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Asian Community Needs and Participation in the New Zealand Local Democracy

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Master of Resource and Environmental Planning

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Abstract

The increased cultural diversity of the New Zealand population has generated challenges for local government. Ethnic groups have different needs and expectations of the services local government provides. Section 37K of the Local Government Act (1974) states that local government has an important role in providing for the wellbeing of local communities. As local communities today increasingly consist of diverse ethnic groups, local government has the challenge of meeting community needs in more difficult social, economic and cultural areas. As well, the local government also has responsibilities to provide avenues to accommodate the input of these increasingly diverse groups.

The research presented in this dissertation examines (1) whether the needs of the Asian community are being met, and (2) what is the pattern of Asian participation in the local government democracy. Palmerston North City Council was used as a case study. A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect information from the resident Asian population. The findings of the research indicate that the majority of Asians felt their needs were being met. Though the overall assessment of the Council's services was positive, some people made suggestions on possible ways that the Council should improve its services to the Asian community. These suggestions include promoting cultural awareness, encouraging cultural activities, providing more English language classes and enhancing employment opportunities for new migrants.

The research also showed that the number of Asian people participating in the Council decision making processes is low. The survey results indicated that this is due to limited understanding of the participation process and lack of awareness of the opportunities the citizens have for participating in local affairs.

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
LIST OF FIGURES	V
LIST OF TABLES	VI
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 PLANNING AND MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES	1
1.2 MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN NEW ZEALAND	2
1.3 DISSERTATION OBJECTIVES	3
1.4 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE	3
1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	5
1.5.1 <i>Conducting the Survey</i>	5
1.5.2 <i>Profile of Respondents</i>	5
1.5.3 <i>Questionnaire Format</i>	6
1.5.4 <i>Statistical Analysis of the Survey Data</i>	6
CHAPTER TWO	8
RACE AND THE PLANNING SYSTEM	8
2.1 CONCEPT OF RACE	8
2.2 CONCEPT OF ETHNICITY	9
2.3 CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURALISM	9
2.4 PROBLEMS OF RACE IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM	10
2.5 ADVOCACY AND PLURALISTIC PLANNING	11
2.6 HOLISTIC PLANNING APPROACH	13
2.7 CONCLUSION	15
CHAPTER THREE	16
THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT	16
3.1 AN OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT	16

3.2	PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT	17
3.3	EFFECTIVE SERVICES TO COMMUNITY NEEDS	18
3.4	THE GOVERNANCE ROLE	19
3.4.1	<i>Councils and Chief Executives</i>	20
3.4.2	<i>Elected Members</i>	20
3.4.3	<i>Council Committees</i>	21
3.4.4	<i>Community Boards</i>	21
3.5	CHANGING ROLES.....	23
3.6	THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY	24
3.7	CONCLUSION	26
CHAPTER FOUR	27
DEMOCRACY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT	27
4.1	REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY	27
4.2	LIMITATIONS OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY	29
4.3	PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY	29
4.4	PARTICIPATORY PROCESS.....	30
4.5	LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION	31
4.6	BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION	32
4.7	REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN NEW ZEALAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	33
4.7.1	<i>Voting for Representatives</i>	33
4.7.2	<i>Ward Representation</i>	34
4.8	PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY IN NEW ZEALAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.....	35
4.8.1	<i>Annual Plan Process</i>	35
4.8.2	<i>Consultation</i>	36
4.9	ETHNIC MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEMOCRACY.....	37
4.10	CONCLUSION	37
CHAPTER FIVE	38
HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF IMMIGRATION IN NEW ZEALAND	38
5.1	HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION	38
5.1.1	<i>White New Zealand Policy</i>	39
5.1.2	<i>The Post World War II Period (1940 to 1970)</i>	40
5.1.3	<i>New Era in New Zealand's Immigration Policy (1970 onwards)</i>	41
5.1.4	<i>Immigration Patterns in the 1980s</i>	42
5.2	HISTORY OF ASIAN IMMIGRATION	43
5.2.1	<i>Asian Migration in the early 1860s</i>	43

5.2.2	<i>Early Twentieth Century</i>	43
5.2.3	<i>After the Second World War</i>	44
5.2.4	<i>Asian New Zealanders 1986-1996</i>	44
5.3	CONCLUSION	47
CHAPTER SIX		48
ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS		48
6.1	PROFILE OF ASIANS IN PALMERSTON NORTH	48
6.1.1	<i>Composition of Ethnic Population in Palmerston North, 1986-1996</i>	48
6.1.2	<i>Age Sex Structure of Asian Population in Palmerston North in 1996</i>	49
6.1.3	<i>Income Distribution of Palmerston North Population in 1996</i>	51
6.1.4	<i>Employment Status of Asian Population in Palmerston North in 1996</i>	51
6.1.5	<i>Distribution of Asian Population by Ward in Palmerston North in 1996</i>	52
6.2	PROFILE OF ASIAN SURVEY RESPONDENTS	54
6.2.1	<i>Ethnicity of the Respondents</i>	54
6.2.2	<i>Country of Origin of the Respondents</i>	55
6.2.3	<i>Age Sex Structure of the Respondents</i>	56
6.2.4	<i>Income of the Respondents</i>	57
6.2.5	<i>Employment Status of the Respondents</i>	58
6.2.6	<i>Distribution of the Respondents by Ward</i>	58
6.2.7	<i>Years Living in New Zealand of the Respondents</i>	59
6.2.8	<i>Reasons Why the Respondents Came to New Zealand</i>	60
6.3	RESEARCH FINDINGS	61
6.3.1	<i>Consider your family needs. How important are the following Council services/amenities to you and your family?</i>	61
6.3.2	<i>Are there any other services/amenities that are provided by the Council that you think are important?</i>	62
6.3.3	<i>How well do you think the Council provides the above services/amenities?</i>	62
6.3.4	<i>Do you think the Council does a good job of meeting the needs of the whole community?</i>	63
6.3.5	<i>Do you think the Council does a good job of meeting the needs of the Asian community?</i>	64
6.3.6	<i>Do you feel there are any areas in which the Council could improve its services/amenities to the Asian community?</i>	65
6.3.7	<i>Have you, as an individual or as a member of a group, ever approached the Council for help in a particular area?</i>	67
6.3.8	<i>Have you taken part in any of the public participation activities?</i>	68
6.3.9	<i>Did you vote in the recent Council election?</i>	69

6.4 CONCLUSION	71
CHAPTER SEVEN	73
CONCLUSION.....	73
7.1 NEEDS OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITY	74
7.2 ASIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEMOCRACY	75
7.2.1 <i>Participatory Process</i>	75
7.2.2 <i>Voting</i>	76
7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	76
APPENDIX A.....	78
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE.....	78
APPENDIX B.....	84
THE PURPOSES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.....	84
APPENDIX C.....	85
GUIDELINES ON MAKING SUBMISSIONS	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY	87

List of Figures

FIGURE 1.1 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	4
FIGURE 3.1 HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKS.....	23
FIGURE 4.1 A LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	32
FIGURE 5.1 MAIN GROUPS OF THE NEW ZEALAND ETHNIC SECTOR, 1996	46
FIGURE 5.2 BIRTHPLACE OF PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS, 1996	47
FIGURE 6.1 ASIAN AND NON-ASIAN BY AGE-SEX COHORT IN PALMERSTON NORTH, 1996	50
FIGURE 6.2 PALMERSTON NORTH CITY WARD BOUNDARIES.....	53
FIGURE 6.3 PALMERSTON NORTH ASIAN POPULATION BY WARD, 1996.....	54
FIGURE 6.4 ETHNICITY OF RESPONDENTS.....	55
FIGURE 6.5 DISTRIBUTION OF ASIAN RESPONDENTS BY WARD	59
FIGURE 6.6 YEARS LIVING IN NEW ZEALAND	60
FIGURE 6.7 HOW WELL DOES THE COUNCIL PROVIDE SERVICES/AMENITIES?	63

List of Tables

TABLE 6.1 COMPARISON OF 1986 ETHNIC GROUP AND 1996 ETHNICITY FOR PALMERSTON NORTH AND NEW ZEALAND	49
TABLE 6.2 AGE SEX COHORT STRUCTURE BY ETHNICITY IN PALMERSTON NORTH, 1996.....	50
TABLE 6.3 INCOME STRUCTURE OF THE PALMERSTON NORTH POPULATION, 1996	51
TABLE 6.4 EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY ETHNICITY FOR PALMERSTON NORTH, 1996.....	52
TABLE 6.5 REGIONS OF PREVIOUS NATIONALITY AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	56
TABLE 6.6 AGE OF RESPONDENTS.....	56
TABLE 6.7 INCOME OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX.....	57
TABLE 6.8 EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS.....	58
TABLE 6.9 REASONS FOR COMING TO NEW ZEALAND	61
TABLE 6.10 PREFERENCE OF SERVICES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS	62
TABLE 6.11 REASONS GIVEN BY RESPONDENTS	64
TABLE 6.12 SUMMARY OF REASONS GIVEN BY RESPONDENTS	65
TABLE 6.13 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVE OF SERVICES TO THE ASIAN COMMUNITY	66
TABLE 6.14 RESPONDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS COUNCIL OFFICERS	68
TABLE 6.15 LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES STATED BY RESPONDENTS.....	68
TABLE 6.16 REASONS FOR NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE RECENT COUNCIL ELECTION	70

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Planning and Multicultural Communities

Burayidi (2000) suggests that “universalism” is the dominant epistemology on which current planning is based. The universalist approach is dependent upon instrumental rationality and a hierarchical social structure. Planning practices based on this perspective often fail to meet the needs of multicultural communities where individual ethnic minority groups may have substantially different worldviews from that of the dominant culture. The universalist approach tends to force all new comers to conform to the dominant culture. In New Zealand (as in many other nations) the universalist approach has come under increased scrutiny, particularly in light of increasing rates of ethnically diverse immigration.

Planning practitioners operating in the universalist planning approach assume responsibilities for a variety of issues that affect communities. These include developing policies to guide decision making in areas such as land use, urban design, environmental protection and historic preservation. James (2000) argues that in planning for multicultural communities, planning practitioners should not only place emphasis on creating policy frameworks for such physical development, but also on incorporating social development. This is equally important in planning for diverse communities.

Understanding the characteristics of multicultural communities, particularly to determine whether planning policy is responsive to their respective needs, has only recently been of concern to planning practitioners. For planning to be an effective instrument of public policy for multicultural communities, planners need to have a better understanding of how to apply their policy to a wide range of different cultural groups. It is also important that they understand these communities and their demographic, cultural and historical backgrounds. Such information allows planners to gain better insight into the needs of their communities.

Simply gaining insight into ethnic minorities may not be enough. It has been suggested that planners should actively engage community members of ethnic minorities in the

planning decision making process (Arnstein, 1969). Providing for citizen participation is one means of engaging such groups in the planning process. By doing so, planners can contribute significantly towards ensuring that effective planning is equated with embracing the whole community.

1.2 Multicultural Communities in New Zealand

The 1987 review of immigration policies led to a significant change in the focus of New Zealand's immigration policy. Migrant selection according to source country preference was replaced with a focus on recruitment based on the potential for migrants to contribute skills, knowledge or capital to New Zealand (Department of Internal Affairs, 1999). Thus, during the early and mid 1990s, New Zealand became accessible to immigrants from a wider range of countries. This has resulted in a rapid growth in the size and diversity of the ethnic population in New Zealand.

For many immigrants, the main purpose of coming to New Zealand is an improved quality of life and environment, better standard of living and opportunities for their children (Department of Internal Affairs, 1996). However, many of them, particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds often face problems trying to integrate into New Zealand society. According to the Department of Internal Affairs, these problems include:

- Lack of information about their rights and obligations as New Zealand residents;
- Difficulties finding employment suited to their qualification and experience;
- Lack of English language skills, that substantially reduce their access to public services and restrict their ability to participate in New Zealand society;
- Lack of understanding of government processes, particularly at the local government and community level; and
- Racial discrimination.

Problems faced by immigrants and ethnic minorities are not necessarily regarded as planning issues, but rather racial issues. However problems relating to immigration and settlement policy, unemployment, racial discrimination or language occur at the local level, and therefore, at least in part, need to be addressed by planning practitioners. Thomas (1995) argues that there is an interrelationship between public policy in

general and planning in particular, at both national and local levels. It is therefore critical that planners should examine the way that the planning system is, or might be, influenced by different cultural communities.

1.3 Dissertation Objectives

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how well the Palmerston North planning system is able to respond to the needs of the resident Asian minority groups.

The key questions addressed by this dissertation are:

- Do the services provided by the Palmerston North City Council meet the needs of the Asian community?
- What is the pattern of Asian involvement in the local government decision making process?

1.4 Dissertation Structure

The dissertation contains seven chapters including this introductory chapter. Figure 1.1 outlines the structure of the dissertation and the approach that has been used for the research. Chapter Two includes a literature review on the concepts of “race”, “ethnicity” and “multiculturalism”, and looks at how these concepts are incorporated into the planning system. Chapter Three sets out the roles of local government in service delivery, governance as well as the potential role in fostering and contributing to the development of a multicultural community. Following this, Chapter Four focuses on theories of participatory and representative democracy and the ways that local government provides avenues for the views of the different ethnic communities to be taken into account.

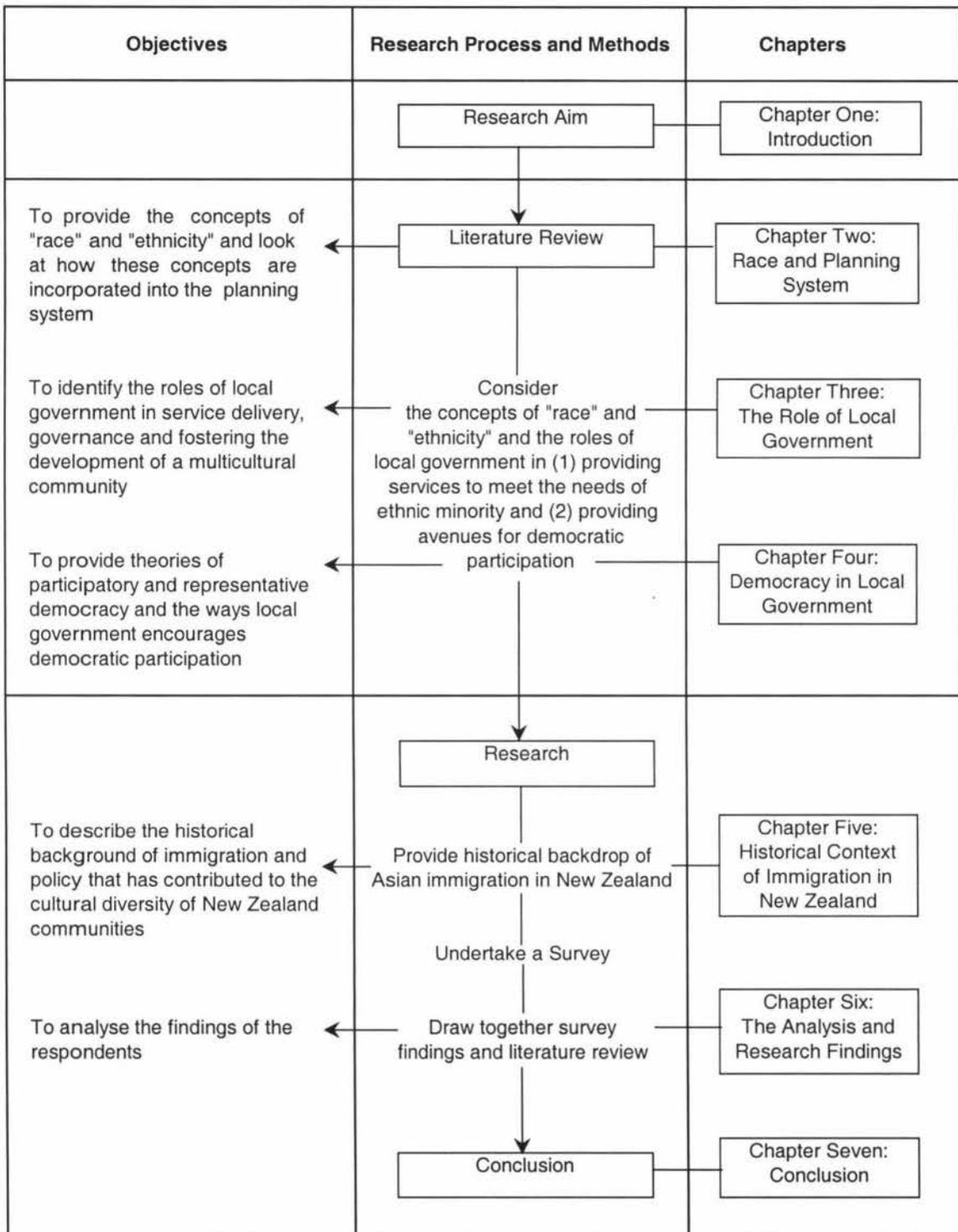


Figure 1.1 Dissertation Structure and Research Methodology

Chapter Five describes the historical background of immigration and the government policy that has contributed to the cultural diversity of New Zealand communities. Chapter Six analyses the survey undertaken to determine the views of Asians living in Palmerston North. The final chapter draws together the conclusions of the research. It provides a discussion on how local government could improve specific services to meet the needs of ethnic minorities. Recommendations on how to encourage more participation in local democracy among ethnic communities are also made.

1.5 Research Methodology

A survey on “Asian community needs and interaction with Palmerston North City Council” (see Appendix A) was carried out to elicit information from the Asian population regarding the services and facilities provided by the local authority. In particular, the survey examines whether these facilities and services are responsive to the needs of the Asian community. As well, the survey sought to find the pattern of the Asian participation in the local democracy. Participation includes voting in the local government election, making submissions and participating in consultation activities.

1.5.1 Conducting the Survey

A face-to-face survey (questionnaire) was used to collect data from resident Palmerston North Asians. The survey was conducted in different locations throughout Palmerston North such as the public library, grocery stores, weekend morning markets, restaurants and respondents’ homes. In total seventy Asians took part in the survey. However the data from only 64 respondents could be used in the analysis, as four of the respondents were not New Zealand permanent residents or citizens, and another two respondents had been living in Palmerston North for less than a month. The responses of these people were considered to be uninformed and therefore not reflective of the resident Asian population.

1.5.2 Profile of Respondents

The Asian community was selected for the case study as it is considered a large ethnic minority group in Palmerston North, the second largest after Maori. Different Asian ethnic groups that completed the survey included Chinese, Taiwanese, Indian, Sri

Lankan, Korean, Japanese, Thai, Malaysian, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Filipino. Asian respondents were selected as sample representatives from six different local government wards.

The ability of the Asian respondents to answer the questionnaire varied enormously depending on their grasp of English. Sri Lankans, Indians, and Filipinos had a very high degree of fluency and also the Chinese from Malaysia. Other Asian groups tended to be less fluent and had some difficulties filling in the questionnaires. This undoubtedly introduced some bias into the results. It should also be noted that the researcher assisted by explaining the questions in some cases. In other cases, children (predominantly teenagers) in the respondent's family, fluent in both their ethnic mother tongue and English, assisted as interpreters in asking and answering the survey questions.

1.5.3 Questionnaire Format

It was considered important to keep the questionnaire to a manageable length and to use simple English. The questionnaire contains two parts. Part One includes nine questions, most of which could be answered by tick boxes. Several questions are open-ended, and some ask for comments and suggestions. Many respondents provided thoughtful comments about both positive and negative aspects of their experiences. Part Two of the questionnaire contains questions that provide information on the demographic profile of the respondents. This includes their age, gender, length of time in New Zealand, employment status, income, country of origin, reasons for coming to New Zealand and their address.

1.5.4 Statistical Analysis of the Survey Data

The questionnaires were analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) statistical analysis software. The software allows data to be analysed in a number of ways. This research used two methods for analysing the responses contained in the 64 questionnaires: descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (chi-square cross-tabulation).

The analysis of the survey results (in Chapter Six) provides descriptive statistics that describe and summarise the characteristics of the Palmerston North Asian community's experiences with regard to local government. Frequency descriptions were also used, and are presented in the form of tables and bar charts.

The inferential statistical analysis conducted in this research uses the chi-square test. This test is used to determine if the relationship between two variables is strong. Responses are cross-tabulated and the "observed" responses compared with the "expected" responses. In turn, the likelihood of a result being consistently obtained is calculated. For instance, by crossing the question "Did you vote in the recent Council election?" with "How long have you been living in New Zealand?" it is possible to determine whether those who have lived in New Zealand longer participate more in the election. The results were interpreted in comparison with a level of statistical significance. If $p < 0.05$, for example, then it is said that there is less than a 5 percent chance of the relationship occurring by chance. Hence, the results from the sample population should reflect patterns in the wider population.

Chapter Two

Race and the Planning System

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the cultural and racial diversity of citizens has an impact on the planning process. The chapter first explores the concepts of “race”, “ethnicity” and “multiculturalism” and looks at how these concepts are incorporated into the planning system. Then the chapter focuses on the international context, discussing problems of racial discrimination in planning. Particular attention is paid to the ignorance of the planning fraternity in dealing with issues involving ethnic minorities. Davidoff’s (1965) advocacy and pluralist planning approaches are introduced. These represent a shift from physical development planning to address social and economic issues confronting the disadvantaged and the minority groups. In the last section, the holistic planning approach is proposed and advocated as a means of dealing with cultural diversity at a community level.

2.1 Concept of Race

The definition of “race” is problematical both sociologically and politically. A primary problem is that “race” is essentially an arbitrary social classification. Spoonley (1995) notes that the concept of “race” derives from a period of colonial expansion where classifying people according to their appearance and perceived variations in intellect and abilities was common place. From this basis, various “races” were ranked according to their superiority and inferiority. For example, Europeans were held to be superior to other races. The remaining races were ranked in accordance with how they fared in comparison with Europeans.

Such grouping, according to physical characteristics, has raised considerable debate. Recently, historians of anthropology have pointed out that the concept of race should incorporate cultural distinctions. Anthropologists also urge people to understand that the “race” concept is a cultural historical construct, rather than a biological fact. Although the concept was never valid scientifically, it is even less useful as a social construct in this age of global interaction. Thomas (1995) notes that the construction and use of the idea of “race” is typically part of social processes of exclusion and attempted domination. Ideas of race enter social life as categories which help shape social interaction and political or policy discourses.

2.2 Concept of Ethnicity

Spoonley (1995) notes that ethnicity is “an identity that reflects the cultural experiences and feelings of a particular group”. For an ethnic group to exist there needs to be cultural practices or beliefs that define it as different from other groups in society. Similarly, Yinger (1986) defines ethnicity as a sub-societal group that shares a common descent and cultural background or a group of people who are different in cultural and societal backgrounds, but can be identified as similar on the basis of language, race or religion. It is believed that ethnic groups are formed by virtue of a common language, a common religion, and the existence of social institutions, which have the power of uniting human beings of one or more races.

Ethnic identity is used in a political way to protect group members and to argue publicly about resources and equity (Spoonley, 1995). As far as planning is concerned, a key proposition is that the processes involved in the formulation and implementation of planning policies will both reflect and help sustain particular group identities and social relations involving them (Thomas, 1994). Thomas (1995) also argues that ethnicity has been an important factor in shaping planning policies and initiatives. Healey *et al.* (1988) point out that often groups or individuals can be incorporated into, or excluded from, policy processes in planning. The processes by which ethnicity is given particular meanings are variable across and within national boundaries and are shaped by political, legal and socioeconomic environments.

2.3 Concept of Multiculturalism

Muller (1993, cited in Spoonley 1995) notes that multiculturalism is a public philosophy acknowledging racial and cultural differences in a society. It places an emphasis on the plurality and diversity of cultures and often the need for mutual tolerance. Thus, it recognises that culture is important and that it influences people’s worldviews, attitudes, perceptions and values. Multiculturalism invites institutions to be aware of the existence of minority ethnic groups. Spoonley (1995) notes that multiculturalism seeks redress for the long-practices of exclusion and that multicultural policies encourage ethnic groups to acquire resources in terms of their specific needs.

The term “multiculturalism” expands the definition of the interests to be accommodated beyond race and class. Thus, it extends the meaning of pluralism. Qadeer (1997) notes that a fundamental effect of multiculturalism is to call for pluralistic planning approaches and to question unitary conceptions of public interest and the ideology of “master plans”. Planning for multicultural society, therefore, requires sensitivity and responsiveness to the social needs of culturally diverse communities. Furthermore, multiculturalism also suggests that planners should pay greater attention to how culture impacts on planning practice.

2.4 Problems of Race in the Planning System

Bauman (1992) claims that “race” is a powerful aspect of most planning situations in urban areas, but it is often not recognised. He suggests that what is missing from the current debate over planning practice is the willingness of planning institutions to deal with racial issues in assessing the problems they face. Mier (1994) believes that it is almost impossible to approach a planning or economic development challenge without immediately noting the racial implications. However, a rich tradition of good planning practice, largely ignored by main stream planning, exists with reference to minority communities.

Thomas (1994) states that the society where racism is widespread needs a planning system that is sensitive to the possibility of it being influenced by racism and indirect discrimination. However, he argues that in many cases local planning authorities and decision making are simply ignorant of indirect discrimination and of procedures, which have been developed in other areas of public policy to address it. The crucial questions raised by Thomas are: (1) how can the understanding of race and ethnicity be included in the planning system? And, (2) how can a broader sensitivity allow the development of ways in which planning activities impinge on the lives of ethnic minorities? He also recommends that emphasis should be placed on how planners and the planning system implicitly acknowledge the concept of race and ethnicity. In particular, planners must be explicit about the way in which their work, procedures, attitudes and policies sustain or challenge conceptions of race and ethnicity.

There have been few studies that evaluate how the planning system might reflect racial disadvantage in society. Thomas (1995) states that the recent study of modern

planning has not evaluated its impact on ethnic minorities. Part of the reason is that the spatial distribution of the immigrant population tends to be viewed as an issue for social policy and not planning. Furthermore, professional planners tend to view themselves as “technicians” and not to view social welfare as related to the policy field (Thomas, 1995). Many professional planners find it difficult to accept that the planning bureaucracy can systematically cause problems for certain sectors of the population including ethnic minorities. There is a lack of incentive to provide for the spatial needs of ethnic minorities due to the imperviousness of both political and professional decision making bodies in planning and due to a lack of influence of ethnic minorities.

Similarly, Qadeer (1997) suggests that multiculturalism requires that planning be both sensitive and responsive to the social needs of a diverse community. He recommends that multiculturalism influence planning in two ways. First, it holds planning policies to the light of social values and public goals, for instance, by questioning how can the competing interests of main stream and of minority communities be balanced. Second, it recognises the legitimacy of the ethnic community and challenges social policies to balance the advantages of neighbourhood homogeneity with the public goals of openness and equal access by all.

In a democratic society, the effectiveness of urban planning is assessed by its responsiveness to citizens’ needs and goals. As the interests and preferences differ by race and cultural background, the responsiveness of urban planning depends on its ability to accommodate citizens’ divergent social and cultural needs and to treat individual and groups equitably in meeting those needs. To achieve effective urban planning, Qadeer (1997) suggests that overt discrimination and cultural biases in the use of space, housing allocation and the provision of urban services need to be eliminated.

2.5 Advocacy and Pluralistic Planning

During the 1960s, physical development planning was widely perceived as a failure primarily because it lacked understanding of urban economic and social changes (Checkoway, 1994). In response to this, the scope of planning was extended from concern for the physical attributes of the city to include a concern for social and economic considerations of wellbeing. However, it is noted that, the attempt to address

such social issues presented problems for planning (Burayidi, 2000). Planning during this period was recognised as a method of policy selection that was firmly embedded in the political process.

To overcome this weakness, Paul Davidoff (1965) proposed advocacy planning inspiring planners to broaden their area of concern beyond purely physical planning and reach out toward the poor, and minorities in a way to provide a more inclusive planning. Davidoff viewed planning as a process to address a wide range of societal issues. He believed that planning could help improve conditions for all people while emphasising resources and opportunities for those lacking in both. He also viewed planning as a process that promoted democratic pluralism in society by representing diverse groups in political debate and public policy. He challenged planners to promote participatory democracy and positive social change to overcome poverty and racism.

Clearly, Davidoff's idea was a rejection of planning prescriptions where the planner's role was perceived as a "technician". He argued that appropriate planning action could not be prescribed from a position of value neutrality. Thus, planners had to go beyond explaining the value underlying their prescription. They should become advocates "for what they deemed proper" for their client's vision of "the good society". Furthermore, he also challenged the planners to become more involved in the civil rights struggle. He claimed that planners should play an important role in elevating the lives of the oppressed and representing the underrepresented.

Davidoff argued that advocacy planners could create plans that addressed the special needs of certain segments of the population and put their concerns on the policymaking agenda. This approach is often called "plural planning". It is based on the idea that multiple plans would propose programmes affording new opportunities to different members of society and that they would improve the overall quality of local planning. In plural planning, performance measures for policies and standards aim for the equal satisfaction of the needs and preferences of diverse groups (Qadeer, 1997).

As it became apparent that there were other racial, cultural and ethnic groups who had interests that differed from those of mainstream practice, planning was forced to deal with the problems of how to incorporate these alternative views into public policy and

programmes (Qadeer, 1997). A pluralistic planning approach was proposed to address the diverse groups and their interests.

However, Davidoff (1965) argued that the existing structure of planning was an obstacle to pluralism. Davidoff described the planning agency managed by planners without knowledge of social and economic issues and governed by commissioners without public accountability as an “irresponsible vestigial institution”. He recommended that the challenge for planning educators and planners was to widen the scope of planning and work for social change in diverse communities.

Davidoff’s advocacy planning stimulated serious debate about planning practice. It is argued that though planners devoted themselves to promoting social justice through community planning, they were often perceived as “not always representative” of their client communities. Often the advocacy planners lacked the power to implement their plans. Krumholz and Clavel (1993) comment that “the equity planners we have known, as it happens, mostly tended to be white males or females, often representing people of color, but not drawn from these populations”. Advocacy planning may act on behalf of the poor and the underrepresented, however, it is criticised that it does not typically involve those actors in the planning process. Furthermore, advocacy planning may not resolve important issues of immigration or racial discrimination (Hartman cited in Checkoway, 1994).

Despite the limitations of advocacy planning expressed by various authors, it is recommended that there is still a strong need for advocacy planning in the multicultural society today. However, this has raised a critical question: how can advocacy planning respect differences in individual identity groups, while also increasing interaction and coordination among them?

2.6 Holistic Planning Approach

Burayidi (2000) proposes holistic planning to advocate multicultural society. Holistic planning is a culturally sensitive approach to planning that recognises the impact of planning on race, class and gender. He notes that the current dominant planning practice is based on the Universalist approach. This approach consists of instrumental rationality and a hierarchical social structure. Such planning is criticised by Beauregard

(1991) as “a totalising and singular vision”. Thus planning practice based on this perspective have failed to respond to a society where there exists ethnic and cultural minorities’ different worldviews.

While attempts were made in the past to adapt planning practices to respond to the needs of a diverse society, these adjustments have been perceived as “oscillations within the same epistemology” (Burayidi, 2000). For instance, Davidoff’s approach of advocacy and pluralistic planning, in which planners act as advocates on behalf of disadvantaged groups and minorities, was criticised as an inadequate response to the substantive problem-solving and needs of minority community. Even though planning practice has shifted from the current dominant paradigm to a recognition of diversity, the voices of ethnic groups is still not represented in public discourse (Sandercock, 1995). Furthermore, the approach of equity planning, which has a theoretical framework for mediating among competing interests is also viewed as a means to address issues of economic distribution between the rich and the poor, rather than issues concerning the problems and the needs of ethnic minorities.

Burayidi (2000) proposes holistic planning in response to the shortcomings of advocacy and equity planning to cater for a multicultural society. He claims that holistic planning is a culturally sensitive approach that places more emphasis on planning’s impact on race, class and gender. It is noted that this approach has a similar concept to Thomas’s (1997) “Unified Diversity” in which planning is proposed as a means to deal with social issues based on diversity, tolerance, and cooperation.

Holistic planning has important differences from the universalist planning approach. Burayidi (2000) suggests that holistic planning has no universal norms prescribed for all communities and no set of standards that all communities should follow in planning process. Unlike the universalist approach, holistic planning reflects a wider scope of thinking. It accepts and expects diversity among and within communities. It also acknowledges that within a diverse society, each culture has its own social realities that affect behaviour and attitudes that are logical to that culture. More importantly, the approach enables communities to build on their strengths in planning their future. Planners, in this approach, share their expertise and work with communities as a partner in the planning process. In this way the planner has an important role as a facilitator, helping communities to write plans, set goals and achieve them.

Burayidi (2000) concludes that there are three main reasons why holistic planning is advocated for planning in a multicultural society. Firstly, holistic planning has potential to foster greater cultural understanding and appreciation between planners and diverse cultural communities. Secondly, holistic planning is an appropriate approach to help legitimating planning among different cultural groups by making it relevant to their needs. Thirdly, holistic planning would help broaden the epistemological conversation to include voices from the margins.

2.7 Conclusion

The cultural and racial diversity of today's society has impacted on planning practices in many ways. Now race and culture have become significant factors for assessing public needs and analysing social conditions. With an increase in demands for cultural identity, it is also necessary for planners to have greater sensitivity to the values and aspirations of the particular groups with whom they plan. Furthermore, as ethnic minorities compete to have more influence on different policy processes, the scope and procedures of citizen involvement in the planning process needs to be modified to accommodate their voices.

Chapter Three

The Role of Local Government

The chapter aims to describe the role of local government in New Zealand. The specific functions, democracy, powers and purposes of local government are set out in the Local Government Act 1974 and subsequent amendments. Broadly, local government is responsible for community wellbeing, service delivery, regulation and policy. This chapter places an emphasis on two key roles of local government (1) service delivery and (2) governance. In addition, it also outlines the potential role for local government in fostering and contributing to the development of a multicultural community.

3.1 An Overview of Local Government

Local government in New Zealand is a separate tier of government. It derives its statutory authority from central government. Mulgan (1997) notes that though central government is constitutionally dominant, local government has considerable autonomy. Central government involvement in the affairs of local government is limited. For instance, it does not have the power to dismiss a council, or to exercise the direct running of a council. The overriding intention of the local government legislation is that local authorities serve and be accountable to their electors.

Over the last ten years, local government has undergone considerable changes. The first dramatic reform occurred in the late 1980's when central government sought to make local government more efficient, more accountable and more accessible to their constituency. This reform was performed against the backdrop of a major overhaul of central government. The reforms used the principles of clear accountability and separation of roles and resulted in considerable change to the Local Government Act 1974, which passed into legislation in 1989. Part of this reform involved a number of local authorities being combined into larger more effective units. Two complementary levels of local government were also created: (1) regional councils (a regional tier) and territorial authorities (district or city councils, or local tier) to promote more effective planning.

A second wave of change came in 1996 to ensure that local authorities undertook rigorous long term financial planning. The financial management provisions of the Local Government Amendment (No. 3) Act 1996 introduced a new approach to financial planning and management responsibilities. These legislative changes also sought to provide more explicit economic and financial guidelines to local authorities in making funding decisions and allocating costs to residents. The legislation requires local authorities to prepare, every three years, a long term financial strategy covering at least the next ten years. This strategy must contain estimates of operating expenditure for each year, the reasons for incurring it, and the proposed ways of funding it. Critical to this strategy is clearly establishing the beneficiaries of Council activities. This includes investigation of public versus private good components of each Council service. The ability to pay of different groups of society may also be considered. Finally, the process allows Council to establish funding mechanism by setting the rating base, differentials, separate rates, user charges and the like.

3.2 Purpose and Functions of Local Government

The purpose of local government as spelt out above makes direct mention of “communities”. However, Hucker (1997) argues that though “communities” may be central to the definitions of the purpose of the Local Government Act, it is not clear whether the reform has produced results that have been as beneficial to community as might have been expected. For instance, he questions whether the transformation of local government has given citizens more power over the kind of services they want and the kind of environment they prefer.

McKinlay (1998) notes that the local government reform not only sought to impose a degree of rationality on local authority structure, it also, for the first time, set out a general statement of the purpose of local government. According to section 37K of Local Government Amendment Act 1989 (see Appendix B), the purpose of local government is to provide among other things:

- Recognition of different communities, including their identities and values;
- Definition and enforcement of appropriate rights in those communities;
- Scope for communities to choose among different types of local facilities and services; and
- Recognition of communities of interest.

The functions of local government, at a broad level, can be described as service delivery, regulation and policy. However, Reid (1994) suggests that the two key roles of local government are (1) service delivery role and (2) governance. The governance role involves providing specific localities with a political voice.

The functions of local government are embedded in two main statutes, the Local Government Act 1974 and its amendments and the Resource Management Act 1991. Territorial authorities have a wide range of service delivery and regulatory functions, both mandatory (such as resource planning), and discretionary, such as the promotion of economic development. Local authorities' service delivery functions (such as roading, water supply, sewage, and rubbish collection and disposal) derive primarily from the Local Government Act. Regulatory functions relating to the environment derive mainly from the Resource Management Act. Other functions reflect the collective decision making of elected representatives that might be expected to represent the preferences of citizens.

Bush (1995) views the roles of local authority differently. He suggests that the range of different functions local authorities embrace should be subject to the desire of the community. In this way, the responsibilities of local authority include:

- Providing local public goods;
- Regulating specified activities;
- Protecting and improving the environment;
- Supplying certain commercial commodities and services;
- Promoting community well-being; and
- Articulating community concerns and interests.

3.3 Effective Services to Community Needs

As required by the Local Government Act 1974 Amendment No. 3 (1996), councils classify each service according to which of three types of benefits it provides; direct (private) benefits, general (public) benefits and control of negative effects. Direct benefits are provided directly to an individual or group. General benefits are generated to the community as a whole (such as improving street lighting). The control of negative effects is required to protect the community from potential problems (Pallot,

2000). Councils also have responsibility to examine which groups, such as residential ratepayers or business ratepayers, receive benefits from each service. Then the costs of providing benefits are allocated. Under the Local Government Act 1974 Amendment No. 3 (1996), councils have the discretion to decide whether this allocation of costs should be modified by issues of community interest (Pallot, 2000).

Besides service delivery, regulation and policy, an essential role of local government is providing for local democracy. Accordingly, local authorities have some responsibility in enabling communities to make decisions about which services or combinations of services should be delivered in the local public interest (Hucker, 1997).

As New Zealand local communities have become more diverse and complex, the differences in cultural, economic and social views within each community have increased. According to governance principles, the delivery of facilitation and social services to these communities is considered to be a primary responsibility of local authority. Section 37K(f) of Local Government Amendment Act 1989 states that the purpose of local authority is to provide “for the delivery of appropriate facilities and services on behalf of central government”. The rationale here is that the needs and circumstances of each community differ. The community would be better served if the principal input to policy making comes from the local authority that works closely with its community.

3.4 The Governance Role

Governing implies the exercise of authority with responsibility. It is about collective decision making where an authority is derived from the representative nature of the decision makers. The governance role of local government in New Zealand is underpinned by the legitimacy conferred by the democratic process (Boston *et al.*, 1996). Howell *et al.* (1995) suggest that effective governance may depend on the ability of representatives to define their appropriate roles within the council structure as much as on the extent to which they represent all interests in the community.

3.4.1 Councils and Chief Executives

Crucial to the reforms in 1989 was the classification of the roles of the elected council and the appointed Chief Executives (Boston *et al.*, 1996). The legislation requires that councils appoint the Chief Executive Officer to lead the management of Council. The appointed Chief Executive Officer is on a performance-based contract for up to five years. All the council officers are employees of the Chief Executive Officer. The council has duty to set “policy” and to monitor the performance of the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer and council officers are to manage within that policy.

Section 119D of the Local Government Act 1974 specifies the role of the Chief Executive Officer and the functions that they are expected to perform. These include:

- The implementation of the decisions of the local authority;
- Providing advice to members;
- Ensuring the exercise of delegated and statutory functions by staff; and
- Ensuring effective and efficient management.

Section 119B of the Act also gives the Chief Executive Officer responsibility for employing staff. It has become accepted that elected members set the overall policy of the local authority and the Chief Executive and their staff implement that policy, in addition to managing the local authority’s resources.

3.4.2 Elected Members

Any person who is entitled to vote in parliamentary elections is entitled to be a candidate for membership of a regional council, a territorial authority, or a community board. Elections are held every three years to elect councillors and community board members. Mayors of territorial authorities are also independently elected. Chairs of regional councils are appointed from within the council elected members. In 1998 New Zealand local government had 1,097 elected members (Forgie *et al.*, 1999). Generally councillors play a number of roles in local government governance. These include constituency work, representing and advocating the various interests and viewpoints of the communities they represent, guiding policy formulation, monitoring formulated policy, and articulating issues (Bush, 1995).

3.4.3 Council Committees

Council committees have an important place in the governance structure of local authorities. These committees are viewed as the meeting-point for the exchange of information between elected representatives and council officers. The role of committee chairperson is crucial to the effective operation of the committee. Similarly, the relationship between committee members and Council officers is critical to effectively conducting the authority's affairs. Section 114 of the Local Government Act provides for the establishment of committees. For instance, a joint committee may be formed to provide a means for two or more local authority's to work together in dealing with issue of common interest. The council commonly appoints committee members. The committees need not necessarily, and rarely do, include all elected members. Council officers may not be members of a committee.

3.4.4 Community Boards

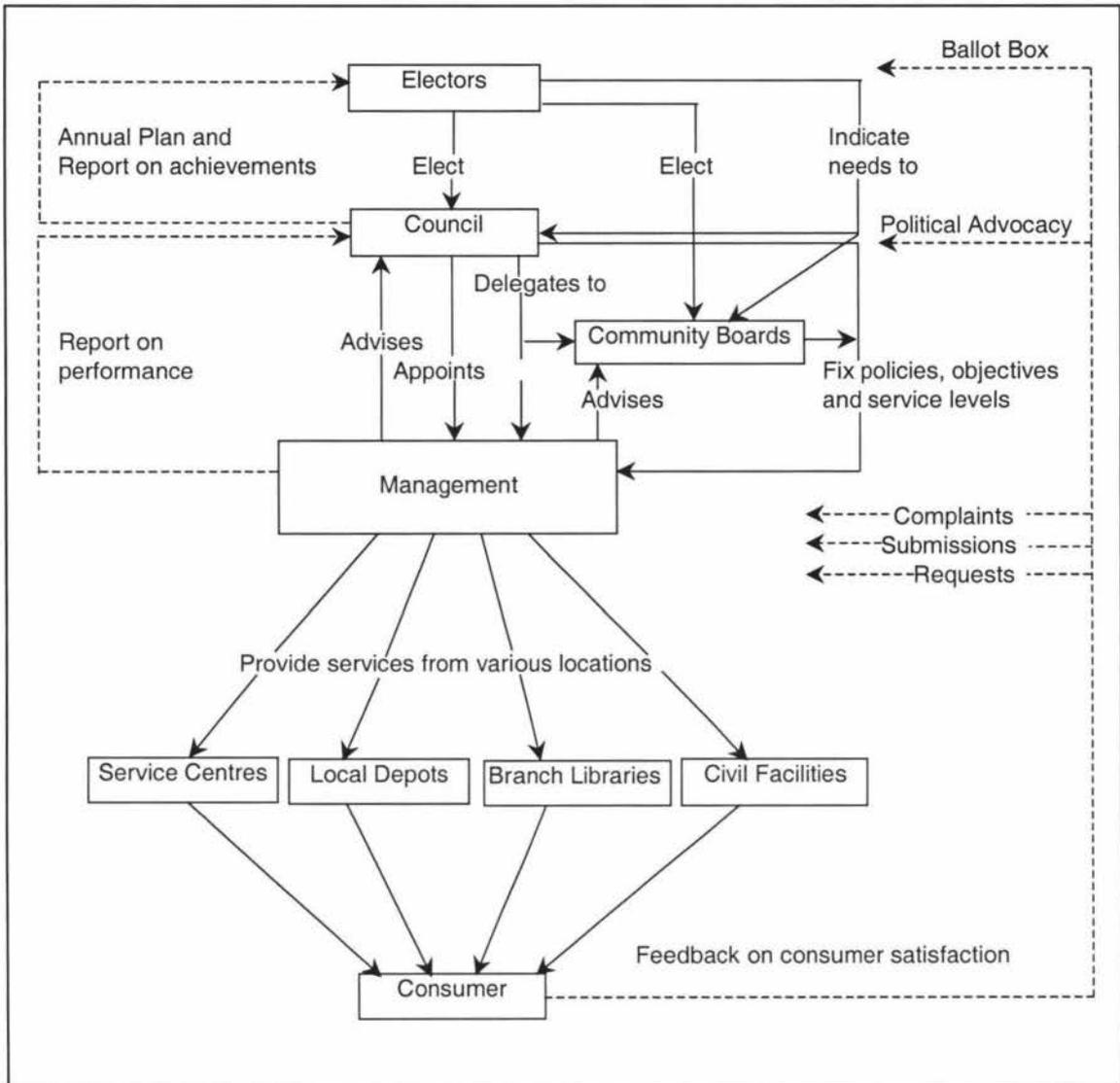
Community boards were introduced by the Local Government Amendment Act 1989 to appease critics who felt that large units of local government diminished local democracy. Storer (1996) suggests that community board members as elected representatives have the same democratic mandate to represent the people as councillors. They can be an important link in the democratic process at the local level. However, this depends on whether they want to be involved in meaningful consultation and actively encourage the participation of community members. The role of community boards varies depending upon the responsibilities delegated by the parent council.

The two main aims of community boards can be viewed as (1) providing smaller communities with an appropriate channel through which they can influence the workings of local government, and (2) overseeing of territorial authorities' performance as perceived by the community (Boston *et al.*, 1996). Marjoribanks (1994) indicated that the success of community boards depends on a clear understanding by the parent authority of the boards' jurisdiction, and a good working relationship between the community boards and the parent authority.

The intention behind the establishment of community boards was to promote greater community involvement in decision making by helping to ensure that the parent authority knows and meets the needs of each community (Boston *et al.*, 1996). However, Hucker (1997) notes that the power of community boards is limited. The extent of their decision making and exercising of power are determined by their parent local authority. Community boards are therefore expected to carry out certain functions such as to communicate, consult and advise without decision making power. In this way activities undertaken by community boards are often of an advisory nature rather than of a decision making character.

As a result, Hucker (1997) contends that local people may have less influence over the direction and future of their communities. In other words, the key to ensuring that communities can exercise more influence over their destiny is by the devolution of power to community boards and locally based institutions. By increasing and enhancing the policymaking status of community boards, Hucker (1997) asserts that there will be greater opportunity for local benefits.

Figure 3.1 depicts how a local authority works. It shows the working relationship between council and management. The management has responsibilities in providing advice for policy development and implementation to meet the objectives decided either by the council, or community boards under delegation from the council. It also indicates that citizens are both electors and consumers of council services. Perhaps the most important feature of Figure 3.1 is that it identifies feedback mechanisms i.e. citizens are provided the right to respond to the Council through different channels such as making complaints or submissions.



Source: Gray (1993), "New Zealand Local Government – At the Leading Edge". Unpublished report. Christchurch City Council.

Figure 3.1 How Local Government Works

3.5 Changing Roles

Local government in New Zealand was developed primarily as a means of enabling the construction of local infrastructure. It functioned as a subsidiary of central government until the reforms of 1989. McKinlay (1998) suggests that this was an important turning point for local government where it was given a role beyond that of providing infrastructure services and other primary functions. In the recent years, the way local government has approached service provision has changed markedly. It no longer

sees its role as that of employing staff and carrying out the work in house. Some services such as roading and water supply have been contracted out to private business. The councils have “semi-privatised” the provision of physical infrastructure. Instead councils have assumed a secondary role defining service quality and monitoring performance. The 1996 review of the Auckland City Council city plan “Outstanding Auckland”, states “Increasingly, the role of local government will be centred on democracy, advocacy, leadership and working with others to supply services and activities”. This suggests that it is now becoming typical for local authorities to think about their changing role.

There is also potential for local government to complete the shift from its traditional role covering the four “Rs” – rubbish, roads, rats and rates, to becoming quite genuinely an institution that works with its communities to enable the achievement of desired economic, social and cultural outcomes. At the same time as local government’s relationship to its own functions is changing, the relationship to those traditionally undertaken by central government is also changing. McKinlay (1998) believes that local authorities will, in the future, have an increased governance role in the provision of services that have traditionally been provided by central government. This is a response to the recognition that there are growing limits on the capacity of central government to deliver the wide range of outcomes which citizens expect and that the local tier of government is better placed to meet the needs of a diverse population.

The issues that citizens may require local government to get involved with on their behalf may include health, welfare, employment and economic development. For instance, as a public body, the council may represent the city/district in health services, through ensuring the accountability of the Ministry of Health and Health Funding Authority in relation to the city/district, or calling the health providers to account for the delivery of their services.

3.6 The Role of Local Government in a Multicultural Society

Boston *et al.* (1996) note that cultural pluralism may pose political challenges and policy dilemmas. While liberal theories of justice such as the ideals of equality of opportunity, universal citizenship and uniform rights for all, tend to give priority to individual rights over the rights of groups or collectives, there are other view points that place a greater

emphasis on communitarianism rather than liberalism. The priority for the latter may be placed on the preservation of cultural diversity, particularly, in nurturing minority cultures, distinctive values and traditions. However, protecting these ideals may require special collective rights. At this point, a problem occurs because collective rights for separate groups are likely to be in conflict with the liberal ideal of uniform rights for all citizens in a community. To handle these issues raises challenges for the conduct of public management.

These issues have been discussed in New Zealand since the mid 1980s (Boston *et al.*, 1996). There are two key developments that reflect these issues: (1) the recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi, and (2) the changing immigration patterns to New Zealand. In response to growing Maori political action and concern over resource management, successive governments since the 1980s have acted to rectify past injustices and resolve resource grievances based on the Treaty.

The second development that reflects in issues of administrative pluralism is the changing patterns of immigration to New Zealand. Prior to the 1960s, the vast majority of immigrants were of European origin, particularly from Britain. However, in recent decades, a growing proportion of immigrants have come from the South Pacific region such as Cook Island, Tonga, Samoa, etc., and more recently from Asia for example China, Taiwan, and Korea. Consequently, there are now large non-European immigrant communities, particularly in New Zealand's larger cities, such as Auckland and Wellington.

Local government as a key provider of infrastructure, services, and support services for these communities, faces the challenge of responding to an increasing diverse community. Increasing numbers of different cultural groups raises the challenge of how to help ethnic minority groups integrate and maximise their quality of life in the communities in which they live. Providing that suitable resources are available, local government can act in a number of ways to help maintain the wellbeing of these ethnic groups. For instance, it can play a vital role in migrant services, providing community learning and support services for new migrants.

A broader interpretation of the role and scope of local government particularly acknowledges a legitimate role in economic, social and cultural development. Scott

(1995) suggests that there is an important role for local authorities in fostering and contributing to the development of a multicultural community through social and economic initiatives.

3.7 Conclusion

The creation of local government in New Zealand in the past was based on collective action to provide physical infrastructure. However, it is argued that, today collective action is required to deal with community needs in the more difficult social, economic and cultural areas, which combine to contribute a community's overall wellbeing. Furthermore, with recent immigration, the image of New Zealand as a homogeneous society has gone. Today, it is recognised as a diverse society where cultural, economic and social differences exist. To govern a diverse community requires a degree of tolerance, understanding and willingness from local authorities. Bush (1995) suggests that the basic obligation of those who govern in a democracy is to hear "what is being said by the people about their needs". The local authorities, thus, have an important role to ensure that the citizens' needs are met sensitively and effectively. The next chapter investigates theory on public participation and the role of local government in engaging communities to participate in the planning decision making process.

Chapter Four

Democracy in Local Government

Democracy has a range of definitions, for example “government of the people, by the people, for the people” and “sovereignty of the people”. However, the notion “rule by the people” has been viewed as the basic form of democracy. Heywood (1998) suggests that the fundamental distinction in democratic systems is between those that based upon direct participation in government (participatory democracy), and those that operate through a representative mechanism (representative democracy). Direct democracy refers to the context where citizens participate actively in governmental processes. Indirect or representative forms of democracy refer to political arrangements where representatives are chosen by citizens to exercise governmental functions on their behalf (Pateman, 1970).

This chapter outlines the local authority role in providing a means for democratic participation. Democratic participation includes public participation in the Council's decision making process and elections. The chapter, firstly, discusses the theories of “representative democracy” and “participatory democracy”. Local government in New Zealand is a form of representative democracy with electors voting for representatives. The chapter next explores the concept of public participation, identifying what is an effective participatory process, and the barriers to participation. Finally, the provisions for public participation and consultation in the decision making process are discussed.

4.1 Representative Democracy

Representation is a key feature in liberal democracies. The idea of popular consent, expressed in practice through the act of voting is an important element in a liberal democracy (Heywood, 1998). In this way, liberal democracy relies heavily on elected representatives to make decisions according to the wishes of the people. Cronin (1989) also suggests that representation derives from the belief that the right of people to participate, and be represented in a legislature, is the primary means of securing liberty.

The election of representatives to make decisions on behalf of the public is the foundation of the liberal representative democracy (Forgie *et al.*, 1999). Through

elections the public delegates political decision making to representatives who become elite decision-makers. Therefore, elections are seen as the basis of the representative mechanism, elected politicians become representatives on the grounds that they have the mandate of the people.

The theory of representative democracy implies that it is inappropriate for unqualified people to exercise decision making power (Cheyne, 1997). This idea is based on the belief that knowledge and understanding are unequally distributed in society. In this way, it is claimed that not all citizens are capable of perceiving their own best interests. Representatives are seen as people who “know better” than others and can act wisely in their interests.

Cheyne (1997) points out that there are two views of representation: (1) representation as an essential means of the democratic process in societies that are too large to allow for participation by all citizens, and (2) representation as a device for limiting popular participation. Some advocates however argue that representative democracy is the only practicable form of democracy in modern conditions. A high level of popular participation is only possible within relatively small communities where face-to-face communication can take place between citizens.

Advocates of representative democracy believe that participation encourages the development of groups of people who are concerned with the interests of their own members. In this way, individuals lobby for the interests of their groups. This might conflict with the interest of other groups. Such participation can lead to instability in a political system. On the other hand, it is suggested that political representatives are able to deal with conflict in a more rational way i.e., with regard to the interests of the whole group. However, the most fundamental objection to direct democracy is that ordinary people lack the time, maturity and specialist knowledge to rule wisely on their own behalf. In this sense, Heywood (1998) notes that representative democracy can clearly do a better job than the general public.

For representation to be a moral duty, Edmund Burke (In Heywood, 1998) has suggested it is important that representatives should exercise their “mature judgement” and “enlightened conscience” to serve constituents. Furthermore, the representative’s

decisions should be made on the basis of wise deliberation, placing the emphasis on constituents' best interests.

4.2 Limitations of Representative Democracy

Representative democracy is strongly criticised for the gap it introduces between government and the public on whose behalf the government makes decisions. The public often has limited influence, only participating through the choice of "who" should govern. Philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was opposed to the practice of elections, insisting that citizens are only "free" when they participate directly and continuously in shaping the life of their community. Similarly, philosopher-economist John Stuart Mill argued that democratic election was an inappropriate way of determining the "truth" on the ground that "wisdom" cannot be determined by a vote.

A liberal representative democracy does not accommodate a participatory role for citizens. In fact, it reduces participation to a meaningless process of voting. However, the most serious criticism of representation is that it grants representatives considerable independence to determine on behalf of others. As politicians are encouraged to think for themselves, they may become insulated from popular pressures and end up acting in their own selfish interests.

Since the 1960s there has been increasing criticism of institutions, elected on the basis of representative democracy, as being remote and not transparent. Allegations of political sleaze and politicians' misconduct have contributed to a decline in respect for politicians. In addition, the act of voting has also been seen as a meaningless process as promises made by politicians have not been honoured (Bailey and Peel, 2001). The growing concern about the disenchantment with the bureaucratic, unresponsive nature of government, and the declining respect for professional politicians, has resulted in a call for a more effective form of democracy.

4.3 Participatory Democracy

Participatory democracy entails more active involvement by citizens in community affairs, social movements, and interest groups. Advocates of participatory democracy such as Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, and Carole Pateman see

participation as having an important role in smaller political systems. They believe that active involvement can create a sense of social unity by giving all members a stake in the community and a voice in the decision making process. In this way, democracy can be seen as an equal force standing in opposition to any form of privilege or hierarchy. Democracy, therefore, represents the community rather than the individual.

The participatory approach was promoted in the 1960s in response to criticisms of the liberal representative democracy. The lack of accountability of representative government and its inability to meet the needs of many sectors of society were all major factors resulting in the requirement for more participatory processes in decision making within government. Participatory democracy is viewed as a means providing greater accountability to citizens. Barber (1989) suggests that participatory processes offer a framework for institutions to safeguard the liberty of individuals without separating them from public space.

4.4 Participatory Process

The essence of participation is active involvement of citizens in decision making. Howard and Baker (1984) state that participation is the process where everyone is offered an opportunity to express their views relating to decision making. Participation is claimed to be self-determination - the government agency transfers the entire responsibility to the people. It is believed that as the people are directly involved in political or planning activities, they will become completely accountable for the consequences of their own decisions.

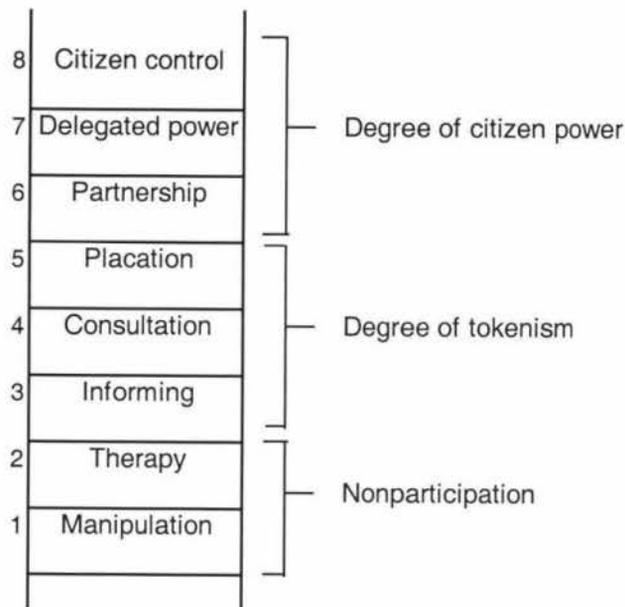
Similarly, Mulgan (1997) believes that participation is fundamental to fostering community involvement in decision making, particularly in relation to the achievement of community goals. He suggests that by participating in the making of decisions that might affect them, individuals will acquire a greater awareness of their own interests and the means by which they may be advanced. They also become aware of the aspirations of others. Therefore, a certain degree of participation encouraged by government agencies is needed. By encouraging participation, they will help individuals to develop a clearer understanding of how to achieve their general goals and the limitation within which government agencies operate.

For participatory processes to be successful, it requires effective communication between the government and the communities. More importantly, it needs the willingness of government agencies to take into account the citizen's attitudes as well as to encourage the expression of their views, and to respond to their views constructively (Javison, 1994).

4.5 Levels of Participation

Arnstein (1969) explained the different level of influence citizens had on decision making by developing a ladder of participation. The two bottom levels (1) and (2) she regarded as "non-participation", and more accurately means of persuading people that their opinion was wrong. The next three levels (3), (4) and (5) she called degrees of tokenism, where, even though people were allowed to be heard and to have a voice, they still lacked the power to ensure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. The top three levels describe increasing degrees of citizen power. Citizens in level (6) can enter into partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in making tradeoffs. At the top level (7) and (8) delegated power and citizen control ensure citizen involvement in decision making. At this point, true participation takes place.

The ladder of participation demonstrates that it is possible for government agencies to engage in public participation activities without actually allowing the public to have a meaningful impact on decision making. For public participation to be effective, it is essential that a redistribution of power from the powerful to the powerless does exist.



Source: Arnstein, S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *American Institute of planners Journal*.

Figure 4.1 A Ladder of Citizen Participation

4.6 Barriers to Participation

Howard and Baker (1984) claim that social environments determine the participation patterns of people. People participate in the planning process due to their sense of obligation, capability and self-confidence, and the opportunity that participation will bring to their life. However, past experience also influences their beliefs and attitudes to participation. Often people are reluctant to participate when they encounter only one-way communication, and the kind of participation that lacks sincere effort from the representatives of organisation to consult with people. It is suggested that the low level of public involvement may be explained by limited public understanding of the participation process or lack of interests or awareness of the opportunities citizens have for managing their environment. However, many people do not want to become actively involved in issues due to time constraints. They prefer to rely on professionals to do what they were hired to do – plan and manage.

4.7 Representative Democracy in New Zealand Local Government

4.7.1 Voting for Representatives

The theme for representative democracy is that the people assign their right to govern themselves to elected representatives that they choose freely, and can remove from office. In representative democracy, political decision making is the function of elected representatives. Voting is seen as the principal means for citizens to participate. Representation is partly a function of the number of council positions relative to local participation. Effective governance can be implied by the ability of representatives to define appropriate roles within the council structure. However, a more important influence on the effectiveness of roles may be the extent to which elected officials represent all the interests in the community.

In 1986, all New Zealand citizens and resident aged over 18 years with ratepayer qualifications or who had resided in an area for at least three months were entitled to vote for elections to the regional and cities/district within whose boundaries the electors resided. However, the ratepayer franchise was abolished in the local authority reforms in 1989. As a result, the ratepayers living outside a local authority in which they paid rates lost their voting rights in that area. In 1991 the franchise was restored to non-resident ratepayers. Thus, non-resident ratepayers, and multi-property owners were entitled to one vote for the regional council, territorial authority and community board. Corporate occupiers or societies owning property were entitled to nominate a person residing outside the local authority to vote on their behalf. While qualification to vote in several local bodies is possible, no person can enroll or vote more than once in any local government area (Bush, 1995).

Boston *et al.* (1996) note that despite the introduction of postal voting and encouragement of ward elections, the turnout of local government election is relatively small. The average turnout of local government election in 1992 was 52 per cent, after the requirement that all elections were carried out by postal vote in 1989. Forgie *et al.* (1999) suggest that although this figure is perceived as relatively healthy compared to some countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia, it is still well below the turnout for central government elections (85 percent in 1993). The voter turnout is

taken as an indicator that local government politics has rarely inspired citizen participation.

Given that on many issues most citizens choose not to participate, this might not greatly affect the quality and appropriateness of a local authority's policies. However, this may affect significantly the quality and health of local democracy. Bush (1995) suggests there are three explanations for the non-participation pattern in local government elections. Firstly, citizens deliberately choose not to participate because they have other priorities. Secondly, citizens want to participate, but are insufficiently informed. Thirdly, citizens want to participate, but they believe that it will make no difference.

4.7.2 Ward Representation

As part of the 1989 reform, the Local Government Commission introduced the use of wards in every territorial authority with a population greater than 20,000 while the remaining councils had the option of wards or district-wide elections. However, in 1991 the Local Government Amendment Act was amended to allow councils to decide on a three yearly basis whether they would be elected across the entire district (at large) or by electoral division (wards) (Bush, 1995). Forgie *et al.* (1999) note that there are a number of advantages associated with the ward system. Since each area has assigned representatives, it becomes easier for people to know whom they should contact regarding issues in their local community. The existence of ward committees also provides a channel through which councillors consult with their electorates. More importantly, the ward-based voting can enhance the quality of local democracy where there is extensive diversity in local needs and interests by area.

However, there are some weaknesses of the ward system. Forgie *et al.* (1999) suggest that ward boundaries do not necessarily represent clearly identified communities of interests. This indicates that individuals may belong to many interest groups that are not within the same boundaries. If there is no formal structure of ward sub-committees, then councillors may be short of effective means of discerning their local people preferences and concerns. Informal ward committees may overcome this deficiency. Furthermore, as ward representatives are also councillors they also have the responsibility in taking into account the interest of the whole local authority before

making any decision. This transition may be difficult for those who place their emphasis on immediate surroundings and problems.

4.8 Participatory Democracy in New Zealand Local Government

In local government, voting has been seen as the principal means for citizens to participate in their local democracy. A decline in electorate voting may however imply a decline in support of representative democracy in local government (Forgie *et al.*, 1999). Of more concern, the increasing complexity in society and inherent diversity indicates that it is almost impossible for elected members to represent all interests in their constituencies.

The reform of local government in 1989 was sought to promote greater openness, transparency and accountability in local authorities. This implies that the major goal of the reforms was to enhance the democratic value of local participation. Furthermore, the effectiveness in local government reforms was assumed to be achieved through decision making that was characterised by public participation, accountability, devolution, responsiveness and recognition of different communities of interests (Cheyne, 1997).

Section 37K of the Local Government Act 1974 (as amended in 1989) gives as one of the purposes of local government, the provision for “the effective participation of the local persons in the local government”. In this way, the reforms have guided local government to provide citizens with the opportunity to express their views in the participation process. How each local authority provides for these views to be taken into account in decision making can be seen in the annual plan process and in the special consultation procedure set out in Section 716A.

4.8.1 Annual Plan Process

The annual plan process can be seen as a consultative requirement under the Local Government Act 1974. Section 223D of the Act requires local authorities to prepare a draft annual plan. The special consultative procedure set out in the Act then comes into effect. This requires each local authority to give public notice of the draft plan as well as to specify the period in which interested persons can make submissions. At this

point all sectors of the community are provided the right and opportunity to make submissions. Councils are then required to take these into account and prepare an annual plan.

The availability of the annual plan process has provided an avenue for the community to express their views. The annual plan process is also viewed as a key opportunity for citizens to have influence on local authority decision making (Forgie *et al.*, 1999). Submissions allow individuals to express their viewpoints. Therefore, in making submission, citizens are likely to increase their probability of influencing the councils' decision making. Accordingly, councils will become more aware of the views of residents expressed through the submissions.

4.8.2 Consultation

The Local Government Act 1974 prescribes a special consultative procedure for local authorities to follow as part of the annual plan process, and when considering proposal relating to the sale of assets, the setting up of LATEs and other issues of importance. The special consultative procedure set out in Section 716A, includes public notice, ensuring the availability of the draft plan, and the opportunity for provision for submissions. The Act also requires local authorities to ensure that any person who makes written submissions has a reasonable opportunity to be heard by the local authority. This statutory requirement to consultation over the draft annual plan is one initiative taken by local authorities to seek citizens' input and views.

There is also some scope under the Resource Management Act 1991 to provide the public with the right to participate in decision making. However, the rights given to citizens apply only to notified resource consent applications. In this way, they can make objections to the applications, and their views will be taken into account by the consent authority when making a determination on whether or not to grant the resource consent.

Furthermore, the Act also provides for consultation process, as set out in the First Schedule. It states that consultation is required for any proposed district plans, or changes to either plans or policy statements. Public submissions are encouraged to be made following public notification. The local authorities then have an obligation to hold

a public hearing where they will give the decision on each submission. In this way, the citizens' views will be considered and taken into account.

The annual plan process is seen as a common approach that councils may use to seek community views. However, citizen involvement based on the annual plan process alone is not sufficient. Submissions allow groups or individuals to express their views. However, research indicates that the elite groups, such as business, highly educated groups, or lobby groups seem to have a much greater chance influencing policy than individuals (Javison, 1994). As such, local authorities may need to seek other informal tools for consultation to assist their decision making. The informal forms of citizen input may include performance assessment surveys and questionnaires for determining citizens' opinions on particular issues.

4.9 Ethnic Minority Participation in Local Government Democracy

James (2000) recommends that the most effective way to ensure participation of ethnic minority groups in the local authority decision making process is to ensure balanced representation of community members, such as community boards and commissioners that have responsibility for deciding planning issues. Planning policy makers, practitioners and advocates can also contribute significantly by establishing the information sources and designing participation processes that ensure involvement of ethnic minority groups. The effective tools may require getting involved with prominent ethnic minority group representatives.

4.10 Conclusion

New Zealand local government, after the reforms of the late 1980s has placed emphasis on incorporating citizen perspectives or expertise in public matters through the annual plan process and consultation. However, it may be argued that this gives no guarantee that participation will actually occur. Public involvement is very much influenced by the attitudes of local authorities and the nature of the issues confronting their communities. In communities comprised of different ethnic minority groups, more sensitive participatory tools may be required to ensure the involvement of these groups. This is essential to ensuring that effective planning is equated with embracing the whole community.

Chapter Five

Historical Context of Immigration in New Zealand

New Zealand is a country of immigration. The entire population is ultimately the consequence of immigration over 1,500 years. Since the arrival of Europeans in significant numbers in the early 1840s, the composition of the New Zealand population has continued to change. According to the 1996 Census (Statistic New Zealand, 1999), New Zealand has a migrant population with at least one in five people being born overseas. New Zealand has become a destination for new immigrants, many of whom were and still are seeking a different way of life. As a result of ethnic and cultural differences, there is potential for government's policies and administrative practices to impact differently on specific ethnic communities.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the historical background of immigration and the immigration policies that have contributed to the rapid growth in the diversity of the ethnic communities in New Zealand. The chapter firstly provides historical background on the ways in which immigration has been managed in New Zealand, covering the period from 1840 until after the Second World War. The chapter, then, discusses the 'new era' in New Zealand's immigration policy, covering the period from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Finally, the chapter discusses immigration of Asian people to New Zealand.

5.1 History of Immigration

Since the early period of colonisation, organised immigration and government policies have been important factors influencing the volume and direction of immigration to New Zealand. The period from 1840 to 1879 was basically characterised by the promotion of European settlement and by various forms of assisted European immigration. This resulted in a large and organised European settlement.

Gibson (1972) notes that immigration policies pursued in New Zealand during this period have reflected: (1) a preference for immigrants of British nationality because of racial and cultural similarities, and (2) a preference found among people who associate with persons of the same race and cultural background. McKinnon (1996) also suggests that even though the primary purpose of immigration was to settle the land

and increase the supply of labour, racial consideration also had been a bearing on the choice of immigrants. For instance, the supply of immigrants from Britain was in preference to the main source of non-British immigrants from Scandinavia in 1870s.

5.1.1 *White New Zealand Policy*

The formation of a “White New Zealand Policy” was concerned mainly with racial prejudice against the Chinese, who first came to New Zealand from the Victorian gold fields in the 1860s. By the end of the 1870s, Australia was preoccupied with the numbers of Chinese entering the country. There was concern that Chinese who were denied access into Australia might try to enter New Zealand. At the 1874 Census the number of Chinese was 4,800, an increase from the 1867 Census figure of 1,200. The Chinese population fluctuated in the next few years reaching a recorded high of 5,004 in the 1881 Census (McKinnon, 1996). Concern over the possibility of Chinese immigrants from Australia entering New Zealand, coupled with the increase in the number of Chinese population in the country, resulted in the first restriction on Chinese immigration in 1881.

Zodgekar (1997) notes that this was the first period in which immigration policy in New Zealand had racial implication. During this time, various bills were introduced in Parliament demanding restriction on Asiatic immigration. The 1881 Chinese Immigration Act was passed, imposing a poll tax on Chinese immigrants, initially of £10, but raised progressively to £100 in 1896. Severe limits were also introduced via a ‘one for every ten tons of cargo’ policy (Pearson, 1990). Furthermore, in 1899 the Immigration Restriction Act was passed to restrict the entry of immigrants who could not fill out an application form in any European language. The Act was an oblique rather than direct restriction on the entry of Asians. As a consequence, Chinese population declined to 2,570 by 1906, a period over which the European population increased from around 600,000 to nearly 1,000,000 (McKinnon, 1996).

During this period economic forces continued to influence immigration policy. As economic conditions improved in the early 20th century, financial assistance for British immigrants was reintroduced. This assisted immigration regime was viewed as maintaining the purity of race in New Zealand. In this way, the Acts passed during 1907 and 1910 consolidated the earlier restrictions imposed in the 1899 Act. Morris

(1970) observes that the purpose of this legislation was mainly concerned with finding the most effective and least offensive ways to exclude non-European immigrants. In 1907 the Chinese Immigrants Amendment Act made it a requirement for Chinese to pass an English language reading test. The test was regarded as more difficult than the test required under the 1898 Act. Later, the Immigration Act of 1920 also introduced a system in which immigrants intending to reside in New Zealand, who were not white British citizens had to obtain individual permits from the Minister of Customs.

The Chinese poll tax was not abolished until 1944. Many Chinese suffered the indignity of the poll tax and other restrictions. With respect to considerable hardship and other discriminatory immigration policy imposed to the Chinese, the New Zealand Government made a formal apology to those Chinese people who paid the poll tax and suffered other discrimination imposed by statute and to their descendants on the Chinese Lunar New Year 2002 (The Dominion, February 2002). The Government's apology is seen as the formal beginning to a process of reconciliation. The New Zealand Chinese Association, representing many descendants of the Chinese who paid the poll tax, has suggested that the government to make a contribution in the form of funds and resources for the purpose of restoring and maintaining the Chinese heritage, culture and language in New Zealand.

5.1.2 The Post World War II Period (1940 to 1970)

Following the Second World War, there was uncertainty regarding the direction of future immigration. In 1947, the government reintroduced an assisted immigration policy, which in some cases, provided free immigration from Britain. The policy also encouraged immigrants from southern European countries such as Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. Through the 1950s and 1960s, the number of British intending to emigrate to New Zealand fluctuated from between 9,000 to 16,000 every year. The main objective of the policy to assist immigrants was to bring working age persons into essential productive and service industries (Zodgekar, 1997).

The immigration policy in the 1950s and 1960s was also driven by fluctuations in the economy (New Zealand Immigration Service, 1997). Labour market shortages promoted migrant recruitment. Of particular long term significance was the growth in migration from South Pacific nations, beginning in the 1950s. The Western Samoan

Quota was established in the 1960s, providing residence for up to 1,100 Western Samoan citizens each year subject to a guarantee of employment, age and standard health and character requirements.

The special relationship between New Zealand and South Pacific nations also influenced immigration policy formulation. The policy employed, for instance, include a free entry for people from the Cook Island, Niue Island and Tokelau Islands and an entry permit or temporary worker status for people from other South Pacific countries. New Zealand's net migration gains from the Pacific region between 1972 and 1975, particularly from Western Samoa and Tonga was substantial (Pearson, 1990). During the same period, New Zealand Government also accepted a small number of refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

5.1.3 New Era in New Zealand's Immigration Policy (1970 onwards)

The beginning of the 1970s was seen as a 'new era' in New Zealand's immigration policy. The Immigration Policy adopted in 1974 highlighted that immigration into New Zealand in the future would be regulated for the interest of the country. Thus the assisted immigration schemes were abolished in 1975 (Zodgekar, 1997). Entry was largely limited to migrants with skills and qualifications in fields where there was high demand, plus people with close family ties, and on humanitarian grounds.

In 1973 and 1974 a major review of immigration policy was conducted, as a result of public and government concern about the immigration levels. At the same time, economic conditions were deteriorating, and the unemployment rate was increasing. Furthermore, the increased number of permanent and long term arrivals of immigrants had also resulted in pressures on housing, schools and other services (New Zealand Immigration Services, 1997). New policy required New Zealand's capacity to provide employment, housing and community services to be matched with immigration levels. Consequently, a new policy was introduced in 1974. It ended the unrestricted access of British migrants and required them to obtain an entry permit before travelling on the same basis as immigrants from other countries. The assisted passage scheme for British migrants was stopped and strict criteria were applied to subsidised schemes that operated from Britain and some European countries.

New immigration policy required that immigrants into New Zealand would be admitted in accordance with defined criteria where they could assist in promoting stable growth rates in the economy and maintain reasonable increases in living standards. The criteria applied in the selection of immigrants include skills, qualifications, good health, age, family size and their ability to settle satisfactorily in the community. Though the elimination of discrimination was a particular concern of the new policy, this did not imply that migrants from all religions and countries would be accepted.

The new policy, however, stayed unchanged in allowing free entry into New Zealand for people from the Cook Islands, Niue and the Tokelau Islands. The number of Polynesians entering New Zealand seeking employment opportunities during this period therefore increased. It is noted that between 1971 and 1976 Census there was an overall increase of more than 23,000 in the Pacific Island-born population (New Zealand Immigration Service, 1997). The refugee intakes also continued through the 1970s. From the mid 1970s, New Zealand accepted Indo-Chinese refugees in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Since then more than 4,600 Cambodian refugees, 4,000 Vietnamese and 1,200 Laotian refugees have settled in New Zealand.

5.1.4 Immigration Patterns in the 1980s

During mid 1980s, immigration policy was regarded as being nondiscriminatory, selecting migrants on individual merit rather than ethnic origin (New Zealand Immigration Service, 1997). In 1986, the Labour Government reviewed immigration policy and established broad criteria for restructuring the economy and enriching the multicultural fabric of New Zealand society. The review also removed the “White New Zealand Policy” by revoking the rule that gave preference to migrants from “traditional source countries” (such as Britain, northwest Europe and North America). The historic focus on migrant selection according to cultural background was therefore replaced with a focus on recruitment based primarily on the potential for migrants to contribute skills, knowledge or capital to New Zealand.

During the early and mid 1990s, this change has led to historically high numbers of migrant arrivals, and to an increase in the number of countries from which migrants came from. This has resulted in: (1) a rapid growth in the size and diversity of the ethnic sector in New Zealand, (2) a shift in the balance of the ethnic sector from

longstanding communities of settled migrants and their descendants, towards newly arrived and settling migrants, and (3) the increasing geographic concentration of ethnic populations in the major urban cities such as Auckland and Wellington.

5.2 History of Asian Immigration

Asian migration to New Zealand can be divided into four periods. The first period dated from 1865 to about 1900 when Chinese immigrants began arriving in Otago towards the end of the gold rushes. The second period covers the first half of the twentieth century to the end of the Second World War. The third period includes the immigration of Asians into New Zealand during the post war to the beginning of the 1980s. And, finally, the last period involves recent years of Asian immigration from 1986 to 1996.

5.2.1 Asian Migration in the early 1860s

The opening up of the Otago gold fields in the 1860s proved to be the beginning point for Asian migration to New Zealand. During this period, significant numbers of Chinese began to arrive via Australia, in many cases, to work on the gold fields in the South Island. By early 1881, the number of Chinese in Otago had expanded to 5,033 and they very soon established their own communities in the goldfields in Dunedin, or in surrounding townships (Statistic New Zealand, 1995). During this period, however, recession and growing public prejudice against Chinese immigration led to the government placing taxes on Chinese migrants and restricting their numbers.

5.2.2 Early Twentieth Century

From 1900 onwards, gold mining slumped and the Chinese immigrants pursued by other forms of employment. Some Chinese businessmen established themselves in urban areas. Most of them settled in Otago and Westland. However, over time, the Chinese started to enter towns and larger cities elsewhere in the country. By 1916, 42 percent of Chinese were living in Auckland, 34 percent in Wellington and only 16 percent in Otago (Statistic New Zealand, 1995). At this point, the Chinese had become a predominantly urban population. By 1948 the Chinese population in New Zealand was reaching nearly 5,000, as a result of a policy shift in 1939 allowing wives and families of local Chinese to emigrate to New Zealand.

Indian immigration was not significant in this period. Though there are records of isolated Indian travellers and workers in New Zealand as early as 1853, only a small number of Indians had arrived in New Zealand for settlement at the turn of the century. By 1916 there were 181 Indian people in New Zealand, of which only 10 were born in New Zealand. However, hundreds of Indians passed through New Zealand in transit to and from the Pacific Islands, which eventually became the basis of the Indian community in Fiji. Having British nationality, Indian migration to New Zealand was much easier than that of the Chinese. By 1936, there were 1,200 Indians living in New Zealand. Most of these immigrants were Gujarati, Punjabis and Bengali (Statistic New Zealand, 1995).

5.2.3 After the Second World War

By 1951 most of the laws discriminating against Chinese had gone. Family reunification became an important basis for immigration, especially after the 1949 revolution in China. Family groups it was felt gave a more stable social structure to the community (Statistic New Zealand, 1995). Between 1945 and 1966 the Chinese population increased reaching 11,040 people. The number of Chinese in New Zealand also doubled again between 1966 and 1986. However, the numbers of Chinese entering the country were insignificant up to the 1970s. The Indian population also increased rapidly after the Second World War. The number of ethnic Indians population increased from 1,554 in 1945 to reach 3,404 in 1956 (Statistic New Zealand, 1995). By 1966 New Zealand's Indian population had reached 7,275 people.

5.2.4 Asian New Zealanders 1986-1996

The New Zealand Asian population has become more diverse in recent years due to changes in immigration policy in 1986. Furthermore, the new 1987 Immigration Act also enabled a number of Asians to enter as business migrants, particularly Taiwan-born Chinese and Koreans. Family unification has also been a major consideration in granting people the right to enter New Zealand.

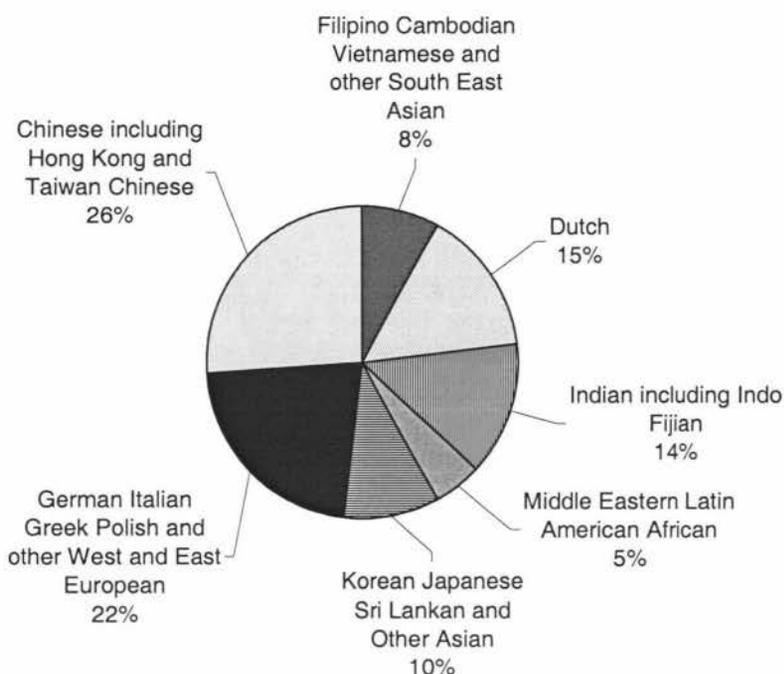
However, Chinese and Indians are still the two main Asian communities in New Zealand. Indians and Chinese were the most significant component in the 55,000

Asian New Zealanders recorded at the 1986 Census (McKinnon, 1996). By 1991, 5 years later, the number of Asians had increased by 45 percent to reach 99,000 people. Of this figure, there were some 45,000 Chinese and around 30,000 Indians. The next largest Asian ethnic groups were Filipino, Cambodians, Japanese, Vietnamese and Sri Lankan.

The Department of Internal Affairs (1999) notes that between the 1991 and the 1996 Census, the number of Asian people living in New Zealand increased substantially. The 74 percent increase in the New Zealand Asian population is due both to the natural increase and immigration. Those who have immigrated here in recent years come from a wide range of ethnic groups with different cultural, economic and social characteristics. Large numbers of people from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea gained permits to immigrate to New Zealand between 1991 and 1996. The Korean population has grown most rapidly from small beginnings. Nearly all the Koreans in New Zealand have settled here during the past five years. Chinese remain the largest ethnic group. In 1991 there were 44,793 Chinese in New Zealand and the increase between 1991 and 1996 Census has been just over 36,600. Indians are the second largest Asian group, where the numbers have increased gradually.

In 1991 different ethnic groups comprised approximately 5 percent of the population. At the 1996 Census, these ethnic groups had risen to 8 percent (Department of Internal Affairs, 1999). Asian groups (including South East Asian) made up 5 percent and other ethnic groups the remaining 3 percent.

Figure 5.1 shows the relative size of main ethnic groups in 1996. Chinese the largest ethnic group accounted for 26 percent of the total New Zealand ethnic population. European migrants (excluding Dutch) made up the next biggest group of 22 percent. Next in order, were the Dutch and Indian (including Indo Fijian) accounted for 15 percent and 14 percent respectively.

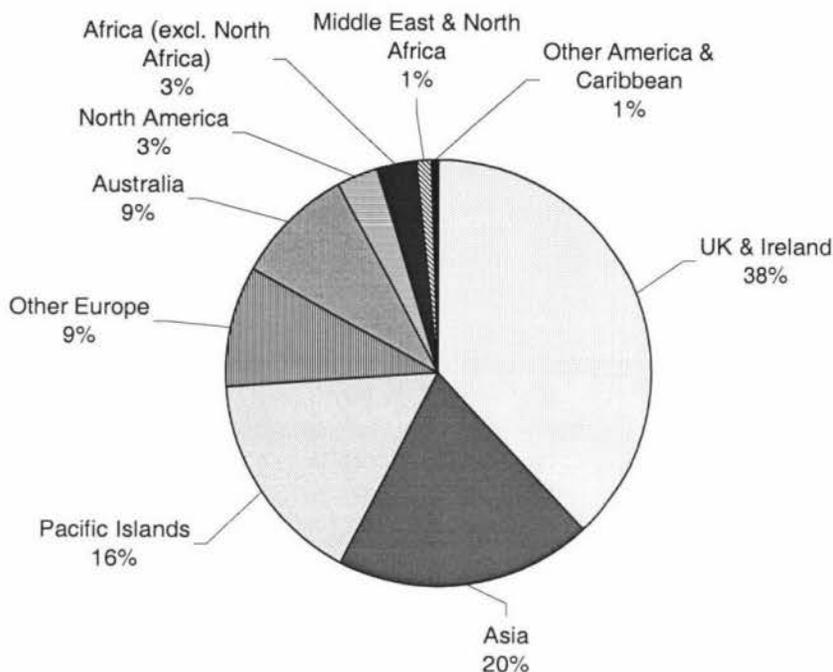


Source: Department of Internal Affairs (1999), Ethnic Diversity in New Zealand: A Statistical Profile.

Figure 5.1 Main Groups of the New Zealand Ethnic Sector, 1996

The pattern of where immigrants have come from has changed over the past years due to the review of immigration policy, refugee intake plus economic and political conditions in New Zealand and overseas. Consequently, this has contributed to the flow of recent immigrants born in Asia, Middle East and Africa. At the time of the 1996 Census, the New Zealand population was recorded as 3,454,425 people. Of this figure, 18 percent were overseas-born.

Figure 5.2 shows that among the overseas-born population in New Zealand in 1996, 38 percent, the largest group were born in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Asia and the Pacific Islands were the next largest groups at 20 percent and 16 percent respectively.



Source: Statistics New Zealand (1996), Census of Population and Dwellings.

Figure 5.2 Birthplace of People Born Overseas, 1996

5.3 Conclusion

Over the past 150 years the number of migrants arriving in New Zealand has fluctuated considerably. Factors that affect immigration patterns include changes in immigration policy, changes in the economic situation, periods of war and other specific events. Immigration policy prior to 1986 was largely restricted to migrants from Britain and Ireland. However, the review of 1986 immigration policy removed the source country preference. These changes over the years have made New Zealand an accessible destination to immigrants from a wider range of countries. Significant trends in immigration in recent years, including a wave of migration from the Pacific Islands, a large increase in the number of Asian immigrants since 1989, and the significant number of people immigrating from the Middle East and Africa. Such migration has resulted in New Zealand becoming more culturally diverse.

Chapter Six

Analysis and Research Findings

The objective of this chapter is to analyse responses from members of the Palmerston North Asian community to the survey questionnaire. The chapter is in three parts. In the first part a profile of the Asian ethnic group in Palmerston North is developed. This profile is constructed from information taken from the 1996 Census of Population and Dwellings¹. It investigates the distribution of key social variables that describe the Palmerston North Asian population, including age sex structure, income, employment status and geographical distribution. The second part compares key variables collected in the survey with those presented in the census findings. The purpose is therefore to provide descriptive insight into how representative the survey respondents are of the Asian population in Palmerston North. The final part of the chapter is concerned with analysing the key research findings from the questionnaire. These findings, and theoretical and historical knowledge from the preceding chapters, are used to address the research questions proposed in Chapter 1.

6.1 Profile of Asians in Palmerston North

6.1.1 Composition of Ethnic Population in Palmerston North, 1986-1996

At the 1986 Census Palmerston North City had a population of 66,381 (Statistic New Zealand, 1996). Of the total population, 57,279 people were of European ethnicity (86.3 percent). The next largest ethnic groups were Maori (8.7 percent), Asian (2.21 percent) and Pacific Island (1.5 percent). By the 1996 Census, the Palmerston North ethnic mix had changed significantly. The number of Europeans has decreased to 55,786 people accounting for 76.3 percent of the total population in Palmerston North. The number of people of Maori and Pacific Islanders had increased to account for 12.7 and 2.3 percent of the population respectively. The number of Asians in the population had also increased. They grew from 1,470 people in 1986 to 3,717 people in 1996, or 5.09 percent of the total Palmerston North 1996 population. Table 6.1 shows a

¹ Results from the recent 2001 Census of Population and Dwellings were not available at the time this dissertation was written.

comparison of 1986 Ethnic groups with 1996 Ethnicity for Palmerston North and the nation².

Table 6.1 Comparison of 1986 Ethnic Group and 1996 Ethnicity for Palmerston North and New Zealand

Ethnic Group/ Ethnicity	Palmerston North		New Zealand	
	1986	1996	1986	1996
European	57,279	55,782	2,650,845	2,594,688
Maori	5,742	9,255	404,775	523,374
Pacific Island	969	1,647	119,370	173,178
Asian	1,470	3,717	47,979	160,683
Other	138	456	3,750	14,667
Not Specified	783	2,238	36,564	151,713
Total	66,381	73,095	3,263,283	3,618,300
Percentage of Asian	2.21%	5.09%	1.47%	4.44%

Source: Statistics New Zealand (1996), Census of Population and Dwellings.

6.1.2 Age Sex Structure of Asian Population in Palmerston North in 1996

The age sex structure of Asians living in Palmerston North is depicted in Table 6.2. This table shows that Asian people were present in all age sex cohorts. The greatest numbers of Asians (both male and female) were aged between 20-29 years. This cohort accounted for 918 people or 24.8 percent of the total Asian population. High numbers of Asians also existed in the 30-39 years age cohorts. Interestingly, low numbers of Asians exist in the 15-19 years cohort. This suggests that many of the Asian families that immigrated to Palmerston North between 1986 and 1996 had very young children. Approximately 20 percent of the Asian population were aged over 40 years old.

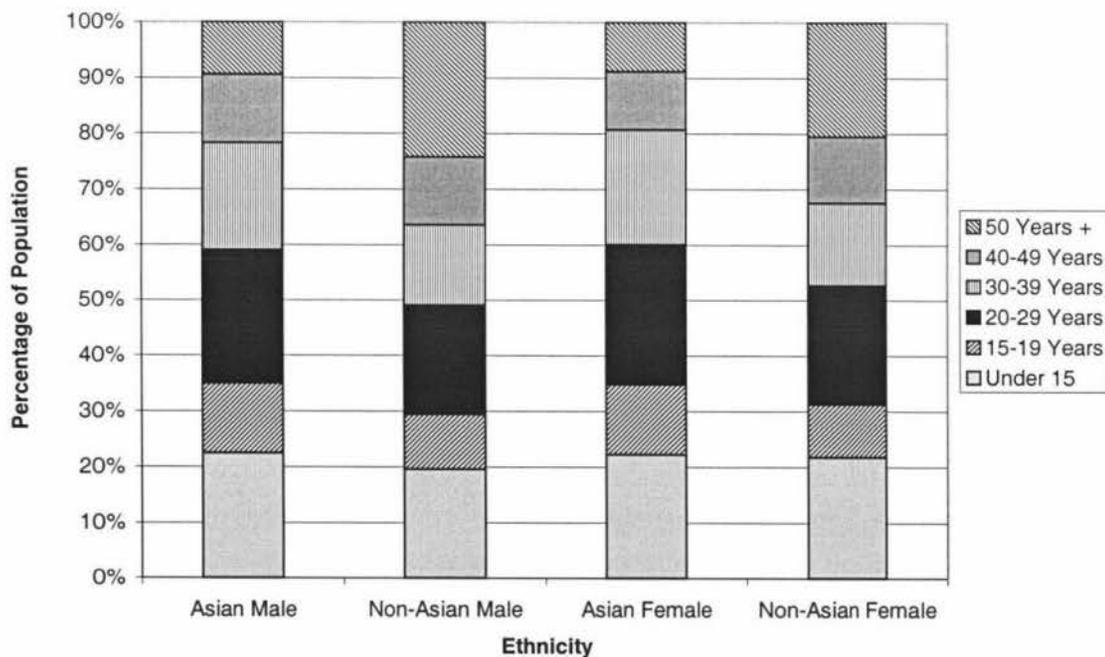
² Differences in statistical definition between "Ethnic Group" and "Ethnicity" mean this data is not strictly comparable. Nevertheless, the conclusions drawn are believed to be reasonable.

Table 6.2 Age Sex Cohort Structure by Ethnicity in Palmerston North, 1996

Age Group	Female	Male	Total
Under 15 Years	423	408	831
15-19 Years	237	231	468
20-29 Years	453	465	918
30-39 Years	363	378	741
40-49 Years	231	192	423
50 Years +	177	162	339
Total	1,884	1,836	3,720

Source: Statistics New Zealand (1996), Census of Population and Dwellings.

Figure 6.1 compares the percentage of Asians in each age-sex cohort with the rest of population (non-Asians) in Palmerston North. This shows that Asians have a younger age structure to that of non-Asians. The under 15 years age cohort accounted for 22.4 percent of the total resident Asian population, slightly higher than the rest of population at 20.7 percent. Asians also have a slightly higher percentage of people in the working age between 15 and 39. There are, however, significantly less Asian residents relative to non-Asian residents aged over 50 years. This group accounted for only 9.1 percent of the resident Asian population compared with 22.3 percent for non-Asian residents.



Source: Statistics New Zealand (1996), Census of Population and Dwellings.

Figure 6.1 Asian and Non-Asian by Age-Sex Cohort in Palmerston North, 1996

6.1.3 Income Distribution of Palmerston North Population in 1996

The distribution of income by bands for Palmerston North residents is depicted in Table 6.3. It should be noted that a cross-tabulated table showing income bands by ethnicity is available from Statistics New Zealand, financial considerations however prohibited the purchase of this data. Only broad comparisons can therefore be made with Table 6.3 in later sections. Table 6.3 shows that approximately 40 percent of Palmerston North residents earn between \$10,001 and \$30,000, while another 33 percent earn less than \$10,000.

Table 6.3 Income Structure of the Palmerston North Population, 1996

Income band	Female	Male	Total
Less than \$10000	11,742	7,524	19,272
\$10001-\$30000	12,945	10,065	23,016
\$30001-\$70000	3,282	7,215	10,509
\$70001 +	186	1,104	1,296
Not Specified	2,106	1,743	3,855
Total	30,261	27,651	57,948

Source: Statistics New Zealand (1996), Census of Population and Dwellings.

6.1.4 Employment Status of Asian Population in Palmerston North in 1996

The Asian population showed high proportions of males and females in self-employed (with employees) category, relative to non-Asians in 1996 (Table 6.4). Similar patterns were also shown in self-employed (without employees) category. Both Asian males and females had a higher percentage of self-employed (without employees). Table 6.4 shows that 20.7 percent of Asians who were actively engaged in employment were self-employed. In relative terms the Asian population also had slightly less wage and salary earners. The census results also shows that there are more Asian unpaid workers in family business relative of the non-Asian population.

Table 6.4 Employment Status by Ethnicity for Palmerston North, 1996

Employment Status	Asian	Non-Asian	Total
Wage and Salary Earner	624	23,231	23,855
Self-Employed (Employees)	87	1,730	1,817
Self-Employed (No Employees)	117	1,998	2,115
Unpaid Family Worker	50	405	455
Not Specified	108	650	758
Total	986	28,014	29,000

Source: Statistics New Zealand (1996), Census of Population and Dwellings.

6.1.5 Distribution of Asian Population by Ward in Palmerston North in 1996

In 1996, there were 3,717 Asian people in Palmerston North. Of this figure, 1,024 lived in the Awapuni Ward. The next largest concentrations of Asians were in the Hokowhitu Ward (767 people) and Papaioea Ward (750 people). The rest of the Asian population lived in the Takaro (628 people), Fitzherbert (436 people) and Ashhurst (113 people) Wards. The Palmerston North City Ward boundaries are shown in Figure 6.2. Figure 6.3 shows the percentage of distribution of Asian population in each Ward.

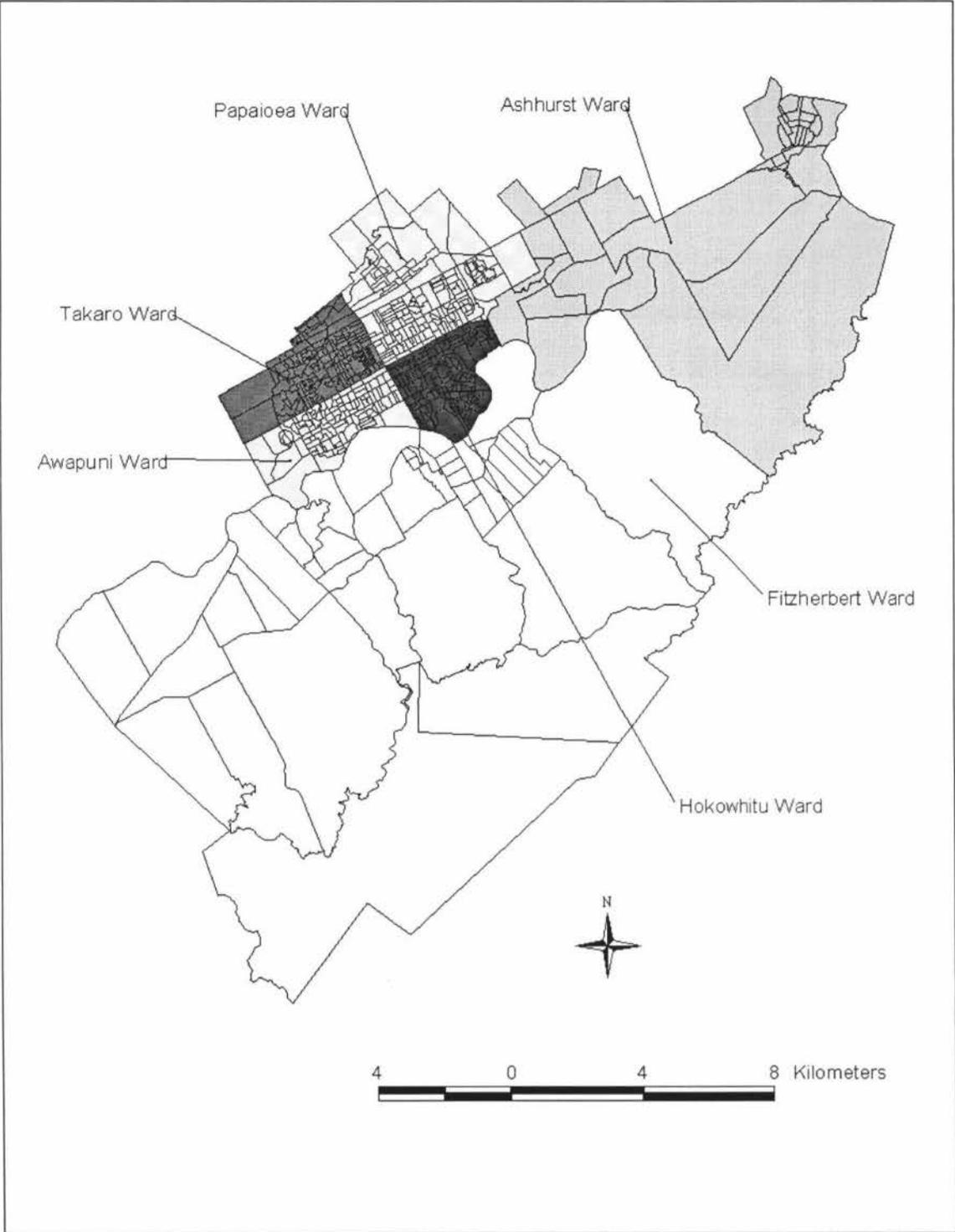
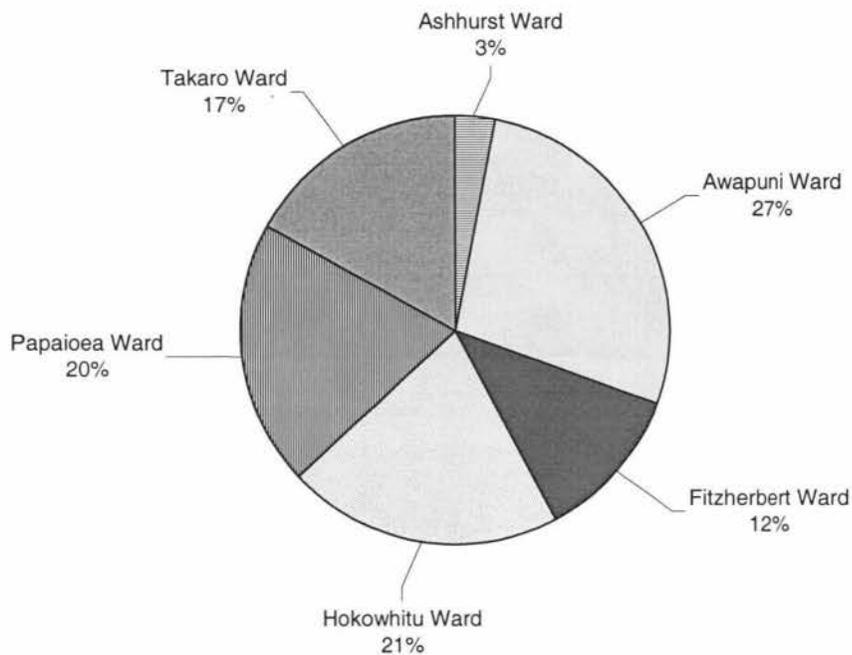


Figure 6.2 Palmerston North City Ward Boundaries



Source: Statistics New Zealand (1996), Census of Population and Dwellings.

Figure 6.3 Palmerston North Asian Population by Ward, 1996

6.2 Profile of Asian Survey Respondents

6.2.1 Ethnicity of the Respondents

The great majority of the respondents who answered the questionnaire were of Chinese ethnicity and came from Mainland China. This group accounted for 38 percent of total respondents. However, the survey also contained clusters of respondents who were from the following ethnic origins: Chinese from Taiwan, Chinese from Malaysia, Tamil from Sri Lanka, Indian, Korea, Thai, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino, and Cambodian. Figure 6.4 shows the mix of Asian ethnicities that answered the questionnaire.

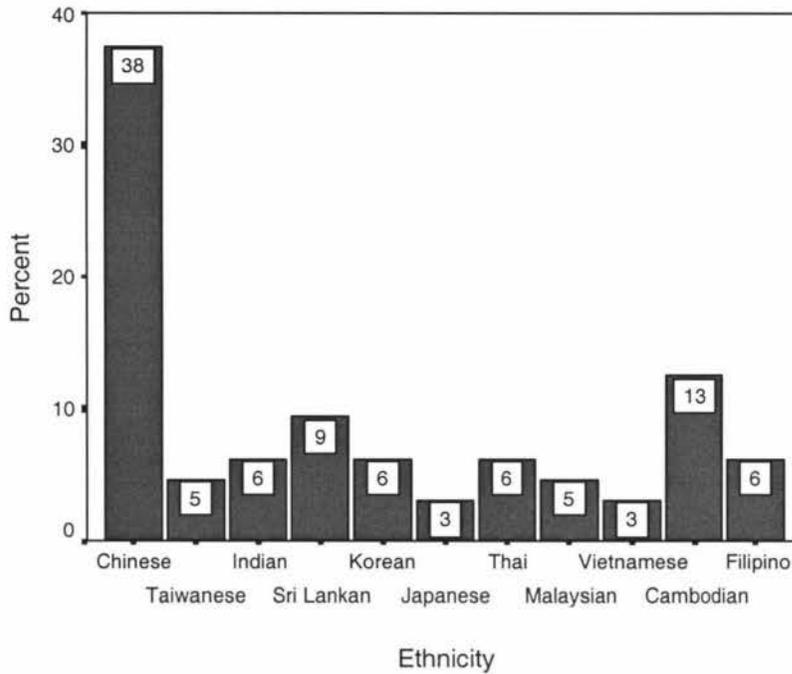


Figure 6.4 Ethnicity of Respondents

6.2.2 Country of Origin of the Respondents

Respondents were asked what their country of origin was before coming to New Zealand. The largest group came from North Asia. The rest were from South East Asia and East Asia respectively. The respondents' countries of origin are presented in Table 6.5. In the North Asia group, 24 respondents were from China, 4 from Korea, 3 from Taiwan and 2 from Japan. In the South East Asia group, 6 respondents were from Cambodia, 4 from the Philippines, 4 from Thailand, 3 from Malaysia and 1 from Vietnam. In the South Asia group, 6 respondents were from Sri Lanka, and 4 were from India. The two respondents of Cambodian ethnicity and the one Vietnamese were New Zealand-born. Therefore, they stated New Zealand as the country of their origin.

Table 6.5 Regions of Previous Nationality and Country of Origin

Region	Country	No. of Respondents	% Share
North Asia	China	24	37.5
	Taiwan	3	4.7
	Korea	4	6.3
	Japan	2	3.1
South East Asia	Cambodia	6	9.4
	Philippines	4	6.3
	Thailand	4	6.3
	Malaysia	3	4.7
	Vietnam	1	1.6
South Asia	Sri Lanka	6	9.4
	India	4	6.3
Other	New Zealand	3	4.7
Total		64	100.0

6.2.3 Age Sex Structure of the Respondents

Most of respondents were aged between 30-39 years, which accounted for 40.6 percent of all respondents (Table 6.6). By comparison, the 1996 Census figures (refer to Table 6.2) indicated that Asians in the 20-29 years age cohort was the largest group, accounting for 24.8 percent to the Palmerston North Asian population. There are two plausible reasons that may explain this discrepancy. Firstly, the number of Asians aged between 20 and 29 has declined, while those in the 30 to 39 age cohort have increased. Given that the 1996 Census results are almost six years out of date this is conceivable due to ageing. Secondly, recent Asian migrants, covering the intervening years since the 1996 Census, were aged between 30 and 39 years old. Neither of the above reasons, however, eliminates the possibility of bias in the survey sampling.

Table 6.6 Age of Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	% Share
Under 20	4	6.3
20-29	17	26.6
30-39	26	40.6
40-49	15	23.4
50 and over	2	3.1
Total	64	100.0

Of the 64 respondents, 36 (56 percent) were female and 28 (44 percent) were male. Compared with the 1996 Census figures (50.9 percent female, 49.6 percent male) this suggests that females were over-represented in the survey results. There were equal numbers of men and women from Sri Lanka, Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Substantially more females than males were from Taiwan, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia and the Philippines. There were more males than females from China. One reason for the higher number of female respondents was that in many instances the women were nominated as representatives to answer the questionnaires.

6.2.4 Income of the Respondents

In response to the question regarding income, the largest group earned less than \$10,000 and accounted for 34 percent of the total respondents. Of this figure, 73 percent were wage/salary earners, 18 percent were self-employed and 9 percent were unemployed but had income. The number of males (12) in this income group was higher than females (10). The next largest income groups were the \$10,001-\$30,000, and \$30,001-\$70,000 brackets respectively. In the income earning group of \$30,001-\$70,000 most were wage/salary earners. The smallest income group was greater than \$70,000 and accounted for only 3 percent of total income earners. In total 27 percent of respondents were retired, students, or housewives. They were categorised as non-income earners because they did not belong to any income earning categories. Table 6.7 shows income of the respondents by sex.

Table 6.7 Income of Respondents by Sex

Income	No. of Male Respondents	% Share	No. of Female Respondents	% Share
Less than \$10,000	12	18.8	10	15.6
\$10,001-\$30,000	4	6.3	8	12.5
\$30,001-\$70,000	6	9.4	5	7.8
Greater than \$70,000	1	1.6	1	1.6
Non-income earner	6	9.4	11	17.2
Total	29	45.3	35	54.7

The distribution of respondents income largely reflected the 1996 Census results (refer to Table 6.3). There was, however, over-representation in the less than \$10,000 income band. Note that no attempts were made to convert 2001 dollars into 1996 dollars i.e., inflation and price changes were not taken into account.

6.2.5 *Employment Status of the Respondents*

Respondents were asked what their employment status was. Wage/salary earners accounted for 50 percent of the total respondents. Of this figure, there were equal numbers of females and males. Of the 20 percent of respondents who stated that they were self-employed 62 percent were male and 38 percent were female. Eleven percent of respondents were unemployed. The rest of the respondents (19 percent) did not belong to any employment status group. They were retired, students or housewives. Table 6.8 shows employment status of the respondents. The number of respondents who classified themselves as wage/salary earners was greater relative to the 1996 Census figures, all other categories were considered reflective of the Census figures.

Table 6.8 Employment Status of Respondents

Employment Status	No. of Respondents	% Share
Wage/salary earner	32	50.0
Self employed	13	20.3
Unemployed	7	10.9
Other	12	18.8
Total	64	100.0

6.2.6 *Distribution of the Respondents by Ward*

At the time of the survey, 29.7 percent of respondents were living in Hokowhitu Ward, 26.6 percent in Awapuni Ward, 21.9 percent in Papaioea Ward, 9.4 percent in Takaro Ward, 6.3 percent in Fitzherbert Ward, and 1.6 percent in Ashhurst Ward. By comparison, the geographical distribution of respondents largely reflects the 1996 Census figures. The exception is the Takaro Ward, which is underrepresented in the survey results. Note that 4.7 percent of respondents did not specify their address in Palmerston North. Figure 6.5 shows the distribution of Asian respondents by ward.

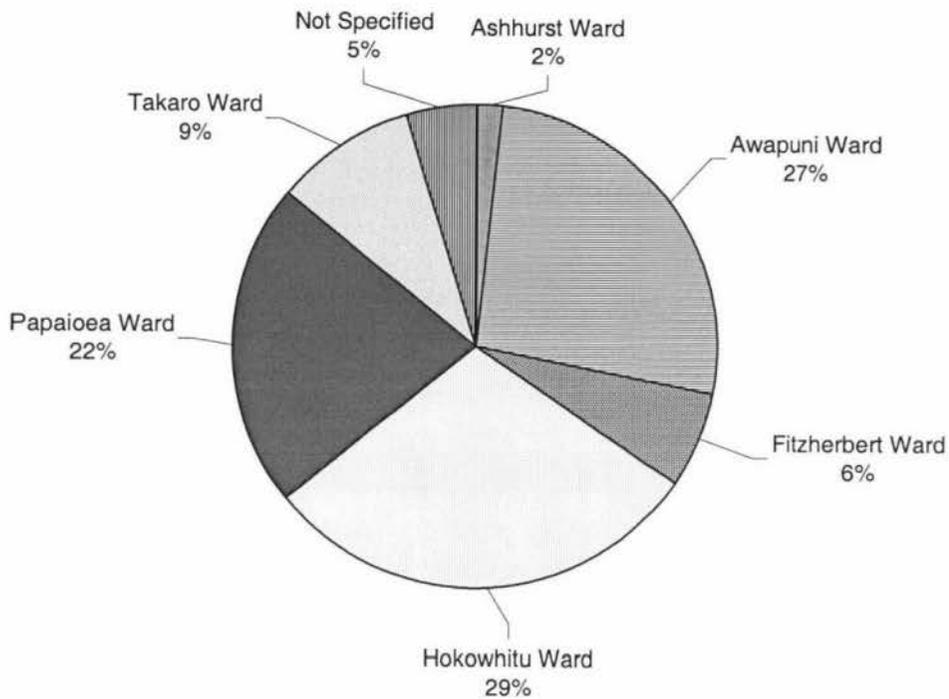


Figure 6.5 Distribution of Asian Respondents by Ward

6.2.7 Years Living in New Zealand of the Respondents

Of the respondents who completed the questionnaire, around 22 percent (14 respondents) have been living in New Zealand less than one year (very recent migrants). Forty percent (26 respondents) have been living in New Zealand between 1-5 years (recent migrants), 9 percent (6 respondents) between 5-10 years (established migrants) and 23 percent (15 respondents) more than 10 years (very established migrants). Figure 6.6 shows the number of years respondents had been living in New Zealand.

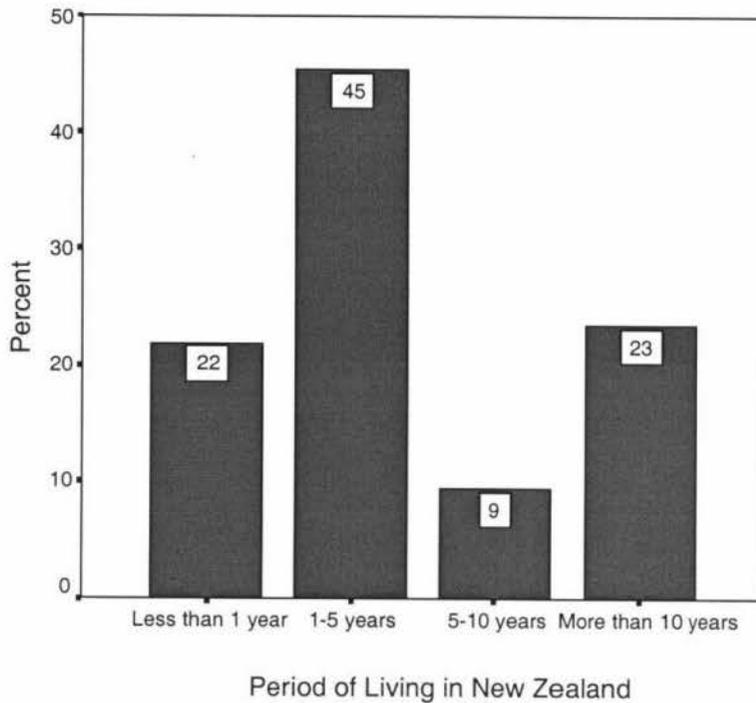


Figure 6.6 Years Living in New Zealand

6.2.8 Reasons Why the Respondents Came to New Zealand

A list of seven possible reasons for coming to New Zealand was provided and most respondents chose more than one reason. The most popular reason, chosen by 39 percent of respondents (25 people) was joining family/relatives. The next most popular reasons were quality of life and environment (27 percent, 16 people) and better standard of living (25 percent, 16 respondents). About 13 percent (8 people) gave the reason of “escaping war and political hardship”. Other reasons given by 11 percent of the respondents included marriage, and better opportunities for education. Table 6.9 shows the number and percentage of respondents choosing each reason. Percentages sum to more than 100 percent because of multiple responses.

Table 6.9 Reasons for Coming to New Zealand

Main Reasons	No. of Respondents	% Share
Joining family/relatives	25	39
Better standard of living	16	25
Better opportunities for children	13	20
Better employment opportunities in NZ	5	8
Quality of life and environment	17	27
Escaping war and political hardship	8	13
Other reasons	7	11

6.3 Research Findings

The key questions addressed by this research are: (1) do the services provided by Palmerston North City Council meet the needs of the Asian community? And, (2) what is the pattern of Asian involvement in local government decision making processes? The first section of the research findings look at the services provided by the Council, the Asian community's evaluation of these services and their suggestions for improvement. In the second section, an analysis of the Asian community's involvement in local government democracy is provided. The survey questions were first analysed using descriptive statistics. Selected responses were, then, cross-tabulated to see whether there was any significant relationship between responses to different questions.

6.3.1 Consider your family needs. How important are the following Council services/amenities to you and your family?

Before assessing whether the needs of Asian community had been met, respondents were asked to consider core Council services and to rank them in order of importance. A list of ten services/amenities was provided. Respondents were asked to rank the degree of importance of each service. The purpose of providing the list of services was also to remind respondents of the types of services provided by the local authority. It was thought that this information would be useful to the respondents in answering later questions. Table 6.10 shows how respondents ranked the services.

Table 6.10 Preference of Services Identified by Respondents

Services and Amenities	Rating of Importance (%)				
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important	Not Specified
1. Community facilities (such as libraries, parks)	69	28	3		
2. Education services	61	31	8		
3. Cultural facilities (such as cultural festivals)	30	52	16	4	
4. Heritage preservation	19	48	20	8	5
5. Employment creation	61	31	3	3	2
6. Council housing	25	39	27	6	3
7. Public transportation	36	42	16	5	1
8. Council communication	30	56	6	6	2
9. Sewage treatment	40	44	11	5	
10. Household rubbish collection	53	25	17	5	

The most important services/amenities provided by Palmerston North City Council according to the Asian respondents was community facilities (69 percent). The next most important services were education services and employment creation, which were equally ranked by the respondents. The least important services according to the respondents were council housing, heritage preservation and household rubbish collection.

6.3.2 Are there any other services/amenities that are provided by the Council that you think are important?

The purpose of this question was to allow respondents to identify other services that they regarded as important, besides those services mentioned in the first question. Most of the respondents answered “no”, as they could not think of any other services. However, about 13 percent of total respondents identified other important services as roading, water supply, recycling, migrant services and pollution control. Maintenance of roading services was the most frequent answer given.

6.3.3 How well do you think the Council provides the above services/amenities?

Respondents were asked their opinion on how effective the Council was at providing core services. Almost half of the respondents considered that the Council provided the services quite well. About 16 percent suggested that they were very satisfied with the services and 33 percent were reasonably satisfied. Only a small number of respondents had a negative response towards the services provided by the Council.

Figure 6.7 shows the opinion of the respondents regarding the Council's effectiveness in providing services.

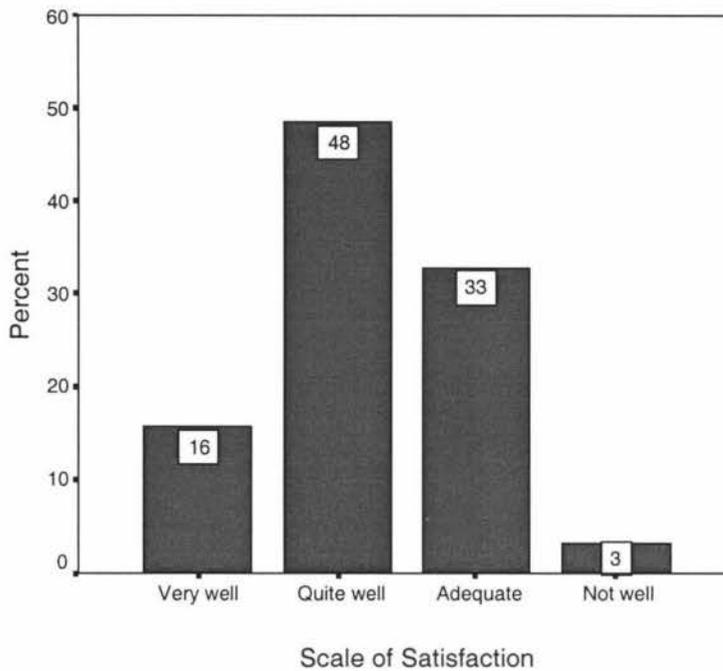


Figure 6.7 How well does the Council provide services/amenities?

6.3.4 Do you think the Council does a good job of meeting the needs of the whole community?

The survey responses show that 43 respondents stated that the Council did a good job of meeting the needs of the whole community, while 10 respondents thought the opposite. Seventeen respondents did not answer the question. Of those that thought the Council did a good job, 25 percent gave the reason that people were able to live comfortably as their basic needs were met. About 35 percent gave the reason that the Council provided good services. Many respondents who gave this reason explained that some of the services provided by the Council (such as libraries) did not exist, or were inadequately provided by the local authority in their home countries. Thirty five percent of respondents did not comment though they agreed that the needs of the whole community were met.

Of the small number of respondents (10) who considered the Council did not do its job well in meeting the needs of the whole community, 3 people claimed that the Council did not provide equally for all communities. They believed that the Council did not adequately provide services (such as roading service) well in poorer areas. Two people said the Council made mistakes in their decision making and another two felt the Council did not adequately support the local economy. The remaining three people did not make any comments. Table 6.11 summarises the reasons given by respondents.

Table 6.11 Reasons Given by Respondents

The Council <i>does</i> a good job of meeting the needs of the whole community		
Reasons	No. of Respondents	% Share
1. People live comfortably as their basic needs are met.	11	25
2. The Council has provided good services.	15	35
3. The Council considers public opinion to improve their services.	2	5
No comments	15	35
Total	43	100

The Council <i>does not</i> do a good job of meeting the needs of the whole community		
Reasons	No. of Respondents	% Share
1. The Council's lack of equity in providing services to all communities.	3	30
2. The Council makes mistakes in their decision-making	2	20
3. The Council does not adequately support the local economy.	2	20
No comments	3	30
Total	10	100

6.3.5 Do you think the Council does a good job of meeting the needs of the Asian community?

When asked if the Council does a good job of meeting the needs of the Asian community, 29 respondents (45 percent) answered "yes" while 23 respondents (36 percent) answered "no". Twelve people (19 percent) did not answer the question. Those who agreed that the needs of the Asian community were met gave two common explanations. Three respondents suggested that the Council supported the cultural

activities of the community. Another nine respondents acknowledged that the Council provided a migrant service centre to support migrants. The migrant resource centre was established by Palmerston North City Council to provide community learning, mentoring and support services for new migrants.

Those respondents who considered the Council did not do a good job meeting the needs of the Asian community had three common reasons. Four respondents claimed that the Council did not provide employment opportunity for new Asian migrants. Around 48 percent (11 respondents) suggested that the Council did not provide adequate funds to support cultural activities and two respondents said there were not sufficient English language classes provided. Table 6.12 summarises the reasons given by respondents regarding whether they agreed or disagreed that the Asian community needs were met.

Table 6.12 Summary of Reasons Given by Respondents

The Council <i>does</i> a good job of meeting the needs of the Asian community.		
Reasons	No. of Respondents	% Share
1. The Council supports cultural activities	3	10
2. The Council provides a migrant resource centre	9	31
No comment	17	59
Total	29	100

The Council <i>does not</i> do a good job of meeting the needs of the Asian community.		
Reasons	No. of Respondents	% Share
1. The Council does not provide employment opportunity for new Asian migrants	4	17
2. The Council does not provide adequate funds to support cultural activities	11	48
3. The Council does not provide adequate English language classes for new Asian migrants	3	13
No comments	5	22
Total	23	100

6.3.6 Do you feel there are any areas in which the Council could improve its services/amenities to the Asian community?

Of the total respondents, 28 people felt that the Council should improve its services to meet the needs of the Asian community, while 21 people suggested they were satisfied

with the services. Fifteen respondents did not answer the question. Of the 28 respondents who suggested the services should be improved, 20 people made suggestions. The respondents' suggestions on the issues needed to be improved are summarised in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13 Suggestions for Improve of Services to the Asian Community

Suggestions	No. of Respondents	% Share
1. The Council should provide more English language courses for new migrants.	2	7
2. The Council should promote cultural awareness for better understanding of Asian cultures and community.	2	7
3. The Council should encourage cultural activities by providing spaces for cultural celebration.	5	18
4. The Council should provide Asian language books and newspaper at the public library.	4	14
5. The Council should employ staff who can speak Asian languages.	3	11
6. The Council should set up Asian language classes for New Zealand-born Asian children to preserve their mother tongue.	1	3
7. The Council should provide employment and training opportunities for new migrants.	3	11
No comments	8	29
Total	28	100

The suggestions expressed by the respondents indicate their cultural needs. Thomas (1995) suggests that the needs of migrant population should not be viewed as an issue for social policy and central government. Because migrants are part of the greater local communities, both political and professional decision making bodies in planning should provide resources to meet their needs.

The respondents considered their cultures important and thus suggested that the Council should promote cultural awareness to encourage better understanding of the Asian cultures. There is evidence that the Council has provided resources to meet the needs of different communities in this issue. Palmerston North City Council, in partnership with the Ethnic Council of Manawatu, has organised the Festival of Cultures annually to celebrate the diverse number of cultures in the city and to promote cultural understanding and awareness (Palmerston North City Council, 2002).

McKinlay (1998) believes that in some areas of services where central government can not adequately reach out to the community, the local authority could step in and get involved on behalf of their citizens. To cater for the need of English classes and employment training, the Council could get involved by offering more ESOL classes and providing employment training through the migrant resource centre. The Council could also lobby central government to provide ESOL services and employment training on behalf of migrants.

Many respondents who made suggestions also wanted the Council to encourage cultural activities, for example, by providing spaces for the celebration of their cultures, providing books and newspapers in Asian languages at the public libraries. Council could also employ staff who could speak Asian languages, or at least provide contacts of Asian representatives in the community who could be contacted, to ease their communication problems when contacting the Council.

6.3.7 Have you, as an individual or as a member of a group, ever approached the Council for help in a particular area?

The purpose of this question is to find out whether respondents have approached the Council for help in any areas, how the Council officers treated them, and whether any language or other form of difficulties existed. Of the respondents, 34 percent (22 people) said they had contacted or approached the Council for help. About 25 percent of respondents (16 people) claimed that they contacted the Council for general services such as paying rates while 5 people approached the Council for help on accommodation issues.

When asked whether the Council officers were helpful, six respondents considered them very helpful and 13 respondents quite helpful. Only three respondents claimed that the Council officers were not helpful. Table 6.14 shows the respondents attitude towards the Council officers.

Table 6.14 Respondents Attitude towards Council Officers

How helpful were the Council officers?	No. of Respondents	% Share
1. Very helpful	6	27
2. Quite helpful	13	59
3. Not Helpful	3	14
Total	22	100

Of the 22 respondents who had approached the Council, 8 people suggested that they had language difficulties, of which 5 considered they had little problems in understanding English. Two respondents suggested that they were not familiar with the New Zealand accent, and 1 person claimed that they could not understand English, but were able to get help. There was no other form of difficulties identified by the respondents. Language difficulties stated by the respondents are summarised in Table 6.15 below.

Table 6.15 Language Difficulties stated by Respondents

Were there any language problems?	No. of Respondents	% Share
1. Little	5	63
2. Not familiar with the New Zealand accent	2	25
3. Cannot understand English, but were be able to get help	1	12
Total	8	100

6.3.8 Have you taken part in any of the public participation activities?

This question aims to find out whether members of the Asian community have participated in any planning decision making processes. These include (1) making a written submission, (2) making a telephone submission, (3) attending a Council meeting, (4) attending a Council consultation workshop. The results showed that the number of respondents participating in these participatory activities was quite low. Five respondents claimed that they made a telephone submission to the Council, while two claimed they made a written submission.

The low number of respondents involved in the Council participatory activities may be explained by limited migrant understanding of the participation process or lack of awareness of the opportunities citizens have in New Zealand for participating in local affairs. To support the ethnic community involvement in public participation and promote understanding of government processes, the Office of Ethnic Affairs has drafted basic guidelines on "Making Submissions" (see Appendix C). The Office of Ethnic Affairs have key responsibilities in providing information services for ethnic minorities (excluding Maori and Pacific Islanders) and providing policy advice to government.

James (2000) suggests that it may not be enough trying to get ethnic communities involved by posting notices of public hearing or meetings of development proposals. Effective outreach may require getting involved with prominent ethnic minority group representatives. To encourage government agencies to engage ethnic minority groups in decision making processes, the Office of Ethnic Affairs has developed guidelines for "Consultation with Ethnic Communities". These guidelines will be available in early 2002.

6.3.9 Did you vote in the recent Council election?

When asked if the respondents voted in the recent Council election, 69 percent answered that they did not vote. About 31 percent of respondents claimed that they did participate in the Council election, however, this percentage was significantly lower than the 38 percent voter turnout of Palmerston North city (Manawatu Evening Standard, 21 February 2002), and the overall voter turnout nationally (estimated at 48 percent by Local Government New Zealand Media Release, February 2002). Those respondents who did not vote gave different explanations that are summarised in Table 6.16.

Table 6.16 Reasons for Not Participating in the Recent Council Election

Reasons for not participating in the recent Council Election	No. of Respondents	% Share
1. Having language difficulties	3	7
2. Do not know how to vote	17	38
3. Do not know the candidates	4	9
4. Not in Palmerston North during the election	5	11
5. Not eligible to vote - under age	2	5
6. Not eligible to vote - not a permanent resident at that time	2	5
7. Lost confidence in democracy	1	2
8. No voting paper delivered to home address	4	9
9. No time, not priority	6	14
Total	44	100

The most frequent reason given by respondents was they did not know how to vote (38 percent, 17 respondents). About 14 percent (6 respondents) claimed that they had no time and voting was not a priority. The next most frequent reason given was they were not in Palmerston North at the time of voting.

Bush (1995) suggests that there are three explanations for the non-participation pattern in local government elections. Firstly, citizens deliberately choose not to participate because they have other priorities. Secondly, citizens want to participate, but are insufficiently informed. Thirdly, citizens want to participate, but they believe that it will make no difference. The reason given by 38 percent of respondents fell into the second explanation by Bush. These respondents were aware they had the right to vote, however, they were not sufficiently informed of how the election process worked. This would indicate that local authorities could improve their communication on the elections to the Asian community. Procedure for voting could be translated into the main ethnic minority languages such as Chinese.

For this question chi-square tests were carried out to see if there was a relationship between length of time respondents have lived in New Zealand and participation in elections. If a significant relationship existed (at the $p < 0.05$ level or 95 percent confidence level), it was assumed that the relationship did not exist through chance. It could then be assumed that the findings from the sample population could reflect patterns in the wider population.

The survey findings show that the pattern of respondents participating in the local government elections was also influenced by the number of years they had lived in New Zealand ($\chi^2 = 10.152$, $p < 0.017$ level). As would be expected, migrants who had spent longer in New Zealand (more than 5 years) were more likely to be involved in the local government election processes. The very recent and recent migrants (living in New Zealand less than 1 year or between 1 to 5 years) showed that their involvement in the political processes of their new country was not a priority. It is probable that other factors such as employment and housing are more important for migrants who have recently arrived.

Testing the correlation between income earnings and participation in the local government election also revealed a significant relationship at the 95 percent confidence level ($\chi^2 = 9.706$, $p < 0.021$). The findings of the survey showed that the respondents with high incomes (\$30,001 to \$70,000) were likely to participate in voting, while the respondents with low income (less than \$10,000) had a lower level of participation.

6.4 Conclusion

The findings of the research show that services/amenities that the Asian community considered important were community facilities, education services and employment creation. In general, the Asian community was quite satisfied with the level of these services provided by the Council. The majority of Asians felt that the needs of the Asian community were met. However, there were suggestions on some possible ways that the Council should improve its services to the Asian community. These included promoting cultural awareness, encouraging cultural activities, and providing more English language classes.

The survey also reveals that in general only small numbers of Asians contacted or approached the Council for help. The main reasons why Asians approached the Council for help included accommodation issues and general inquires. The majority claimed that the Council officers were helpful and that they had not encountered difficulties other than minor language problems.

The research findings indicate that most of the Asians did not participate in the local government decision making processes. This may be explained by their limited understanding of the participation process. Similar results were found for Asian participation in the recent local government election. More than half of the Asians did not vote, the main reason being that they did not know how to go about voting. Other factors also influenced the number of voters in the Asian community. Respondents with higher incomes, and those who had lived in New Zealand for longer periods, showed higher voting rates.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

The culture and racial diversity of citizens has an impact on the planning process in several ways. Firstly, race and culture become factors when assessing public needs. Secondly, the increased demand for recognition of cultural identity by ethnic minorities requires the planning authority to be sensitive to their values, beliefs and aspirations. Thirdly, as different interests and ethnic groups in society compete to influence on planning decisions, the mechanism for citizen participation needs to be modified to accommodate input from all cultural groups.

The increased cultural diversity of the New Zealand population has generated challenges for local government. Different sectors of the community have different levels of need for various services and amenities, and this is reflected in their expectations. Local authorities in New Zealand make a unique contribution to many areas of life in local communities. Local government has an important role as a key provider of infrastructure and services as well as the wellbeing of local communities. As communities today increasingly consist of different ethnic groups, local government has the challenge of meeting new community needs in more diverse social, economic and cultural areas. These combine to contribute to the community's overall wellbeing.

The New Zealand Asian population has become more diverse in recent years due to the changes in immigration policy introduced in 1986. The number of Asians living in major cities in New Zealand such as Auckland and Wellington is now substantial. The growing numbers of Asians in the population of a community raises the challenge of what the local authority could do to help these groups integrate and maximise their quality of life in the communities in which they live. This issue has been researched using the Asian population in Palmerston North as a sample population. This research examines (1) whether Palmerston North City Council provides services that are responsive to the needs of the Asian community and (2) what is the pattern of Asian participation in the local government democracy. The key findings are outlined below.

7.1 Needs of the Asian Community

The research undertaken has shown that in general the needs of the Asian community in Palmerston North were met. Asian people had a positive response towards the services provided by the Council. They had a perception that the Council also provided its services efficiently to meet the needs of the whole community. Though their overall assessment of the Council's services was positive, the Asian respondents made suggestions on possible ways the Council could improve its services to the Asian community. These suggestions, discussed in more detail below, include promoting cultural awareness, encouraging cultural activities, providing more English language classes and enhancing employment opportunities for new migrants.

The Asian community considers their cultural needs important and thus requires the Council to be sensitive to their values, beliefs and aspirations. The results of the survey suggested that the Council should encourage more activities to promote cultural awareness. Council does provide resources to meet the needs of different cultural communities in this regard. It currently organises the Festival of Cultures annually to celebrate and promote understanding of cultural diversity in Palmerston North.

For those Asians who were from non-English speaking backgrounds, the need for English language classes was expressed. Providing English language classes to new migrants is more the responsibility of central government than local government. Community based tuition for people wishing to learn English in their own homes and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are established by central government to support migrants as part of the migrant settlement programme. They are available in most New Zealand cities, through polytechnics, universities and some secondary schools (Department of Internal Affairs, 1996). Nevertheless, these services are only available under selected circumstances.

Though Palmerston North City Council does not directly have a responsibility to provide English language classes or employment training to its residents, however, by setting up the migrant resource centre, the Council does play an essential role in supporting migrant services. Therefore, the Council should take into account the suggestion that more English courses and employment training be offered at the migrant resource centre. Or the Council should advocate on behalf of migrants to central government for

funding to provide these services locally so they can be tailored to meet the needs of new migrants.

As identified in Chapter Three, one of the key responsibilities of local authorities is delivering infrastructure and physical services. However, their responsibilities are moving away from the traditional narrow focus to an increasing emphasis on social development and the wellbeing of people in local communities. While the research found that migrants recognise the provision of facilities as an important role, they would also like to see the Council involved in improving the lives of ethnic minority groups.

7.2 Asian Participation in the Local Government Democracy

7.2.1 Participatory Process

The 1989 amendment to of the Local Government Act (1974) sought to encourage outcomes of increased public participation and decision making at the local level. Section 37K of the Act gives one of the purposes of local government as to provide for “the effective participation of the local persons in the local government”. It guides local government to provide citizens with the opportunity to express their views in government decision making. The legislated avenues, provided by the local authorities to encourage citizen participation include making submissions as part of the annual plan process and the special consultation procedure. Ethnic minority groups, as part of the greater community have an equal opportunity to be involved in these participatory activities.

The research has demonstrated that low numbers of Asian become involved in the formal Council participation processes. This may be explained by their limited understanding of the participation process or lack of awareness of the opportunities citizens have in New Zealand for participating in local affairs. By not participating, the Asians voices and opinions are not heard. Also, as there is no legislation that requires including ethnic minorities in the consultation process, it is unlikely that the Asian community interests will be included in the planning process. To overcome this, the Office of Ethnic Affairs has developed the guidelines “Consultation with Ethnic Minorities” for government agencies to engage ethnic minority groups in decision

making processes. As well, guidelines of making submission are produced to promote ethnic minorities understanding of governmental processes.

7.2.2 Voting

A similar result was found with a low number of Asians participating in local government elections. Local government in New Zealand is a representative democracy. The underlying principle is that voters elect candidates who make decisions for them on their behalf. All New Zealand citizens and residents aged over 18 years are entitled to vote for candidates in the region and district within which they reside.

The survey data revealed that as a percentage of their ethnic group, the number of Asian people who participated in the recent Council election was significantly lower than voter turnout for Palmerston North City and the nation overall. Though most of Asian people were aware they had the right to vote, they were not well informed about how the election process worked. Language difficulties were also given as reasons for not voting in some cases. For those who were recent migrants, involvement in the local political processes of their new country was perhaps not a priority.

7.3 Recommendations

It is now generally accepted that the planning service provided by the local authorities should be fair and have regard to the needs of all groups, including ethnic minorities (Thomas, 1994). The following are suggestions for improving the services to meet the needs of the Asian community based on this research. These include:

- (1) Undertaking research to help establish the needs of the Asian community;
- (2) Examining how planning procedures and policies affect the lives of Asian people;
- (3) Improving communication with Asian people via interpretation services; and
- (4) Making regular contact with Asian community representatives to obtain the views of the Asians towards services provided.

There are also a number of reasons local authorities should consider involving ethnic minorities directly in decision making processes. Firstly, empowering ethnic communities to contribute their opinions assists them to integrate into the local

community. Secondly, enabling decision-makers to be aware of the different interests and needs of various ethnic groups may assist in ensuring that unwanted or inappropriate services are not provided. Thirdly, providing adequate information on participatory activities to all residents and receiving feedback from them enhances local democracy, one of the main reasons of local governments existence.

There are a number of ways in which the Council could improve and promote participation in the local government democracy among Asians. These include:

- (1) Providing information and advice on the local government elections and participation process to the Asian community;
- (2) Inviting Asian representatives to a specific Annual plan discussion;
- (3) Consulting with the Asian community when specific consultations are underway or relevant issues to their community are being discussed;
- (4) Conducting focus groups with the Asian community on relevant issues; and
- (5) Ensuring balanced representation of the Asian members on various boards that have responsibility for deciding planning issues.

The Asian people are part of the greater community. By addressing their needs and encouraging them to participate in the local democracy, the Council would maximise their ability to lead independent, positive and satisfying lives. By developing partnerships with the Asian community, supporting factors that enable them to maintain their cultural identity, and providing them with opportunities to influence the decision making that affect their lives, the Council can develop planning policy and services that are effective and empowering.

Appendix A
Survey Questionnaire

Asian community needs and interaction with Palmerston North City Council

I am Panjama Ampanthong, a Masters degree student of Environmental and Resource Planning at Massey University. As part of my degree, I am undertaking a research project exploring Asian community needs and interaction with Palmerston North City Council.

By completing this questionnaire you give consent to use any information that you have provided. This survey will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. If English is a new language for you, I can assist you in completing this questionnaire.

Your personal information, and the results of this survey, will be treated as strictly confidential. No personal details will be identified in the results of this project.

I agree to complete this questionnaire, in accordance with the conditions spelt out above.

Name.....

Signature.....

Thank you for taking part in this survey.

Needs and interaction questionnaire

1. Consider your family needs. How important are the following Council services/amenities to you and your family?

Services and Amenities	Rating of Importance			
	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Important
1. Community facilities (such as libraries, parks)				
2. Education services				
3. Cultural facilities (such as cultural festivals)				
4. Heritage preservation				
5. Employment creation				
6. Council housing				
7. Public transportation				
8. Council communication				
9. Sewage treatment				
10. Household rubbish collection				

2. Are there any other services/amenities that are provided by the Council that you think are important?

3. How well do you think the Council provides the above services/amenities?

- Very well
 Quite well
 Adequate
 Not well
 Not very well

4. Do you think the Council does a good job meeting the needs of the whole community?

Yes (*why?*).....
.....

No (*why not?*).....
.....

5. Do you think the Council does a good job meeting the needs of the Asian community?

Yes (*why?*).....
.....

No (*why not?*).....
.....

6. Do you feel there are any areas in which the Council could improve its services/amenities to the Asian community?

Yes (*please explain*)... ..
.....

No

7. Have you, as an individual or as a member of a group, ever approached the Council for help in a particular area?

Yes (*please explain, then go to 7(a)*)

No (*go to Question 8*)

(a) How helpful were the Council officers?

Very helpful

Quite helpful

Not helpful

Not very helpful

(b) Were there any language problems?

Yes (*please explain*).....

No

(c) Were there any other difficulties?

- Yes (*please explain*).....
- No

8. Have you participated in any of the following activities?

(*please tick any boxes that apply*)

- Making a written submission to the Council
- Making a telephone submission to the Council
- Attending a Council meeting
- Attending a Council consultation workshop
- Any other form of participation with the Council (*please specify*).....
- None of the above

9. Did you vote in the recent Council election?

- Yes
- No (*please give reasons*).....
.....

Personal Information

10. What is your age?

- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50 and over

11. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

12. How long have you been living in New Zealand?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

13. What is your employment status?

- Wage/salary earner
- Self employed
- Unemployed
- Other (*for example, retired, student*).....

14. What is your income?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,001-\$30,000
- \$30,001-\$70,000
- Greater than \$70,000

15. What ethnic group(s) do you belong to? (*for example, Chinese, Indian, Thai*)

.....

16. What was your country of nationality before you came to New Zealand?

.....

17. What were your main reasons for coming to New Zealand?

(please tick any boxes that apply)

- Joining family/relatives
- Better standard of living
- Better opportunities for children
- Better employment opportunities in New Zealand
- Quality of life and environment
- Escaping war and political hardship
- Other reasons *(please explain)*

.....

18. Where do you live in Palmerston North? *(please specify street address)*

.....

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Appendix B

The Purposes of Local Government Act

Section 37K of the Local Government Amendment Act 1989 states that the purposes of local government are to provide:

- (a) Recognition of the existence of different communities in New Zealand;
- (b) Recognition of the identities and values of those communities;
- (c) Definition and enforcement of appropriate rights within those communities;
- (d) Scope for communities to make choices between different kinds of local public facilities and services;
- (e) For the operation of trading undertakings of local authorities on a competitively neutral basis;
- (f) For the delivery of appropriate facilities and services on behalf of central government;
- (g) Recognition of communities of interests;
- (h) For the efficient and effective exercise of the functions, duties, and powers of the components of local government;
- (i) For the effective participation of local persons in local government.

Appendix C

Guidelines on making submissions

The Office of Ethnic Affairs has drafted this information to provide a basic guide to preparing submissions. We wish to promote understanding of government processes and to contribute to ethnic communities' views being heard and included in changes to government policy.

In New Zealand, submissions are sometimes sought from the general public when changes are being made to policies or to legislation. Submissions are requested to test public reaction and/or so that your views can be included in a new policy.

Sometimes discussion papers are released by government outlining the proposed changes, and usually they include a section that tells you when and where you can make a submission. A closing date for submissions will be included. Sometimes a public announcement in the newspapers is made which includes when and where and by what date submissions are to be received. You may also be asked whether you want to appear in person to present an oral submission.

In the case of changes to legislation this is likely to be at Parliament House in Wellington. If the matter affects Local Government, you may be asked to attend the office of the local authority, (e.g. regional or local council). You need to follow the instructions that will be given by the organisation or the official responsible.

A submission is a way to present your views that may support or oppose the proposal. It can be as short or as long as you like, in the form of a letter, or even a postcard. Sometimes it can be sent by e-mail. (This depends on the instructions that have been given by the people responsible or the specific organisation). A submission can be a detailed description of your opinion with supporting evidence or it can be quite simple. It is better to say why you support or oppose a proposal and to include any suggestions that might be helpful.

Don't forget to sign the submission so people can read your signature. Several people can sign a submission if that is their preference.

Delivering your submission to the organisation responsible can usually be done by post, email, fax or hand delivered.

If you need any further information or help, please contact the Office of Ethnic Affairs:

Wellington: Phone: (04) 495 7200 Fax: (04) 495 7231

Auckland: Phone: (09) 357 6168 Fax: (09) 377 3467

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