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DETAILED LITERATURE REVIEW

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**Terry McGrath, Andrew Butcher,
John Pickering and Hilary Smith**

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INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON MIGRATION

From a broad perspective, there is extensive international literature on multiculturalism and ethnically diverse societies.[1] Much of this literature centres on issues of social and political inclusion of indigenous and immigrant groups.[2]

INTEGRATION

There are various themes that have emerged in the literature around the 'engagement' of migrant communities into a host society. The term 'engagement' itself is rarely used; however, partly synonymous terms provide a similar outlook. The closest term in the literature to 'engagement' is integration. Integration can be seen in some ways as an older variant of the social cohesion focus. It has been interpreted in different ways according to both historical period and location; it includes assimilation, notions of a melting pot and various forms of cultural pluralism. In current usage, integration is seen to be distinct from the older discourses of assimilation or pluralism.

Assimilation, which insisted that new migrants adopt the dominant cultural norms of the host society, is now a discredited process. This approach was a cornerstone of white settler colonisation in the 19th and 20th centuries in places like New Zealand, Australia and Canada.

The 'melting pot' image, by contrast, was invoked to describe a different process whereby migrants from many backgrounds and sources actively participated in the formation of the new nation to produce a 'new' culturally and ethnically homogeneous society. This notion of a melting pot was most commonly used in the USA through the 20th century, and it still has some resonance and usage.

Cultural pluralism, which is a more recent term, reflects the recognition that heterogeneity is a permanent phenomenon in societies. It assumes that different social groups influence each other reciprocally, and that together they create the national space in which all migrants are citizens with equal rights and civic unity is promoted but not at the expense of ethnic diversity. This has become a notion that has gained currency in settlement societies. It takes a variety of versions, from 'soft' to 'hard', especially in countries such as Canada which have had multiculturalism as an official policy since the 1970s.

There are, however, problems with the term 'integration' which deserve coverage here. From a British perspective, Adrian Favell notes that 'integration' has become something of an all-purpose rubric: "a vague yet technical sounding term that encompasses a range of positions from more assimilatory policies through to more openly multicultural ones."[3] While 'integration' conceives and conceptualises practical steps in a long process of migration settlement, it does so by projecting both social change and continuity between the past and some idealised end-point. Given that 'integration' covers a multitude of measures, from legal protection to multicultural education, it aims for "the extremely difficult and improbable... construction of a successful, well-functioning, multi-cultural or multi-racial society".[4]

However, integration also serves a further, more political, purpose: it provides a moderate ground upon which pragmatic multicultural policies can be promoted. Integration is a term that operates in the context of an apparently coherent social unit, the nation-state: "a unified, bounded entity which alone can encompass and hold together the diversity and divisions of people sharing this same territory".[5]

From a Canadian perspective, Peter Li critiques the discourse of integration, arguing that its subtext, which is effectively "becoming similar to Canadians", is more akin to assimilation. Thus, immigrants are 'integrated' when they earn as much as native-born Canadians, adopt the English or French language, move away from ethnically concentrated immigrant enclaves, and participate in the social and political activities of mainstream society.[6] Furthermore,

> [d]espite the policy objective of defining integration as a two-way street that requires accommodation on the part of both immigrants and Canadian society, the integration discourse suggests that it is immigrants and not Canadian society and its institutions that are required to change.[7]

In both Australia and Canada, and in the literature generally, 'integration' is more often understood as a state (less frequently as a process), which may be viewed as a corollary to social exclusion. However, 'integration' raises the question of integrating into or with what? Even if it implies reciprocity, the mistake is to assume only two diametrically opposed 'cultures' are involved where the host society and 'immigrants' (e.g. Asian, Pacific peoples) are somehow homogeneous. "In short, integrating 'into something' then, implies some stable form of society where hegemonic cultures are not contested by the political, economic, social and cultural participation of 'ethnic minorities' themselves".[8]

However, some commentators argue that integration can operate as a policy focus. Weiner[9] argues that successful integration of migrants into the economy, culture, social system and polity of a host culture involves the following:

- When the host society regards the migrants as permanent members of the society by readily granting citizenship, and the migrants in turn readily accept citizenship and a new identity;

- When the children of the migrants are at birth considered natives and provided with the same educational opportunities given to the children of the native born;

- When the characteristics of the migrants are particularly suitable for mobility within the host country's labour market;

- When the host economy is expanding, thereby providing opportunities for migrants as well as reducing competition between migrants and those of the host society;

- When the structure of the labour market provides opportunities for migrants who seek occupational mobility;

- When the host society does not denigrate the culture and values of the immigrant community;

- When the migrant stream is sufficiently diversified, or the numbers from one source are not so large and continuous as to enable migrants to build permanent self-contained enclaves where migrants can employ one another, speak the same language, and insulate themselves from the larger society;

- When the influx of migrants and refugees is regarded by the host society as controllable; and

- When the state does not require or promote (although it may permit) separateness in schools, employment or housing.

NEW ZEALAND MIGRATION LITERATURE

Health

There has been a significant amount of literature devoted to the mental health of immigrants and refugees.[10] As Pernice and Brook note, depressive and anxiety symptoms have been observed in all voluntary immigrant groups in immigrant minorities in England, in the British immigrants to Australia, and in the Pacific Island immigrants to New Zealand.[11] Pernice and Brook's research finds that whilst Indochinese refugees experience significantly more anxiety and depression than British immigrants, the differences are quite minor from Pacific Island immigrants. Further, Pernice and Brook[12] find that the strongest predictors of the symptoms of experiencing discrimination in New Zealand are not having close friends, being unemployed and spending most of one's time with one's own ethnic group.

Abbott notes that feelings of being discriminated against, inadequate language skills and conflicts concerning the perceived moral standards of New Zealand are most frequently noted as post-migration cultural stressors, with financial, cultural and loneliness/boredom stressors most closely linked to increased rates of mental disorder.[13] Abbott further notes that there are several factors which have been most strongly and consistently linked to elevated rates of mental disorder amongst migrant and refugee populations,[14] including unemployment and under-employment, a drop in socio-economic status, and negative public attitudes towards, and rejection of, immigrants and refugees generally and/or some groups specifically.[15] Amongst refugees in particular, prejudice and discrimination are important post-migration stressors.[16]

Employment

Research has often examined discrimination against migrants with particular regard to the labour market.[17] There are few studies that quantitatively research migrant experiences in New Zealand. By contrast, qualitative reports of experiences or perceptions of discrimination by migrants are common both in New Zealand and overseas.[18]

Research by the Department of Internal Affairs finds that immigrants, particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds, face formidable barriers in gaining employment in New Zealand.[19] In the research, these barriers include mis-information and misunderstanding, denial of opportunities, a lack of recognition of overseas qualifications, an inability to access the job market, and an inability to gain the training or experience necessary to meet the required standards to meet their trade or position. For many, this means accepting positions with less responsibility or remuneration than their education or experience warrants. However, this research also finds that an increased length of residence in New Zealand and a greater competence in English favourably advantage migrants in finding employment that either partly or fully makes use of their qualifications.

Research has also been done on self-employment amongst migrants (who are more likely to be self-employed than non-migrants), particularly amongst Chinese migrants.[20] This research shows that Chinese migrants have great difficulty in setting up businesses in New Zealand for a variety of reasons, including lack of information about business investment and procedures, structural barriers to employment, including an inability to speak English, and discrimination by members of the host society, in addition to non-recognition of overseas qualifications and previous work experience. Such barriers can drive Chinese migrants into self-employment, which therefore becomes a matter of consequence rather than choice.

Other research has been undertaken on company attitudes and policies toward immigrant linguistic and cultural skills,[21] which identifies the three main factors that influence company employment policies and practices concerning the use of linguistic and cultural skills of NESB (non-english speaking background) immigrant employees: the kind of activity involved, the customer base, and attitudes to immigration.

Recognised and appropriate qualifications, particularly if they are from New Zealand, are seen by migrants to be a major factor in getting employment in New Zealand. Previous research has shown that even if the language barrier is overcome in accessing employment, migrants may suffer a loss of status when the qualifications and previous work experience that they have gained in their countries of origin are not recognised by potential employers in New Zealand.[22] International research has shown that under-employment is much more prevalent amongst NESB migrants than amongst English-speaking background migrants.[23]

In research on skilled migrants in New Zealand, the New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS)[24] finds that amongst English-speaking migrants (ESM) and migrants who have been in New Zealand from zero to two years with university qualifications, those from the UK/Ireland have the highest overall labour force participation rates, whereas those from North East Asia have the lowest. However, it also finds that the majority of non-English speaking migrants (NESM)[25] have no or school-only qualifications (87 percent each of males and females). NESM also have lower employment and labour force participation rates than ESM and the New Zealand-born population. Labour force participation (LFP) and employment rates are generally lowest for migrants who have been in New Zealand for zero to two years and females had lower LFP than males. Furthermore, while labour force status and employment status are generally higher for those who have been in New Zealand for longer than two years, they do not show the steady increase with length of time that is present for ESM. Similarly, unemployment rates for NESM males are higher than for the New Zealand-born population and do not show the decrease with length of time in New Zealand that is present with ESM.

Research has also finds that there are high levels of unemployment and particularly under-employment amongst migrants (that is, migrants being unable to find work in their area of expertise or working in a job whose status is less than their prior educational and employment achievements). This can lead to considerable personal frustration and family stress[26] and delay the settlement process in New Zealand.[27]

Language

There is no formal language policy in Aotearoa New Zealand, although a need has been identified since the 1970s[28] and there have been constant calls by language professionals since that time. A two-part discussion document, *Aotearoa*, was released in June 1992, which set out six ranked priority areas[29]: revitalisation of the Māori language, second-chance adult literacy, children's English as a Second Language (ESL) and first language maintenance, adult ESL, national capabilities in international languages, and provision in services other than English. It was proposed that the priorities be addressed by action plans in government departments, but these did not eventuate. Without a formal language policy, decisions on language issues continue to be made on an ad hoc basis.

There are two areas where language is important for immigrant communities: English language acquisition and language maintenance. The six goals in the *New Zealand Immigration Settlement Strategy*[30] include one aiming at confidence in English and another aiming at "a sustainable community identity". The primary focus on English is confirmed in the introduction to settlement programmes funded by NZIS.[31] However, for many communities language is an important part of their identity, so first language maintenance is an important part of sustainable community identity. The idea of language as a core value of culture is outlined in Smolicz's[32] seminal work, in which he states that a culture which has language as a core value will be more likely to maintain the first language and that failure to maintain the language will result in the loss of other aspects of the culture.[33]

A number of immigrant groups in Aotearoa New Zealand have reflected this importance for their communities in starting schools for language maintenance, outlined in Shameem's[34] report into community language teaching in Auckland. Schools for the languages of Asian communities include Bengali, Chinese (unspecified), Gujarati, Hindi, Korean, Singhalese, Tamil and Thai. In addition, Arabic and Urdu are being taught as religious languages for Muslim speakers with a number of Asian and other first languages.

Socio-linguistic studies with immigrant groups have been undertaken since the late 1980s at Victoria University, investigating the role of attitudes into language maintenance and the shift of minority groups in the Wellington area. Studies with Asian communities include Roberts'[35] study of the Cantonese community, which finds some support for Chinese, Shameem's[36] study with the Indo-Fijian community, which finds positive attitudes to Fiji Hindi by mothers and teenagers, and Smith's[37] research with the Lao refugee community, which finds positive attitudes towards the Lao language.

A question on language was introduced into the New Zealand Census in 1996, which enabled language to be included in social policy analyses. The Ministry of Social Development's *Social Report 2004*[38] uses "language retention", defined as the proportion of people who can speak the first language (other than English or Māori) of their identified ethnicity, as one of three indicators of cultural identity. The report states that cultural identity "gives people feelings of belonging and security", and has been linked with positive outcomes for health and education.[39] The main findings are that those born in New Zealand are less likely to speak the first language of their

group than those born overseas, and that younger people are less likely than older people to be able to hold an everyday conversation in the language. The report includes data from 15 immigrant groups: five each from the Pacific, Asia and Europe.

A comparison of these same groups is reported in recent analysis by Statistics New Zealand's *Concerning Language*,[40] which also includes ability in English. Asian people in the groups analysed were less likely to speak English and more likely to speak their first language than the other groups analysed.

The other main issue for immigrant communities is English language acquisition, and a number of studies of immigrant settlement in Aotearoa New Zealand have included this in their analysis. Qualitative studies show that NESB migrants themselves recognise language as a key element in successful integration.[41]

A number of studies have identified English language proficiency as a factor in determining social and economic settlement outcomes for migrants.[42] Studies have demonstrated a correlation between English proficiency and income earnings and labour market status.[43] Winkelman and Winkelman's study of labour market outcomes for immigrants in New Zealand includes an analysis of English language proficiency in the 1996 Census.[44] They conclude that a lack of English proficiency is "a long-term aspect" for Pacific Island and Northeast Asian immigrants.[45]

Fletcher's review of Australian, United States and Canadian literature finds "considerable consistency" in the studies, in that migrants with higher proficiency in the language have higher rates of labour force participation, and that high levels of proficiency are more important for highly skilled migrants. He also suggests that accent may cause discrimination by employers, because some studies have reported that those who speak only English do better than those who speak other languages.[46]

Ho, Cheung, Bedford and Leung's report on the settlement assistance needs of recent migrants stresses the individual nature of English language needs. They find that the language services needs of NESB migrants have not been met, with long waiting lists for English language courses by formal and community-based providers, and recommend that funding be increased.[47] They also point out that the length of time it takes to acquire adequate proficiency in the new language is often overlooked by both the migrants themselves and members of the host society, and they recommend that information be provided so that migrants have realistic expectations (and that host community members be encouraged to be more understanding and tolerant).

Henderson's study of policy issues for skilled Chinese immigrants to New Zealand includes a detailed description of the language policies and legislation affecting the immigration process itself: the "ongoing tinkering" she describes as both a cause and a reflection of national attitudes to immigration and ethnicity.[48] She examines pre-migration and post-migration factors associated with language acquisition, noting:

> *One factor stands out for the achievement of native-like fluency and sociolinguistic competence in the dominant language: positive contact with members of the speech community.*[49]

She finds that skilled migrants who meet the English language requirement are sometimes still unable to find suitable employment, and that failure to find employment affects their further English acquisition, social participation and socio-economic integration.[50] She identifies an "accent ceiling", or a reluctance to employ migrants who speak English with an accent, especially an Asian accent.

NZIS's literature review on refugee resettlement issues focuses on the provision of English language tuition, noting the difficulties consistently identified in studies.[51] The final *Refugee Voices* report stresses that ability with English impacts on all areas of settlement, and identifies particular issues for women caring for children at home, but cautions against a "one size fits all approach" to the provision of English language classes.[52]

Accessing health-care and other social services

Research by Holt et al notes that for many migrants, language is the "single most formidable barrier" in accessing goods and services, particularly health-care.[53] They note that immigrants are unaware of many of the medical benefits that are available to them, which may be related to their lack of general English language competency.

> [O]ne can only speculate about the possible side-effects of such gaps in healthcare system knowledge. At the very least, however, they clearly point to the likelihood of significant numbers of immigrants going without a range of useful to perhaps vital services that are actually free and possibly endangering their own health or the health of their families, all due essentially to undue barriers and breakdowns in the dissemination of basic information.[54]

There has been extensive research in New Zealand on the mental health needs of migrants and refugees.[55] Abbott observes that inadequate service provision and poor access to health, language education, social services and employment, particularly for refugees, have long been a concern in New Zealand.[56] Furthermore, language proficiency is highly significant in securing employment and enabling new settlers to become active participants in the host society.[57]

Conclusions from the literature in this area also demonstrate that settlement difficulties and initial disadvantage are greater for older migrants than for younger adult migrants and that there are additional problems facing aged migrants.[58] Whilst the relationship between age, ageing and migration was not a strong focus of this study, or indeed a prevalent finding, it nevertheless remains an under-researched area in New Zealand.[59]

REFUGEE ISSUES IN NEW ZEALAND

Background

Refugees have been accepted in Aotearoa New Zealand since 1944, with a higher proportion of 'at risk' refugees such as women at risk or the elderly than other countries.[60] The main Asian groups have been Chinese from Hong Kong and Indonesia from 1962 to 1971, Asian Ugandans 1972 to 1973 and Indochinese from 1975 to 2000.[61]

Refugees are accepted in three ways:[62]

- *Quota* – mandated overseas by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in the categories of 'protection', 'women-at-risk', or 'medical/disabled'. This group has been found to need higher levels of service provision;

- *Convention* – former asylum seekers who have been recognised in New Zealand; and

- *Family reunification* – sponsored by refugee family members living in New Zealand.

Asian refugee groups were the highest quota refugee groups in the 15 years from 1980, and mainly included the Indochinese countries of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia. In terms of the number of applications approved for Asian countries since 1997, the highest group was from Sri Lanka (447), followed by China (66), India (42), Myanmar/Burma (29), Cambodia (19), Thailand (16), Viet Nam (13), Bangladesh (6), Mongolia (4), Laos and Nepal (3), and Brunei, North Korea and South Korea (1).

The changes in refugee flows in response to the international situation mean that research on refugee issues tends to focus on particular groups.[63] This is supplemented by personal accounts such as those of Jansen[64] and Kanal and Jansen.[65] The strongly emotional aspect of the refugee experience is reflected in the poems that are presented in conjunction with the academic literature, such as those in Abbott,[66] or NZIS's *Refugee Voices*.[67]

Recent research on refugee issues has included a comprehensive literature review for NZIS by Gray and Elliot,[68] followed by a large research project on refugee resettlement, *Refugee Voices*, involving interviews and focus groups.[69] A further summary of resettlement issues in New Zealand has been prepared for the Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy,[70] and information needs of refugees and new migrants have been researched for the Christchurch City Council.[71]

Issues specific to refugee migrants

While many of the factors affecting settlement are the same for refugees as other migrants, there are some issues specific to refugees:

- **Background of trauma and grief**
  Refugees are likely to have experienced danger, upheaval, dislocation from family members, overcrowded camps and perhaps torture, which may lead to mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder in Aotearoa New Zealand;[72]

- **Poor physical health status**
  A number of health issues have been identified in refugee groups,[73] and relate to low levels of health-care in their country of origin and country of first asylum;[74]

- **Disrupted education**
  Many refugees have not completed schooling, or have had poor-quality schooling such as in refugee camps while awaiting resettlement;[75]

- **Little background documentation**
  The nature of their departure from their homelands means that refugees may not have documentation of qualifications or employment, which affects their employment opportunities;[76]

- **Lack of financial resources**
  The nature of refugee backgrounds means that refugees have often left all or most of their financial resources in their home countries. They may therefore prioritise employment above other resettlement concerns such as English language learning,[77] but obtaining work is extremely difficult for refugees; and[78]

- **Discrimination**
  Discrimination towards refugees has been identified by NZIS,[79] and the J R McKenzie Trust[80] finds "punitive attitudes" by Work and Income staff. These have probably been exacerbated in recent times by media coverage such as from the leader of the New Zealand First party Winston Peters' claim of refugees bringing in families who "bludge off taxpayers",[81] and the long-running Ahmed Zaoui case.

Issues specific to Asian refugee migrants

- **Confusion between them and other migrants**
  e.g. business migrants, international students – possibly from their home country (e.g. Viet Nam).

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