

THE FOLLY OF LOOKING ONLY IN THE MIRROR

*Ashley E. Pritchard*¹



Introduction

New Zealand's immigration policy has undergone important changes in the past several years. The 1990s saw short-lived surges amounting to the highest net migration gains in over one hundred years (the so-called "Asian invasion" of the mid-1990s), some of the highest net migration losses of New Zealanders on record (the oft-noted "brain drain" of the late 1990s), and belated recognition that much of what is called "permanent and long-term migration" is not, in fact, permanent or long-term at all. (Bedford et al., p. 1)

New Zealand's future economic success is uncertain because it lacks within its current population some of the labor and technological skills needed to sustain economic growth. It is necessary, then, that it maintain an immigration policy that works to import these skills, log-

ically from its skilled neighbors: Asians and Pacific Islanders. New Zealand has been and continues to be largely accepting of peoples from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. However, New Zealand remains constantly uninviting to the "others" — its Asian neighbors — despite the considerable skills that they possess. Even though its immigration policies and initiatives have changed to no longer prohibit Asian immigration, attitudes toward settlement have not. It is because of this latent xenophobia that New Zealand's immigration policy is arguably the country's most contentious social issue. Each shift in policy has been met with harsh anti-immigration backlash and debate. (Grbic, p. 1) In fact, the unintended consequence of two immigration

¹With sincere appreciation to Professor Pinaire for tossing the first draft and imploring me to write with my soul.

acts that were passed in the late 1980s and early 1990s was to effectively restrict immigration policy.

In the last few decades, the composition of immigrants in New Zealand has shifted away from traditional source countries and toward individual applicants with skills that can benefit New Zealand's economy. (Winkelmann) By the late 1980s, economists and government officials realized that, in order for New Zealand to remain competitive in the global market, it needed to import skilled workers. The Immigration Acts of 1987 and 1991 worked to solve this skill shortage, bringing in immigrants from all around the world under a modified open door policy. More immigrants entered New Zealand from countries whose immigrants were rarely before seen in New Zealand — such as China, India, and Japan. However, New Zealand's covert xenophobia was awakened with the passing of the two immigration acts and continues as a dominant force in today's political life.

New Zealand's xenophobia has stunted the country both economically and socially. Gordon McLauchlan, a prominent commentator from the *New Zealand Herald*, notes that this "nervous xenophobia that afflicts island peoples" has prevented New Zealand from truly developing as a country. He also argues that New Zealand society "lacks diversity and size in the modern world. We have an economy smaller than many corporations in the United States and Europe, smaller than many American investment funds — about the same size as the Coca-Cola franchise in Biloxi." (McLauchlan, quoted in Bedford et al., p. 13)

This article attempts to explain how New Zealand's xenophobic immigration policies have hindered its economic growth and development in the global community. Following the 1987 and 1991 Immigration Acts that opened New Zealand borders to non-traditional source countries, the record shows rising conflict between native New Zealanders and "the others." This conflict has manifested itself in the rise of the political party New Zealand First, as well as through unfavorable media coverage of New Zealand's policies toward immigration and public opinion toward immigration. In fact, today's immigration policy largely reflects the same closed-door opinion that New Zealand has held about foreigners for centuries.

A History of Immigration in New Zealand

New Zealand was first settled by the Māori, who arrived by canoe between 750 and 1350 AD from various eastern Polynesian Islands. Although the first European contact was not made until the late eighteenth century, the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 established British sovereignty over the country. (Winkelmann, p. 2) All British citizens were entitled to unrestricted access into New Zealand, along with the status of "instant citizen." No legal or cultural distinctions were made between the British and New Zealand residents. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 152) The continuing immigration of the British (and later their Irish neighbors) was aided by an unofficial "white-only" immigration policy framework, which was maintained until the late 1980s. (Grbic, p. 2)

Between 1881 and 1921, more than eleven acts were passed in New Zealand's Parliament with the express purpose of restricting the entry of Chinese and other Asian "races." (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 159) In fact, New Zealand's early immigration policy made it legally possible for the country to keep out its Pacific Island and Asian neighbors. Therefore, it was not surprising that the 1921 census showed that 99 percent of New Zealand's 1.2 million population, excluding the Māori population, claimed British nationality. (Grbic, p. 2)

In the late 1800s while the country was being settled, the New Zealand government offered assisted passage schemes, by which the government paid travel fares for immigrants from the British Isles to move to New Zealand. (Winkelmann) In the 1950s and 1960s, New Zealand re-opened these assisted passage schemes in an attempt to regain the previously substantial immigrant population from the British Isles that was beginning to decrease noticeably. While the overall net migration gain remained relatively stable at 10 to 20 thousand per year throughout the 1960s, these annual flows constituted less than 1 percent of the population at the time. Immigration had thus become a relatively small component of New Zealand's population growth compared to the early years of colonization. (Winkelmann, p. 3)

A memorandum produced by the Department of Internal Affairs in 1953 summarizes New Zealand's immigration policy at the time: Our immigration is based firmly on the principle that we are and intend to remain a country of European development. It is inevitably discriminatory against Asians — indeed against all persons who are not wholly of European race and color. Whereas we have done much to encourage immigration from Europe, we do everything to discourage from Asia. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 160)

Later on, during the 1970s and 1980s, turbulent times began to characterize New Zealand's immigration policy. Ups and downs in net migration flows occurred, the result of cyclical changes in immigration policy decisions. (Winkelmann) For example, a typical policy cycle consisted of a promotion of immigration during times of labor market shortages. However, delays between the recruitment and the arrival of immigrants meant that immigrants sometimes arrived after the labor shortage disappeared. This produced hostile attitudes towards immigrants in the native population and a subsequent restriction of immigration. (Winkelmann, p. 5) Furthermore, New Zealand's immigration policy had followed a traditional-source-country list ever since the 1840s, but after 1976 immigration became subject to both an occupational priority list and to a preferred-source-country list. (Winkelmann, p. 11) The preferred-source-country list looked much like New Zealand's previous traditional-source-country list, however. This meant that if an employer wanted an immigrant from a country that was not on the preferred list, he had to *prove* that it was impossible to acquire those skills from one of New Zealand's preferred-source countries.

In 1986 a long-awaited review of immigration policy was introduced in Parliament by the Labour Government. (Bedford et al., p. 6) With the consequent passage of the Immigration Act of 1987, race, culture, and national origin were removed as criteria for immigrant selection, making New Zealand the last country in the world founded by immigrants to discard such discriminatory provisions. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 161) Moreover, by the early 1990s official policy had identified Asian markets as

engines for growth, Asian investments as pivotal in internationalizing New Zealand's economy, and Asian immigrants as catalysts for expanding the country's pool of human capital. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 155) Asia had cutting-edge technology, ongoing research, and trained technicians that could greatly aid New Zealand. But in order to gain access to Asia's technologies and investments, New Zealand had to change its "white-only" immigration policy.

In 1991 the Immigration Amendment Act was passed and the current point system was established. The new act granted entry into New Zealand if an immigrant's skills matched the needs of the New Zealand economy. Since the labor market had a relatively high proportion of unskilled New Zealand-born workers, importing skilled workers seemed a relatively inexpensive and immediate way to overcome a shortage of skilled labor. In theory, this change would benefit both unskilled New Zealand-born persons and, in particular, owners of New Zealand's capital. (Winkelmann, p. 18)

The 1991 act established four main categories for obtaining permanent residence in New Zealand: the General Skills, Business Investment, Family, and Humanitarian categories. In 1996, 61 percent of all immigration approvals came from the General Skills category, 25 percent from the Family category, 10 percent from the Humanitarian category, and 4 percent from the Business Investment category. This breakdown is different from that of most countries (such as Australia) where family reunification is the major reason for migration. Table 1 lists the elements of New Zealand's General Skills point system, according to which points are awarded depending on the characteristics of the worker.² In the category labeled "Employability," there are several different factors. The factor "Work Experience" measures how many years the applicant has been working in his/her prospective field. The "Offer of Employment" factor indicates whether or not the immigrant applicant has received an offer of employment in New Zealand prior to his/her approval. The factor also assigns a point value to the age of the applicant, with the age range of 25–29 years being the "most desired." In the second column under "Qualifications" the

²As of October 1995.

Table 1

Summary of Points System in General Skills Category

Employability		Qualifications	
<i>Work Experience</i>		Base Qualification	10
2 years	1	Advanced Qualification	11
4 years	2	Masters Degree or Higher	12
6 years	3	Settlement Factors	
8 years	4	<i>Settlement Funds</i>	
10 years	5		
12 years	6	\$100,000	1
14 years	7	\$200,000	2
16 years	8	<i>Partner's qualification</i>	
18 years	9	Base qualification	1
20 years	10	Advanced qualification	2
<i>Offer of Employment</i>		<i>New Zealand work experience</i>	
	5	1 year	1
<i>Age</i>		2 years	2
18–24 years	8	<i>Family Sponsorship</i>	
25–29 years	10	3	
30–34 years	8	<i>Maximum Settlement Points: 7</i>	
18–39 years	6		
8–44 years	4		
18–49 years	2		
<i>Maximum Age: 55 years</i>			

Source: Winkelmann and Winkelmann.

applicant's educational credentials are assessed. Individuals who have attended a university or who have continued on to receive a Masters or PhD degree are awarded more points in this category. In the "Settlement Factors" category, more points are awarded if an immigrant is judged to be easily able to adjust to a new life in New Zealand. Partner qualifications are also taken into account in this category in judging whether the immigrant's partner will also be able to find work and have an easy transition. The "Family Sponsorship" factor takes into account whether an immigrant already has family living in New Zealand and whether the family is sponsoring its family member to come to New Zealand. There are additional base qualifications that must be met in New Zealand's point system, but generally speaking, immigrants had to maintain a minimum 25 points in order to gain residency in New Zealand in the General Skills category.

Judging by the evidence (e.g., see Winkelmann and Winkelmann, as well as the Hud-

son Report), the radically different policy was considered to be quite successful, especially since immigrants had significantly higher education levels than the New Zealand-born population. (Winkelmann, p. 18) Unlike in the United States, where most immigrants are low-skilled, in New Zealand immigrants (in the 1990s) had much higher educational levels than native born workers, with 44 percent of immigrants in 1996, for example, having obtained university degrees versus only 10 percent of the New Zealand-born. (Department of Labour) Yet many New Zealand natives did not seem to be concerned with the positive economic impact that these immigrants would make; instead, they seemed more concerned about their ethnicity. The resulting boom in immigration from 1994–1996 became controversial not only for its sheer magnitude, but also because of its composition. The countries from which most immigration requests were approved in 1996 included Taiwan, China, India, South Korea, Hong Kong,

and the Philippines. And in the 1996 census, the proportion of recently arrived foreign-born residents from Asia was 47 percent. (Ho et al.) In short, the new immigration policy was successful in acquiring the much-needed skills for New Zealand's economy; yet the source countries of recent immigrants were radically different from those of any immigration initiative in the past.

The Promulgation of Racism during the 1990s

The 1987 and 1991 immigration acts were an attempt to deal with New Zealand's struggle with the acceptance of "the other," yet the attitudes remained. New Zealand's continued xenophobic attitudes were expressed in a 1996 poll showing that 60 percent of New Zealanders believed that it was necessary to reduce immigration. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 178) Likewise, the lives of the immigrants themselves were affected by such attitudes. According to an Auckland survey taken during the same year, one in four immigrants felt "fairly or very unwelcome," while one in five was concerned about "overt racism." (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 187)

Peters and New Zealand First

The most outspoken individual regarding immigration policy has been Winston Peters, leader of the New Zealand First party. Under the headline "Whose Country Is It Anyway?" Peters' leaflets have railed against Asian immigrants, falsely claiming that hundreds of thousands of Asian immigrants are coming into New Zealand and blaming them for, among other things, traffic problems in Auckland. These immigrants are, according to Peters, poor enough to be leeches on the welfare system yet rich enough to drive up the cost of housing. (Fickling, p. 3) When the Malaysian prime minister Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad warned that Peters' opinions would be interpreted by Asian countries as a sign that New Zealand did not want to be a part of Asia, Peters stated that "New Zealand was not part of Asia, nor did New Zealanders want it to be." (Peters, as quoted in Miller, p. 206)

While radical opinions might take hold in any political spectrum, New Zealand First is

not a political anomaly. It was the third-largest party in Wellington's Parliament; and, until 1999, Mr. Peters was the country's deputy prime minister. (Fickling, p. 2) In fact, Mr. Peters' 1996 election-year immigration-policy platform that would cap immigration at 10,000 per year was later adopted as official New Zealand policy in December 1997.

Media Promotions of Racism during the 1990s

During the period from 1993 to 2003, several reports were put out that analyzed media coverage of immigration in New Zealand. The findings of these reports showed overwhelmingly negative attitudes towards immigration, suggesting that the content of the print media during this time articulated certain stereotypical and negative images about "Asian" immigrants. (Spoonley and Trlin) Certain media phrases were repeated over and over such as "Inv-Asian" and "Asianisation" [of New Zealand], creating a negative depiction of the immigration flows during the late 1990s. The media also gave widespread coverage to the views of Winston Peters and New Zealand First. Peters himself focused on certain negative aspects of immigration, such as Asian driving habits or the pressures placed on infrastructures and services (e.g., education) by immigrants. (Spoonley and Trlin)

Ultimately, the media influence the way in which political agendas are constructed and understood, as well as the ways in which the images and language of public and private debates are formed. (Spoonley and Trlin, p. 11) For New Zealand, a negative portrayal of immigration was detrimental to the social cohesion of the country. Many Kiwis bought into the New Zealand First campaign, believing and spreading the negative media stories on immigration, which in turn created more division within the country.

Public Opinion Polls

In 1995 a survey³ was conducted to measure attitudes towards immigration. A total of

³Survey conducted by Douglas Grbic and referenced in his "Social and Cultural Meanings of Tolerance: Immigration, Incorporation, and Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand."

1,043 New Zealanders were asked to rank their stance on immigration based on five questions. The results were then compiled into a single additive variable measuring anti-immigration sentiment. The possible values of the variable ranged from 5 (extremely pro-immigration) to 25 (extremely anti-immigration). The average response was 14.46. (Grbic, p. 7) Other public opinion polls similarly found a strong dislike towards immigration, with one poll in March 1996 revealing that 78 percent of New Zealanders wanted the number of Asian immigrants reduced. (Miller, p. 206)

Discrimination toward Immigrants in the Job Market during the 1990s

Public attitudes toward immigration expressed in the media also extended to the job market. Immigrants often complained of discrimination in employment and of difficulties in finding a job, despite their high skill levels and certifications. Various employment studies indeed showed that Asian immigrants had a lower probability of finding employment and lower incomes, if employed, than New Zealand-born workers of the same age and education. (Winkelmann and Winkelmann, p. viii)

In each of the census years (1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, and 2001) disparities in educational attainment between the immigrants and natives were seen. (Winkelmann and Winkelmann) In 1996, for example, 44 percent of recent immigrants (36 percent in 2001) had university degrees versus only 10 percent of the NZ-born (12 percent in 2001). (Department of Labour, p. 6) Immigrants entering New Zealand in 1996 without any qualifications represented 23 percent of the total population of all immigrants (14 percent of recent immigrants), compared with 30 percent of the New Zealand-born. (Winkelmann and Winkelmann, p. vii) Overall, immigrants coming into New Zealand in the late 1990s were much more likely to hold a university qualification and, at the other end of the spectrum, much less likely to have no qualifications than the native New Zealand population.

To a large degree, the employment patterns appeared to depend not on skill or qualification but on ethnicity and country-of-origin. For Pacific Islanders in the late 1980s, employment opportunities were particularly

grim. In one study,⁴ Poot and his colleagues show that in 1981 recent immigrants from the UK, Australia, and North America had unemployment rates that were relatively similar to those of the New Zealand-born. By contrast, unemployment rates among recent immigrants from the Pacific Islands were several times higher than those of New Zealand-born workers, as well as other immigrant groups. (Winkelmann, "Immigration . . .") Moreover, unemployment rates of immigrants born in the Pacific Islands appeared to take much longer to converge to the unemployment rates of the New Zealand-born (up to 15 years). (Winkelmann, "Immigration . . .") For Asians, employment opportunities were also poor. Despite the fact that Asian immigrants were entering New Zealand with higher skill levels than the general population, Asian immigrant unemployment rates were very high. For example, in 2001 Asian immigrant unemployment rates were about 18 percent, more than double that of the general population (7.5 percent). (Ho et al.)

Income statistics also demonstrate a disconnect based on ethnicity and country-of-origin. Zodgekar used 1991 census data to find that immigrants from traditional source countries such as the UK had much higher average incomes than immigrants from the Pacific Islands and Asia. (Winkelmann, "Immigration . . .," p. 17) Skilled Asian immigrants had a particularly large initial income disadvantage. For example, on average the income of a 25-year-old university Asian graduate even fell short of the income of a native high-school graduate. (Winkelmann and Winkelmann)

Further research showed that immigrants from the UK and Ireland had higher participation rates, employment rates, and incomes than other groups of workers, but that Asian and Pacific Island immigrants who came in through the Business Skills category tended to have less favorable outcomes in each of these three areas, despite their higher skill levels. (Winkelmann and Winkelmann, p. viii) Overall, recent immigrants from Asia had the lowest full-time employment rates among all recent immigrants (including Pacific Islanders). Only 31 percent of

⁴Study conducted by Jacques Poot and referenced in Liliana Winkelmann and Rainer Winkelmann's "Immigrants in New Zealand: A Study of their Labour Market Outcomes."

recent Asian immigrants of working age were employed in March 1996, compared to 76 percent of recent UK immigrants. (Winkelmann and Winkelmann, p. viii)

Why Is There Hostility?

Few issues are as likely to provoke and divide New Zealanders as that of immigration. For everyone who supports immigration as a catalyst for sustainable growth and expanded opportunities, there is someone who laments its eroding of the social and cultural fabric of New Zealand society. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 175) There are many reasons why New Zealanders are covertly, if not overtly, resistant to multiculturalism and immigration. Below I discuss four main social theories that might explain this phenomenon.

One theory holds that individuals who suffer the most from economic disadvantage tend to view immigrants as a threat to their own employment and job opportunities. Research has shown that low socioeconomic status has a strong positive association with anti-immigration sentiments. (Grbic, p. 3) Therefore, in the local Kiwi context the lower the socioeconomic status, the less tolerance individuals will have for immigration. However, the fact that immigrants from traditional source countries are succeeding in New Zealand's economy suggests that this phenomenon cannot be explained by economic disadvantage alone.

Another theory that might explain New Zealand's attitude toward immigrants stresses the importance of size. To New Zealanders, size is important; and for a country that is slightly larger geographically than the UK with a population only a quarter that of London alone, smaller groups, factions, and opinions can have a greater impact. (Move to New Zealand, p. 1) In his macrosociological theory, Blau defines social structure as a "multidimensional space" of different social positions. (As explained in Grbic, p. 4) Social positions are differentiated by two forms — heterogeneity and inequality. Heterogeneity is defined by structural parameters such as race and religion, which determine the distribution of individuals by social groups. On the other hand, inequality is defined by the degree of social distance between individuals, such as income and edu-

cation. When there are few or no differences within a group — that is, when there is little heterogeneity and little inequality — the greater is the status of "homophily," love of the same, as similar individuals tend to cluster together. (Grbic, p. 4) In New Zealand, for the first two hundred years of its existence, immigrants were arriving from the same handful of European countries. Therefore, homophily, love of the same, could easily be established because the commonalities among persons greatly outweighed the differences. However, with the change in immigrant source countries and the inflow of immigrants from very different regions during the late 1980s and 1990s, there were stark apparent differences that created divided group associations.

A third theory as to why New Zealanders are largely opposed to immigration is based on their unique historical context. In the New Zealand context, intergroup conflict, as Fleras and Spoonley point out, arises from "fundamentally different standpoints in the social hierarchy. . . . Māori and Pākehā,⁵ as colonized and colonizer, tend to see the world differently, with each arguing from positions that the other cannot understand or accept because of differences in social status." (Fleras and Spoonley, as quoted in Grbic, p. 4) This conflict between majority and minority groups relates to new immigrants in two ways. The majority group, the Pākehā, will tend to be more anti-immigration since they, as the dominant group, believe that minority groups should assimilate into their society. (Grbic, p. 5) The Pākehā dominate New Zealand quite visibly; and with new immigrants coming from "colored skin" countries, assimilation becomes much more difficult. Ironically, the Māori minority are also against immigration because they feel they are fighting their own battle for recognition and biculturalism in New Zealand. They believe that other outsiders would dilute this Māori presence.

Yet another social theory explaining New Zealand's hostility to outsiders is the theory of national identity. National identity is a sentiment, form of culture, or social movement that focuses on one's own country. New Zealand, an island country, was settled by two different

⁵The Māori word to describe the British colonizers of New Zealand.

cultures: the Māori and the Pākehā. Both cultures are drastically different from one another and came from opposite corners of the earth. The Pākehā in the past had taken on the role of colonizer, choosing to control and colonize New Zealand and its Māori people. In the 1980s, the uneasy transition towards a post-colonial biculturalism,⁶ a desire by the Māori to be recognized with the Pākehā as original settlers of New Zealand, and the expansion of non-traditional sources of immigration led many to conclude that “New Zealand at the turn of the millennium is experiencing a crisis of national identity.” (Grbic, p. 3) As Fleras and Spoonley state, “Debates over Asian immigration, together with Māori ori challenges to the status quo, have shattered the complacency [New Zealanders] once had by confronting New Zealanders with the most basic of questions pertaining to national identity: “Who are we?” (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 152)

The founding of New Zealand dates back centuries, but the original Treaty of Waitangi is where most point to as the start of conflict. In 1840 the Treaty of Waitangi established British sovereignty over New Zealand, while it also recognized the Māori ownership of their lands. Since the signing of this document, the Pākehā and Māori have argued and fought continuously over power and recognition. Māori continue to fight for biculturalism — desiring the recognition of two distinct settlement groups in New Zealand — whereas the Pākehā instead see New Zealand as the land of her Majesty the Queen, striving to preserve its purity. Put simply, the identity of New Zealand has never been adequately addressed or defined. Therefore, with the immigration policy shift in the early 1990s and the introduction of other cultures and ethnicities into New Zealand’s society, there has been more public confusion and outrage than ever before.

Current Immigration Policy

The changing ethnic composition resulting from the immigration boom of 1994–1996

⁶Biculturalism is the idea that two cultures can co-exist, usually despite a history of national or ethnic conflict. The conflict usually arises as a consequence of colonial settlement, although in the case of New Zealand the conflict is between rival groups of colonizers.

brought substantial concern to New Zealand. The unearthing of many hostile feelings left the country in a moral dilemma that was not easily resolved. Once again, New Zealand adjusted its policy in response to negative public opinion through a series of stringent measures that immediately halved immigration numbers. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 161) In October 1995, policy was tightened to require minimum English language requirements, not just for the principal applicant but also to all adult family members (aged 16 and older) in both the General Skills and the Business Investor categories. (Spoonley et al., “Tangata Tangata . . . ,” p. 124)

Furthermore, in occupations where professional registration is required by law in New Zealand (such as physicians, lawyers, and electricians), immigrants must now pass the professional requirement test before points for these qualifications can be awarded. (Winkelmann, “Immigration . . . ,” p. 12) Since New Zealand’s system of occupation regulation (e.g., certification, licensing) is modeled after the British system, British, American, and other Western European applicants were automatically approved for immigration with practicing licenses; but immigrants from Asia and the Pacific Islands were not. By placing this registration requirement in the immigration policy, the government attempted to control where immigrants came from. Thus, professional governing bodies can now politely but firmly refuse to recognize formal qualifications for entry from professionals they don’t want without it being called a discriminatory policy. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 157) The policies thus make it more difficult for Asian and Pacific Island people seeking entry by barring them according to language and registration without explicitly discriminating on the basis of ethnicity and country-of-origin.

In December 1997 the decision to aim in the future for an annual Permanent Long Term (PLT) net gain of 10,000 immigrants was announced by Parliament. This policy was created in response to the campaign platform of New Zealand First and Winston Peters, who argued that there were too many immigrants in New Zealand and that immigration was ruining a “pure” New Zealand. The most recent change in immigration policy, announced by the Prime

Minister in July 2003, brings New Zealand's immigration policy back full circle. The Prime Minister announced that the General Skills Category would now be replaced with a new Skilled Migrant Category (SMC). As sociologist Paul Spoonley states, "Instead of being a passive recipient of residence applications from people who may or may not be successful settlers, New Zealand will actively recruit those who are needed and who are expected to settle well."⁷ (Spoonley et al., "Tangata Tangata . . .," pp. 124–25) Therefore, the immigration policy that began in the late nineteenth century as a selective country-of-origin process today incorporates an "active recruiting process." Given the discriminatory employment environment that many Asian and Pacific Island immigrants have faced, it is no surprise that New Zealand is again targeting such countries as Britain, Ireland, the United States, and Canada — a return to the "white-only" immigration policy seen a few decades ago. New Zealand has spent centuries attempting to find the "right" set of immigration policy filters and procedures to deter or eliminate those who are not wanted and who "do not fit." Winston Peters has stood on his immigration platform as leader of New Zealand First, demanding harsher immigration laws. He has stated that "the [New Zealand immigration] system is like the proverbial sieve leaking undesirables at will." (Peters) Peters' most recent immigration policy initiative was the creation of an "undesirables" category and a new agency dedicated solely to double-checking the immigration papers of those who have already entered the country, and then deporting those immigrants whose paperwork may have been overlooked before. (Scoop Independent News, p. 1)

Current Public Opinion

The current opinion polls and statistics show that discrimination and xenophobia are still very much alive in New Zealand today. A study conducted by the research group UMR in December 2008 revealed that over half of respondents selected a race when asked which

group of people is generally most discriminated against in New Zealand. In the same survey, when respondents were asked to rank the levels of discrimination, 74 percent of them said that Asians were subject to "some" to "a great deal" of discrimination. (Human Rights Commission, "Treaty of Waitangi . . .," p. 13) In the Human Rights Commission Race Relations Report of 2008, many respondents said that they felt unhappy with people from China because "too many are coming to New Zealand and taking over New Zealanders' space." (Human Rights Commission, "Tūi Tūi Tuitiā . . .") The Human Rights Commission report also contained examples of documented hate crimes and harassment. In several incidents, immigrants were approached by people chanting "white is good, yellow is bad" while staging the Nazi salute. (Human Rights Commission, "Tūi Tūi Tuitiā . . ." p. 25)

Similarly, a report published by the Hudson consulting group, "Employment and HR Trends," in December 2006 presented information gathered from 1,705 interviews with New Zealand employers and noted significant employment barriers faced by immigrants. (Hudson Report, p. 1) The report also pointed out that, with unemployment in New Zealand at historically low levels, a large number of businesses are having difficulty finding a sufficient number of skilled workers. However, the report finds that at the same time many New Zealand companies are reluctant to make use of immigrant workers. Even though immigrant workers who have entered New Zealand through the Skilled Worker Category are highly trained and qualified, they face unemployment rates of more than 10 percent. Seventy-seven percent of employers believe that there are barriers to entry for immigrant workers; yet more than fifty-six percent of employers found that their company benefited from employing immigrants and would employ immigrants again. (Hudson Report) This contradiction between employers struggling with a critical shortage of skilled talent while many are also showing reluctance to take on workers from "non-traditional pools" is the same contradiction we have seen in New Zealand for the past two decades. The Hudson Report concludes by saying that successful settlement of immigrants requires successful employment.

⁷According to current immigration policy, however, the applicant must still pass a health, English language and character requirement.

Conclusion: What Can Be Done about It?

Can New Zealand's attitude toward immigration change? The 1987 open-door immigration policy exposed a flaw in New Zealand's ability to encompass diversity as a part of its national identity. (Fleras and Spoonley, p. 152) New Zealand's economy has suffered from an unwelcoming attitude towards immigrants, and as a result economic growth has been affected. New Zealand companies acknowledge that they are in dire need of workers with higher qualifications; yet those immigrants are rejected because of their ethnic background. The "white-only" immigration policy that New Zealand strives for is its nemesis; and by looking only in the mirror, New Zealand has lessened its global presence.

The Department of Labour predicts that by 2021 one-quarter of the New Zealand workforce

will be overseas-born, one of the highest proportions of immigrant workforces among countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). While today eight of ten workers are Pākehā New Zealanders, by 2021 only two in three will be. It is ironic that New Zealand, a tiny country in the South Pacific with a population half the size of New York City, is so dependent upon the rest of the world for goods to survive; yet it is so selective with respect to whom it admits. As stated by Le Heron and Pawson, "It remains to be seen whether New Zealand can repair its relationship with the Asian community at home and abroad; after all, New Zealand remains a small, isolated, and economically insignificant country that, paradoxically, depends on Asia for its long-term survival rather than vice versa." (Le Heron and Pawson)

REFERENCES

- Bedford, Richard, Elsie Ho and Jacqueline Lidgard. "International Migration in New Zealand: Context Components and Policy Issues." University of Waikato Migration Research Group and Population Studies Centre Report. October 2000.
- Department of Labour. "Settlement Patterns and the Geographic Mobility of Recent Migrants to New Zealand." April 2008. Online. www.dol.govt.nz. Accessed September 2008.
- Grbic, Douglas. "Social and Cultural Meanings of Tolerance: Immigration, Incorporation, and Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand." January 2006. Online. www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/0/3/8/8/p103887_index.html. Accessed March 2009.
- Fickling, David. "Not-so-nice New Zealand." *The Guardian*. December 2003. Online. www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/dec/15/worlddispatch.australia. Accessed March 2009.
- Fleras, Augie and Paul Spoonley. *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Ho, Elsie, Sybil Au, Charlotte Bedford, and Jenine Cooper. "Mental Health Issues for Asians in New Zealand: A Literature Review." November 2002. University of Waikato Migration Research Group. Online. www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/migration/docs/mhc-mhi-for-asians.pdf. Accessed March 2009.
- Hudson Report. "Employment and HR Trends: Part II HR Insights." July–December 2006. Online. au.hudson.com/documents. Accessed April 2009.
- Human Rights Commission. "Treaty of Waitangi, Personal/Group Discrimination and Disabilities." UMR Research. December 2008. Online. www.hrc.co.nz. Accessed April 2009.
- Human Rights Commission. "Tūi Tūi Tuituiā: Race Relations in 2008." March 2009. Online. www.hrc.co.nz. Accessed April 2009.
- Le Heron, Richard and Eric Pawson. *Changing Place: New Zealand in the Nineties*. Auckland: Longman Paul, 1996.
- Miller, Raymond. "New Zealand First," in *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies*. Hans-Georg Betz and Stefan Immerfall, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998.
- Move to New Zealand. "Population Information" Webpage. Online. www.movetonz.org/new-zealand-population.html. Accessed March 2009.
- Peters, Rt. Hon. Winston. "Our Immigration Crisis — And Why New Zealand First Is the Only Party that Can Fix It." Address at a public meeting in Auckland Central, Tuesday, September 13, 2005. Online. www.nzfirst.org.nz. Accessed April 2009.
- Scoop Independent News. "New Zealand's First Tough New Immigration Policy." May 25, 2005. Online. www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0505/S00701.htm. Accessed April 2009.
- Spoonley, Paul and Andrew Trlin. "Immigration, Immigrants and the Media: Making Sense of Multicultural New Zealand." Massey University New Settlers Programme Paper. Published 2004. Online. newsettlers.massey.ac.nz/publications_pdfs. Accessed March 2009.
- Spoonley, Paul, Cluny Macpherson, and David Pearson. *Tangata Tangata: The Changing Ethnic Contours of New Zealand*. Victoria, Australia: Thompson Dunmore Press, 2004.
- Winkelmann, Liliana and Rainer Winkelmann. "Immigrants in New Zealand: A Study of their Labour Market Outcomes." Department of Labour Occasional Paper Series. June 1998. Online. dol.govt.nz/PDFs/op1998.pdf. Accessed March 2009.
- Winkelmann, Rainer. "Immigration: The New Zealand Experience." Discussion Paper Issued for the Institute for the Study of Labor. October 1999. Online. papers.ssrn.com. Accessed March 2009.