunn, 2021). This made interviews particularly useful for this research as topics were explored as they arose, allowing the conversation to be participant-focused and led while exploring the embodied experiences of Chinese New Zealanders.

In-depth interviews are described as being built on trust and respect, resembling friendships as they seek to uncover 'deep' information and knowledge (Johnson & Rowlands, 2012). They often touch on personal details and were particularly useful for this research which sought to uncover participants' backgrounds, sense of identity, and sense of belonging in Aotearoa. To ensure participants were informed, the research purpose was stated before permission was sought to audio record as required with interviewing recommendations (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). As the interviewer, I spent time conversing with participants before recording and throughout the interview and I shared my own experiences to reciprocate their sharing of information. Identifying as a Chinese New Zealander myself, there were often many similarities across our experiences which helped establish a sense of connection. Given that this research explored issues of race, identity, and possible experiences of racism, I was conscious of providing a secure environment for attendees and followed recommendations John & Rowlands (2012) to remain attentive to participant needs. I noted the body language and tone of voice of participants to assess participants' level of comfort and checked in periodically to ensure they were comfortable progressing with the interview. I remained attentive and sympathetic throughout the interview and maintained awareness of my role of listening to participants, providing them with the time and place to speak with my full attention. Early on in the first interview, it became clear that not all participants had a negative experience over lockdown, which I then prepared for in subsequent interviews. I became aware that it would be useful to unpack their experiences growing up in Aotearoa to see how this influenced or impacted their perception of the anti-Chinese sentiment over lockdown. Particular attention was paid to their geographic locations growing up and where they currently resided to highlight the added nuance of place due to the wide range in ethnic distributions across the country.

Chinese New Zealanders are a broad and diverse community and undertaking life story interviews helped me explore individual participant experiences of growing up in Aotearoa. In particular, I was exploring how their experiences had impacted their view of themselves as being of Chinese ethnicity, their sense of belonging in Aotearoa, and how this may have impacted how they experienced and viewed the pandemic. Life story interviewing is a specific type of interview that aims to capture peoples' own perceptions of their lives and views their lives as an accumulation of experiences over time (Adriansen, 2012). It provides a holistic approach to understanding experiences that highlight the interrelatedness between parts, where oral history is utilised to unpack the role of memory, history, and traditions in experiences (DeLyser et al., 2009). This helped unpack how interpretations and experiences in earlier life

may have impacted participants' interpretations of their experiences over the lockdown and their own identities. For example, comparison with past experiences of racism can make COVID-19-related anti-Chinese sentiment seem insignificant for some or more severe for others. Life stories provide a platform to discuss feelings, thoughts, and opinions, highlighting the subjectivity in stories and allowing the researcher "…to step inside the personal world of the storyteller and discover larger worlds" (Atkinson, 2012, p. 151).

## 3.3 Participant recruitment

A total of two Chinese journalists, two Chinese organisation representatives and five Chinese community members were approached or recruited for this research to obtain a diversity of perspectives ranging from the local to national scale. The journalists and organisation representatives were able to provide a regional to national overview of their observations of the Chinese community over the pandemic in combination with their own experiences as individuals. Chinese community members were invited to share their individual experiences to provide a more detailed and rich account of embodied experience. All participants were provided with a participant information sheet, consent form, and an indicative interview schedule (see Appendix A, B, C.) through email, which included an explanation of myself and the research project. Once the participants agreed to participate, the interview was conducted either over Zoom, a video conferencing software, or face-to-face in Auckland at a location that best accommodated the participant. Zoom interviews were synchronous, meaning they were conducted in real-time and maintained the same format as face-to-face interviews (James & Busher, 2012). Interviews were audio-recorded if permission was granted by participants and transcribed. Participants were able to receive a transcript for editing if requested to ensure they were comfortable with the information presented. Due to the sensitive nature of the information being discussed, including race, identity, and possible experiences of racism, participants were provided with a national helpline, 1737 part of the National Telehealth Service by the Ministry of Health in case they required additional support due potential discussions on distressing experiences of racism. This was alongside with the sensitivities and recommendations I employed throughout my interviews to ensure participant were comfortable.

**Journalists:** Over the COVID-19 pandemic and particularly leading up to the first nationwide lockdown in New Zealand, news outlets were almost exclusively focused on the

effects of the COVID-19 pandemic both nationally and internationally. This included both articles focused on instances of racism and reports of the increased racism experienced by Chinese New Zealanders as reported by the Human Rights Commission (Nielsen, 2021). Two Chinese journalists were identified and approached through email as their professions were highly impacted by the pandemic and they were likely to possess insights into the effects of the pandemic on the wider Chinese community through their profession. They were also invited to participate in their individual capacity as Chinese community members as I acknowledged the two roles might have been difficult to separate and were likely to influence each other. They were approached directly as these specific roles were unlikely to be fulfilled through online participant recruitment. The direct contact approach taken for these individuals was stated in the Human Ethics Application for this research UAHPEC2948 and approved before they were approached. The journalists were identified while reading through news articles on racism towards Chinese New Zealanders published by local media outlets. Due to their public-facing professions, email addresses were easily accessible, and each person was emailed an invitation to participate in this research.

**Organisation members:** Many Chinese organisations across Aotearoa could provide insight into the experiences of their members over the pandemic and a more regional or national overview of their observations across the Chinese community. Two Chinese organisation representatives were identified online while searching for Chinese organisations and approached through their organisational email addresses identified through their organisation websites. Both operated regionally within Auckland, although one also held branches in other parts of the country. They differed in the type of services they provided and their length of operation, but both were well-established within the Chinese community and served the Chinese community exclusively. Along with the journalists, the organisation representatives were only approached once ethics was approved.

**Chinese community members:** Five members of the Chinese community were recruited through Facebook groups dedicated to Chinese New Zealanders, of which I was a member. These groups provided access to a community of Chinese New Zealanders who could access the internet and utilise technology in the case that the interviews would need to move online due to the pandemic. Advertisements (see Appendix D) were posted in these groups with permission from the group administrators. The advertisement included a summary of this research project, a set of criteria for potential participants, and a contact email address. The criteria asked that potential participants identify as being of Chinese ethnicity, are over the age

of 18 years old, are a permanent resident or citizen of Aotearoa, and have been residing in Aotearoa since the beginning of March 2020. I requested permanent residents and citizens to target those who may have resided in the country for a more extended period and may possess fluent English language skills due to my limited Mandarin speaking ability. Aotearoa entered its first nationwide lockdown on 25th March 2020, so participants were required to reside in the country since March 2020. Communication with participants took place over email, and five out of an anticipated six participants were recruited over three days.

## 3.7 Data analysis

To analyse the interview data, I conducted a thematic analysis, a widely used method for analysing qualitative data across a wide range of disciplines. It identifies, organises, describes, and reports themes across a data set and is a highly flexible approach that can be tailored for one's research needs (Nowell et al., 2017). It allows storytelling through the interpretation and creation of qualitative data with the subjectivities of the researcher and is context-dependent, and positioned and situated (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Braun & Clarke (2019) use the term reflexive thematic analysis to acknowledge the researcher's role in knowledge production where decisions are made based on the researcher's academic background, which the researcher is fully cognisant of and transparent about. This is acknowledged throughout the thematic analysis in a "…continual bending back on oneself" (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 594) to inquire about the assumptions made in the interpretation of data by the researcher. Themes are "…creative and interpretive stories about the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 594) created at the intersection of data, process, and subjectivity and do not simply 'emerge' from the data as is commonly referred to by academics. A reflexive thematic analysis acknowledges my positionality and how this impacts my analysis of the data which I will reflexively engage with throughout my analysis. Positioning is a part of all research which I will explain in detail further below and this allows me to bring these to light and acknowledge how this impacts my research.

A thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes across responses which are described by Braun & Clarke (2019) as "…patterns of shared meaning underpinned or united by a core concept" (p. 594), otherwise called a 'central organising concept'. My analysis was guided by Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun (2017), who had provided guiding steps for analysis, but it is essential to highlight that this is an iterative process, and I often repeated steps

and revisited past work. In order to identify themes, I first familiarised myself with the data, which requires reading and re-reading to immerse oneself. As I became familiarised with the data, I could then begin to generate and assign codes which are meaningful labels used to assign segments of the data. I revisited my codes over time to ensure they were relevant and made sense in the research context. After I was comfortable with the codes, I then began to construct themes. Codes were clustered, combined, or collapsed into overarching patterns and themes identified patterns shared across many codes. The themes are then interpreted, defined, and named many times before being used in my thesis. This allowed for one last check to ensure they were relevant and insightful for my research and summarised my data to the best of my ability. Conducting the analysis over a period of time allowed me to revisit the data and check that my assumptions were either highlighted or mitigated when possible throughout the analysis.

## 3.8 Research context

The context for this thesis focuses on Aotearoa New Zealand, a settler country formerly colonised by the British who established a white nation building process to establish a 'Britain of the South Seas' (Bell et al., 2017; Spoonley, 2015). Aotearoa is home to the indigenous Māori people who experienced British colonisation in the late 19th century which brought enormous changes to their way of life (Smith, 2012). Māori like many other indigenous populations, still battle the legacy of colonisation to this day and continue to experience the most adverse socio-economic and health outcomes compared to other ethnic groups in the country (Reid et al., 2014). Soon after colonisation, the British brought over 5,000 Chinese men as labour after the discovery of gold in Otago-Southland goldfields who were subsequently racialized, marginalised, and oppressed, as part of the country's white nation building process (Bell et al., 2017; Murphy, 2003). The country's legislations actively targeted Chinese migrants who were subjected to pay a poll tax on arrival which increased from £10 to £100 up until the 1930s, while anti-Asian and Chinese networks and organisations emerged in response to 'yellow peril' fears from the British. As the prospects of gold disappeared, the Chinese labourers dispersed across the South Island establishing laundromats, fruits shops, or becoming market gardeners due to their denial into the workforce by the British majority. Although not explicitly labelled as white policies, British and Commonwealth migrants continued to be favoured by government and were exempt from the migration process expected from other

ethnic groups. New waves of diaspora Chinese migrants entered the country over the second half of the 20th century from across Southeast Asia, and Hong Kong, a small proportion arriving as refugees while Samoan Chinese nations were granted citizenship in line with new policies. A significant shift of migration policy over the 1980s to 90s granted entry to migrants who met the criteria regardless of race or ethnicity spurring a wave of new business-orientated Chinese migrants. However, on a campaigned based on anti-migration and anti-Asian sentiment in 1996, the New Zealand First Party gained enough public support to alter the immigration policy to focus on skilled migrants allowing a new wave of skilled migrants from mainland China. Chinese migrants were the first non-British or Polynesian groups to settle in Aotearoa and continue to be third largest ethnic group today after Europeans and Māori. Despite their longstanding presence in Aotearoa, they continue to the second highest self-reported rates of racism just behind the Māori population (Harris et al., 2006) and have been found to experience workplace discrimination particularly across those who identify as both Chinese and female (Kim, 2004). Ip (2005) explicitly highlighted the racism towards Chinese presented over 140 years of caricatures emphasising the role racial stereotypes while other academics (Friesen & Ip, 2001) have acknowledged the role of racism affecting Chinese migrants settling in New Zealand. Research on Chinese New Zealanders does not appear to focus explicitly on racism and centre on newer Chinese migrants and their motivations and experiences of relocating to the country as well as their adjustment into the local community. Migration patterns have resulted in distinct ethnic clustering across the country, with the vast majority of the Chinese population located in Auckland (see Table 2 below).

**Table 2**

Chinese ethnic distributions across New Zealand's regions

| Regional council | Percentage of total Chinese in each region (%) | Percentage of Chinese in each region (%) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Northland Region | 0.7 | 0.9 |
| Auckland Region | 69.1 | 10.9 |
| Waikato Region | 4.9 | 2.6 |
| Bay of Plenty Region | 1.6 | 1.3 |
| Gisborne Region | 0.1 | 0.8 |
| Hawke's Bay Region | 0.8 | 1.1 |

| Taranaki Region | 0.5 | 1.0 |
|---|---|---|
| Manawatū-Whanganui Region | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Wellington Region | 8.6 | 4.2 |
| Tasman Region | 0.2 | 0.8 |
| Nelson Region | 0.2 | 1.0 |
| Marlborough Region | 0.2 | 0.9 |
| West Coast Region | 0.1 | 0.6 |
| Canterbury Region | 8.7 | 3.6 |
| Otago Region | 2.2 | 2.4 |
| Southland Region | 0.4 | 1.1 |

Source: Adapted from StatsNZ, 2021

## 3.9 Positionality

As news of anti-Chinese racism and xenophobia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic arose, it immediately caught my attention. Not just because it felt like a clear injustice but because I could relate as a Chinese New Zealander who has experienced racism throughout my life. I had a personal interest in the issue, and I wanted to investigate anti-Chinese racism in Aotearoa. I was both professionally and personally committed to this research. This section is my reflection and acknowledgement of my position in this research and the effects on both the research and the participants (Haraway, 1988; Rose, 1997). While I identify as the same ethnic identity as the participants, as the position of researcher, I inevitably hold a position of power and am influenced by my own experiences growing up as a Chinese New Zealander in this country.

**My background**

My parents are immigrants from Beijing and arrived in Hamilton, New Zealand in 1989. My dad tells me that he arrived with a single $20 US note in his pocket and went straight to work the next day. My mum tells me she stayed at home crying while dad was at work, she missed my sister and her family back in China. I remember growing up a happy child and while money was scarce, I don't ever recall going without a meal or being cold in the winter. My clothes may have been handmade, and my toys may have been from the local dump, but I had

a really lovely childhood. My parents never made me feel any different or that we had to go without.

The first primary school I attended was decile one, the lowest socio-economic rating possible for a school in Aotearoa. The school was predominantly comprised of Māori and Pasifika children and in the late 1990s and I was one of the few Asian children who attended. As a result of being so different, I was heavily bullied from the ages of five to eight. In a school where the surrounding families represented the lower and working class of Aotearoa, we were marginalised by society, and I found myself further marginalised for my racial appearance. I became highly aware that I was visibly different, most noticeably my eyes as kids pulled their eyes to mimic mine. From the age of around six, I became acutely aware that I was racially visible.

My parents are incredibly resilient people who lived through Chairman Mao's strictly controlled communist regime. They never had the freedom to pick their degrees or their jobs, and they lived through the Great Chinese Famine of 1959 to 1961. As I've gotten older, my dad tells me stories about these years where he often went hungry. He jokes about the time he ate 50 dumplings when he was starving, and sighs when he talks about the time grandpa had to kill his rabbit in order to feed the family. I often look at him in awe, that he lived this life which seems worlds away from my own experience. For my parents, meeting their basic needs for day-to-day survival was a battle let alone fulfilling their social and emotional needs. Across ethnic Chinese populations, subjective norms fail to incorporate mental health and my parents were no exception. To no fault of their own, I didn't understand what I was going through, and I grew ashamed and embarrassed of the bullying I experienced. Even had I found the courage to tell them, I'm not sure what they would have done with their limited English skills. Not only was my family and I racially visible, but we were also culturally difference and linguistically excluded in Aotearoa.

Growing up in Aotearoa, I developed an understanding of Māori as the local indigenous population and Pākehā as the white majority who had colonised the lands. As a young Chinese girl, I often wondered where I fit into the nation and struggled to understand my place. I have found it difficult to call myself a Kiwi as growing up I was continuously asked where I was from, I received compliments for my English, and others have always reaffirmed to me that I am a Kiwi when I tell them I grew up in Hamilton. Despite my strong associations with the country, it is continually questioned before the label of Kiwi is finally granted to me by others.

Kiwi has become synonymous with being white because while my birthplace, accent, and mannerisms may match any other local, my physical appearance continually asserts me as different. I spent my childhood and teenage years rejecting Chinese culture and attempting to distance myself from my Chinese ethnicity, describing myself as a banana and associating myself with a white identity on the inside, embarrassed of Chinese culture and my appearance. It was not until I reached university, where I learned about difference and privilege that I learned to embrace my ethnic heritage and found myself struggling to speak a language I once knew and missing out on the celebrations important to my culture.

# Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions from nine semi-structured life story interviews with two Chinese journalists, two Chinese organisation representatives, and five members of the Chinese community in Aotearoa. These three groups provide a range of perspectives from the broad nation-wide observations down to the feelings, emotions, and experiences at the scale of the individual body highlighting the microscopic ways in which race and nation are enacted during a crisis. To present the findings, each individual is presented separately with their personal biography to both emphasise the voices of the Chinese community and to highlight the influence of racial identity on the feelings, emotions, and experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown. All participants have been provided with pseudonyms and any identifying material has been removed to protect their identities.

First, I explore the findings from two Chinese journalists who both lived and worked through the pandemic. Anna and Mei work for national news media organisations and reported on the effects of the pandemic on the Chinese New Zealand community. Anna is based in Wellington and grew up in Aotearoa whereas Mei is a recent migrant who grew up and was educated in mainland China. They provide two unique perspectives and interpretations of their observations across the Chinese New Zealand community intertwined and influenced by their own identities and experiences.

Second, I explore the findings from Sam and Bowen, representatives from Chinese community organisations located in Auckland. Sam is fourth generation Chinese New Zealander operating a Chinese community organising embracing Canton culture tradition and Sam is a recent migrant, working for an organisation providing resources and support for the Chinese community. They both represent and support distinct cohorts of Chinese migrants which have been shaped by changing migration policy and have taken unique journeys to adapting to life in Aotearoa, walking the fine line between acculturation and assimilation.

Lastly, I will discuss the findings from five interviews with Chinese New Zealanders who shared their individual experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. While they are connected through their ethnic identity and share similar experiences growing up racially marked, they highlight the nuance in their individual experience during the lockdown.

## 4.2 Journalists

Anna (20-29, Wellington Region, Journalist)

Mei (30-39, Auckland Region, Journalist)

Mei and Anna are journalists whose personal lives and professions were significantly impacted by the pandemic. While they both identify as ethnically Chinese, Mei is a recent migrant from mainland China, whereas Anna and her family are part of the Chinese diaspora, identifying as ethnically Chinese with a family history based in South East Asia. This section presents their observations of the Chinese community in Aotearoa during the COVID-19 pandemic intertwined with their own experiences as Chinese journalists reporting on their own community.

Mei has predominantly reported on the Chinese New Zealand community since working as a journalist in the country, first reporting on local news before moving to national news with a focus on ethnic communities. She first heard of the COVID-19 virus in December of 2019 when she read of a mystery virus in Wuhan but described how *"she didn't even connect it to SARS and didn't really think of it much"*. As the situation quickly progressed, she utilised her connections to hear personalised accounts of the increasingly dire situation in China, sharing the stories with her colleagues who quickly *"realised it is worth having a Chinese reporter here"* to access on-the-ground accounts of events as they unfolded:

*"Well at first when people were posting [photos of] all of these long queues at medical centres and there were so many articles talking about how [a] whole family have like vanished because of this virus… I was worried about my family as well but then you have to talk to people who are more connected to New Zealand to report on their stories… I think you have to be calm and also be more, not indifferent but put a shield between personal and emotions and professional errands."*

Mei noticed *"a difference between what civilians are perceiving… and what is maybe actually happening"* and became increasingly aware of the severity of the pandemic in China. While life for most New Zealanders remained the same, Mei was personally affected by, and professionally committed to the devastation in China. To protect herself and carry out her professional responsibilities, Mei described putting a *"shield"* between her two worlds to separate her emotions and focus her attention on stories involving local citizens. Although the virus had yet to reach the country, Mei along with other members of the Chinese community

were already emotionally impacted by the crisis unfolding overseas, with many locals enacting and performing acts of care by sending supplies back home to loved ones.

As the virus continued to spread globally, Aotearoa entered a nationwide lockdown on the 25th of March 2020. During this time, Mei observed distinct trends across different cohorts of Chinese migrants. While those who were long established sought comfort through friends and family members nearby, Mei potentially influenced by her own experience as a migrant, focussed on migrant workers and students who had lost employment and income, struggled to access support services, and were separated from their friends and families overseas.

*"For migrants who are more established, they have more social connections... But there are new migrants who are here, who are here alone, perhaps like for example students… from what I've heard, there are people who are talking about, they are so worried about their families in China and they perhaps don't have many friends and social connections. I imagine it would be quite hard for them."*

She referenced trends on social media as people shared their cooking and baking creations and revisited old hobbies portraying a positive image and experience. However, she stated that while *"what we've seen from the surface is may be positive"*, there may be *"underlying problems that haven't been looked into properly"* expressing her concern for migrants who *"are here without many guarantees"*. She emphasised both the emotional and financial challenges migrants may have faced and described the lockdown as a *"wake up call"* to the issues facing the migrant community as emerging research indicates that immigrant communities have been disproportionately affected (Bowleg, 2020).

Mei also reported on and acknowledged the racism faced by Chinese New Zealanders as a result of the pandemic, a common topic across national news media. She believes racism is subjective and when discussing the topic, she posed questions such as *"…how do we define racism and then how would you view it? Well people will view someone who has a different face and has an accent has different habits, how would you define racism even?"* Despite the subjectivity, she believes racism exists *"everywhere… in universities, in government agencies"* potentially describing its embeddedness in society and suggested its existence prior to the pandemic. However, in response to the racism, Mei suggested that Chinese New Zealanders may need to reorientate their perspective as a minority group to equal members of society noting the advice of a speaker she encountered:

*"I did hear from a Chinese community opinion leader, her view is always like we are too conscious of us being Chinese, they are New Zealanders, this is the mainstream, we are the minority, and we are different, and we must make ourselves heard. She thought… this is not the right way of looking at ourselves in the first place and so I guess maybe we need to change the way that we perceive ourselves. Of course, we will be a minority on the other hand we can perhaps like... Well, if you want to feel more connected or if you want to eventually be part of this society naturally, we can perhaps just act as a New Zealander."*

While she acknowledged the racism experienced by the Chinese community, she potentially overlooks the impact of racism by encouraging the community to assimilate. Although she appears to suggest this to foster connections between Chinese New Zealanders and the wider nation, suggesting that they *"act as a New Zealander"* appears to encourage social and or behavioural assimilation to the nation without acknowledging how marginalised communities could be better accepted and accommodated for if they face racial discrimination. This may show Mei's self-admitted lack of experience with racism as she appears to encourage marginalised communities to conform to the majority to diminish the differences between them.

Mei also acknowledged the moments of positivity, unity, and collaboration both nationally and internationally in response to the pandemic where she mentioned the unity between different ethnic groups in response to racism, and the international collaboration between scientists for vaccine development:

*"But there are positive aspects of things as well… Connection between different ethnic groups and how we should face [adversity] altogether as whole nation rather than [as] different ethnic groups and like all [the] scientists are working together to develop a vaccine..."*

She acknowledges both the positive and negative aspects of lockdown sharing her observations of moments of both adversity and unity. Her experience and background as a Chinese migrant appears to have influenced her journalism as she highlighted her concerns for migrants. While the pandemic significantly affected the nature of her profession, it had a deeper impact on her own experience far away from her own friends in family, as she describes residing in an *"alien country"* in an unprecedented moment of crisis.

Anna was the first of her family to be born in Aotearoa and describes her identity as an *"ongoing journey"* as she works to incorporate her ethnic and national identities into her journalism:

*"I identify as a Kiwi Asian, I would say. My family is from South East Asia but originally from China. I was the first one of my immediate family to be born in New Zealand and I grew up here. I've always gone by the broad label of Kiwi Asian but there's a lot more that goes into that identity. I really feel like my sense of place is rooted in New Zealand but as I'm on this journey, I don't want to neglect my ancestral roots so it's sort of a thing of seeing how I can incorporate or blend the two of my realities."*

She experienced racism throughout her life making her feel the need to *"prove her New Zealand-ness"* and to assert her sense of place in the country, similar to other Chinese New Zealanders who are either born or have migrated here as children, experiencing identity dilemmas as they struggled with their sense of belonging (Wang & Collins, 2016a). She carefully navigated her career as a journalist as *"the media industry is predominantly white"* and she rarely reported on the Chinese community prior to the pandemic, concerned she would be *"pigeonholed to do 'just those issues' or 'just those communities'"* as *"a person of colour"*.

Anna first heard of the pandemic through international news and social media where she noticed that Chinese and Asians were being targeted based on their racial appearance. As reports of racism towards the Chinese New Zealand community arose, she described the reports as *"straight news stories"* which failed to acknowledge the ongoing and persistent nature of racism in the country:

*"I noticed that COVID-19 was becoming a new symbol for racism towards Asian people. It was anti-Chinese, but I noticed that anyone who looks Asian would be targeted. I noticed other reporters writing about racist incidences due to the fear around COVID-19 in straight news stories that never really elaborated on the fact that racism is ongoing and is being highlighted more because of COVID-19. I interviewed an Asian woman who decided during lockdown that she wouldn't go out very much or she would dress in a particular way. And I spoke to another person who said he would dress up as much as possible to cover his face. You heard stories of people in these communities being strategic about how they would do things and how they were thinking a bit more of how they were going to be reacted to during this time, compared to other ethnic groups."*

Anna observed how members of the Asian community avoided associating with perceived 'Asian' characteristics, at times performing notions of 'whiteness' to conform with the majority to avoid potential encounters with racism (Cretton, 2018). Despite their length of residence or sense of belonging, they are part of a racially visible ethnic group widely

associated with the pandemic and were particularly targeted during this time. When asked about the impact of the pandemic on the community, she emphasised the deeper emotional impact on sense of self and identity, noting how it encouraged individuals to speak up and spread awareness about the ongoing racism faced by Asians in Aotearoa.

*"I personally feel it really impacted a lot of people's confidence or sense of self. I think it made people feel really uncomfortable and there was a sense of othering or being seen as foreign... At the same time though, I feel like it definitely encouraged a lot of people in the Chinese community to speak up or feel more confident to speak up not just about COVID-related things but other instances of racism they experience too."*

Anna possibly influenced by her own experiences of facing racial assumptions throughout her life, could potentially relate to the subtle ways in which identity and belonging may be affected as a result of being othered, particularly during COVID-19. As she read more stories about the increasing anti-Asian racism due to COVID-19, she noted how the virus had become a symbol for racism towards Asians, acknowledging its spread beyond the Chinese community and highlighting how the community had responded to avoid being identified as 'Chinese' or 'Asian' by conforming to 'Kiwi' characteristics. She highlighted the ongoing, everyday, and subtle discrimination faced by the community and its emotional impact, bringing her own perspective to reports on the Chinese and wider Asian community during lockdown.

Mei and Anna's experiences, backgrounds, and identities distinguishes them as individuals of the same ethnic community who have approached their observations from differing perspectives emphasising the situated nature of their journalism (Haraway, 1988). Mei focussed on marginalised migrant groups potentially influenced by her own experience as a migrant and utilised her language skills to communicate with and bring a voice to non-English speaking members of the Chinese community. However, her lack of experience with racism has resulted in her potentially recommending an assimilation approach for new migrants, commonly found to be strategy adopted by immigrants in Western countries who perform notions of whiteness and national identity (Vogiazides & Chihaya, 2020). Anna represents a mix of cultural identities and has faced racism throughout her personal and professional career which has contributed to her style of journalism as she works to highlight the diversity across the Chinese and wider Asian community. Her sensitivity to the subtle ways in which members of the Asian community have distanced themselves from being seen as 'foreign' reveal the strategies adopted by the Asian community during the lockdown to conform with the 'Kiwi'

identity. Although both journalists reported on the same community during the pandemic, Mei chose to highlight marginalised migrant communities who she fears were forgotten in the pandemic, potentially struggling to access resources and support while Anna chose to bring light to the ongoing issue of racism towards the Asian community which existed long before the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 4.3 Chinese organisations

Bowen (20-29, Auckland Region, Community organisation representative)

Sam (60-69, Auckland Region, Community organisation representative)

Bowen and Sam are two unique individuals whose organisations cater for distinct subgroups within the Chinese community. Bowen's organisation provides culturally appropriate support services for Mandarin-speaking migrants from mainland or northern China whereas Sam's organisation hosts social activities based on Canton culture and tradition for English-speaking Chinese locals, many of whom are descendants from early Chinese migrants from the Guangdong province. It became immediately noticeable to me that there was a distinct Nothern/Southern divide between the organisations based on their geographic origins in China, spoken language, culture and traditions, and lengths of residency in Aotearoa. As well as the differences in the social identities of the members upon my first impression, Bowen and Sam's organisations represent vastly contrasting experiences of lockdown reinforcing the observations by journalists of the differences in experiences across the different cohorts of Chinese migrants.

Sam started the discussion with a comprehensive overview of the history of Chinese in Aotearoa, emphasising the discrimination, racism, and hardship Chinese faced when they first arrived in the country. He supplemented his stories with dates, facts, and sources and placed his own family history into the narrative, sharing how his grandfather and subsequent family members were forced to pay the poll tax. Sam described how *"Chinese lived very, very poorly"* as *"they couldn't find employment basically in the mainstream white society because they didn't want Chinese"*. The racism early migrants faced forced them to establish their own businesses for income which *"the three main occupations were market gardeners, fruit shops, and laundries because they didn't have too much money to be able to get started"*. Sam grew up at his family's fruit shop in the South Island before they relocated to the Wellington region where

*"there's only two Chinese families in the area"*. Growing up, he describes adapting to *"their ways"* most likely inferring the majority Pākehā population and adopted local hobbies such as following the national rugby team, noting that *"you can't be in New Zealand and not follow the All Blacks",* linking the sport to the national identity. Despite Sam's enthusiasm for the local culture, he found himself wanting to reconnect with his Chinese heritage which he believes he had maintained through his values, reinforcing his identity, association, and connection with both Chinese and New Zealand cultures. Sam was bullied for his racial appearance but turns the situation into a positive, describing those subjected to bullying as unique. However, he appears to normalise bullying referring to its widespread prevalence:

*"...they well, they always had this "ching chong Chinese" because you're unique and you know, once you got to know the people well they treated you just as the same... But you know, it's how you react... what the difference is yeah, and you know, I think we've all been bullied or picked on I mean, they even say that bullying goes on in schools far too much... and it's something that doesn't go away but you know, we've just got to live with it, it's part of maturity isn't it?"*

Sam focuses on the reactions of those subjected to bullying, possibly placing the responsibility on victims instead of those perpetuating racism in society. He appears to hold a passive acceptance of bullying and is dismissive of his own experience, while noting that he gained acceptance after his peers got to know him. His experience highlights the othering he experienced based on his racial appearance and the power the majority white peers at school held who were able to dictate his acceptance.

Sam had little to share regarding his experience during lockdown. Although he described lockdown as difficult, he found time for neglected domestic activities and described following government guidelines and temporarily closing his organisation:

*"We closed this place down, we followed the New Zealand government rules. Well, we all had to go into lock down which means that you know, we spend a lot of time with the family and that was it. It wasn't the easiest of times but yeah. I did clean up a few things at home, went through my files and tossed a lot of things out. Went through all my photos and tidied all those up."*

He stated that neither himself nor his organisation's members experienced any racial discrimination which he attributed to their longstanding presence in the local community and their lack of foreign accents. He described himself and his members as *"well integrated"*

referring to the inter-racial marriages of his fellow members and how their children were *"brought up the Kiwi way"*. He contrasts this to other Chinese organisations and the ethnoburbs in Auckland which allow people to *"live in New Zealand in your isolated world"* and believed they may have faced racial discrimination due to their geographic location and aural difference. He appears to express disapproval for these spaces and communities, comparing it to his own experience of having *"to integrate with people"*:

*"...do you know how many Chinese organisations that are currently in Auckland? About 350. Every district, suburb has got their Chinese association... some of them meet five times a week in their community centre for two to three hours a day. And you can live in New Zealand in your isolated world… we couldn't do that in our day. I mean you know, we had to integrate with people you know… and they I think would have been targeted more."*

Sam's conceptualisation of difference goes beyond physical markers of difference to include aural markers as part of his imagination of a 'Kiwi', possibly eluding to the potential for accent discrimination during the pandemic (de Souza et al., 2016). In Auckland unlike elsewhere in Aotearoa there are well-established ethnoburbs which he believes has allowed new migrants to retain their cultural characteristics preventing them from integrating into society which he compares to his own lived experience. Sam may be concerned by his understanding of ethnic segregation which is similar to early theories of urban segregation from Chicago School which favoured assimilation. However, studies have since highlighted the positive aspects of ethnoburbs as they enhance social networks and business connections, and provide a place of familiarity for new migrants who have limited English language skills, while also noting their dynamic nature hosting multiple ethnic groups and ethnic subgroups (Xue et al., 2012). Sam acknowledges the anti-Asian sentiment overseas which he attributes to political discourse by former President Trump who called the virus 'Wuhan flu' and 'China virus' inciting and normalising the racialisation of the virus (Goodwin & Chemerinsky, 2020).

In contrast to Sam, Bowen migrated to Aotearoa in the new millennium and represents a more recent wave of migrants from northern China since changes in migration policy have targeted skilled migrants. He grew up and completed his education in China before arriving in Aotearoa where he now supports Mandarin-speaking Chinese migrants in the country. Since he has lived here, he has experienced racial stereotyping and shared an encounter where he was assumed to have grown up with the book, *"Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung"*

associated with China's strict Mao Zedong era. He believes Western nations predominantly hold negative and outdated imaginations of China and shared an encounter he experienced:

*"I think China changed so much even 10, 20, 30 years ago it was a totally different world... At my old job, one old white gentleman asked me "oh for Chinese people the only thing I know is your small red book" ...that was fifty years ago! When he saw me he still mention[ed the] little red book! They consider us as [we were] fifty years ago but actually we are not [like that]. So, they [are] just [in] denial, sometimes the denial is attacking you, when they attack you then you are not better than me."*

This may indicate the dated, exaggerated, and negative imagery held of Chinese citizens in Aotearoa despite significant political and cultural shifts in China. In an encounter with someone deemed as 'different', the man in Bowen's story appears to have fixated on a negative aspect of Bowen's difference to him reinforcing distinctions between 'them' as foreigners and 'us' as New Zealanders. Bowen believes that discrimination towards the Chinese community has been perpetuated by mass media in Aotearoa which *"represents European people or mainstream people [and] what they think and what they want to do"* which has been supported by research regarding Aotearoa's portrayal of Chinese and Asian people in mass media which has reinforced existing stereotypes (Hannis, 2009; Spoonley & Butcher, 2009). However, despite China's problematic political history, he believes that he is part of a generation which can also recognise China's rich history and culture, finding a balance between acknowledging both positive and negative aspects of his home country:

*"Yes [there are] some negative part[s] of the Chinese government... but there still a lot of positive [things.] Why [is]China becoming the most powerful country in the world and... we have thousands [of years of] history and those beautiful things. Sometimes I think for the Chinese [migrants] they forgot or they choose not to take that part [and] they only see the negative part of Hong Kong, Taiwan, the political part but actually there's so many beautiful things there. I think I am the generation that they can see both. But you need to know you're living here, you need to know the systems and what they do, what they say, what they prefer."*

Bowen distinguishes between the political controversies and social and historical aspects of China culture, choosing to embrace the positive aspects of his home country. This may be his response to Western stereotypes conflating negative aspects of China across Chinese people in the construction of the other, denying people of their individual identities. While he believes older migrants have lost their pride in China focusing on the negative aspects,

he distinguishes his generation which is able to see both aspects, embracing the culture while acknowledging his disagreement with government's political decisions.

Bowen and Sam's organisations had wildly contrasting experiences over lockdown as Bowen's organisation was inundated with inquiries and they experienced their busiest period ever, hiring additional staff to help migrants who struggled to access resources and understand the government's guidelines. He described a vast variety of ways in which Chinese migrants struggled both during the lockdown and prior in their everyday life, noting that the lockdown exacerbated existing struggles faced by Chinese migrants. The barriers identified have been classified and presented below, supported by Bowen's stories, examples, and observations of the Chinese community.

**Cultural barriers:** Bowen highlighted how his organisation differed from others due to the differences in New Zealand and Chinese cultures regarding mental health and wellbeing, noting that *"for the Asian cultures, they don't have the concept of counselling"* which requires his organisation to start with *"education"* explaining *"what is counselling"* and *"what is mental health"* and the associated processes and systems in the local context. He compares this to the normalisation of mental health in the mainstream localpopulation, who are more willing to reach out for support and are predominantly able to navigate the system whereas his organisation operates differently to account for differences in cultures. Due to the isolation during lockdown, this resulted in crippling mental health conditions for many new migrants who were *"suffering from their issues and they [were] stuck in their home[s], they couldn't seek help and they still think they can deal with it [themselves]"*. He describes his organisation as a *"last resort"* for migrants who tend to first seek help from family and friends, embarrassed to seek help from professionals, resulting in escalating health conditions before they contact Bowen and his organisation. Differences in norms also contribute to the difficulties navigating everyday life and he provided an example of the differences in teacher-parent relationships where *"in China if there [is] something wrong with the children… the teacher will come to the parents and ask them to deal with it, but I think in New Zealand… the teacher is looking for the parents to come to them"*. Bowen highlighted the significant and subtle cultural differences between Chinese and New Zealand cultures which require tailored support and may hinder the ability of new migrants to navigate life in Aotearoa and connect to locals.

**Language barriers:** Migrants with little to no English skills struggled to comprehend the official lockdown guidelines, and find difficulty navigating life in New Zealand. Bowen

noted a significant delay before his organisation was asked to help *"translate some official COVID-19 information"* and before their details were *"include[d] in promotional material"* which helped spread awareness of their services. Regarding access to mental health, he compared this to the ease in which the English-speaking population can navigate and access resources saying, *"I can refer you to an agency and they can speak your language and you can start from there"* which he compared to stories where migrants had *"ask[ed]… friends to write letters and then send it to communicate."* His organisation has been asked to help translate websites unrelated to their specialisation as Bowen shared a story where a migrant had no family members in the country. The woman had struggled to navigate a website resulting in him spending *"probably 40 minutes to help her"* although *"we are not supposed to [be] working that long because you know, we are quite busy. Normally we can only spend 15 minutes for each person but for this lady if you hung up the phone no-one [can] help her".* Despite his organisation struggling to meet demands and access funding, they find themselves devoting time and resources to meet a wide range of needs across the community who at times have no other sources of support.

**Social barriers:** Bowen generally noted that *"those who have migrate[d] to New Zealand for a longer time… will know the system and they have some social support"* compared to new migrants who can often lack the social connections to support them. However, he believes that when it comes to accessing support, that ultimately *"it doesn't matter how long they have been in New Zealand, it's about their family structures".*

**Structural barriers:** Bowen believes there are underlying structural barriers which result in a lack of funding for resources for new migrants, and a lack of representation for the Chinese community and recognition of their needs. He recalled a meeting where *"they [mainstream organisations] got a huge [amount] of money… but for us, they only gave us half… Even though there's a demand, we know there's a demand, every month we show the numbers… but they sometimes they just ignore [us]".* In a sector such as mental health which is widely reported to be underfunded, the Chinese community may be further marginalised as the available funding is prioritised for the mainstream population. He attributes this to the lack of representation for the Chinese community despite being a key ethnic group in Aotearoa's population, describing a time where he was the only Asian attendee at a meeting and felt compelled to *"stand up and challenge"* a health plan which accounted for the mainstream, Māori, and Pasifika populations. Although well intentioned, Bowen may be unaware of the inequality faced by the Māori and Pasifika populations particularly regarding health outcomes

in Aotearoa (Harris et al., 2006). However, this is not to deny that tailored approaches may benefit the Chinese community who have unique cultural norms and beliefs in relation to health and the community's lack of representation Aotearoa.

Sam believes that these barriers have exacerbated adverse COVID-19 outcomes for Chinese migrants as they have prevented access to support during a time of crisis which then required extra resources due to the lack of early intervention and outreach. These barriers appear to reinforce each other and work in tandem to increase the difficulties faced by Chinese migrants particularly in a time of crisis when support was most required. As an organisation which is connected to an underfunded mental health sector, Chinese migrants may be further marginalised due to the barriers they face in gaining access to culturally appropriate support and resources on top of the communication difficulties they face. The barriers not only affect the Chinese community during times of crisis but also inhibit their navigation of everyday life as migrants may struggle to communicate, navigate, and access resources in a culturally different, English-speaking society.

While Bowen and Sam presented differing views in how they perceive, define, and respond to racial difference, they both believe that Chinese migrants need to better integrate into Aotearoa's society although there were differences regarding their interpretations of integration. Bowen believes that due to widespread exposure of Western culture, new migrants are better able to integrate into Western countries bridging the cultural differences compared to earlier generations of migrants:

*"I mean, probably 20 years ago the first generation of migrant[s] here… probably their educational and English levels, the[ir] understanding of the concept of Western cultures… is not that strong, but now just like me when I came to New Zealand I [was] still watching [English] movies, I watched TV dramas and I learned English and I listened to English songs so I know the culture, I know what they think and I'm working in mainstream companies. I think there's more ways to engage more, integrate, with Western cultures."*

Globalisation has increased access to Western cultures and Bowen himself passively learned English through listening to and watching Western music and movies while in China. This may indicate an increased adaption to Western culture and the processes of acculturation which are occurring prior to migrants arriving in the country. Bowen also admires the normalisation of te reo Māori, believing that Chinese should also proudly acknowledge their cultural background through showcasing their native language. He appears to suggest that

Chinese migrants should acculturate to Aotearoa's culture but maintain their pride and connection with their ethnicity:

*"...when we have a meeting and Māori introduce themselves, they'll sing Māori songs it doesn't [matter] whether you understand me or not. I think for the Chinese we can also have this kind of confidence "this is my mother tongue; I just sing in Chinese". Of course, when I communicate with you, I can use the English…"*

He believes that Chinese New Zealanders should model local Māori's pride for their ethnic heritage and culture, still communicating in English as necessary but presenting their culture through greetings, contributing to the normalisation and acceptance of Chinese culture. This appears to contrast Sam's disapproval for ethnoburbs and Chinese organisations and his own integration to New Zealand culture speaking English with locals and following the rugby. While Sam and Bowen may both be supporting acculturation and integration, Sam appears to show slightly less tolerance for difference while Bowen encourages displays of ethnic performance through language. Bowen also referred to the Treaty of Waitangi, as he believes commitment to the Treaty provides Māori with formal recognition and acknowledgement, and an avenue for direct communication and legal recognition which other ethnic groups struggle to access:

*"And I think in New Zealand politically they need to [include Māori] because [of the] Treaty of Waitangi and they have to treat Māori as equals which give[s] them a way to talk to the government. If you didn't do it [then] you are politically incorrect so there's a political way to criticise the government. But for Chinese people they don't have the expectation to do that."*

In the context of Aotearoa which contains a Pākehā majority with legal obligations to the Treaty where Māori are equal partners, this appears to perpetuate the image and sentiment of a bicultural society particularly due to the lack of ethnic representation and diversity across politics and positions of leadership (Sibley & Liu, 2007). To cater for the Chinese community, Bowen suggests that the Chinese community be represented separate pillar due to their distinct cultural needs alongside other ethnic groups in a political and structural embrace of the diversity of ethnicities in Aotearoa while acknowledging and respecting Māori's position as equal partners to ensure they reach equal outcomes.

Sam and Bowen are both Chinese New Zealanders from distinct cultural subgroups, catering for and supporting different cohorts of migrants. Sam's organisation had little to report

from the lockdown which they attribute to being 'Kiwis', racially marked as different but culturally compatible with the Pākehā majority. However, Bowen's organisation supports new migrants who experienced further marginalisation during the lockdown when they required support the most resulting in significantly declining mental health outcomes. Both Sam and Bowen agree that migrants need to adapt to the culture in their host society although express differences in their alignment to the nation. While Bowen advocates that migrants should seek pride in their Chinese culture, he acknowledges their need to learn English and the local culture whereas Sam expresses the need for migrants to better immerse themselves in the local community and culture, concerned for the ethnoburbs and communities which he believes inhibits social integration.

## 4.4 Members of the Chinese New Zealand community

This section presents both the biographies of five individual participants who identify as Chinese New Zealanders. They were invited to share the ways in which their ethnicity played a role growing up in Aotearoa to unpack their identities, sense of belonging, and experiences of being racially marked in a white majority country. This provided time to reflect and discuss the role of ethnicity throughout their lives before unpacking their experiences of the COVID-19 lockdown. The details of the five participants are provided in Table 2, where they were asked to provide their age, location, and length of residence in Aotearoa.

**Table 3**

*Name, age, location, and length of residence for the five Chinese New Zealand participants*

| Name | Age | Location | Length of residence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lily | 20-29 | Auckland Region | Arrived during childhood |
| Jackie | 20-29 | Auckland Region | Born in Aotearoa New Zealand |
| Jeffery | 30-39 | Auckland Region | Arrived during teenagerhood |
| Ken | 80-89 | Manawatu-Whanganui Region | Third generation Chinese New Zealander |
| Wendy | 50-59 | Canterbury Region | Fourth generation Chinese New Zealander |

**Lily:** Lily and her family arrived in Auckland from Southern China when she was a child where she has since grown up and completed her schooling. While attending school, she recalls being embarrassed when her parents brought her *"sticky rice for lunch or dumplings"* as she wanted to *"fit in at school"* and was worried *"that it would smell, or people wouldn't like me"*. For Lily, food served as a distinct point of difference between herself and her peers differing in both appearance and aroma causing her to be self-conscious of her ethnic food culture which reinforced her difference. Although there were other Chinese students at her school, she described how *"Chinese people were not viewed as being that cool"* and *"were in the orchestra while the 'cool' white kids... would be in like rugby teams and stuff"*. Lily's stories emphasise the persistence of the model minority stereotype throughout her schooling experience where Chinese and Asian kids were considered *"nerdy"* and *"uncool"* and associated with high academic achievement. This resulted in her becoming conscious of her difference to her peers, which was most noticeable through her school lunches. As a result of her experiences, she felt that she belonged *"for the most part"*, aware of the racial stereotyping and assumptions people held based on racial appearance.

*"I mean there were some, you know, sort of racist comments here and there but overall, I didn't really get bullied thankfully, I think growing up it was alright."*

Although she was subjected to racism, Lily acknowledged those with worse experiences of racial discrimination, thankful she only received occasional racist comments which she appears to have found bearable. She shared a metaphor used by a family friend to describe the how the Chinese community are treated, highlighting their invisibility in Aotearoa's society:

*"...he said that, you know, white people sort of view Chinese people as like being some sort of herb like coriander for example. It's not important but when it's needed to be used, then you sort of get spread some on a dish and I think that's sort of example sort of stuck with me. We're not like the main people here in New Zealand, we're not Pākehā, we're not Māori, even though there's still a lot of us we're still like a minority."*

Like Bowen, Lily appears to consider Aotearoa a bicultural society acknowledging the presence of both Pākehā and Māori as *"the main people"*. She appears to suggest that Chinese New Zealanders lack both visibility and acceptance by the majority population as parts of the culture are accepted, acknowledged, or tokenised. Since finishing high school, Lily now

strongly identifies as a Chinese New Zealander and came to embrace her ethnic identity while on a trip to South Korea noticing her difference to those around her:

*"I think I would have felt less pride, but I think going to South Korea made me sort of realise like wherever I go into world, I'm always going to be Chinese so there's no point sort of hiding from it or getting away from it because I can't. I'm always going to be Chinese."*

She became acutely aware of her ethnic and cultural differences and learned to embrace her identity, noting that it *"wasn't really a sense of pride, it was more of just knowing who I am"* as she missed her ethnic food culture and believes she took it for granted.

Lily and her family followed news of the virus from very early on, hearing anecdotal stories from family members in China and becoming aware of the devastation faced by locals. She described remaining hopeful *"that it would be contained within China and you know, maybe Asia"* as she heard discussions of vaccines and noting Aotearoa's distance from Asia. However, as news arose of the Chinese Government's mishandling of the outbreak, Lily described being concerned of the public's perception of China and its impact for Chinese people:

*"It definitely puts a bad light on China, especially how there was news about doctors who are trying to convince the Wuhan local government that this is going to become a really, really big problem and they were just shut out and so that in itself was already really bad and then also… The number of people dying and getting sick. So, on one hand it was the virus getting out of control, but then on all the other hand it was how China was appearing to the world as being sort of like a liar, like covering up statistics also covering up the disease in the first place."*

She described how she *"felt bad that this was labelled as a Chinese virus"* and that *"countries were sooner or later banning Chinese people from entering into their countries."* Lily may have been aware of the othering of the Chinese community through her own experiences through high school noting the ways the Chinese students were excluded, concerned the virus would contribute towards racial stereotypes. Despite her strong sense of identity and belonging, Lily gained a heightened awareness of her racial visibility and refrained from wearing a face mask despite her mother's persistence acknowledging it would be *"the right thing to do"* but that she did not want to stand out in her local community:

*"…my mother, she would tell me 'when you go to work you need to wear a face mask' and then I sort of just thought oh well, no one around me was wearing it or there was only a few and they were the odd ones out… I think I was kind of conflicted because wearing them was sort of the right thing to do and if we were in China or in Asian countries, I would feel fine wearing face masks … I just didn't really want to wear it."*

Lily observed distinct differences in how people across the Chinese community reacted, as some people were *"trying to seek out face masks for their family or friends to bring back to China to help those in need"* due to local shortages in China. Like the reporter Mei, Lily appears to acknowledge these actions as acts of care despite widespread public disapproval during this time as people were concerned that the Chinese community were depleting local stocks in Aotearoa. They showed empathy towards the community possibly concerned for their own friends and family overseas. As the country went into lockdown, Lily personally struggled with feelings of isolation and loneliness describing that she *"felt even more lonely"* as she would usually *"just go to work and interact with colleagues"* but she would go through days in lockdown where *"sometimes I wouldn't really talk to anyone"*. Coupled with her personal struggles, she was also aware of the anti-Chinese sentiment locally, choosing to adapt her behaviour to distance herself from 'foreign' Chinese characteristics and adapt to local norms. As well as reflecting on her own behaviour and attitudes, she provided commentary on her observations of the Chinese community describing the scrutiny the community faced from the rest of the nation:

*"…I think when COVID first hit China to the lockdown point, what I gathered was like a sense that Chinese people had to be extra careful not to get coronavirus because the feeling was if a Chinese person got it then it would be worse, like they would be judged even more. And so Chinese people sort of had to keep up this reputation that they didn't get the virus and, I don't know there may or may not have been like sort of a sense of pride that the earlier cases that they weren't Chinese. I think it was both sort of like a relief and like dare I say a sense of pride that they weren't Chinese."*

When asked to expand on this, Lily described that due to China's association with the virus *"if a Chinese person did bring coronavirus to New Zealand, it would be worse because China's already done so much damage"*. She expressed concern that the virus would add to existing racial stereotypes describing how *"Chinese people as a whole in New Zealand… I wouldn't say we would have a bad reputation, but our reputation isn't that good like there are*

*the stereotypes already like Asian bad drivers for example, and we wouldn't want to add to that, and we wouldn't want to take the responsibility of spreading it".* Lily acknowledges the stereotypes and negative perception many hold of Chinese and Asian New Zealanders and believes the community was cautious to avoid contracting the virus due to the blame put on the Chinese community for causing the pandemic. She believes that racism towards Chinese was more severe overseas where she heard *"how in the US, Chinese people would be buying guns"* to protect themselves but also acknowledged some of her worst memories of the lockdown in Aotearoa, recalling a violent attack against a group of Chinese people in Rotorua:

*"I think the worst memory I had, that didn't affect me but there was on the news it said that there were some sort of Chinese people who went to Rotorua… and went to some sort of spa pool and then got attacked by non-Chinese people and it was really, really brutal. I think it showed sort of people's attitude towards Chinese people but then I would also argue that it wouldn't have been just because of the coronavirus because even prior to coronavirus, we would hear of cases where someone would be walking down Queen Street and would just get randomly attacked."*

Although Lily believes that anti-Chinese racism was most apparent in the US, she acknowledged the persistence of racism in the country even prior to the pandemic resulting in violent racial attacks on the Asian community. Despite the racism experienced by Chinese New Zealanders, she believes there were far less instances of racial violence compared to other countries due to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's political rhetoric to *"be kind"* during the lockdown which she believes may have *"influenced people's thinking"*. Jacinda Ardern has been widely acknowledged worldwide for her handling of Aotearoa's pandemic where she took swift action putting the nation into lockdown and encouraged kindness, support, and unity across the nation. She along with other ministers provided consistent daily updates always repeating the motto to be kind, uniting the nation against the virus and community transmission. Although Lily emphasised the othering and racism experienced by the Chinese community, she believes there are ways in which the Chinese community could better integrate, and be more accepting of difference themselves, through adopting local cultures and making a concerted effort to form connections with the local community:

*"I always think that Chinese people especially new migrants, I do feel that they're not as willing to actually integrate into the community. They sort of stick to their old ways, old Chinese way, which I do sort of understand in a way they want to actually keep their Chinese*

*identity, they're proud of their Chinese heritage. But then they're also in New Zealand and I think being in New Zealand means that they can't just be like, 'oh yeah we came here for the fresh air and to provide children with a better future'. I think that they need to really be more appreciative of the New Zealand culture and be more accepting of it because, I think a lot of Chinese people they can look down on Kiwis in some aspects or they may look down on other ethnic people or are very racist."*

Lily was the first participant to acknowledge the racism within the Chinese community towards other each other as well as different ethnic groups. Like Sam, she believes newer migrants may at times have been less willing to adapt to the local culture despite moving to the country and *"stick to their old ways"* potentially referring to a lack of openness towards new experiences and differences across society. She may also be acknowledging the existence of colourism within Asian cultures as fair skin is considered desirable influenced by Western ideologies as well as traditional beliefs (Li et al., 2008). She further explains how she believes new migrants could adapt to and embrace life in Aotearoa:

*"I think that like getting to know maybe just a part of the New Zealand history or just doing things that are the Kiwi way of life like going for a barbeque or... understanding Māori and their culture… I don't think that's of interest to them at all, whereas I think that it should be because they're living in New Zealand. Just being willing to actually interact with people outside their sort of circle because there's a lot of Chinese associations in New Zealand... I wish that they would be able to actually interact with other races more."*

Lily appears to present her idea of a citizen not just based on legal citizenship but as someone who shows an interest and embraces the local culture and history, potentially aligning with notions of cultural or civic nationalism (Kundra, 2019). She also believes that new migrants could make more of a concerted effort to connect with the local community, sharing the same sentiment as Sam as they both refer to the insular nature of Chinese associations where members may at times exclusively communicate with each other.

Growing up, Lily observed how Asian students were excluded at her school and went through a period of wanting to conform, embarrassed by her ethnic food culture which she believed to be a point of difference from her school peers. She came to terms with her ethnic identity on a trip where she became aware of her ethnic and cultural identity, missing comfort foods like *"yum cha"*. During the pandemic, she felt concerned for the reputation of the Chinese community, aware that it may be adding to a negative perception of China and

reinforcing existing Chinese and Asian stereotypes. In response to the negativity, she adapted her own behaviour to conform to local norms and was deeply affected by news of racial attacks towards her community, although she acknowledged the existence of racism prior to the pandemic. However, Lily acknowledged the intergroup racism within the Chinese community and believes work can be done by both Chinese New Zealanders and New Zealanders to contribute towards a more cohesive and connected society which better embraces differences across cultures.

**Jackie:** Jackie was also born and raised in Auckland in *"a very white neighbourhood"*. She recalls being *"one of the only Asian kids"* up until high school, adopting an awareness of her racial appearance from an early age. Like Lily, Jackie described wanting to *"fit in"* and be *"whitewashed"* to gain acceptance from her peers, performing whiteness through her behaviour and actions at school. She describes distancing herself from Chinese culture when she realised *"it wasn't the dominant culture of everyone in school"*:

*"So, I guess from those formative years I was more wanting to fit in, wanting to be whitewashed, I didn't want to fit into the Chinese culture. I didn't really see any Chinese culture apart from my parents and I knew it wasn't the dominant culture of everyone in school. I just really wanted to fit in and be just like one of the other Kiwis."*

Jackie mentions wanting to *"be just like one of the other Kiwis"* possibly eluding the white European notion of a 'Kiwi' and noted the cultural differences between her and her peers as her parents were the only ones she associated with Chinese culture. As Jackie entered high school, she encountered a greater number of Chinese students but didn't connect with them, noting distinct cultural differences between their personalities due to her early exposure and adoption of the local culture. As she entered her teenage years, she recalls becoming louder and more rebellious which she contrasted against the quieter more reserved Chinese students. While she shared her story, she reflected on her past perception of the students, believing that they reminded her of younger self, describing them as the type who are *"shyer, doesn't really want attention drawn to them, [and] listens to their parents"*. She believes that they represented the culture and attributes she tried to distance herself from while bridging the differences between herself and her peers by conforming to local norms. She formed friendships with white, or *"non-Chinese Kiwi Asian friends"*, most likely to referring her Asian peers who had adopted local the culture who she had shared commonalities and experiences with. Similar to

Lily, Jackie describes being *"super self-conscious with fitting in"* refusing *"to eat or bring lunches that weren't sandwiches or anything that looked weird or could be classed as different",* as they both found their ethnic food culture a point of difference from their peers which she worked to change, making a concerted effort to bring *"sandwiches"* instead.

Jackie experienced a significant shift in her perspective towards her ethnicity when she went on an exchange during university and found herself as an international student overseas:

*"…I went on exchange to the US and then I became an international student, one of the Chinese international students! And then I think that was what also changed my mind because the Chinese international students, they were so welcoming and Chinese people like doing things in groups… it was just like an instant little friend group, that all wanted to eat rice and noodles in a small town with nothing but like bread. I think that also changed my mind like "oh they're so fun!" It's sort of like comforting to have a culture that everyone identifies with."*

Jackie connected with fellow Chinese international students, a group she had once distinguished herself from in earlier years. However, she found commonality with the fellow Chinese international students through their shared ethnic food culture in a town where rice and noodles were not common staples. Despite rejecting Chinese food throughout her schooling years, her ethnic food culture became a catalyst for her friendships despite her noting that she *"only understood maybe half or a quarter of what they were saying"*. While Jackie may have experienced a simple shift in her acceptance of Asian food, it served as a greater point of connection with a group that she herself may have once othered, changing her opinion as she ended up most closely attached to, and connected with, those embracing a culture she had once strongly rejected. Since then, Jackie has proudly embraced both Chinese and New Zealand cultures and has been an active member of local Chinese organisations and helps to organise Chinese events among their members.

Jackie first heard of the COVID-19 virus on social media, recalling the moment it was revealed to have emerged from a wet market in Wuhan. She noticed comments on social media ridiculing Chinese eating habits as people believed it had been contracted through bat consumption. She believes this has always been a common Western stereotype of Chinese people and their eating habits despite a lack of certainty regarding how the virus was contracted:

*"So, I think at the beginning, I did start reading about it when there was like a new virus in Wuhan… I did see like all the comments on news sites like New Zealand Herald and*

*Stuff which were like, 'oh my god, Chinese people should stop eating bats'… I got the sense that there was still like 'oh so like savage urgh, so gross' like that sort of mentality… I understood where it came from because I think Western society has always demonized Asian eating habits or any culture that is not the majority culture... So, it wasn't surprising to see the comments…"*

She expressed frustration at these assumptions noting that the virus provided *"another reason or outlet for Western people to insult or demonize Asian food"*. She believes that prior to the pandemic, *"consciously or unconsciously, Kiwis and most of society still avoided Chinese food and supermarkets and stuff like that"* associating Chinese food with *"MSG, food poisoning, dirty, cheap, unhealthy"*. Jackie appears to believe in another Chinese stereotype centred around food using words such as *"savagery"* to describe Western perceptions of Chinese food culture. While ethnic food discrimination may yet to be researched, this relates to Anderson's (1987) research on Vancouver's Chinatown where 'Chinese' were associated with disease, a lack of hygiene, and a lack of sophistication, adding to the wider distinction between the East and West.

As the virus spread, like Lily, Jackie felt a sense of relief that the first cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand weren't contracted by Chinese New Zealanders, believing it *"would have stoked the blame more on Asian people"*. She believes that the pandemic revealed people's true racist beliefs which were expressed during a moment of fear, creating a moment where normally hidden racist attitudes became more apparent:

*"…I guess it was a relief that the people that were getting diagnosed with COVID first weren't Asian. Because I think that would have stoked the blame more in New Zealand like they were already getting paranoid of Chinese people, Asian looking people wearing masks and coughing, they were like already paranoid…I think if any of the confirmed cases had been confirmed Asian, then it would have increased the blame and the fear more. And I think yeah, when people react out of fear what they say is normally like deep down, they're racists or their real attitude comes out."*

Jackie appears to have been affected by the public blaming and associating the Chinese community with the COVID-19 virus, as despite her strong sense of identity, she reflected on her actions during lockdown noting that she *"refused to wear a face mask until it was mandatory"* worried she would *"look like every other Asian"*:

*"I refused to wear a face mask when I went out or any gloves because it seemed like most Kiwis were just taking it quite casually. When you're white and you're wearing a face mask and gloves, they don't have any as much assumptions as like a Chinese person wearing gloves and a mask. I think there is still the racism there where like 'oh they're hiding, they must be sick', I guess I felt that during the lockdowns. I think most Kiwis, they weren't that scared like they were taking it seriously but weren't scared, so I refused to be paranoid about it."*

Although she embraces her ethnic identity, in a moment of crisis where her ethnic group was targeted, she described how she wanted to *"do whatever the white people are doing"*, noting her heightened awareness of her racial visibility during COVID-19, prompting her to conform with white New Zealanders. She admitted to *"wanting to fit in with whatever the dominant/white people in the country are doing"* as she tried to *"distance myself from the Asians or fully Chinese culture"* at a time where certain behaviours were more heavily associated with Chinese culture. While Jackie acknowledged the anti-Chinese and Asian sentiment locally, she believes Jacinda Ardern's handling of the pandemic encouraging the nation to be kind *"made it very not-about-race"* instead focusing discussion on community spread. She commended the government's messaging as *"they didn't scapegoat a group of people to try deflect it off themselves"* whereas she believes *"that is something… other Western countries were fine with letting it happen"*. She compared this to the US where former President Trump racialised the virus noting *"how lucky we are to be in New Zealand because the government handled the COVID spread so well"*:

*"I think in the US or the UK it was still like oh, blame Chinese people and their eating habits and avoid Chinese people and it's all their fault. I think Trump didn't help with saying it was the Chinese flu, China flu, Wuhan flu like those things, I guess was more influential in America. It did trickle down to New Zealand, but I think with how Jacinda and the government handled it, they made it very not-about-race, so it was just all about community spread."*

Jackie attributes this to changing societal attitudes towards racism where overt racism in Aotearoa is widely disapproved but every day and casual forms of racism continue to persist. She explains the nuance in people's perceptions of racism and the new challenges ethnic communities face in trying to distinguish the finer details of what constitutes as racism as well as the delivery of racism, noting the differences in who might be delivering a racial joke and to who, highlighting the power imbalance between ethnic groups:

*"I think we've dealt with the major racist stuff, but I don't think white people know what casual racism is and so some of them think even mentioning race is racist and then they don't see why some things are racist and why some things aren't, or why can this group of people joke about this but I can't say stuff like 'but it's true, most of them seem to be doing it anyway'. I think now we're probably sorting out the finer details within society of what is classed as racist and what isn't, there's still debate about it. I mean it's also like everyone's different as well, within Asians too what people would find offensive and not offensive coming from a white person."*

Despite her observations of the othering of Chinese and Asian people and food causing a shift in her own behaviour as she navigated the lockdown, Jackie found unity across social media platforms where fellow Chinese and Asian people from across the world shared their experiences using humour, which Jackie found comforting at a time where she felt alone:

*"Yeah well, I think while everyone was forced to stay at home and that meant just being on the internet all day. All the new Asian groups were really helpful because I think without that sort of voice on social media, it would've been very depressing… But yeah with the funny memes on social media, I was like "oh, I don't feel so minority-like anymore", it was more like a shared experience… The blaming Chinese thing is not the only point of view on social media which I think is helpful."*

Social media provided Jackie with place where she found comfort in shared experiences with fellow Chinese people in Western countries. On a platform which people were openly racist towards the Chinese community, she found pockets of communities which used humour to counteract their experiences, sharing the same observations with Anna who found a strengthening of voice across the Chinese and broader Asian community. Jackie also recognised that she lived in Auckland, noting its multiculturalism which she believes has increased cosmopolitan attitudes and tolerance in the region. She compared this to small towns where she believes the lack of diversity creates a fear of difference, believing she would have struggled with *"self-hate"* in a small town:

*"I think when people don't have any exposure to a different culture, they're more fearful or more confused, they don't know really know how to react and then when it seems like there's a way to blame them, they will… I think with Auckland now, the who belongs in Auckland is very like sort of multicultural now and I think in smaller towns, maybe it's like if you are not white then you don't fit in."*

Jackie highlights the wide variation in the distribution of ethnic populations across Aotearoa and speculates about its influence on difference. Her thoughts are supported by the ethnic diversity and distributions particularly in the Auckland region, which is the most cosmopolitan city in the country, hosting 69% of the Chinese population (StatsNZ, 2021), likely to influence attitudes towards cosmopolitanism in the region.

Jackie and Lily share many parallels in their experiences through school where they were conscious of their ethnic food culture with Jackie changing her school lunches to fit in with the majority. She describes wanting to be whitewashed when she noticed she wasn't part of the majority culture, conscious of her differences to her peers, highlighting the nuance in citizenship which is affected by notions of belonging influenced by wider social processes (Staeheli, 2011). Like Lily, it took Jackie taking a trip overseas for her to embrace her ethnic identity, as her ethnic food culture become a point for connection with fellow Chinese international students as she came to embrace her ethnicity and Chinese culture. Despite her assertive pride for her ethnicity, she found herself conforming with local norms during the lockdown, wanting to follow the white majority to avoid being seen as 'foreign'. She acknowledges the influence of place; grateful she lives in a large city with a significant Asian population which she compares to small towns in Aotearoa. Despite the widespread racism on social media, she found solace in Asian community groups on Facebook where she found shared experiences with Asians in Western countries who utilised humour to make light of their experiences during the pandemic.

**Jeffery:** Jeffery lives in the Auckland region and unlike other participants, his family migrated to Aotearoa when he was a teenager. He learned English as a second language and feels most comfort speaking in Mandarin, and was the only participant to not strongly identify as a Chinese New Zealander, connecting more to a Chinese identity:

*"I don't quite classify myself as Chinese New Zealander because all my thinking, the way I thought you know, the way I work, and I act is somehow closer to the Chinese side over Kiwi side even though I live here for so long."*

Jeffery immediately makes a clear distinction between 'Chinese' and 'New Zealand' people, associating each side with particular traits, attributes, and behaviours. While he experienced racism growing up, Jeffery explains that he *"don't really mind"* because he sees himself *"as a very typical Chinese"*. He also states that *"Chinese [are the] most racist people*

*in the world because we also hate each other"* and that his friends describe him as *"the most racist guy in the world"*, possibly stating his own racist beliefs as a trade-off for the racism he's experienced. Jeffery predominantly associates with Mandarin-speaking Chinese peers due to his preference for speaking in Mandarin despite him but notes that *he "get[s] along great with all the races"*. He expresses a lack of knowledge of the local culture and 'Kiwis', sharing some of the questions and assumptions he held regarding local diets and culture:

*"Well frankly speaking, I like to learn the lifestyle and the way of how Kiwi work and live in New Zealand, but again, I don't have much Kiwi friends. So even though I want to learn that type diet of what they eat… I tried to because I like food right, I want to learn how they eat and then the way they live. For example, let's say for Chinese we shall go home and stay with family and then recently I found out they watched Netflix they are no different to us. We watch TikTok and YouTube and stuff like that and they also do maybe the similar stuff but actually I never live with Kiwi, so I don't know. The way they think is also different to us, we are more like introvert, they are extrovert."*

Jeffery distinguishes between his imagination of Chinese and Kiwi identities, associating particular personality traits, cuisines, and habits with each identity, failing to acknowledge potential overlap between the two . He expressed surprise when both groups shared similarities such as watching Netflix, YouTube, and TikTok despite the global widespread use of the platforms in this current day. I questioned Jeffery further about his beliefs regarding the concept of race to better understand his construction of ethnic identity:

*"We have a saying that people are born equal, that's what everybody say right but in reality people to my opinion, we're not born equal. So, they must be some class in between but for us as an ordinary citizen, we just live in our classes, but we don't want to go too high, we don't want to go to low."*

Jeffery's beliefs appear to align with historic notions of race based on biological difference assigned by birth (Witzig, 1996). This helps to explain his categorical approach to ethnic groups as he assigns behaviours, traits, and power to particular ethnic groups. He also believes that racism is embedded in all people who inherently hold racist beliefs:

*"Because the way I think when we talk about racism, we just don't want to explicitly tell people that we are racist unlike myself. I tell everybody I'm racist. In the bottom of our heart, I strongly believe everybody is racist despite all the fact. Black people, I think they hate*

*white people, they hate Asian, they hate Indians, and then Indians they hate white people, they hate Black people, they hate Chinese and Chinese they hate whatever…"*

Jeffery normalises his view due to his belief in racism as an inherent trait across all people which he believes he observed upon entering the workforce where he noticed *"there were classes"* between people. Unlike other participants, he appears to portray indifference towards racism and adopts problematic conceptions of race rooted in biological difference contributing to distinct categories which dictate behaviours.

As the pandemic started to spread, he shared his disapproval of the Chinese government's misinformation regarding COVID-19 statistics disappointed by their response despite their experience with the SARS outbreak, noting the bad portrayal of the Chinese government to rest of the world:

*"In terms of the virus coming from Wuhan, we all know how crap the government is never to tell you no truth… The news wasn't exploring in China, that's how you know people got ill and then passing on and then the actual numbers of death are way beyond what the media was announced… I've just surprised and not surprised at the same time because I came in New Zealand in 2003. That was the time right before SARS expand[ed] in China. Back in the day, they didn't give a fuck, they like 'okay you got this incurable disease, oh shit well what we're going do? Okay, we block the news and this shit, that shit'. I thought [the] Chinese government will learn a lesson last time from SARS but apparently they didn't so that's one of the thing[s] that kind of hurt my feeling[s] however, the good thing they did was they forced people to lockdown in China for a couple of months in Wuhan."*

He shares the same sentiment as many local Chinese communities in Aotearoa's national news media who criticised Jacinda's ban on visitors from China early on in the pandemic. He referred to the subsequent mutations in the virus that had originated from particular countries, noting a lack of action by the government potentially suggesting that Chinese people were unfairly targeted:

*"…one thing that hurt my feeling the most was New Zealand decided to ban China to start with. But actually, the old virus they received from the managed isolation department from either UK or USA or Europe[an] countries and then they don't ban them. The new virus came from either South Africa or UK, that's what I heard but they just welcome you come. I'm like how can you ask your own citizen just to come back home without doing so-called tests where in China the restriction is pretty high, now they increase it to two tests."*

As Jeffery noticed increasing anti-Chinese sentiment, he was the one participant who experienced racism during the pandemic but appears to be unaffected by the comments, stating that he had followed guidelines and even took the extra precaution of wearing masks:

*"In a critical period of time nobody care where you're coming from, the only thing we need to care is how do we not get involved [with] this COVID thing. There was an incident that I got yelled "fucking Chinese go back to your country because of COVID-19, you spread [the] virus". It was during lockdown period because me and my roommates, we walk at night wearing masks and some guys they also wear masks, and they like "oh fuck you Chinese" and then we look at them. We don't say no word because we understand that it wasn't against us at all because we [are] not the only one who spread the virus so okay fuck it, whatever you say it doesn't matter, it doesn't bother me."*

He was most affected by his redundancy after the lockdown, noting the significant impact the lockdown had on his face-to-face sales job. He acknowledged the stress people were going through, unlikely to engage with his sales activities and despite believing he was doing well at his job, he expressed disappointment in his employers who made him redundant.

*"...Because my job is to talk to people so the way of me working have to be changed. I can't meet people in person no more... since we're locked down, I don't believe any new business would talk no more. They have their own shit to care about... So now when it came back to May after the lockdown my employer say now's the time to figure out some overhead because of COVID our revenue stream and this, that... Let's propose a restructure. I'm like come on, that's what I thought and then I was the guy that the team decided to let go so that impact[ed] me quite a lot because to my understanding I was doing well in my job."*

Jeffery expresses empathy towards those who were going through the lockdown, noting they had their own challenges during a particularly difficult period. He appears to have been most affected by his loss of employment during the pandemic, possibly due to the direct financial impact on him.

Jeffery has vastly contrasting opinions and attitudes on racial and ethnic categories compared to all other participants with a traditional conception of race rooted in biological difference. He has appeared to be unaffected by the racism he experienced and was the only participant to report verbal racial abuse as a result of the pandemic, however, he appears to offset the racism he experienced by asserting his own racist beliefs. Despite stating he is not affected by the racism, he expressed frustration at the government's actions to ban passengers

from China, believing it unfairly targeted the Chinese population despite mutations in the virus which had occurred in other countries. He did not appear to be affected by the pandemic until it had personal consequences for his employment as his employer made him redundant during the lockdown. Jeffery also wanted to participate despite not quite identifying as a Chinese New Zealander, assigning particular behaviours0 and traits to each ethnic group.

**Ken:** Ken grew up in the Wellington region where his parents owned a fruit shop, his grandfather being the first member of the family to arrive in the country in the 1890s. His grandparents and parents were sojourners who spent long periods of time between China and Aotearoa which was common among early Chinese migrants during this time (Murphy, 2003). Ken's parents intended to send him to China for his schooling before the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War when his family decided to permanently settle in Aotearoa. He described being bullied in his childhood experiencing *"name calling"* and being *"spat on as a student"* describing the racial divide as between Pākehā and Chinese in his early life:

*"I had to be a bit careful. Because there was discrimination, you had name calling and all that sort of thing and… Pākehā didn't really mix with you much socially you know, at school and that sort of thing, you sort of kept yourself a bit more."*

Ken describes growing up in society where there was little mixing between ethnic groups as Pākehā rarely interacted with Chinese students. Ken's parents wanted him *"to do better than run a fruit shop"* and despite not earning *"mega bucks selling fruit and veggies",* they supported his through university where he was the second Chinese student to graduate from his degree. As an ethnic minority, he was aware that he represented his ethnic group and described *"treading carefully"*, making sure he carried himself well so as to not hurt the reputation of the Chinese students at his university:

*"I was conscious that I was Asian when I graduated, so I knew I had to cross my t's and dot my i's carefully, so I didn't upset the playing field for those that were coming after me who were also Chinese, you know. I was sort of aware of that, to be particularly careful because you didn't know how people would accept you looking at them and all that sort of thing because it's quite a personal thing."*

Once he started working, Ken became a respected professional in his community where he was invited to join local community groups and organisations. Ken and his wife raised their

children in the Manuwatu-Whanganui region where *"they sort of merged with the community."* Ken rarely reflected on his ethnicity throughout his life, telling me that *"it didn't occur to me to think about whether I belonged or not"* as he spent his time busy studying. He believes that perhaps if he had *"done more socialising, gone to parties and things"*, he would have had a greater awareness of the role of his ethnic identity although he acknowledged the racial tension during his time. Ken is part of an older generation and has grown up in a time where racism was far more overt in nature, experiencing bullying throughout his childhood and being conscious of his ethnic identity throughout his time at university. He expressed how times have changed with globalisation as he recalled how he used to conduct business locally, requiring him to *"adapt to the ways of the majority":*

*"I think because of the number of Asians in New Zealand now, it's a lot easier to be cliquey. You stick together. In the old days… business wasn't worldwide in those days as it is now with computers, with flying and everything else. So, you had to do the business more locally within the country and so therefore I think you had to adapt to the ways of the majority if that makes sense."*

Ken like many other participants, noted the differences in the different cohorts of migrants, observing the ways in which newer generations operated and maintained their cultural norms and *"ways of doing things"*. He doesn't appear to express disapproval, simply noting the difference compared to his own experience.

Unlike all other participants, Ken described having an overall positive experience during his lockdown and described being *"very well looked after"* as an elderly resident by his fellow neighbours, family members, and friends. He was well supported by his community and did not experience any sort of discrimination based on his ethnicity:

*"You know, we got looked after very well by both actually. Well, the next-door neighbours, you know, even though we've only been in this house a few years so some of the next-door neighbours of even less moved in... They all rang and said look if you wanted anything give us a call you know, and they weren't people that we'd known for yonks or anything. Then the Asian community, of course, they look after us as well because you know, we're part of that sort of the olds group if you're like. And so no, we got looked after well really so we didn't have any discriminatory things."*

He described the ways in which the community around him banded together to support each other noting the dangers posed by his older age. And despite not being well acquainted with his neighbours, they all reached out and offered their support.

Ken believes that they were *"lucky"* in Palmerston North as the region did not experience any cases of COVID-19 which he believes was due to it being a small city with infrequent visitors. He believes there are strong connections within the small local community who are familiar with the local Chinese community who had come from market gardening backgrounds residing in Aotearoa across multiple generations:

*"I think Palmerston North, being a small city, very small city, the people who come here don't come here initially. You know, most people land in Auckland and they stay in Auckland because they're used to the busyness of a big city and all that sort of thing whereas a small town unless you've got a particular reason, you don't come. So, the population are familiar with Chinese who have been here for ages as market gardeners, and they're quite friendly with them… I think I might have found it differently if I was in Auckland because of the sheer numbers."*

He believes he did not experience racism due to his strong connections in the community, being long established in the area with his family. He compared this to living in a city such as Auckland with a larger population where there may not be strong connections within local communities where Chinese may have recently arrived.

Ken grew up experiencing both verbal and physical racial abuse during a time where ethnic groups did not mix, and was aware that due to his racial appearance, he came to represent his ethnic group throughout his time at university, not wanting to make a bad impression on Chinese students. Ken appears to have experienced old racism associated with overt acts of racism, however, he noted that he never experienced racism again after finishing university. Ken graduated as a health professional and became a respected member of his small local community where he has been an active member of local organisations and has built a strong network. He described lockdown as a positive experience for him as he was well looked after by his friends, family, and neighbours and attributes this to being in a small town with a long-established Chinese community who have a history as market gardeners in the area.

**Wendy:** Wendy is a fourth generation Chinese New Zealander who grew up and currently resides in the Canterbury region in the South Island. Her grandfather was a market gardener, and her parents owned a fish and chip shop which she describes as *"typical of Chinese New Zealanders who had takeaway businesses or restaurants if they didn't lead an academic life"*:

*"I think that came for later generations after the market gardens and laundries, they went into things like being a doctor or a lawyer or accountant, that sort of things to enable their children to have better jobs than they did."*

Wendy, along with Ken and Sam who have a long-established history in the country, describe distinct occupational trends across different generations of Chinese migrants who struggled to find employment in New Zealand. Throughout her schooling, Wendy was one of the few non-white students where she was bullied for her appearance despite the same students being frequent customers at her parent's shop:

*"So, growing up in a small town, I went to the primary school, intermediate, and high school there and there weren't any other ethnicities there apart from two Māori kids in my year? ...So, I felt like I was alone the whole way through in a small way. It didn't bother me; I didn't think I was different from anybody else, but they made me feel different. And particularly in primary school, my family's fish and chip shop was the only one in the whole suburb so that whole district went to that one shop. So, people were quite happy to call me things like 'ching chong Chinaman' and things like that but at the same time eat our fish and chips."*

Wendy describes how her school peers chose which aspects of her that they accepted and rejected, noting their contradictory actions bullying her and then enjoying the food from her family's business. Unlike all other participants, Wendy received the most racism during her adulthood after moving to Christchurch, where discrimination increased in response to growing numbers of Chinese migrants. She attributed this to Winston Peters' political campaign based on anti-immigration and anti-Asian rhetoric in the late 1990s which he believes caused a wave of yellow peril fears across the country and directed racism towards the Asian community. She described how she at times retaliated to comments to *"go home"*, responding that her home is *"a few kilometres down the road"* or posing the question back to those yelling at her telling them *"to go back to where they're from"*. Wendy was also subjected to physical abuse which she believes was racially motivated sharing the encounters she experienced:

*"I shopped at Pak n' Save in a different area once and I've had trolleys pushed into my ankles, somebody just rammed their trolley into my ankles several times and they didn't do to my husband, he was walking beside me. Other people walk past, and they just elbow me, and they were all women."*

As well as overt and aggressive forms of verbal and physical racial abuse, Wendy described the ways in which she was assumed to be foreign in everyday life and describes being constantly asked *"where are you from?"* or being assumed to have been taught by *"a really good ESOL [English for speakers of other languages] teacher"*. However, Wendy often asserted her place in New Zealand, telling people who inquired that she *"was from Christchurch",* and her parents are *"from even further south",* emphasising her family's establishment and belonging in the country. Although Wendy condemns racism, she believes that some migrants need to *"try and assimilate with New Zealand culture"* describing the experiences of early Chinese migrants who had to *"blend in and just be head down and working hard because they didn't want to stand out and that's how they became accepted"* echoing the opinions of those who grew up during a similar time such as Ken and Sam. When asked if migrants can embrace their Chinese culture, Wendy describes it as a balance:zXxx

*"I think it's a balance because when I was child and I visited my relations my uncle would say to me 'inside the house you speak Chinese, outside the house you can speak English' and that was the rule. So, inside the house that's where you maintain your Chinese-ness but outside you know, you can do whatever you do and assimilate.*

Although Wendy notes the importance of language in her family, she appears to suggest that culture and difference is something to maintain within the privacy of one's home, assimilating with the majority when outside in the community and diminishing one's difference. In regard to her experiences with racism, Wendy stated that she hasn't experienced racism in over ten years which she sadly attributed to the arrival of Muslims in the area who have become the predominant targets of racism.

*"...the last time I experienced racism was probably 10 years ago. I haven't received anything since then, but I think the arrival of more Muslims, unfortunately, has taken the heat off the Chinese. And I believe that they're being pursued now instead of us."*

She was the only participant to mention different racial groups being targeted and specifically referred to Islamophobia, showing empathy towards the Muslim community who

are often targeted in Western countries since the September 11th terrorist attacks in the US (Sheridan, 2006).

Wendy recalls first hearing of the COVID-19 virus through the news where she grew angry at the racialisation of the virus by former President Trump. She compared the racist political discourse to the anti-Asian sentiment during Winston Peters' political campaign which influenced widespread anti-Asian racism in the country in the late 1990s:

*"I think we saw a lot of Trump on TV during that time, and he was referring to it as a Chinese virus and they made me really angry. And I thought how many people are watching that and reading media stories and watching him on TV and thinking the same because many years ago as it was election time, Winston Peters used the Asian invasion card to alienate people because most of the people that supported him were elderly white people. And Winston Peters stirred up a lot of racism at that point for those few years that he was under New Zealand First and so I was worried that Donald Trump would stir up the same sort of thing."*

Wendy often appears to connect anti-Chinese or Asian racism to political discourse noticing and experiencing increased racism during these times. Although she did not experience overt racism during the lockdown, she became conscious of the way she was looked at and treated in public, unsure whether to attribute the distancing from others to recommended social distancing precautions or fears based on her racial appearance:

*"Sometimes I felt like people were thinking something, but they just didn't say it. It's just the way they looked at you… When we queued up at the supermarket two meters apart, I wondered whether people you know, were thinking I was from China and I wonder whether people actually stayed further away or walked further away from me just because they thought that just because I looked Chinese, I might come from that region. Because we can tell each other apart but they can't."*

Her feelings highlighted the ways in which her emotions became heightened in response to her awareness for her racial visibility, unseen by others but lived through her own embodiment of race. This was also reflected when she was made redundant from her job, as she was unsure whether to attribute it to her racial appearance:

*"I was made redundant from my workplace and I was the only one. Another guy lost his job, but he'd been sick for a long time and he wasn't well enough to do his job, so that was logical whereas mine, it was just me out of my team. You know, I did think that it was actually*

*due to me being Chinese because my boss did say to me, he couldn't fault my customer service. So, I think it was more related to he had to pick one and so he picked me."*

While Wendy decided that her redundancy was not due to her racial appearance, it highlights the impact of the anti-Chinese sentiment on her sense of identity and belonging during the lockdown.

Wendy believes living in Christchurch has contributed to her experience referring to larger more cosmopolitan cities in such as Wellington and Auckland which host a greater diversity of ethnic populations. She also noticed differences across the suburbs in her city, finding her parents' suburb friendlier than her own despite being both located in close proximity:

*"I went out for a couple of walks, you could actually go out for a walk, and I made a point of saying hello to people… And I think just about everybody was really pleasant back which was surprising because quite often when it wasn't pre-COVID and I went for a walk and you say hello to people and they just ignore you. So, I think people were nicer during COVID. I noticed different suburbs were nicer than others while I was walking around my parents' suburb everyone's lovely, doesn't matter whether it's COVID, pre-COVID, or no COVID whereas my suburb which was only 10 minutes away, generally if I was going to do it doing normal exercise, walking around the block for an hour and you say hello to a few people, they just ignore you."*

Wendy went further while reflecting on the influence of place going beyond the city to discuss the differences between suburbs noting that her parents lived around *"older, more friendly people."* While discussing the different experiences Wendy had across her suburbs, she also reflected on her city of Christchurch noting its high proportion of Pākehā compared to other cities in the country and used the example of her city's reluctance to correctly pronounce te reo Maori to highlight her city's intolerance for difference. Like Jackie, Wendy appears to suggest the greater diversity encourages tolerance and acceptance for differences:

*"…in Christchurch, it's mostly Caucasian. So, if you grew up in Hamilton or in Auckland, you've probably got a higher percentage of Māori people there. So, I think it's more accepted if you're different and I think having Asians and Māori people helps to balance everything whereas it's predominantly white here… Just use te reo for an example, people say why is it now that we have to try and pronounce words? Why can't I just pronounce it the way I was taught? And I said well it's not right, this is the way it's supposed to be pronounced and*

*it has taken such a long time to change somewhere like Christchurch, to accept something else even the Māori language, which is actually an official language of New Zealand. It's difficult for them."*

Despite her criticisms of her city, Wendy has observed a significant shift since the tragedies over the past decade most notably the Christchurch shooting of 2019. She believes the shared experience of grief and loss has created strength and unity in the community in response to the adversity the people of Christchurch have faced noting that overall, she found residents were kinder during the pandemic.

*"The last year in Christchurch has been quite tough, well just New Zealand is quite tough but Christchurch especially because you have Whakaari island volcano explosion, then we have the shooting at the mosque, and all the Christchurch earthquakes. It's been particularly hard for people in Christchurch but after the mosque shooting and then COVID, I think people are actually being nicer towards each other now and sometimes out of tragedies, it makes people more accepting. Because around the country we saw people get together and support you know, and rallies and things, light candles at the park, which is really nice"*

Wendy is the only participant to have experienced the worst racism in her adult life, associating it with the racism fuelled by Winston Peters in the late 1990s in response to increasing Asian immigrants in the country. She responded to racism by asserting her sense of place in Christchurch, noting her family's long history in Aotearoa. Despite her strong assertion of her sense of place and identity, she became highly aware of her racial appearance during the lockdown, unsure whether to attribute the reaction of others to social distancing or avoidance. Although Wendy noticed the spatial differences in attitudes towards difference across cities and suburbs, she acknowledged the overall changes she has observed in Christchurch as the city and its residents have united through their adversity, particularly during the lockdown where she believes people have been kinder.

## 4.5 Conclusion

Following the findings from geographers in Aotearoa (Friesen & Ip, 2001; Ip, 2003; Wang & Collins, 2016a, 2016b), and academics from the wider social (Harris et al., 2006; Murphy, 2003), Chinese New Zealanders have long experienced racial discrimination since first arriving in a country colonised by the British where citizenship and belonging have always

centred on white identities (Bell et al., 2017). While participants such as Ken, Sam, and Wendy, descendants from early Chinese migrants, faced racism throughout their childhood for their racial appearance and shared the overt racism Chinese went through in earlier years, the younger generation of Chinese New Zealanders such as Anna, Lily, and Jackie, observed and experienced the more subtle ways in which the Chinese community are othered through covert everyday racism; the everyday, subtle, and unconscious forms of racism in spaces of white dominance (Harwood et al., 2018). Many academics have noted the presence of new or modern racism, the covert ways in which racism is denied and traditional values are emphasised as being violated by minority groups since overt old racism has been denounced in society (Liu & Mills, 2006). For the younger generation, their ethnic food culture was the main point of difference from their school peers as they were conscious of the difference in aromas and appearance, and they all made a concerted effort to bring Western school lunches such as sandwiches to align with local norms. They also faced assumptions based on racial stereotypes and faced the model minority stereotype throughout their schooling, noting the portrayal of Chinese students as 'nerdy' or 'uncool'. Along with Wendy and Bowen, they all continue to suffer from the forever foreigner stereotype, constantly associated with the imagination of a 'Chinese' person despite their length of residence and citizenship in the country. While the first wave of yellow peril came from British migrants in response to increasing numbers of Chinese migrants in the 19th century, Wendy's experience following the New Zealand First political campaign in 1996, may indicate another wave yellow peril fears influenced by Winston Peter's anti-immigration stance (Liu & Mills, 2006). Wendy unlike all other participants, experienced the most racism in her adulthood and shared encounters of the physical abuse she suffered for her racial appearance. During the COVID-19 lockdown, Wendy felt targeted for her appearance, noting the widespread anti-Chinese sentiment during this time possibly due to a heightened sense of awareness for her difference as she was unsure whether to attribute actions such as social distancing or her redundancy to racial discrimination due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All participants but one believe that Chinese migrants need to better integrate into society, but the participants are spread across a scale from acculturation to assimilation as they align with different notions of national identity. While Ken, Sam, Mei, and Wendy believe that migrants should adopt behavioural and cultural traits, with Wendy expressing that expressions of culture should be contained within one's home, the younger generation including Anna, Jackie, Lily, and Bowen believe in expressions and an embrace of culture and traditions,

noticing the invisibility of the Chinese community in New Zealand's bicultural society which highlights Pākehā and Māori identities. There is distinct difference between the participants, possibly due to increase globalisation and cosmopolitanism in Aotearoa particularly in the Auckland region where there has been increasing diversity and distinct ethnoburbs have formed potentially contributing to differences in everyday cosmopolitan attitudes which also emphasised the role of place for many participants. Jackie believes that the greater diversity in Auckland has increased tolerance for difference similar to Christine, who believes her encounters of racism may have been influenced by her location in Christchurch, a city with less ethnic diversity as she even noticed differences between the city's suburbs. While Jackie expressed her concern for attitudes towards difference in small towns, Ken noted the ways in which his small community accepted, supported, and respected him noting his long-standing presence in the community.

Things changed significantly as the COVID-19 virus spread causing a global pandemic which was heavily associated with Wuhan, China and Chinese locals around the world found themselves blamed for spreading the pandemic. Performances of nationalism centred on white identities, emphasising the persistence of the forever foreigner stereotype at a time where Chinese locals found themselves marginalised from Western communities where they had long been established. On the 25th of March, New Zealand entered a nationwide lockdown, disrupting the daily lives of New Zealanders and reports surfaced of the racism faced by Chinese New Zealanders. Aware of the anti-Chinese sentiment, most of the participants gained a heightened sense of awareness of their racial visibility, choosing to adapt and conform to local norms to avoid being identified as 'foreign'. This included conforming to local dress styles and avoiding the use of face masks in public spaces while others who were well established in the community believed they were easily identified as being a 'local' through their accents. This highlights the wide variation in the imaginary of a 'Kiwi' or 'New Zealander' from associating them with a white appearance like many Western countries overseas (Beaman, 2019; Cretton, 2018; Martinez, 2006), to the performances of whiteness enacted to gain acceptance into the majority or local community through conforming to local cultural norms. Despite these negative experiences, most participants also noted moments of hope and positivity from the unity across ethnic groups in response to racism, to the groups on social media connecting Chinese locals across the world through their shared experiences, to the large scale international collaborations between scientists for vaccine development.

# Chapter Five: Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has been defined as a crisis aligning with the four key criteria identified by Woods, et al. (2020); the pandemic has been highly disruptive, created increased uncertainty, which created a critical juncture for political decision making, leading to structural indeterminacy. This has fuelled nationalism globally as governments worked to protect their nations reinforcing the imagined community and their country's borders closing access for non-citizens. The crisis contributed to anti-Chinese and xenophobic sentiment globally, as 'Chinese' became associated with disease (Anderson, 1991) and those racially marked found themselves targeted as political rhetoric racialised the virus (Goodwin & Chemerinsky, 2020). This may indicate the performance of exclusionary latent and possibly virulent nationalisms (Bieber, 2018) as citizenship was aligned with white identities and the forever foreigner stereotype persisted othering Chinese locals. COVID-19 increased anti-Chinese and Asian sentiment globally and while there were reports of increased racism in the Chinese and wider Asian community in Aotearoa, racism is not a new experience for Chinese New Zealanders which has been ongoing since Chinese migrants arrived in the country where they have consistently been subjected to racial tropes and stereotypes (Murphy, 2003).

This thesis sought to explore the experiences of the COVID-19 lockdown across several Chinese New Zealanders and as I started my interviews, I found that only one participant had experienced verbal racial abuse during the lockdown. However, this does not speak to the minute ways in which race was operationalised through emotions, feeling, and affect, as many participants gained a heightened awareness of their racial visibility and chose to conform to local norms, distancing themselves from their conceptions of 'foreign' and aligning with notions of being 'Kiwi'. This highlighted the imagination of a 'Kiwi' identity, which centred around a white identity or Western characteristics and emphasised the nuance of citizenship, extending beyond legal status to include the wider social and political processes influencing inclusion and exclusion.

There were many similarities across participants who shared their experiences of growing up in Aotearoa and during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, there was an even greater amount of difference expressed through personal biographies, identities, personal beliefs, and geographic locations across the country all contributing to the nuance in experience and identity.

# Appendix A: Participant Information Sheets

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## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (JOURNALIST)

**Project title:** Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during COVID-19

**Principal investigator/supervisor:** Professor Laurence Murphy

**Student researcher:** Lan Chen

This research is being conducted by Dr Laurence Murphy, a professor in Human Geography in the School of Environment at the University of Auckland, and Lan Chen a Masters student in Human Geography in the School of Environment at the University of Auckland. This project explores the experiences of the COVID-19 lockdown on Chinese New Zealanders and its effects on ethnic and national identity. As part of this research, Chinese journalists who have been reporting on the effects of COVID-19 on the community, have been invited to participate to provide wider context on the effects of the pandemic.

### Why is the project being conducted?
Since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March of this year, there has been little published on the social effects of the pandemic on the Chinese New Zealand community. Since the virus was first discovered in Wuhan, China, the community has been the target of anti-Chinese/Asian sentiments. This project seeks to explore their experiences and the effects of the pandemic on the wider Chinese community in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### How is the project being conducted?
The project consists of two parts. The first part involves a review of the literature on race, nation, and intersectionality with a focus on Chinese New Zealanders, as well as Chinese people more broadly. The second part involves interviews with 10 people based on their affiliation with the Chinese community.

### Why have I been invited to participate in the project?
You have been invited to participate in the project because you have specialised knowledge and expertise reporting on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community.

### What does participating in the project involve?
Your participation in this project involves participating in an interview conducted by me, Lan Chen, at a time and location of your choosing; the interview can also be online if you would prefer. The interview is expected to last up to one hour, but the duration of the interview can be shortened to suit your requirements. I will ask some prepared questions to provide a loose structure; however, my aim in conducting the interview is to make it as conversational as possible. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Please indicate on the Consent Form if you would like to receive a copy of the typed transcript. You can make changes to the interview transcript up to two weeks after receiving a copy.

### How will my comments be identified in the research results?

Your identity and any identifying personal information will be kept confidential. A pseudonym will be used in place of your name and all comments made will be attributed to the pseudonym in my thesis and potential publications.

### What are my rights as a participant in the project?

Participation in this project is voluntary and you may wish to decline to participate without giving a reason. Participants may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. You can choose to decline any question you do not feel comfortable answering. You can request for the audio recording device to be turned off at any point during the interview process. In addition, you can withdraw your data within two weeks of the interview or two weeks within receiving a copy of the transcript. You have the option to request a copy of the interview transcript. Please provide an email address on the Consent Form, this email address will be kept confidential and will only be used to send a copy of the transcript and receive amendments within the two-week period.

### What are the potential benefits and risks of participating in the project?

You can receive a copy of a summary report of my findings and will have access to any publications which may arise from this project. Please indicate on the Consent Form if you would like to receive these and provide an email or postal address. It is possible that issues which are distressing may be discussed during the interview. In the case that you find you require support after this interview please text or call 1737 at any time, 24 hours a day for free contact with a trained counsellor. 1737 is part of the National Telehealth Service by the Ministry of Health.

### What will happen after my participation in the project?

Interview recordings will be transcribed and analysed in conjunction with news media material. Together, these information sources will form the basis of my thesis and any potential journal publications. Interview recordings will be transcribed by myself and recordings and transcriptions will be stored in a password-protected electronic file accessible only by Laurence Murphy and myself. The file will be deleted after a period of six years from the formal conclusion of the project (end of February 2021). A copy of this form and the consent form you sign will be held in a locked cabinet for a period of six years separate from any recording or transcript of the interview.

### How do I contact the researcher?

Please get in contact with myself, Lan Chen, or Laurence Murphy using the contact details below. We are happy to discuss any aspect of the project and answer any questions you may have.

**Professor Laurence Murphy**
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The University of Auckland
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**Lan Chen**
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Private Bag 92019
Email: lche488@aucklanduni.ac.nz

If you would like to contact the Head of Department, please contact:

**Dr Julie V Rowland**
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The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Tel: 09-373-7599 ext. 87412
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**UAHPEC Chair contact details:**

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE)**

**Project title:** Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during COVID-19

**Principal investigator/supervisor:** Professor Laurence Murphy

**Student researcher:** Lan Chen

This research is being conducted by Dr Laurence Murphy, a professor in Human Geography in the School of Environment at the University of Auckland, and Lan Chen a Masters student in Human Geography in the School of Environment at the University of Auckland. This project explores the experiences of the COVID-19 lockdown on Chinese New Zealanders and its effects on the effects on ethnic and national identity. As part of this research, representatives of the Chinese community have been invited to participate to provide wider context on experiences of the Chinese New Zealand community during the COVID-19 lockdown.

### Why is the project being conducted?
Since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March of this year, there has been little published on the social effects of the pandemic on the Chinese New Zealand community. Since the virus was first discovered in Wuhan, China, the community has been the target of anti-Chinese/Asian sentiments. This project seeks to explore their experiences and the effects of the pandemic on the wider Chinese community in Aotearoa New Zealand.

### How is the project being conducted?
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### Why have I been invited to participate in the project?
You have been invited to participate in the project because you have specialised knowledge and experience with a Chinese community group during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

### What does participate in the project involve?
Your participation in this project involves participating in an interview conducted by me, Lan Chen, at a time and location of your choosing; the interview can also be online if you would prefer. The interview is expected to last up to one hour, but the duration of the interview can be shortened to suit your requirements. I will ask some prepared questions to provide a loose structure; however, my aim in conducting the interview is to make it as conversational as possible. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Please indicate on the Consent Form if you would like to receive a copy of the typed transcript. You can make changes to the interview transcript up to two weeks after receiving a copy.

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### How will my comments be identified in the research results?

Your identity and any identifying personal information will be kept confidential. A pseudonym will be used in place of your name and all comments made will be attributed to the pseudonym in my thesis and potential publications.

### What are my rights as a participant in the project?

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If you would like to contact the Head of Department, please contact:
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School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Tel: 09-373-7599 ext. 87412
Email: j.rowland@auckland.ac.nz

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**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (COMMUNITY MEMBER)**

**Project title:** Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during COVID-19

**Principal investigator/supervisor:** Professor Laurence Murphy

**Student researcher:** Lan Chen

This research is being conducted by Dr Laurence Murphy, a professor in Human Geography in the School of Environment at the University of Auckland, and Lan Chen a Masters student in Human Geography in the School of Environment at the University of Auckland. This project explores the experiences of the COVID-19 lockdown on Chinese New Zealanders and its effects on ethnic and national identity. As part of this research, members of the Chinese community have been invited to participate to share their individual experiences of the COVID-19 lockdown.

### Why is the project being conducted?
Since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic in March of this year, there has been little published on the social effects of the pandemic on the Chinese New Zealand community. Since the virus was first discovered in Wuhan, China, the community has been the target of anti-Chinese/Asian sentiments. This project seeks to explore their experiences and the effects of the pandemic on the wider Chinese community in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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### Why have I been invited to participate in the project?
You have been invited to participate in the project because you have identified yourself as a member of the Chinese New Zealand community.

### What does participating in the project involve?
Your participation in this project involves participating in an interview conducted by me, Lan Chen, at a time and location of your choosing; the interview can also be online if you would prefer. The interview is expected to last up to one hour, but the duration of the interview can be shortened to suit your requirements. I will ask some prepared questions to provide a loose structure; however, my aim in conducting the interview is to make it as conversational as possible. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Please indicate on the Consent Form if you would like to receive a copy of the typed transcript. You can make changes to the interview transcript up to two weeks after receiving a copy.

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Participation in this project is voluntary and you may wish to decline to participate without giving a reason. Participants may withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. You can choose to decline any question you do not feel comfortable answering. You can request for the audio recording device to be turned off at any point during the interview process. In addition, you can withdraw your data within two weeks of the interview or two weeks within receiving a copy of the transcript. You have the option to request a copy of the interview transcript. Please provide an email address on the Consent Form, this email address will be kept confidential and will only be used to send a copy of the transcript and receive amendments within the two-week period.

### What are the potential benefits and risks of participating in the project?

You can receive a copy of a summary report of my findings and will have access to any publications which may arise from this project. Please indicate on the Consent Form if you would like to receive these and provide an email or postal address. It is possible that issues which are distressing may be discussed during the interview. In the case that you find you require support after this interview please text or call 1737 at any time, 24 hours a day for free contact with a trained counsellor. 1737 is part of the National Telehealth Service by the Ministry of Health.

### What will happen after my participation in the project?

Interview recordings will be transcribed and analysed in conjunction with news media material. Together, these information sources will form the basis of my thesis and any potential journal publications. Interview recordings will be transcribed by myself and recordings and transcriptions will be stored in a password-protected electronic file accessible only by Laurence Murphy and myself. The file will be deleted after a period of six years from the formal conclusion of the project (end of February 2021). A copy of this form and the consent form you sign will be held in a locked cabinet for a period of six years separate from any recording or transcript of the interview.

### How do I contact the researcher?

Please get in contact with myself, Lan Chen, or Laurence Murphy using the contact details below. We are happy to discuss any aspect of the project and answer any questions you may have.

**Professor Laurence Murphy**
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Tel: 09-373-7599 ext. 88631
Email: l.murphy@auckland.ac.nz

**Lan Chen**
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Email: lche488@aucklanduni.ac.nz

If you would like to contact the Head of Department, please contact:

**Dr Julie V Rowland**
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Tel: 09-373-7599 ext. 87412
Email: j.rowland@auckland.ac.nz

### UAHPEC Chair contact details:

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

*Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 30/09/20 for three years.*

*Reference Number UAHPEC2948*

# Appendix B: Consent Forms

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (JOURNALIST)**
**THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS**

**Project title:** Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during COVID-19

**Principal investigator/supervisor:** Professor Laurence Murphy

**Student researcher:** Lan Chen

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to participate in this research.
- I understand that the interview will take approximately one hour.
- I agree / do not agree for the interview to be audio recorded *(please circle)*.
- I understand that I can request for the audio recording device to be switched off at any time during the interview.
- I understand that the interview will be transcribed.
- I would / would not like to receive a copy of the transcript to edit *(please circle)*. I understand I must return any changes I make to the transcript within two weeks of receiving the transcript.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to two weeks following the interview.
- I understand that should I request a copy of the transcript that I have two weeks to make any changes to it.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question that I do not feel comfortable answering

I wish /do not wish to receive a summary of findings, which can be emailed or mailed to me at this email/postal address:

_____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

*Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 30/09/2020 for three years.*
*Reference Number UAHPEC2948*

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE)**
**THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS**

**Project title:** Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during COVID-19

**Principal investigator/supervisor:** Professor Laurence Murphy

**Student researcher:** Lan Chen

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to participate in this research.
- I understand that the interview will take approximately one hour.
- I agree / do not agree for the interview to be audio recorded *(please circle)*.
- I understand that I can request for the audio recording device to be switched off at any time during the interview.
- I understand that the interview will be transcribed.
- I would / would not like to receive a copy of the transcript to edit *(please circle)*. I understand I must return any changes I make to the transcript within two weeks of receiving the transcript.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to two weeks following the interview.
- I understand that should I request a copy of the transcript that I have two weeks to make any changes to it.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question that I do not feel comfortable answering

I wish /do not wish to receive a summary of findings, which can be emailed or mailed to me at this email/postal address:

_____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

*Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 30/09/2020 for three years.*
*Reference Number UAHPEC2948*

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Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
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The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142, New Zealand

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (COMMUNITY MEMBER)**
**THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS**

**Project title:** Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during COVID-19

**Principal investigator/supervisor:** Professor Laurence Murphy

**Student researcher:** Lan Chen

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, and I have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to participate in this research.
- I understand that the interview will take approximately one hour.
- I agree / do not agree for the interview to be audio recorded *(please circle)*.
- I understand that I can request for the audio recording device to be switched off at any time during the interview.
- I understand that the interview will be transcribed.
- I would / would not like to receive a copy of the transcript to edit *(please circle)*. I understand I must return any changes I make to the transcript within two weeks of receiving the transcript.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time, and to withdraw any data traceable to me up to two weeks following the interview.
- I understand that should I request a copy of the transcript that I have two weeks to make any changes to it.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question that I do not feel comfortable answering

I wish /do not wish to receive a summary of findings, which can be emailed or mailed to me at this email/postal address:

_____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

*Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 30/09/2020 for three years.*
*Reference Number UAHPEC2948*

# Appendix C: Indicative Interview Schedules

**Indicative Interview Schedule**

**I will be conducting semi-structured interviews in this research. The following questions represent the 'interview guide' but the interview will take the form of a conversation.**

Journalists

Introductions and brief history of individual

Current sense of identity and affiliation – ethnic and national

- How the individual feels and associated with identity
- How the nation, others, make you feel in terms of your belonging or sense of identity

Reporting on Chinese community prior to COVID-19

- Did you report much on the Chinese community prior to the lockdown?
- What were the stories like?
- What was your perception of how Chinese fit into the wider nation?

Reporting on Chinese community during/post COVID-19

- What were the effects of COVID-19 on nature of profession/job?
- What were your observations leading up to COVID-19 lockdown in NZ?
- What were your observations over COVID-19 lockdown regarding the Chinese community and how they experienced lockdown?
- Were the notable differences on how different groups of Chinese were treated differently over lockdown? Was it a universal experience or very different across distinct groups?
- What were your observations of the interactions between Chinese and the broader nation?
- Would you say COVID-19 exacerbated the issues/racism Chinese have already experienced or was a new issue posed to the community?
- Positive or negative overall?
- How did reporting on these stories affect you as a Chinese New Zealander?

Moving forward

- Is there anything we should takeaway from the lockdown and the experiences of the Chinese community?
- Can Chinese fully thrive, be accepted and supported in NZ? If yes, what needs to change?

**Indicative Interview Schedule**

**I will be conducting semi-structured interviews for my research. The following questions represent the 'interview guide' but the interview will take the form of a conversation.**

CNZers – Chinese New Zealanders

Community representatives

- Introductions and brief history of individual and organisation
- Journey into current role/position
- Operations and experience of community group pre COVID-19
    - Everyday/common operations/tasks/requests of members
    - CNZers and their sense of belonging in NZ
    - CNZers experiences of being in NZ
- Operations and experience of community group during/post COVID-19 lockdown
    - Changes in everyday/common operations/tasks/requests of members
    - Effects on CNZers sense of identity
    - Effects on CNZers sense of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand
    - Anything notable from over this time
- Effects of COVID on community and any notable experiences unique to this COVID
- Moving forward, what would best help this community – support, needs, social/political changes, etc.

# Appendix D: Facebook Advertisement for Participant Recruitment

## Appendix D: Facebook Advertisement Recruiting Participants

Hi all!

My name is Lan and I'm a Chinese New Zealander. I am currently doing my Masters at the University of Auckland on the experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during COVID-19. I'm looking at the experiences of Chinese New Zealanders during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on sense of ethnic identity and belonging here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I'm looking for six individuals to participate in individual one-hour interviews. These can either be in-person (if you live in Auckland) or online. I am looking for participants over the age of 18 years, who identify as being of Chinese ethnicity, are a permanent resident or citizen of Aotearoa New Zealand, and have been residing here since the beginning of March, 2020.

If you would like to hear more information about the study, ask further questions, or are interested in participating, please email me at [lche488@aucklanduni.ac.nz](mailto:lche488@aucklanduni.ac.nz)

Thank you!

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 30/09/2020 for three years. Reference number UAHPEC2948

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