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**CHINESE IMMIGRANTS'
EXPERIENCE OF
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
IN NEW ZEALAND**

*A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Psychology
at Massey University*

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ABSTRACT

The present study is a phenomenological study of Chinese immigrants' experience of racial discrimination in New Zealand. The aim is to have an in-depth look at Chinese immigrants' subjective feelings and lived experiences of racial discrimination. The participants were 6 Chinese women and 2 Chinese men ranging in ages from 23 to 62. They talked about a variety of racial discrimination episodes in unstructured interviews. Their overall experience was a sense of being objectified by the perpetrators of racism. The participants felt they were being judged by stereotypes and preconceived conceptions instead of being treated as individuals. They felt marginalised and were sometimes taken advantage of and being denied access to opportunities and resources. As a result, they suffered identity problems, felt a lot of anger and fear, and had lowered self-esteem. The participants used a variety of ways to deal with their predicament. These ranged from open confrontation to avoidance, denial, minimalisation, rationalisation and relying on social support. There was a distinctive difference between experiencing isolated racist attacks and continuous racial harassment. While the effect of isolated discrimination was relatively transient, persistent racism led to feelings of low self-esteem, vulnerability and depression. This study had a cathartic and therapeutic effect for the participants. It also deepened my own understanding and awareness of discrimination. It is hoped that it would enable readers to rethink their attitude towards Chinese immigrants and other minorities.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW

Prejudice and discrimination against outgroup members is one of the oldest of human characteristics. Over the years, many social scientists have studied the experience of racism and its effect and much has been learned. Efforts have been made to change people's attitudes and behaviour to combat intergroup antagonism. However, prejudice and discrimination is still very much alive today. During the last century, some progress has been made in reducing discrimination and promoting egalitarianism. In many western countries, the welfare of women, minorities and disabled people has improved markedly. Laws and regulations have been passed to ensure equal treatment of all individuals. Yet despite such progress, the ethnic genocides in Russia, Rwanda, Cambodia and Bosnia remind us we still have a lot more to learn in order to eliminate interpersonal prejudice and discrimination.

The present study aims to make a unique contribution to that goal. It attempts to take an in-depth look at Chinese immigrants' experience of racial discrimination in New Zealand. Past studies of racism in New Zealand have focused on European's treatment of the Maori population. However, with the sudden influx of Chinese and other Asians in the last decade, there is a need to examine anti-Chinese attitudes and behaviour in New Zealand. The few existing studies on this subject (Abbott, Wong, Williams, Au & Young, 1999/2000; Eyou, Adair & Dixon, 2000) are quantitative in nature and seem to suggest that racial discrimination against Chinese in New Zealand is minimal and its negative effects do not interfere with the victims' abilities to cope with life in general.

The present study looks at the subjective experiences of several Chinese immigrants who have suffered racial discrimination in New Zealand. The purpose is to have a first hand in-depth look at their feelings and reactions. The focus is to read between the lines and interpret what the racist experiences mean to them and how these events have influenced their lives.

Initially, I will quote several definitions of racial discrimination and then arrive at my own understanding of it. Then I will outline some recent researches on the nature, causes and effect of racism and various ways of coping with it. I will look at how and why participants were reluctant to talk about racism. A historical overview of anti-Chinese laws and regulations provides a useful background and context to examining present day interpersonal discrimination against Chinese immigrants. This will be followed by a discussion of the rationale for choosing phenomenology as my methodology. The assumptions and essence of the phenomenological method will be outlined. This will be followed by an outline of criteria for assessing phenomenological studies.

Under the method section, the procedure for undertaking the study will be explained. This includes the recruitment and interview process, and description of how the data was analysed and organised. A small section on reflexivity attempts to look at my own experience of racism, values, attitudes, knowledge and presumptions as potential influences on the present research.

Findings of the study will be presented and discussed in the results and discussion sections. I will examine the participants' perception of discrimination and their experience and feelings of being discriminated against. The perceived effects of racism on their lives and ways of dealing with these consequences will be discussed.

The final section will include an overview of the study and highlights of its findings and their significance. Some suggestions will be made for future research. This will be followed by a postscript, which will cover the impact of this study on my personal outlook and perceptions. I will discuss new insights that I have gained through the process of doing this study.

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Racism

Before looking at the subjective experience of racial discrimination, one needs to be clear on what one considers as racial discrimination. I will initially review several ways of defining racism before I outline my understanding of it. According to Lonner and Malpass (1994), racism includes “the attitudes, practices and policies that result from a belief that skin tone determines attributes on behaviour.” The core of racism is assuming something about somebody solely on the basis of his or her physical features.

Allport (1954) proposed that racism consists of three independent but positively related dimensions: prejudice (defined as hostility toward ethnic minorities), stereotypical beliefs about minorities, and overt discriminatory behaviours toward minorities. Moreover he suggested that interpersonal discrimination exists on a scale from mild to severe forms of expression ranging from avoidance, exclusion and physical attack to extermination.

Duckitt (1993) gave examples of milder forms of racial discrimination as failure to make eye contact or to interact verbally (Bielby, 1987) and failure to respect personal space (Brown, 1981, cited in Lott & Maluso, 1995).

Prejudice and stereotypes come from categorization, the grouping of things or people according to their cultural group and emphasizing the differences between groups and similarities within groups (Sampson, 1999). A journalist Walter Lippmann first used the term stereotype in 1922. He borrowed it from the technical term by the same name meaning printing from a form that reproduces an endlessly unchanging product. Lippmann used the term to refer to the “pictures we carry in our heads about various groups of people.” A stereotype was said to conform “very little to the fact it pretends to represent and results from our defining first and observing second.” (Katz & Braly, 1933, p.68). Stephan (1985) defined stereotype as the way

people deal with differences by forming ready-made judgments about others and then using these judgments to categorize people into social group.

By the 1970's social scientists had developed definitions of racism that distinguished institutional from interpersonal racism. Wilson (1973, cited in Lott & Maluso, 1995) specified three levels of racism: institutional, collective and individual. The present study deals with individual racism, which Wilson defined as "a given person's set of attitudes that members of the minority group are culturally or biologically inferior to the dominant group and therefore should be exploited or discriminated against" (p.34).

In my opinion, racism refers to negative attitudes and derogatory treatment of people of a different race. While the core belief of the perpetrators is that physical characteristics and racial identity determine the way people think and behave, the essence of racism lies in the resulting behaviour of exploitation and mistreatment of individuals one perceives as belonging to an inferior race. Prejudices and stereotypes result in discriminatory behaviour towards minority groups.

Perceiving Racism

Racism can take many forms. It can be blatantly obvious, it can also take more subtle forms where the racial component of the attack is not obvious or when the motives of the perpetrator are not clear. For example, the persecution and extermination of Jews in the Second World War was obviously overt racial discrimination. On the other hand, failure to make eye contact or interact verbally with people of another race are more subtle ways of racism. In this study, the focus is on how the victims perceive discrimination and their experience of it.

What specific factors in a situation prompt the victims to regard the actions as racist? It has been argued that people have prototypes (or expectancies) about discrimination, and new events, which match a given prototype, are more readily categorized as discrimination than are atypical events (Inman & Baron, 1996). Certain perpetrators who are expected to be in power are seen to be more prejudiced than less powerful ones. Rodin, Price, Bryson & Sanchez (1990) found that people

who are white, male, heterosexual and young were seen as more prejudiced than the less powerful people like blacks, females, gays and elderly.

Power is defined as having control over the rewards, punishments and resources for one's own and other groups (Fiske, 1998). Two explanations have been offered for these findings. Inman and Baron (1996) claimed that people have prototypes of racism and argued that when the perpetrator and victim's characteristics match these prototypes, perceivers more readily perceive the actions as discrimination than when the perpetrator and victim do not match these prototypes. The second explanation is that perceivers think a social norm has been violated. Rodin et al. (1990) speculated that racist actions were perceived more offensively when directed at less empowered groups because as these victims start from a more disadvantaged position, such actions harm the victim more. Also the perpetrators are violating the norm of social responsibility that mandates protective behaviours from the more empowered groups.

In this study, the focus is not on what the victims of racism think objectively about racism or how they rationally define racial discrimination. Rather, the emphasis is on their subjective insiders' experience of "felt" emotions and reactions to the impact of racism. In another words, I am interested in finding out what their lived experience of suffering from racial discrimination was like. The goal is to look at how the participants perceived certain actions as racist and what that experience was like for them and what the experience meant for them. Therefore I am not interested in whether the incidents appeared discriminative from a third person's point of view. It is sufficient that our participants saw and felt them as such.

Obstacles in Facing up to Discrimination

When I initially approached potential participants to see if they were interested in being part of the study, to my surprise, the reaction was very negative. When asked directly if they ever suffered racial discrimination in New Zealand, most of them looked as if they were caught off guard and backed away saying, "never!" Some were obviously embarrassed by the question and appeared very uncomfortable. The ones that admitted to having had the experience told their stories hesitantly, with

constant nervous laughs and hesitation throughout their talk to cover up their embarrassment.

Based on my own experience and understanding of Chinese culture and with the support of relevant researches, I propose three possible reasons which create difficulties for Chinese people to acknowledge and face up to the experience of being discriminated. These factors are loss of face, fear of personal confrontation and feeling of failure and alienation. Loss of face is a major obstacle because preservation of face is paramount in a collectivist culture. Having been discriminated against means social harmony has been disrupted and therefore a great loss of face for the people concerned. Chinese people also do not like personal confrontation because it goes directly against their ideal of close personal relationships and a harmonious society. Finally, acknowledging that one has been mistreated racially creates a feeling of failure and alienation.

Loss of face

A growing body of research supports the notion that individuals simultaneously hold two views of self, an interdependent and independent view of self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It appears that members of collective cultures (e.g. Chinese culture) have stronger interdependent images of self than do individualist groups (e.g. Western culture) (Singelis, Bond, Sharkey & Lai, 1999). Interdependent self-images predicted higher levels of embarrassability attributable to ethno cultural group (Singelis et al.). Self-image is conceptualised here as a constellation of thoughts, feelings and actions concerning the relation of the self to others and the self as distinct from others (Geertz, 1975).

Chinese culture is a collectivist culture where personal goals are subordinated to those of the in-group (Triandis, Bontempo, Villarreal, Asai & Lucca, 1998). Also there is an emphasis on norms and perceived duties in guiding social behaviour in promoting harmony. In a collectivist culture, harmonious interpersonal relationships and the ability to adjust to various situations are most important regardless of the immediate costs they entail. In a comparison of informal rules about how people

interact, Argyle et al. (1986, cited in Bond, 1998) found greater endorsement of rules for restraining emotional expressions, preserving harmony and avoiding loss of face in Japan and Hong Kong than in Italy and United Kingdom.

Therefore, under the influence of a collectivist culture, Chinese people find it extremely difficult to face up to racism, which spells disaster for any harmonious interpersonal relationships. Racial discrimination embarrasses Chinese people and makes them suffer severe loss of face. Ting-Toomey (1988) suggested that collectivist cultures are more concerned with preserving “positive face” which consists of “the desire to have one’s presented image approved” (Leichty & Applegate, 1991, p.452-3, cited in Bond, 1998). Face is a broad metaphor encompassing all those behavioural considerations regarded as important in nurturing a relationship or preventing its disruption (Bond, 1998). In collectivist cultures, said Ting-Toomey (1988), saving face achieves the goal of preservation of harmony. For example, face is maintained when an expensive gift is given in exchange for a big favour; or when a Chinese person’s reputation or dignity is maintained.

Embarrassment is usually caused by the concern for how one is being evaluated by others (Edelmann, 1987). Embarrassment results from a concern that people have about their observable behaviour and a desire to conform and please others. A study by Kjellander (1995) suggested self-concealment and distress disclosure among Chinese Americans could be predicted by face concerns. Subjects who reported more face concerns also reported concealing more negative personal information from others. In facing up to racial discrimination, the Chinese participants were made to look less than favourable in others’ eyes because harmonious relationships had been disrupted. Therefore, the loss of face (Cheng, 2000; Kwan & Sadowsky, 1997) is a very probable deciding factor in their reluctance to talk about their experience.

Acknowledging that one has suffered racial discrimination has implications that one has been humiliated, abused or neglected in the hands of people of another race; it also implies one is not coping so well as an immigrant. It is a huge loss of face for the people involved. It is totally out of one’s control and is possibly a life-long problem that will repeat itself over and over again.

Fear of confrontation

Under the influence of Confucianism (Xing, 1995), Chinese people are committed to a society with specific roles and well-established norms governing how people should behave in relation to each other. Close personal relationships and a harmonious society is the ideal. The individuals exist for the benefit of the group. Group pressure is applied to ensure conformity through eliciting shame (losing face) and conflict is generally handled through intergroup mediation. As the Chinese philosopher and writer Lin Yu Tan claimed, the true end of life lies in the enjoyment of a simple life and in harmonious social relationships (Xing, 1995). Therefore any interpersonal friction and confrontation is frowned upon in Chinese society and is to be avoided at all costs.

Tolerance, forbearance and forgiveness are virtues of the “gentleman” (the ideal person), the model that all Chinese people aspire to. Pacifism, contentment, calm and strength of endurance distinguish the most coveted virtues (Xing, 1995). So to acknowledge that one has conflicts with another even if one is being victimized is going against the grain of “keeping the peace at all costs.” Also there is a Chinese saying that goes, “Good news does not leave home, but bad news travels a thousand miles”. Chinese culture frowns upon airing one’s dirty laundry in public. It is considered more prudent to keep the problems to oneself. So to talk about the excesses of prejudice and racism is like broadcasting bad news to the world, a definite social taboo.

Sense of failure

Confessing that one has been discriminated against separates oneself from other Chinese people and other New Zealanders. It emphasizes one’s foreignness and exaggerates one’s feeling of alienation that ordinary migrants already feel as a result of settling in a foreign country. Studies on migrants (Eyou, Adair & Dixon, 2000) indicated Chinese migrants who felt separated and marginalized had lower self-esteem than ones who were integrated into the mainstream society. These experiences separate oneself from other Chinese people who have not suffered a

similar predicament. As a result, the humiliation and suffering that these people endure are magnified in their eyes.

At the same time, the implication of having suffered discrimination is that one is not coping so well as an immigrant. This casts doubt upon the wisdom of one's life-changing decision of uprooting from one's homeland, giving up one's home, career and friends for a supposedly better future.

Effect of Racism and Strategies to Deal with Racism

Numerous studies on the effect of racism point to very negative consequences for the victims of racial discrimination. Lonner and Malpass (1994) wrote about the confusion, uncertainty, depression, anxiety and interpersonal difficulties that individuals suffer after discrimination. Clark and Clark (1939/1952, cited in Lonner & Malpass, 1994)'s studies on black children suggested that one of the effect on a person's identity of being the target of racism being observed early in life was self-denigration and rejection. According to some researchers, it is difficult to establish or to maintain a positive self-image when one is living in a society that has systematically devalued and denigrated one's social group. One tends to see oneself through disparaging eyes, mirrored by people who have negative views of one's own group.

Minorities often develop strategies for dealing with the difficulties of being not quite full-fledged members of mainstream society. According to Sampson (1999), they use strategies of assimilation, alternation and multiculturalism. Assimilation refers to the attempt to join the dominant group's culture by abandoning one's home culture. This often results in "racelessness" and other negative consequences for the individual. Others resort to alternation, which allows them to move back and forth between two different identities but resulting in commitment to neither.

Multiculturalism is the ability to take a mature view of oneself as a member of one's group while not rejecting the dominant culture's values.

Ponterotto and Pederson (1993) proposed a theory of stages which people are said to pass on their way to an achieved ethnic identity. Stage one involves identification with the dominant social group. Stage two involves the active questioning of the “stage one” self. Individuals challenge their former preferences and begin a search for something in themselves they can feel good about. However, they also experience confusion, anger and embarrassment. During stage three, they commit to their minority identity and fully immerse themselves in the minority culture, at the same time rejecting values and norms from the majority group. At the last stage, individuals resolve a double identity. This bicultural identity enables the individuals to cherish their minority values without rejecting the white world.

Therefore it seems reasonable to expect that our participants’ experience of racial discrimination will have detrimental effects on their self-esteem and self- image. Depending on the specific stage of ethnic identity an individual is in, he or she will react to racism in a different way. For example, individuals who are fully committed to their minority status and rejecting values from the majority group (stage 3) will possibly embrace their home culture more for protection and support. However, people who are trying to identify with the dominant social group (stage 1) will probably double their efforts of doing so after suffering discrimination.

Based on people’s level of acculturation in their home culture and their degree of immersion in the majority culture, they will use different ways to deal with discrimination. Assimilation and alternation are possibly more popular coping strategies whereas multiculturalism requires a successful integration of dominant and minority values and may require more maturity and life experience.

Historical Background of Anti-Asian Discrimination in New Zealand

In the nineteenth century, Chinese had been coming into New Zealand as market gardeners and gold miners, but between 1881 and 1920, they were persecuted and efforts were made to restrict their immigration. The Chinese Immigrants Act (1881) required every immigrant Chinese to pay a ten-pound poll tax and placed a quota of one Chinese per ten tons of cargo on ships carrying any Chinese immigrants. The

poll tax was increased to one hundred pounds and the quota was further restricted to one Chinese person for every two hundred tons of cargo by the Chinese Immigration Amendment Act of 1896.

Many anti-Chinese discriminatory laws and regulations were in effect during that time. The Chinese Marriages with Europeans Act 1888 required an annual return to be submitted before Parliament showing the number of Chinese in the colony who were married to European women, the number of half-caste Chinese children in the colony and the provincial districts where the half-caste children were living. The Old-age Pension Act 1898 excluded all Chinese and other Asians from receiving the state pension. The Consolidated Statutes Enactment (Immigration Restriction Act) 1908 provided that no letter or certificate of naturalisation should on any grounds be issued to any Asian or Chinese and that all Chinese immigrants and residents seeking re-entry permits were to be finger-printed because all Chinese look alike. Until 1952, Chinese were not able to become New Zealand citizens.

The 1964 Immigrants Act was the first immigration act that was not racially biased. Starting from 1991, there was a sudden increase of Chinese and other Asian immigrants into New Zealand. In 1995, 37% of immigration approvals were Chinese: 22% from Taiwan, 9% from China and 6% from Hong Kong (Legat, 1996). About 80% of the Asians settled in Auckland resulting in crowded schools with inadequate funds to teach immigrant children English. Because of Chinese people's traditional emphasis on a good education, the new immigrants enrolled their children in the prestigious eastern suburbs schools, causing a sudden rise in the number of Chinese students. Also, universities had difficulties coping with students whose English literacy skills were substandard. The conspicuous consumption of some wealthy Taiwanese and Hong Kong people brought on a lot of envy from the European residents.

However, there were some positive consequences from the sudden influx of Chinese immigrants. Unemployment during the same period fell from 11.6 per cent to 6.1 per cent. More people meant more retail activity and, although immigrants took jobs, they also created jobs by increasing the size of the market. Hundreds of trades people, real estate agents, car dealers, retailers and construction material suppliers

would have benefited from the flow-on effect of the new residents and the construction boom in East Auckland. According to the New Zealand Immigration Service, new immigrants under the business investment and general investment categories brought a total of \$722.6 million worth of investment capital in 1995 (Legat, 1996).

In the mid 1990's, there was a wave of anti-Asian feelings among the general public. Former Member of Parliament, Michael Laws, referred to some immigrants as "parasites"; others like politician Winston Peters complained that Asian immigrants steal Kiwi jobs. Common complaints about Asian immigrants were their flashiness, expensive cars, huge houses and conspicuous consumption. Newspapers and magazines during this time told of many instances of racial discrimination against Chinese and other Asian people. Mai Chen, a Chinese lecturer in law at Victoria University, recounted her experience:

No matter how much I achieved, it could never provide full protection from discrimination for me and those I loved. No amount of education, achievement and acculturation can make you legitimate, because some people do not respect achievements. All they can see is the colour of your skin (McLeod, 1993).

Thus discrimination against Chinese has a long history. Decades of institutional racism against Chinese in New Zealand meant that Chinese people had been treated more as commodities than human beings. They were denied state benefits and their numbers were heavily restricted. Many lived in squalid conditions on the outskirts of communities, barely integrated into the community. It is therefore not surprising that stereotypes and negative preconceptions of Chinese prevailed until the present. As a result, xenophobia and interpersonal racism are still prevalent.

Purpose of the Present Study

The present study aims to have a more thorough and in-depth look at the subjective phenomenon of racial discrimination. Its goal is to create a better understanding of what it means to be discriminated against racially. The focus is on how the victims

felt; how they perceived and reacted to racism; how their lives were affected and how they managed to deal with the impact.

In the long run, I hope this study will increase the general public's awareness of the reality of racial discrimination. It is hoped that individuals not normally exposed to racism can get a "feeling" of what it is like to be on the receiving end of subtle and overt racism and thereby have more empathy and compassion for Chinese and other minorities in general. The present study also provides a platform for a small number of Chinese people to air their grievances, express their concerns, and voice their fears and distress. By reading their narrative accounts, other individuals who have suffered a similar plight would be able to identify with their experiences and feel that they are not alone in their suffering.

I hope to present the participants as breathing feeling individuals who have their own stories to tell and thus demystify the stereotypes that white New Zealanders may hold about Chinese people. It is hoped that the present study can further understanding between the two races and help to remove barriers between the two cultures.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Interpretive Phenomenology

I chose phenomenology as my research methodology because I feel it is more appropriate for studying human behaviour and practices. Phenomenology is one of the qualitative research approaches that have been emerging during the last 20 years or so. It developed as a protest against reductionism because some felt human behaviour could not be adequately studied using traditional scientific methods. Traditional science, in reducing human experience to “constructs” and in only recognizing sense data, aims for simplicity and economy. Phenomenology, on the other hand, aims for rich description, meaning and understanding (Munhall, 1994).

According to Giorgi (1995), phenomenology is the “actual grasp one has of the real things and events that exist in the world, to understand them as experienced events”. It is a way of thinking and looking at objects and events whereby we correlate the phenomenon consciousness with the presentation of the object and not with its objective reality. The assumption is that reality is not objective and “out there”, but a socially negotiated and agreed upon reality among people in a particular culture and time. This reality is ever changing (Benner, 1985). Its nature depends on the perspective of the individual, which in turn depends on the social interaction that helped define their particular world. Therefore, in a research, the researched and the researcher help to negotiate the truth of an agreed upon reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Phenomenology is the study of the world as people immediately experience it. It involves paying attention to details and seemingly trivial aspects of everyday lives and seeing the significant and unique in the taken for granted. The aim is to grasp the essence and meaning by studying the particulars, as they are experienced.

Munhall (1994) stated, “the aim of phenomenology is understanding the meaning of being human” (p.173). Phenomenological research begins with naturally occurring everyday life as it is lived (Van Manen, 1990) and aims at having a deeper understanding of the nature of that experience. The goal in phenomenology is to reflectively interact with retrospective accounts or dialogues to gain insights and understanding about why certain aspects of experience were significant enough to be brought to notice (Van Manen, 1990). In deciding the essential quality of an experience, one’s focus is to discover aspects that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is.

The focus is not on facts but what the experience was like. Phenomenology allows more direct access to experience through trying to understand why certain things mattered or what meanings they held for the person. The researcher uses data as clues for hidden meanings. The meaning is concealed because it is so pervasive and taken for granted. Therefore, the objective is to open up the phenomenon for clearer viewing and to increase awareness of the possible meanings of that experience for the person living it.

The aim of phenomenology is to go beyond cultural layers of meaning to a new interpretation of events. Phenomenologists believe meaning is socially constructed. People assume the way they see things is the way things are and they add layers of interpretation on top of each other (Crotty, 1998). These processes can prevent people from seeing what is going on. Therefore, phenomenologists aim to put aside personal pre-suppositions and cultural meanings (Van Manen, 1990) to look at the original encounter of subject with object, trying to experience the encounter afresh.

Using phenomenology, one is aiming at an insiders’ point of view as opposed to an outsider’s view provided by quantitative techniques. By interpreting the meanings of people’s actions, one gets direct access to understanding what it means to be in the world. It aims at having a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of everyday experience. It aims to change lived experience into a written expression of its essence, so that a meaningful experience is reflectively relived and understood.

Because people are fundamentally self-interpreting beings for whom things have significance, understanding human actions always involves an interpretation by the researcher of the interpretation being made by those persons being studied. As Gadamer (1986, cited in Van Manen, 1990) said, “When we interpret the meaning of something we actually interpret an interpretation” (p.68).

Many versions of phenomenology have been proposed by various theorists, for example, Husserl (1931), Heidegger (1927/1962), Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), just to name a few. In the present study, I have chosen to subscribe to Van Manen’s approach to phenomenology. I found the outline of his method very comprehensive and relatively easy to follow. Also his explanation of the epistemological position was very convincing.

Van Manen (1990) suggested phenomenology allows people to have a more tactful and thoughtful practical engagement with the phenomenon being studied. In showing up meanings that arise out of the lived experience, phenomenology creates new possibilities for understanding human experiences. Phenomenological analysis according to Van Manen (1990) involves the following steps:

1. Focusing on a phenomenon which interests us.
2. Studying experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualise it.
3. Reflecting on the core themes which distinguish the phenomenon.
4. Describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting.
5. Keeping a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon.
6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.

The methodology of phenomenology is a “carefully cultivated thoughtfulness” rather than a technique. Phenomenology has been called a method without techniques. The methodology requires a going back and forth among the different levels of questioning. To be able to do justice to the complexity and ambiguity of the lived experience, writing is a process of rewriting (re-thinking, re-flecting, re-cognising).

This process of writing and rewriting aims at creating depth, building multiple layers of meaning, thus revealing certain truths while keeping a sense of ambiguity. It is

like the artistic process of creating an object of art that has to be approached again and again, going back and forth between the parts and whole to arrive at a masterpiece that reflects the personal signature of the author.

There are three essential elements in the methodology of phenomenology. Firstly, it involves investigating a particular phenomenon using the process of phenomenological intuiting, analysing and describing. The intuiting of a phenomenon involves intense concentration on the phenomenon while still keeping a stance that allows critical analysis. Phenomenological analysing involves a systematic examination of the structure of a phenomenon. Description focuses on essential characteristics of the phenomenon and sifts out and leaves behind that which would distract us from the understanding of the essential experience.

In this study, the phenomenon of interest is Chinese immigrants' experience of racial discrimination. Focus and concentration is centred on the participants' experiences of racism as they were lived. At the same time, I am aware that my personal experience of racism, my values, preconceptions, upbringing and academic background exerted influences on the interpretation of the results. By uncovering aspects of my reflexivity, I hope to be able to maintain a stance that permits critical analysis of the findings.

Phenomenological analysing involved a step-by-step look at how the participants perceived racism, how they reacted and coped with it. Description emphasized the main features of the phenomenon, which included how participants defined racism, their overriding sense of objectification, their emotional reactions and their ways of coping.

The second element involves identifying the essence of a particular phenomenon. This begins with an in-depth study of particular examples of the phenomenon. By identifying what the exemplars have in common, one can grasp unifying themes that are essential to the examples being an example of the phenomenon. Another way to identify essences is to assemble related examples based on how similar they are to each other and see which naturally belong together. The "common ground" of the examples that group together is an "essence" of the phenomenon.

This second element was accomplished by identifying instances which highlighted various themes. For example, the common theme of participants fighting back against their attackers was extracted and labelled as confrontation. Also, it was noted that the experience of encountering isolated incidents of racism was markedly different from that of pervasive discrimination.

The third element of the phenomenological method involves grasping the meaning of the essential relationship both within and between essences. The focus is whether each component is essential to that essence for it to still be the essence as it is identified.

Applying this technique to the present study involved examining how participants' feeling of being objectified pervaded their overall experience of being discriminated against. The essential component of this essence included the perception of oneself as a unique individual, the feeling of being treated as a stereotype, and the feelings of anger, frustration and humiliation at being treated as such.

Use of the Interview

In phenomenology, the interview serves very specific purposes. Kahn and Cannell (1957, p.16) defined interview as "a specialized pattern of verbal interaction.... initiated for a specific purpose and focused on some specific content area". It is a means for exploring and collecting experiential narrative data for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human experience. Intensive interviewing with the aid of an interviewer guide can be extremely effective in capturing the participant's perspective (Lofland, 1974).

The interview is also a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with the interviewee about the meaning of an experience. The semi-structured interview allows the freedom to obtain depth of information (Polit & Hungler, 1987). Anderson and Jack (1991) believed that interviewing provides an opportunity for listening attentively to what is not said, and intentionally probing the meaning of narrative accounts.

Discovery and interpretation are critical to the interview. As Kvale (1988) explained, the participant discovers new patterns and relationships while talking. The interviewer interprets and reflects back what is heard, summarizing information. The interviewer is an active participant in the process and without him or her present, the space would not be created for the narrative. Interview questions are flexible, responses are individualized and emphasis is placed on depth of information and subsequent analytic techniques.

Kvale (1996, p.1, emphasis in the original) explained succinctly the role of the qualitative research interview as follows:

The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations. The qualitative interview is a construction site of knowledge. An interview is literally an *inter view*, an inter/change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest.

Narrative accounts are considered the best way to get the "lived experience" in a direct, pre-reflective way. For some participants, stories may be told for the first time, whereas others may have told their story many times before (Benner, 1994). Each interview is influenced by the choices of what they say, depending on their mood, what sort of day they have had and how they feel about the researcher. No one precise story exists, but rather multiple stories that are shaped by the particular clearing created by the interview situation (Benner, 1994).

Therefore the interview is a very important and useful vehicle, not only to initially engage the participants, but also to elicit subsequent narrative experiential information about their lived experiences. It is a very flexible format that allows for opportunities for deep exploration of specific issues of interest. It is an excellent way of getting the participants' perspective of their experiences.

Criteria for Evaluation

Traditional ways of evaluating the quality of quantitative research are not applicable to qualitative approaches because the latter are based on different assumptions. It is inappropriate to measure reliability and validity of an interpretive account because there is no such thing as an interpretation-free and objectively free account (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). Researchers acknowledged that it is impossible to guarantee absolute accuracy and generality (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992), but suggested there are methods of evaluating the quality of quantitative research. These ways of monitoring and assessing the worth of particular studies served as guidelines for the design and procedures of this study.

Different research writers proposed various criteria for evaluating phenomenological research. Munhall (1994) proposed “one P and 10 R’s” as appropriate criteria. (the phenomenological nod, resonancy, reasonableness, representativeness, recognisability, raised consciousness, readability, relevance, relevativeness and responsibility). Burns (cited in Munhall, 1994) proposed descriptive vividness, methodological congruence, analytical preciseness, theoretical connectedness and heuristic relevance.

I find the above criteria too broad and vague. I have decided to choose four different guidelines drawn from various researchers to evaluate the present study. These include resonance, accessibility to the readers, plausibility and consequences for one’s life.

A good phenomenological description resonates with our sense of lived life. Buytendijk (1987) referred to the “phenomenological nod” as a way of showing that a good phenomenological description is something we can nod to, recognizing it as an experience we have had or could have had. A good phenomenological description is thus validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience.

Accessibility to the reader is also very important in a phenomenological account. Meanings of narrative experience are worthless if they are not communicated to the

readers in a clear and effective manner. Readers need to fully understand and grasp the essences of the meaning of the lived experiences.

Taylor (1985) argued that plausibility is the ultimate criterion for any interpretive explanation. Readers need to recognise the possibility of a certain experience actually happening. Guignon (1983) talked about the “measure of truth” of an interpretive account:

The measure of truth of Heidegger’s phenomenology is not whether it offers us a correct representation of who and what we are; [rather it] lies in the way our lives are enriched and deepened through these descriptions... The description is measured not by criteria of correctness, but by criteria pertaining to its consequences for our lives (p.250).

Reasons for choosing these criteria for evaluation are based on the basic assumptions and aims of phenomenology. Since reality is a socially negotiated agreement between individuals, a valid interpretive account needs to be perceived and accepted as something the readers can recognise in their phenomenological world. Accessibility to the readers means readers can readily participate in the phenomenon in question. Plausibility means that readers find it easy to accept and believe in these lived experiences. Lastly, since one of the main aims of phenomenology is to enrich and deepen people’s life experiences, the “measure of truth” is a logical way to assess how well the study has been done.

Phenomenology is not without its limitations. It requires commitment and plenty of time. Also the researcher’s preconceptions and biases must be acknowledged as clearly as possible. Some people have criticized interpretive work for being biased toward the researcher’s knowledge and experience and for not being true to the participant’s lived experience (Tripp-Reimer & Cohen, 1987). However, the risk of biasing exists in all human sciences. Phenomenology tries to address this risk by remaining close to the data and by uncovering biases for scrutiny.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Participants

Initial attempts to engage potential participants for this study through family and social network were unsuccessful. As soon as the topic of racial discrimination was introduced, most Chinese people abruptly ended the conversation, saying they never experienced any racist treatment and politely declined to participate in the study.

However with persistence, I found eight Chinese people aged from 23 to 62, six women and two men who were willing to talk about their experiences. Four of them were contacted through family friends and acquaintances. The other four were contacted through the Asian Health Support Services at North Shore Hospital in Auckland. The only criteria was that they had to be Chinese people living in New Zealand who had encountered racial discrimination and who were willing to talk about their experiences.

T and M were both born in New Zealand. They went to university together. At the time of the interview, T was working full-time while M was finishing a Master's degree. T's parents were from Singapore. M's mother was from Singapore and her father was from China. One of the male participants, E, came from Hong Kong and had lived in New Zealand for seven years. E decided to retire when his brief attempt to set up a business failed. The other male participant, H, was from Taiwan and had lived in New Zealand for three years. H was also retired because his inability to speak English prevented him from getting a job in New Zealand. A and C were both homemakers and had been living in New Zealand for four and ten years respectively. L and V both had been working part-time. L had lived in New Zealand for thirteen years while V had resided here for eight years. A, C, L and V all came from Hong Kong.

Procedure

The discriminatory events they encountered included both covert and overt instances. I endeavoured to look at their narratives of these events and uncover the way they interpreted them. Also I looked at what these experiences meant to them and how these events impacted on their lives. The focus was on the essence of their “lived experiences” of racism.

Potential participants were initially contacted by telephone. Over the phone, I explained briefly the purpose and procedure of the study and tried to gauge the individual’s interest in participating. A meeting was then arranged with the people who were interested in participating in the study. They were offered the option of meeting in their own home, office, at my home or any other venue they suggested.

Two participants wanted to meet at their homes; one met me at my home; and another one met me at her office. The other four participants met me at the office of the Asian Health Support Services. At the meeting, I outlined the purpose and procedure of the present research and discussed the points made in the information sheet (Appendix A). The information sheet and consent form were translated into Chinese for the convenience of the participants. I invited questions regarding the study and answered them to the participants’ satisfaction.

It was explained to them that the research aims to have an in-depth look at racial discrimination of Chinese people in New Zealand, and that it will take the form of an informal interview, which will be tape-recorded. After queries from the participants were answered, their informed consent was sought and their rights to confidentiality explained to them. They were also assured that they could refuse to answer any questions during the interview and could terminate the interview at any time. They were also told that their identities would only be known to me. The participants then signed the consent forms (Appendix B).

While I was setting up the tape recorder, I made “small talk” with the participants to establish rapport with them. The subsequent interviews lasted between three quarters of an hour to one and a half hours. The interviews were unstructured using open-

ended questions. I started off with questions about their families, reasons for coming to New Zealand and how long they have lived in New Zealand. A set of prompt questions was used to help with the flow of the interview. I would occasionally ask a question if the participants ran out of things to say, or when they needed to provide more details to their experience. The interviews varied from those that required little prompting to those where there were more questions asked. I transcribed all the tapes verbatim. Each participant was identified by an initial to assure his or her anonymity.

Analysis of data

First of all, I focused on the phenomenon by reading and re-reading the transcripts several times. Then I tried to put aside any preconceptions of racism and examined the participants' experience as they lived it. This was done through a thoughtful reading and reflection of their narrative accounts and their expression of emotions and reactions. Then using one side of the margin I noted down themes that seemed to be emerging. Key words were used to capture the essential quality of what I was finding in the text.

I then made a list of all the emerging themes and then looked for connections between them. The many concepts and ideas extracted from the participants' responses were organised into clusters of themes and sub-themes. This is similar to Spiegelberg's (1969) method of lining up phenomenon based on their similarities and putting phenomenon, which "belong together" into distinct groups.

To help retrieval of direct quotations from the transcripts (which Benner, 1994 referred to as "exemplar"), the themes and sub-themes were numbered to correspond with the appropriate sections in the transcripts. The transcripts were then read once again for any "missed" themes and to check how each theme was common across all the participants and to decide which themes were more important and encompassing. Using the table of themes as the basis for an account of the participants' responses, I drafted the form of my argument. The arguments were subsequently interspersed with verbatim extracts from the transcripts to support my case.

I spent considerable time reflecting on the core themes as Van Manen (1990) suggested, and determined that the sense of being objectified and marginalised was a major theme in the experience of racial discrimination. Also the contrast between the experience of isolated discrimination and that of pervasive discrimination appeared as another important theme that ran through the study.

The writing and rewriting process was a lengthy one as I slowly came to grips with the method of interpretive phenomenological research. Initially too much description was made with not enough interpretation. Also looking at the parts and whole meant that I had to keep going back to the raw data to grasp the overall picture. After rewriting the results and discussion several times, I was satisfied that a rich description and interpretation was achieved. I then proceeded to write the introduction and methodology to complete the writing up of the study.

Reflexivity

In phenomenological research, the researcher is intimately bound up in the process of interpretation. He or she is engaged in choosing and interviewing participants as well as in the process of analysis. It is impossible for the researcher to be separate from the research. Therefore, interpretive research requires an examination of the relation between the researcher and the research. This can occur at three inter-related levels (Chamberlain, 2001).

Firstly, who is the researcher and where does he or she stand on issues related to the research? In the present study, I, the researcher, am a Chinese female in my mid-40's who has been living in New Zealand for 23 years. I experienced only subtle discrimination until a major incident woke me up to the reality of overt racial discrimination of Chinese people in New Zealand.

The incident happened in 1996 at the height of anti-Asian feelings in Auckland. I parked my car at a shopping mall at one of Auckland suburbs. As soon as I got out of my car, a tall European man confronted me and accused me of taking his car park. I was not aware of going into the park before someone else. I exclaimed that I did not see his car. The man then asked me to "go back home". I told him that I had

probably been in New Zealand longer than he had. The man then said if I got back into my car he would ram my car with his ute. I asked if he was threatening me. He replied he was. I then went into the supermarket to call the police. I waited for the man to finish his shopping and demanded he speak to the police on the phone. However, he denied making any threats. The man then stormed out of the supermarket. I quickly ran after him to copy down his registration number. I then drove to a nearby police station to report the incident. I never heard back from the police.

The above incident had a major impact on me. I was physically shaken and was almost in shock afterwards. I felt a mixture of shock, rage and fear. I was afraid that the aggressive man would physically assault me. It was dark and I was confronting the man by myself and felt very vulnerable.

The incident drove home to me the cruel and harsh reality of racial discrimination of Chinese people in New Zealand. It made me wonder to what extent racism plays a part in the daily lives of other Chinese people. It also made me curious as to what these experiences were like for them.

Secondly, we need to look into how the researcher's values, understandings and presumptions impact on the research. I had limited knowledge of racial discrimination prior to the study. I came from a middle class background and was raised in Hong Kong where there was much institutionalised racism of British people against Chinese people. However, immediate personal experience of overt racism was not experienced until the aforementioned incident. I am married to a European and have interacted with many Europeans in my family and work circles. I have a degree and postgraduate training in psychology and this would no doubt have impacted on my interpretation of the participants' experiences.

Moreover, being Chinese and having been brought up in a Chinese family in Hong Kong gave me insight into the values and norms of Chinese culture and the way Chinese people think and act. Also being of the same race and speaking the same language as the participants would have helped to establish rapport, lower the latter's

defences, enabling them to speak more openly and frankly. I was able to resonate with many of the participants' experiences during the course of the interview.

Thirdly, how did the research impact on the researcher and the researched? I felt I was able to look at racism from the inside. I felt empathetic to the experiences of the participants and was surprised at times at how deeply racial discrimination had affected some of them. I felt I have achieved an increased awareness and a much deeper insight into the repercussions and "felt experience" of racism among Chinese people in New Zealand.

As to the participants, for most of them it was the first time they recounted their experiences in racism in such detail and depth. A couple of them said it was a relief to unburden themselves to someone else. One participant said she felt she had been in therapy and felt better for it. Another participant said talking about certain aspects of her experience made her see some things in a different light and thus gained a fresh insight into herself. One of them got quite emotionally upset while describing the racist incidents. She broke down in tears a couple of times but slowly calmed down during the course of the interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

PERCEPTION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

All eight participants' perception of discrimination was framed in terms of power differentials. In line with the aforementioned theories on perceiving racism (Rodin et al., 1990) the participants saw themselves as possessing less power, being in the minority and on the defence. They saw the perpetrators of discrimination as more empowered and privileged and on the offensive. They felt the perpetrators were using the imbalance of power to oppress and take advantage of them.

C's perception of racial discrimination was based on her powerlessness. She was sexually harassed while waitressing at a restaurant when she first arrived in New Zealand. A drunken European man pinched her bottom and because C's English was limited, she felt powerless to verbally retaliate or to assert herself other than to say, "Behave yourself!" When she reported the incident to her female European boss, she was asked to ignore the whole thing because the client was drunk. This made C feel she was discriminated against twice over.

The above incident might seem to be an ambiguous situation to a third party as far as racist intent is concerned. Some might construe it as simply drunken behaviour or sexual misconduct. However, C saw it as racial discrimination, because she perceived both the European client and her European female boss to be the powerful parties victimizing her, the less powerful party. C did not see it as sexual harassment, because if the man who harassed her was Chinese, she could have defended herself adequately by verbally retaliating and standing up for herself. But because of her limited command of English, she felt defenceless and vulnerable, not because she was a woman, but because she was at a disadvantaged position to assert and protect herself. She saw the incident in terms of the power differential between the attacker and herself. She was also extremely embarrassed because it happened in front of her co-workers. C expressed how she felt in this way:

I didn't know what to do.... It happened so suddenly. I was in the middle of serving customers. I didn't know how to use English to scold him. I didn't know what to do. So I went home and cried for a long time.

L's hassles with the European male principal of a reputable high school were also perceived as racially motivated even though a third party might not see it that way. L was adamant that she wrote to withdraw her son from the school, but the principal insisted she did not and therefore had to pay an extra term's fees. L saw the conflict between herself and the principal as a power-laden one. L exclaimed:

I was determined not to pay it. I talked about this to lots of people and think it's because I am an Asian woman and he was bullying me. No matter what I said and how many letters I wrote he took no notice.... but I was determined not to be bullied. The more he wanted to bully an Asian woman, the more I didn't care that it was a reputable school, that he was a highly educated man.

All eight participants saw their attackers as being more powerful and in a more privileged position. They considered the perpetrators of racism as controlling resources and valuable opportunities. On the other hand they were in the minority and had less rights, power and resources. Thus, the acts of racism were seen as major violation of the norm of social responsibility. Such a perception of racism is supported by research done by Rodin and his associates (Inman et al., 1998).

Overview of the experience of racial discrimination

Only two out of the eight participants managed to talk about their experience without shame, embarrassment or rationalisation. They were both in their early twenties and were born and raised in New Zealand. Having been immersed in the New Zealand way of doing things all their lives have possibly made them less susceptible to the traditional Chinese way of saving face and avoiding confrontation. All the other participants were either reluctant to talk about their experiences of racial discrimination or talked about them in an indirect way. A few of them rationalised their experiences as results of "differences in culture" and "lack of understanding".

The overriding sense was that the participants felt objectified by the people who discriminated against them. The racist perpetrators only looked on the participants' physical appearances and categorized them as "just another Chinese". They resorted to preconceptions and stereotypical ideas about what Chinese people were like, regarding them as "terrible drivers", with substandard English who should go back to where they came from.

The participants, in the course of going about their daily lives, reacted with disbelief, shock and horror at the racist treatment they received. Instead of being treated as unique individuals with their own abilities, personalities and way of thinking, they were treated as objects. They were denied the respect and dignity of individual human beings.

They felt the stereotypes that their attackers projected about them did not fit at all with how they perceived themselves. They felt their identities and individualities had been assaulted and violated. The racist comments and actions struck at the core of their being, challenging their very sense of self-image and self-worth. The suddenness and unexpected nature of the attacks added to the dramatic impact of the discriminative behaviour.

Anger and outrage were dominant emotions in all of the participants' accounts. They were angry at being mistreated, denigrated and insulted. There was a sense of "How dare they do this to me!" It was a cry from the very core of their being. It felt like a "primal scream" of protest and traumatic response.

Depending on the participants' age, level of mainstream acculturation and degree of immersion in their home culture, and whether they were born in New Zealand, they reacted to discrimination in different ways. Some of them who were brought up in traditional Chinese culture and values embraced their home culture even more for protection and security. They felt vulnerable and out of control and conformity with their social group gave them back some of that control over their identity and self-worth.

Others who encountered racism from a young age and who had not had a strong identification with Chinese culture rejected their home culture and tried to join ranks with the dominant white majority. This is similar to the assimilation strategy (Sampson, 1999) mentioned in the introduction. By thinking and acting as white as they could, they were trying to distance themselves from being victims and from being discriminated against. They saw that as the only way out of a very difficult situation. However, no matter how similar their attitudes and behaviour were to the dominant group, their physical appearances let them down without fail. They still ended up being treated as just another Chinese.

A couple of the participants found themselves vacillating between western and Chinese cultures, so much so that they ended up with a very vague and loose identity. This is similar to the alternation strategy proposed by Sampson (1999) as mentioned before. Alternation refers to the behaviour when individuals move back and forth from one culture to another without commitment to either. Sometimes they felt very confused about who they were and where they belonged. Since they have been brought up in New Zealand, most of their friends were Europeans. Always being surrounded by and interacting with Europeans sometimes made them forget that they were not white. However, they could not afford to let their guard down because they would get hurt when people reacted adversely to them being different.

Nature of the racist experience

As I have just discussed the overview of the experience of racial discrimination, I will now describe the experience of racism and its effects in more detail. First I will discuss the overarching sense of objectification and the associated process of feeling marginalised. The theme of objectification pervades the narratives of all the participants and provides us with a “felt sense” of reliving the racist experience. The feeling of being taken advantage of and being denied access to resources and opportunities help to complete the picture of the overall experience of racial discrimination.

Feeling of being objectified

The narratives of the participants portrayed a sense of feeling objectified by the perpetrators of racism. The participants commented on how they were judged by stereotypes and misconceived conceptions instead of being treated as individuals. Studies suggested how assumptions about who people are and are not create limitations that allow ethnocentric and racist ideas to flourish and permeate (Glauser, 1999). The experiences of the participants supported such a phenomenon. M's comments captured the essence of that experience:

I had quite a chip on my shoulder because often people would ask me, "Can you speak English?" I was really offended by that because I have been brought up in New Zealand and I could speak English. So I got quite a lot of that.... And they asked me questions like "Are your parents market gardeners?" There is this stereotype that Chinese want to go to medical school because of the money. I had to work twice as hard to persuade them I wasn't like that.... People think all Asians look the same. I still feel quite sensitive about it.

T was the only one who put a name to her experience. She called it "racial objectification".

A study by Christiansen, Kaplan & Jones, (1999) indicated that people with negative predispositions toward minorities require very little negative stereotypical information about these minorities to activate their prejudiced social judgment. This seems to be the case with the experiences of our participants. Negative stereotypes about Chinese people, which the participants perceived to be held by New Zealanders, include the perception that Chinese cannot speak good English and are inferior to white people. Chinese students are considered as nerds and Chinese people are perceived to be timid, passive, easily bullied and taken advantage of. Some Europeans think Chinese people are slow, terrible drivers. They also think Chinese are physically unattractive with round faces, flat noses and slanty eyes.

Our participants felt some New Zealanders appeared to hold the above stereotypes about Chinese people and behaved in a derogatory way towards them. The recipients of such treatment found it extremely offensive and unfair. They felt these preconceived notions were unjustified and did not match the way they saw themselves. They felt their very identity and core values have been challenged.

C's belief in her identity as a dependable, hard working, and productive member of staff was challenged when she was forbidden by her employer to serve at the front counter at the request of the European mall manager. It was suggested that a Chinese person serving fish and chips was lowering sales. C had this to say about her role as an employee, "I was particularly generous with my time and money. I would turn up before the appointed time and leave after it was time to go. On my Sundays off I would go to check that things were O.K".

After she was banned from the front counter, she started to have doubts about her value as an employee and even her identity, wondering if it would be better if she were European. She exclaimed, "Why was it a problem? I wasn't a problem. I didn't do anything wrong".

It seemed the mall manager held the stereotype that Chinese people are inferior to Europeans, but C saw herself as an equal to any white person. She saw herself as an extraordinary employee because she displayed initiative and hard work. However, when her value was challenged by the mall manager's racist treatment, C started to doubt her concept of herself not just as an employee but her worth as a Chinese person.

T described her racism experience as follows, "The central part of being Chinese in New Zealand is that you look different. And that's not necessarily a Chinese thing, but it is something that New Zealand Chinese people have as a common experience".

The fact that neither M or T were asked to go out with European boys all through high school and university challenged their self image of being physically attractive and desirable. M said she felt "ugly" with a "round face, small eyes and a flat nose"

and that she did not conform to the western standards of beauty as portrayed in the media. T said:

When I was at school I never got asked out by boys or anything because I was Chinese. I felt it was because I was Chinese and that white boys didn't want to go out with Chinese girls.... I had my own image problems and I think being Chinese was just another part of that – being a real nerd, and when I look back on it, it was just another barrier to being attractive.

It appeared that the participants felt that different aspects of their self-image were challenged by the perpetrators of racism who judged them as stereotypes and objects. Whether it was their English-speaking ability, their value as employees or their physical attractiveness to the opposite sex, these challenges evoke feelings of inadequacy and inferiority about themselves. As a result their overall self-identity and image were devalued in their own eyes. They no longer felt comfortable in “their own skin”.

Marginalisation

The International Webster New Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language defines marginalisation as “the intermingling but incomplete acceptance of the values and norms of two cultures.” The experiences of the participants reflected a feeling of being treated as second-class citizens. They talked about what it was like to be scrutinized in a critical way constantly. They resented being looked down upon and being shunted aside. They wanted to be treated as equals and most of all to be regarded as unique individuals.

T and M's experiences were good illustrations of how it felt to be marginalised. T felt she has been constantly judged by her race. She exclaimed:

Nearly everyday I know somebody is assessing me in terms of my race. Where is she from? What kind of name is that? Is she Chinese? How come she can speak such good English? I know they're looking at me and wondering where I am from. It makes me feel marginalised all the time.

M also felt marginalised in a similar way. She described it in this way, “They might ask me if I was a foreigner or from China. They just don’t think I can speak English, or they might speak to me very slowly.... It’s very condescending”.

T and M were expressing their frustration and feelings of humiliation at people’s biased assumptions and judgment about them based solely on their race and appearances. They felt like being “put in a box” and restricted in their self-expression as worthwhile human beings. They were desperately crying out to be treated on equal terms with everybody else. They wanted to be allowed the opportunity to freely express themselves as individuals, and let others get to know them for the worthwhile individuals they were, and not be prejudged by some stereotypes.

Another example of marginalisation was T’s feelings about the under-representation of Chinese people in the media. She mentioned how on the popular New Zealand TV programme *Shortland Street*, there had only been one Chinese character, a Chinese female doctor. She was not a very interesting character and did not last very long. There was only one race-related incident when she was on the show. T expressed her reactions as follows:

It really annoys me and it makes me feel like I am being marginalised. I do really want to see people who look like me on TV because it’s difficult when you’ve got such a particular experience of being a member of an ethnic minority. Personally because I haven’t been part of a big Chinese community in New Zealand, I kind of miss that connection with other people with similar experiences and of seeing those experiences portrayed. It’s like when you do see it it’s so rare you don’t realise you have been missing it. It is so important to your personality.

T felt that the presence and importance of Chinese people in New Zealand had been underrepresented in the media. It meant that she had been denied the opportunity to identify with other Chinese people with similar experiences as herself. She expressed a certain vulnerability in having a unique experience of being an ethnic

minority. There was an implied sense of loneliness and longing for validation and yearning of a connection with others similar to herself. There is a sense of her “being left out in the cold” and wanting to identify with others and be acknowledged.

Being taken advantage of

Sometimes being discriminated against meant one was being taken advantage of. The perpetrators of racism used their power to intimidate Chinese people to obtain extra material gains and other benefits from them. As a result, the Chinese victims felt bullied, downtrodden and powerless to retaliate. C had to put up with European customers who frequently hurled abuses, asked for refunds without cause and demanded extra helpings of food for free at the takeaway she worked at. She expressed her indignation this way:

They can't hurt you. They're just trying to take advantage of you. I felt it's because I am Chinese.... They're just trying to take advantage of me because I am of a different skin colour. I felt they treated us differently because our hair and skin colour are different. They wouldn't shout at other Europeans. They usually see how good your English is. If you can communicate with them in English they can't take advantage of you so easily.

It appeared that C felt she was bullied and intimidated by overbearing and greedy customers who were trying to obtain personal gains unfairly. C perceived the European customers to have the upper hand because they were the majority in New Zealand and because of their command of the English language. C saw herself as the victim because her knowledge of English was limited and she was a member of an ethnic minority. C could see the unfairness of the situation, but philosophically accepted it as the result of blatant racism and greedy bullying behaviour.

Being denied opportunities and access to resources

Some of the participants felt they were misinformed, under informed and denied opportunities and access to resources available to other New Zealanders. As a result, they felt they were let down and not given a fair chance.

A and her husband were looking for a school for their children, but were turned down in person by a teacher at the school in their home zone. However, after getting advice from another school, they rang up the first school for an enrolment form and after filling in the form and submitting it, their children were admitted. A said she was not sure if it was racial discrimination. But she heard some people say that perhaps they were rejected initially because they were immigrants. A felt the teacher who saw them initially could be biased against immigrants or he could have had reservations about their children's standard of English lowering the standard of the school. A felt very unhappy with the way she was treated by the school.

It appeared to A that she was initially denied the legal right of her children to be educated in the school of their home zone. They were treated as second-class citizens and turned down for a legitimate place in a state school as a result of prejudice. A had been made to feel inferior and unworthy and "not good enough". A's children were judged according to some preconceived notions about Chinese immigrants and denied access to their rightful opportunities and resources as a result.

V felt she did not get adequate support and attention from her European supervisor while she was doing her master's thesis. She exclaimed, "He underestimated my ability and made disparaging remarks about my ability to do statistics. He would spend an hour with the European students but only a few minutes with me".

The above experience was an example of a subtle case of racial discrimination where educational opportunities and resources were withheld because of someone's race. V felt she had been treated unfairly because instead of receiving help, guidance, encouragement and support from her supervisor she got challenged about her academic ability. She felt hurt and angry that her supervisor made her feel that she

was not qualified to do a master's thesis. V felt she was entitled to the same quality and quantity of supervision time that other students got. She was very disappointed that due to the supervisor's bias and prejudice, she was not given the equal opportunities and resources that she deserved.

Both of the above incidents were examples of subtle discrimination where opportunities and resources were perceived to be denied to Chinese people. While the racist actions were not blatantly discriminatory, the subtle form of exclusion meant that the victims only found out that they were treated unfairly after looking at the way others were treated. The participants felt this sort of racism was very insidious. There was no way they could guard against such unequal treatment. In fact they felt it would be hard to prove this sort of discrimination. As a result, they felt very defenceless and vulnerable. It made them feel that they were at the mercy of their attackers. It was like being ambushed by hidden attackers with no weapons to fight with.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPACT OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Discriminatory actions had significant and dramatic impact on the lives of the participants. Some of them felt a lot of anger while others were very afraid. Pervasive discrimination eroded individuals' belief in themselves and resulted in depression, lack of confidence and social dysfunction. Discrimination also had an effect on participants' sense of cultural and ethnic identity. Depending on the degree of their identification with their home culture, some of them gravitated even more towards their home culture, while others tried to adopt the dominant culture instead. A couple of participants felt their attitudes to egalitarian issues with minority groups had changed.

Identity formation and conflict

Racial discrimination seemed to have a big impact on the participants' cultural and ethnic identity. For those who have been raised and steeped in Chinese culture, their strong sense of cultural identity seemed to bolster them against some of the adverse effect of racism. In addition, being discriminated against made them want to embrace their culture more and identify more with their minority group. Their group identification with Chinese people in general – that is, the emotional and personal value they derived from their group membership, helped them withstand the effects of racism.

A study by Niles (1999) indicated that a strong sense of cultural identity helped to protect immigrants against the negative effect of perceived racism. Crocker and Major (1989) suggested that high levels of minority group identification might facilitate the use of self-protective strategies such as attributing negative outcomes to prejudice and racism. There is considerable evidence that highly identified group members are likely to interpret outcomes in intergroup terms (Doosje & Ellemers, 1997). It means that our participants who had strong identification with Chinese culture were able to see the discriminatory actions as a result of intergroup racism

instead of a result of their personal actions. Also their group identification with other Chinese helped them put up with the negative consequences of perceived racism.

T felt so strongly about the importance of identifying with other Chinese that she felt ambivalent about having Eurasian children. She has a European boyfriend, but she is not keen to have children of her own because she feels Eurasian children do not have a strong racial and ethnic identity:

It is as if they wouldn't experience the full deal of what it is like to be Chinese in New Zealand.... Everyone would think they are really good-looking, but they would never be hassled at school for having no nose that sort of thing.... I guess you could say because racial discrimination has made me so strong in my identity that it's almost if they don't experience racism they wouldn't be so strong in their identity.... It's like they have nothing to react against.

Social identity theory argues that recognizing that the powerful majority is prejudiced and discriminates against one's in-group will lead to increased identification with the in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Therefore, when devalued group members believe that acceptance and fair treatment by a more powerful group is improbable, identifying with the lower status group may be the best possible strategy for feeling accepted and enhancing psychological well-being (Branscombe et al., 1999, p.137).

Many studies have found that recognition of prejudice is associated with higher levels of group identification (Dion & Earn, 1975; Chavira & Phinney, 1991). This was happening when C captured the essence of wanting to identify more with the minority culture:

Yes, I want to preserve more of my Chinese culture. If I had a choice I would choose to be Chinese because our culture and education is good.... I am different. There is no problem with me. Lots of people like Chinese people. This (racial discrimination) is their problem.

I am Chinese and I want to preserve Chinese good tradition and virtue. I feel when we work, if we don't do well, it will affect other Chinese people. So I have to do better.... I don't care how you treat me, you are European but I am Chinese. (A)

Some participants on the other hand reacted to racism in a different way. They often wished they were white and wanted to embrace European values and ways of thinking and behaviour, trying to conform to the majority population. They wanted to blend in with the mainstream culture, differentiate themselves from other Chinese people and to look and act as European as possible. It appears that pervasive and constant racial discrimination from an early age was so intolerable for these participants that a denial of their cultural identity and an attempt to assimilate the majority culture was perceived as their only refuge. By taking on the behaviour and mentality of the majority white population, they wishfully thought they could blend in with everyone and lessen victimization.

Having been constantly teased about her physical appearance and race from an early age, M resented her cultural and racial identity as a child. She said this about her childhood:

I did wish I were white with a white name from a normal white family quite often... As a child I did not want to have anything to do with Chinese culture at all. I just wanted to fit in and be as white as possible. My mother and I did not celebrate Chinese New Year or eat much Chinese food. I definitely did not want to learn more about Chinese culture.... I didn't know if I would be that comfortable with other Chinese people.

T as a child also wanted to conform and be regarded as a New Zealander:

I felt like I really wanted to fit in. I was really patriotic and was always saying, "I am a New Zealander! I am a Kiwi. I love New Zealand." that sort of thing and I had a real Kiwi accent.

Several authors of colour (e.g. Delgado-Romero, 1999; Fukuyama, 1999; Talbot, 1999) reported similar experiences. Like M and T, they initially internalised negative messages about their racial or ethnic groups, causing them to reject their racial or ethnic identity and adopt white culture.

A possible reason for this contrasting reaction seen in M and T was that, right from the start, the ethnic identities of the foreign-born Chinese immigrants were stronger than theirs, because they were born and raised in New Zealand. Studies on ethnic identity and its relation to self-esteem (e.g. Lay & Verkuyten, 1999) support this phenomenon. The findings suggested that foreign-born adolescents were more likely to identify themselves as Chinese (rather than Chinese Canadians) and their collective self-esteem were positively related to personal self-esteem. In the face of racial discrimination, the overseas-born Chinese embraced their culture more for protection and security. However, the native-born Chinese had only weak links with their cultural heritage, so they tried to identify with the majority culture, which was more familiar to them.

Even though M and T initially identified with white New Zealanders, they found that as adults they could neither identify with New Zealanders or Chinese. M felt she had “a very loose identity”. She felt caught between the two cultures. On one hand, even though she tried to identify as a New Zealander as a child, her Chinese name and her appearance brought her endless taunts and teasing. To complicate matters, the influx of new Chinese immigrant students in her school meant that these Chinese girls stayed together, spoke their own language and had distinctive characteristics, which brought a lot of discrimination from the European girls. So M, in order to avoid further isolation, felt she had to differentiate herself from these immigrant Chinese girls. Thus, M was further alienated from people of her own race.

M was born and raised in New Zealand. As a result, her values and attitudes were very similar to European girls. Most of her friends were white New Zealand girls. Yet no matter how similar her thinking and attitudes were to the rest of them, her appearance and race set her apart. Therefore, she felt somewhat Chinese and somewhat European. The looseness of her identity possibly provided her safety and protection from further racial attacks and discrimination.

T also found she had “quite a loose and indeterminate sense of identity” as a result of racist treatment:

I found on quite a lot of occasions I have quite a loose sense of identity, like it's not very fixed in a lot of places. It needs to be summoned up when I think about it. If I was in a pub and I've been drinking a bit I would go and look in the mirror and I don't really recognise myself. It's like I am a Chinese person. I am surrounded by white people. I just assume I am the same as them ...I don't think of myself as white, but it's like I dissociate from my differences, but at the same time I keep these values of what's normal in New Zealand society.

Thus racial discrimination had a major impact on individuals' sense of ethnic and cultural identity. Unfair and derogatory treatment by others singled people out as individuals, making them feel isolated and vulnerable. As a result, they retreated to the group they identified most with for protection and sense of belonging. The Chinese who identified strongly with their home culture became stronger in their cultural identity. However, for the two New Zealand born Chinese girls, having to alternate between the two cultures created a lot of difficulties for them. At times they were confused about their cultural identities. They did not feel completely comfortable in either culture.

There were a number of strong emotional reactions to being discriminated against. Participants felt shocked, outraged, fearful and at times sad. However, the major themes of anger and fear dominated most of their narratives.

Anger

Anger was a prominent and common emotional reaction to being discriminated. Fischer (1998) described anger as a protest against being demeaned and blocked in being who one is trying to be. According to Fischer, when someone is in the midst of going about activities, he or she finds their progress blocked and therefore unable to continue one's course. Therefore he or she is demeaned and becomes angry about

being lessened as a person and being prevented from being a particular type of worthwhile person.

The narratives of the participants suggested a sense of shock, rude awakening and outrage at being treated unfairly and in a demeaning way. They reacted very strongly to having their equal rights violated and found it difficult to believe and tolerate the behaviour they were witnessing. They felt devalued and humiliated.

E could not believe what he was witnessing when his adult son was physically assaulted and they were asked “to go back home” when he went into a car park ahead of a European couple. He exclaimed:

I think in New Zealand everyone should be equal. According to New Zealand policy we should be equal. Such things should not be happening.... I thought New Zealand is a lawful place; racial discrimination shouldn't be a problem.

E felt angry because his human rights of equality and respect were violated. He was protesting against being treated as a second-class citizen. He was reacting against the derogatory treatment and insulting words. He was exclaiming his shock and disbelief that such despicable behaviour could happen in a place he had called home. He was expressing his disappointment in encountering such unfair treatment and at the same time trying to reconcile in his mind that racial discrimination was happening to him.

T described her anger this way:

Every time it has happened to me I would feel really really upset – angry upset but also very sad. It made me cry and stuff. Angry that they have said it and really hurt that they've said it. Angry that I have taken it so seriously. Just like really emotional about it. People often call out from their cars, “Ching Chong”, or “Go back home!”

It seems that T felt angry because she has been publicly insulted, rejected and degraded. It is one thing to know that some people reject you but another thing to be publicly insulted and degraded. It must have meant a big loss of face and utter humiliation for T, especially when the racist remarks were so unexpected. T was caught off guard and felt very emotional. She was also angry with herself for taking the comments so seriously and letting them hurt her so deeply. It seems like T's pride was deeply wounded and her anger was a reaction to the shame and embarrassment she felt.

All of the participants' responses indicated a raw gut reaction of anger and indignation at being insulted and humiliated. They were in the course of going about their daily activities, but were blocked from doing so by total strangers who called them names and asked them to go back home. Such discriminatory behaviour was so unexpected and uncalled for. The Chinese participants' instant and direct reaction was outrage. In some cases, they verbalised their anger to their attackers. In many cases, they were too shocked to react.

Fear

The participants frequently mentioned fear as a dominant reaction towards discriminatory treatment. Against the background of anti-Asian immigration political agenda, T was caught up in a very frightened frame of mind. She was scared for her own physical and emotional safety. Also, as a member of an ethnic minority, she was scared for Chinese people in general because she felt the racial discrimination was going beyond isolated personal attacks. T felt the situation was getting out of control and she was filled with apprehension about the present and future. She was worried that there might be concerted attacks against Chinese people. She described her fear as follows:

It always seems frightening to me. I remember during the 1997 election, when Winston Peters became quite popular, I began to feel quite uncomfortable being a New Zealander living here.... One out of four people wanted you to leave the country.... I was particularly scared living in Mount

Roskill at that time. A Somalian family was attacked a few times. The fact that it happened in my community made me frightened and horrified.

M felt really intimidated after receiving an anonymous racist letter in her letterbox. She described her experience in this way:

Once I got an anonymous racist letter in our letter box saying, "You do nothing for our country. Go home. Chink, gook!" My brother and I found it when we came home from school and we threw it away.... It was horrible. You feel horrible. You don't feel safe. When you have people around you like that you don't feel safe.

M's fear was strongly felt because the racist threat happened at her doorstep. The accusation and rejection was directed personally against them as a Chinese family and had strong political overtones. The anonymity meant that the letter could have come from a single person or a group of people. Receiving a letter like that in your own home must have been really frightening because a person's home is supposed to be a safe haven. M was expressing through her fear her vulnerability as well. It seems M felt really threatened by the letter; she was scared that the security of her neighbourhood had been invaded. She seemed to be genuinely concerned about the emotional and physical safety of her family.

While T And M were the only ones that mentioned their fear of safety under the anti-Asian political climate of the mid 1990's, all the other Chinese participants talked about how their overall sense of safety had been compromised. They felt threatened because they were constantly scrutinized, because they could be spat on and insulted by total strangers in the streets at any time, and because they could be excluded and ignored by others in any situation. It was a feeling of being in the midst of threat and having no protection against it. No matter where you go, there was a possibility of treading on danger. The anti-Asian sentiments of the mid-1990 only magnified the seriousness of the situation and worsened the plight of the Chinese people. They felt outnumbered by their attackers. They also felt their enemies were faceless and could strike any time at any place.

Feelings of inferiority – low self-esteem

Teases, taunts and constant verbal abuse from others made the recipients feel humiliated, degraded and embarrassed. Consequently, the victims felt singled out and isolated and started to feel bad about themselves. They might have even started believing in some of the negative comments directed against them. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, in the collectivist Chinese culture where people have strong interdependent self-image (Singelis et al., 1999), self-esteem is based on belonging, fitting in, occupying one's proper place, engaging in appropriate behaviour and keeping harmony. A study by Kwan, Bond and Singelis (1997, cited in Singelis et al., 1999) suggested that the relative importance of relationship harmony to self-esteem in predicting life satisfaction was greater in collectivist Hong Kong than it was in individualist United States.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to predict lowered self-esteem among victims of racial discrimination. This is supported by studies (Germain, 1999; Bianchi, 1998; Eyou. Adair & Dixon, 2000) which showed that immigrants who were marginalised had lower self-esteem and that racial mistrust was negatively associated with individual self-esteem. As Crocker and Major (1989) pointed out, several theoretical perspectives in social psychology predict that experiencing racism will damage the self-esteem of its targets. First, if members of stigmatised groups recognise prejudice as rejection by the dominant group, the "looking-glass" approach to the self (Cooley, 1956; Mead, 1934) suggests that those who recognise others' negative view of their group membership are likely to internalise that negative evaluation and have lower self-esteem. Also, an efficacy-based approach to self-esteem proposes that because positive self-esteem is built by gaining a sense of control over one's environment (Gecas & Schwalke, 1983; White, 1959), and rejection by the dominant group reduces feelings of control (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995), attributions to racism should harm self-esteem.

Indeed our participants did talk about lowered self-esteem and feelings of inferiority after suffering racial discrimination. M felt she had "very low self-esteem" as a child because she was constantly teased and laughed at by her classmates for her "flat

nose, small eyes and Asian-sounding name". M described her experience in this way:

I used to wish I wasn't Chinese, that I was white and that I could fit in....
Also I knew my parents were different. They acted differently. As a child I was really anxious. I definitely had social dysfunction. At lunchtime I just hid by myself because I had no friends.

T felt that having her physical appearance judged according to European standards contributed a lot to her low self-esteem. T said:

By the time I became vaguely aware of the issue of whether I was attractive or not, I was about fourth form and I thought it was part of the complex I had in general; a general complex of having quite low self-esteem and being quite an outsider. I thought that my race, my ethnicity had a lot to do with how I defined myself as an outsider.

Judging from these narratives, it appears that both M and T had problems "fitting in" because they were so different. They were different in the way they looked, talked and acted. These differences were singled out and denigrated. As a result of the prejudicial and racist treatment, M and T saw the differences as their own personal inadequacies. They were made to feel that they could not measure up to the white majority. They therefore developed feelings of inferiority about who they were, the way they looked and who they represented. They were made to feel that the mainstream whites were the best, and to look and act Chinese was not good enough.

Racial attacks hurt even more when your friends made them. Even though M and T did not share the attributes and behaviour of the immigrant Chinese girls, they still felt bad listening and witnessing the racist treatment, because people of their racial group were under attack. Both M and T's friends said racist things about the migrant Chinese to their faces but these attackers also said M and T were completely different from the migrants. M described the situation in this way:

The European girls complained how the immigrant girls dressed differently, kept to themselves, talked in their own language and always wanted to be doctors and lawyers. But they said at least I was not a gook. I still felt humiliated because gook is a derogatory term for Asians.

Both M and T could not change the fact that they were Chinese even though they had very European values and attitudes. As a result, they still felt hurt and angry at the racist comments because they were directed against their racial group. Yet they felt they could not completely identify with the Chinese people because they thought and behaved so differently. On the other hand, they would never be fully accepted as New Zealanders no matter how well they could speak English or how similar their values and attitudes were to other New Zealanders because they looked so different. To be called names and laughed at by strangers was bad enough, but to receive racist treatment from your friends must have made them feel worse.

All eight participants talked about feeling depressed, withdrawn, lacking in confidence and feeling bad about themselves in general after being discriminated against. Self-doubt and feelings of inferiority were common themes in their narratives. The racist treatment made them feel less worthwhile as human beings. They felt they were judged according to some arbitrary criteria and found wanting. As a result, their self-esteem was eroded.

Attitudes to egalitarian issues

Exposure to racism had changed a couple of participants in their attitudes and behaviour towards other minorities. It sharpened their critical thinking on racial and equality issues. It also made them feel more sympathetic to the plight of other minorities.

Both M and T felt experiencing racism had made them more compassionate, sensitive and tolerant people, especially towards other minority races and groups. They also felt they had sharpened their critical thinking and moral judgment on racial and minority matters. T said, "It has been the trigger or tool by which I have been

able to see things critically. Experiencing concepts and ideas of racism has been a tool by which I can make moral judgment about things.”

T found it hard to accept that her father was prejudiced against Maori and Pacific Islanders when they were a minority people themselves. T said:

People like my father are racist against Maori and Pacific Islanders because they do not share white capitalistic middle class values. However African Americans like the Huxtables as portrayed on the television show “Cosby’s Show” are universally embraced because although they are black they are a successful family living by white middle class values. Experiencing racial discrimination has enabled me to recognise automatically that such attitudes are wrong.

T also felt racial discrimination against Chinese people is different from that against Maori people and Polynesians. While the latter mostly fail to succeed according to white middle class standards, the Chinese culture of hard work and ambition is very similar to New Zealand white capitalist values. Therefore Chinese people are discriminated against mainly out of envy. The average white New Zealander feels threatened by the competition provided by the new Chinese immigrants. According to T, that explains why white girls at her school refused to socialise with the Chinese girls. While they could not prevent the Chinese girls from taking the top grades, they could stop them from becoming one of them.

M felt having been discriminated against gave her an advantage as far as sensitivity to racism and minority issues were concerned. She expressed her feelings this way:

My experiences in childhood have made me a stronger person. I feel I am more sensitive to other people’s predicament. I’ve got a slight advantage when it comes to understanding people of different ethnicities. I know what it’s like to be on the outside. Before I went to university I used to think women’s history and literature were not “proper” history and literature. However, because of my racism experiences I realised women need to lay claim on things separately and be considered legitimate in their own right.

Good literature therefore should not only be “white male” literature but should include women and minorities’ literature. These minorities need to be treated differently because they have a strong tradition to fight against. Also I felt I could understand the special treatment of Maori people more. I feel more tolerant of other minority cultures and the difficulties they encounter.

It seems racism has made M perceive herself as being more tolerant, compassionate and understanding in her attitude towards minorities.

Only two out of the eight participants talked about their changed views on egalitarian issues. Both M and T were highly educated individuals (they both had postgraduate university qualification) and were born and raised in New Zealand. Possibly partly because they have perceived themselves as minority members for a longer period of time and partly because their university education enabled them to do more analytical thinking, they came to the conclusion that they have emerged as more liberal, broadminded and tolerant people. They felt they had a unique standpoint on egalitarian issues because of their experience of racial discrimination. They felt they were more understanding and empathetic than before.

All in all, the perceived impact of racism on the participants differed according to how pervasive the discrimination was and how much they identified with Chinese culture. While all racist treatments resulted in reactions of anger and fear, long-term discrimination also led to perceived loss of self-esteem. Moreover, Chinese people who identified strongly with their home culture to start with tended to embrace their culture even more after discrimination. However, the two New Zealand born Chinese participants identified more with European culture. When they were mistreated racially, they tended to gravitate to European culture to avoid more discrimination. Also these two participants felt that racism had made them more liberal and more compassionate towards the equal rights of other minorities. They perceived themselves to be stronger people with sharpened critical thinking because of their experience of racism.

CHAPTER SIX

WAYS OF DEALING WITH RACISM

The participants used a variety of ways to deal with the experience of racial discrimination. This ranged from open confrontation to avoidance, denial, minimalisation, rationalization, defensiveness and relying on social support. Such a wide range of responses has been shown in recent researches (Hyers, 2000).

Confrontation

Some participants dealt with racist treatment by fighting back. They verbally confronted the perpetrators of racism and asserted their right to be treated equally, fairly and with respect. The confrontation seemed to be fuelled by the victims' anger, but it must have taken a lot of courage to do so because it goes against the traditional Chinese value of preserving social harmony. The participants were trying to send a strong message to the perpetrators that they would not be easily intimidated. They felt they had been unjustly treated and believed their grievances needed to be addressed. They were demanding to be treated as rightful New Zealand citizens. They were also publicly stating how wrong and unjust racism was.

When E was asked "to go back home", he retaliated verbally by asking his attacker to do the same. When the other person tried to block his car from leaving, E threatened to call the police. As a result, the other person backed down.

C challenged the bank teller who was so warm and chatty to the European customers but who ignored C's attempt to make conversation. C asked why the teller did not seem happy to see her. The teller claimed there was a death in her family, which proved to be a lie. C reported the incident to the bank manager and got a written apology. The teller was reprimanded for her behaviour.

In L's case, she fought against the headmaster's demand for an extra term's fees for a year, enlisting the support of local Members of Parliament and the chairman of the

school board of trustees. Finally the headmaster gave up his demand. L never backed down in spite of constant harassment by the debt collection agency.

M found an alternative way of confronting the racism issue in a creative way using her musical talent to give vent to her feelings about racial discrimination. She and her Chinese friend formed a band called Yellow Peril. They wrote songs punctuated with black humour about how they were terrible drivers who drove too slowly. They also wrote songs about the beautiful Eurasian girls who were supposedly superior to Chinese girls because they looked only slightly different to the European girls. Such creative outlet seemed to give M a way to fight back and a sense of control over her situation. It appeared to be an effective catharsis for her pent-up emotions and ideas that had been preying on her mind for a long time. The songs were written in a “tongue and cheek” style and were supposed to be taken with a sense of humour. It provided an outlet for M and highlighted a serious sensitive issue, but at the same time created a sense of defiance against the perpetrators of racism.

It was interesting to note that in every case where the participants perceived themselves as confronting the perpetrator, the latter backed down. The participants stood their ground, demanded their equal rights and fair treatment and eventually got it. Using confrontation to cope with racism not only had a cathartic effect for the victims’ angry feelings, but it was seen as an effective way to get results. Calling the police, complaining to the bank manager and refusing to back down against the headmaster were all perceived as significant ways to redress the unequal treatment. Such demonstrations of assertiveness were the participants’ attempts to assert their individuality. As a result, they felt a sense of victory over their attackers. They managed to regain some control over their situations.

This phenomenon of reasserting control through confrontation is supported by research. One such research by Hyers (2000) showed how assertive confrontation could play an important role in reducing prejudice in society and in restoring a sense of mastery for discriminated group members. Studies have indicated that when people suffer racial discrimination, they feel a loss of control over their lives (Broman, Mavaddat & Hsu, 2000). For our participants, confrontation with the

perpetrators of discrimination seemed to be an effective way of regaining that control and restoring a sense of empowerment.

Avoidance

The confrontational style was not typical of the participants' responses since confrontation is not part of the Chinese culture. Most Chinese people preferred to suffer in silence, be stoical about the discrimination and keep the peace at all costs. Some chose avoidance as a life strategy to stay away from any abuse.

M made a point of deliberately putting herself in situations where racism was unlikely to happen. She said:

I like to hang out at university because if anything happened there, it would be immediately unacceptable. Whereas anywhere else the boundaries are not so clear and you would feel a lot more insecure. University is a lot more tolerant than other places. Also where I live, my friends are different. I just think I am in a more restrictive environment where I have more control of my surroundings.

T gravitated towards certain areas at university where ethnic Chinese students congregated. Her action could be interpreted as an indirect way to avoid discrimination and to feel safe.

There was this area called the Atrium, a covered area. It was always full of Chinese people. I quite liked to go and sit there and listen to them speak Mandarin, to just feel like I was part of a crowd (T).

Avoidance was a well-used strategy by all the participants to reduce racist treatment. As was previously discussed in the introduction, Chinese philosopher Lin Yu Tang (Xing, 1995) talked about the importance of pacifism and of maintaining harmonious relationships in Chinese culture. Our participants therefore avoided confrontation frequently because such behaviour is central to Chinese cultural values of pacifism and reducing conflict.

Denial, minimalisation, rationalisation

In some cases of racial discrimination, the recipients minimised the incidents or rationalised them in their own way to the point of almost excusing the culprits. In Glauser (1999)'s qualitative study "Legacies of racism", one participant described how she dealt with racism by denying and minimising it to prevent herself from becoming overburdened. Another participant talked about his avoidance and denial of racism.

Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey (1999) suggested that the perception that one is a victim and is worse off than others is extremely aversive, making it an inference that people tend to avoid. A number of studies have found that minimising the degree to which one is discriminated against protects well-being in devalued group members (Crosby, 1982; 1984). For example, the more that African Americans (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996) perceived themselves to be victims of either gender or racial prejudice, the more they showed debilitating psychiatric and physical health symptoms. Several studies by Taylor, Ruggiero & Louis (1998) supported the hypothesis that devalued group members are motivated to avoid making attributions to racism and only do so in the presence of strong situational factors.

In a series of studies, they found that devalued group members were reluctant to attribute negative outcomes to prejudice and racism. Unless participants were told it was a certainty that they had been discriminated against, they preferred to attribute failure to their own personal inadequacies. Minorities use minimalisation as a self-protective strategy (Postmes, Branscombe, Spears & Young, 1999). Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) predicts that rejection from the majority group will be painful. Therefore, minimising the extent to which one is victimized can protect well-being (Taylor et al., 1983, cited in Branscombe et al., 1999) and avoid the pain of attributing the victimization to racism (Ruggiero & Major, 1998; Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995).

It appeared that these strategies were used by our participants to reduce the pain and negative impact that racism had on their lives. A couple of them plainly refused to

acknowledge discrimination even when faced with it. Others tried to make excuses for the culprits to lessen the offence. In other cases, they played down the effect of the racist treatment on them.

V believed racism is in the eye of the beholder. She expressed her view in this way, "If you want to see racism you can see it in a lot of things. It depends on what you consider as racial discrimination. I feel in many things I will look at people's motives." In the situation of being ignored or denied service in public places, V thought if Europeans intentionally ignored her, she felt it was hard to tell if it was racism. If V were ignored, she would wait for someone else to serve her instead of confronting the issue. She exclaimed, "I feel it depends on the perceiver. If she didn't see that I was Chinese she wouldn't have scolded me. I don't want to call this racism because she didn't say anything about Chinese".

She also said sometimes it was good that she was not aware of the discrimination so she would not feel angry. Reading between the lines, it is as if V did not want to face up to the painful fact that she had been victimized because she was afraid of confrontation. Also she was trying to protect herself from the aversive and unpleasant feelings of being discriminated against.

When A was verbally abused by passing cars in a racist way, she said she was "a bit enraged". But then she corrected herself saying, "I shouldn't say enraged, just a little bit disappointed. But afterwards I thought it wasn't so bad. Because I felt people are human. Not everyone is the same". A seemed to initially show her true feelings, but then tried to rationalise the event and tone down the effects of the victimization. Possibly she was trying to save face and to protect herself from the negative effects of discrimination.

All the participants practised denial, minimalisation and rationalisation. Possibly because they perceived being victims of racism as personal failures, they tried to deny racial discrimination happened or tried to explain it away. Such efforts could be subconscious means to protect their own physical, emotional and mental health. If racism did not happen or only occurred in a minimal way, then they would not feel as distressed.

Another way to interpret such a phenomenon is that racism was so painful for individuals and had such a detrimental effect on their well-being that it was too hard for them to bear. That was why they needed to minimise or deny it. Similarly, when people lose dearly loved significant others, they undergo the same denial process for self-protection.

Social support

Studies (Wong, 1999; Niles, 1999; Myers, 1998) have indicated that perceived family support is inversely related to mental distress caused by racial discrimination. Indeed most of the participants in the present study talked about how they perceived family and social support as significant in alleviating their distress after discrimination. Families and spouses provided a safe haven for them to retreat to and for them to pour out their troubles to. Because they might have had similar experiences themselves, they were more likely than friends to be supportive and understanding.

However, M found her boss was on her side when a European man in the restaurant she was waitressing at verbally abused her. The obnoxious drunk was saying some Chinese words to M in jest and asking if her parents were market gardeners. The boss got one of the waiters to tell the customer to refrain from harassing M; otherwise he would have to leave. M said it felt good to have her boss stick up for her.

M also found emotional support from T who was also born and raised in New Zealand. M said:

I've been lucky. I've made a friend now who is also a New Zealand born Chinese. She can speak Chinese. She has always been a lot more aggressive and angry about racial discrimination than I have. It's been quite good to have such a person in my life to make me feel angrier about it.

It seems that M saw her Chinese friend as someone who had similar background and experiences as herself, and someone she could identify her racist experiences with. Also she saw T as a morale booster in her more aggressive and assertive stance against racism. She used to feel more scared than angry when victimized. Now she feels more confident to express her anger and indignation against racist treatment.

All the participants perceived their spouses, families and friends as helpful support after incidents of racial discrimination. They felt they could relate the racist incidents to their significant others and be listened to attentively. They felt they could express how and what they felt about the incident and the perpetrators without fear of being judged in any way. The opportunity to have a shoulder to cry on and to receive emotional support was very important for the participants. It enabled them to put the racist incidents in perspective and get on with their lives.

Our participants used varying ways to deal with racial discrimination. All of them turned to their families and friends for solace, reassurance and moral support for the distress they suffered. However, this was where the similarity ended. A few of them boldly fought back racism by verbal retaliation, assertive actions and creative confrontation using music. Such assertiveness led them to perceive and feel a sense of redress for the unfair treatment they received. However, most of the participants succumbed to their traditional values of pacifism and instead tried to avoid, deny, minimize and rationalize the discrimination. They either pretended the racism did not happen, downplayed its effect or tried to explain it away. Such efforts could be attempts at protecting their mental and emotional well-being.

It should be noted that the terms of confrontation, avoidance, denial, minimization, and rationalisation reflect largely on my own psychological training. While only a couple of the participants used these terms in their narratives, they were the terms that I came up with after dwelling in the “clearing” of their experiences. I am aware these terms reflect my interpretation but I feel they capture the essence of how the participants dealt with racism.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ISOLATED DISCRIMINATION VERSUS PERVASIVE DISCRIMINATION

Based on our participants' narratives, the experience of an isolated racist attack seemed to be distinctly different from that of continuous discrimination. M, T and C recounted numerous racist incidents where the dominant group victimized them, whereas the rest of the participants talked about isolated acts of discriminatory behaviour. The perception of pervasive racism appeared to provoke very strong anti-white reactions, a lot of avoidance behaviour and a high degree of vulnerability and helplessness in the victims.

This phenomenon is in line with findings in recent studies (Branscombe et al., 1999), which suggested perceiving prejudice as pervasive produces effects on well-being that are fundamentally different from those that may arise from an unstable attribution to prejudice for a single negative outcome. As pointed out by Williams, Shore and Grahe (1998), people's reactions to negative treatment are likely to depend on the length of time they are exposed to the negative treatment. Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey (1999) proposed that the effect of recognising prejudice and racism against one's group depends on how pervasive prejudice and racism is and on expectancies of encountering racism in the future.

Much social psychological research has demonstrated that humans are active agents who have an amazing ability to recover from negative life events (Major, 1994; Taylor & Brown, 1988). Attributional research has shown that when faced with negative treatment from others, people often discount that negative feedback to protect their self-esteem (Weiner, 1985). That might explain why five of our eight participants saw their experience of isolated racist incidents as peripheral to their lives. While their initial reaction was negative, the racist incidents did not leave an indelible mark on their lives nor did they change their overall favourable impression of New Zealanders. They saw racism as a problem with a very small minority of the population.

On the other hand, the recognition that prejudice against one's group is pervasive and stable might have rather different consequences. Branscombe et al. (1999) claimed that stable attributions to prejudice that reflect perceptions of widespread bias against one's racial group have very negative consequences for well being. They are aware that they may face racism in a number of different situations at different times (Deaux & Major, 1987; Sigelman & Welch, 1991). Many theoretical approaches predict that feeling rejected and excluded in this way will cause anxiety (Baumeister & Tice, 1990), depression (Frable, 1993) and lowered self-esteem (Leary, Tambor, Terdal & Downs, 1995). Williams et al. (1998) found that being excluded reduced self-esteem, feelings of control, sense of belonging and perceptions of a meaningful existence.

The effect of rejection from mainstream culture are most negative for devalued group members who lack a strong sense of minority group identification. That would explain the devastating effect that racism had on the lives of M and T who were both born and raised in New Zealand. Having been brought up in New Zealand and being acculturated accordingly, they did not readily identify with other Chinese. So when they were discriminated against, they could not turn to other Chinese for acceptance and understanding. M and T both talked at length about the deep sense of vulnerability and helplessness they felt. T expressed it in this way:

But I am quite hypersensitive about it still. If I go out on the street tomorrow and somebody abused me, I just have to cry. It actually makes me shaky just thinking about it. I actually haven't developed very good protective mechanisms for myself.

T also talked about how her Chinese name made her feel vulnerable:

That's one of the first things I was defensive about my ethnicity. I was made fun of because of my name. When I was at secondary school no one could say my name right. After a few years I just couldn't care any more. You could call me what you want. My name has become a private thing and I am quite happy about that. The fact that people can't even say my name to start

with means I have the power. They're on the back foot already. It's become a funny sticking point for my whole life.

One gets a sense of disappointment, resignation and reluctant acceptance of the situation and suppressed anger behind it all. T also felt vulnerable because she felt she has been constantly assessed and scrutinized in terms of her race:

Nearly everyday I know somebody is assessing me in terms of my race. Where is she from? What kind of name is that? Is she Chinese? How come she can speak such good English? I know they're looking at me and wondering where I am from. It makes me feel objectified all the time.

M also had problems with her Chinese name:

When I get into a situation where someone has to know my name, they hardly ever get it right. I mean it's just a simple thing that white kids don't have to deal with. But you have to deal with it everyday. It immediately sets you apart. What will happen when it is not cool to be Chinese? It will probably happen in the next three years. What will I do then?

The above comments showed how M and T resented having to "negotiate" and define their cultural and racial identity on a daily basis, while others were allowed immunity from such a struggle. They felt a lack of control and a deep sense of helplessness in the way other people reacted to their names and race. They also felt frustrated that they had to define their ethnicity all the time. They felt they had to be on their guard constantly against potential criticism and negative stereotyping.

Several theoretical perspectives predict that recognising stable prejudice and racism against one's group will increase hostility toward the dominant group (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Wilder & Shapiro, 1991). Prejudice and racism against one's group is a threat to the group's status, and as Branscombe and Wann (1994) have shown, such threats to a valued group identity increase antagonism against the group that poses the threat. Especially when prejudice is perceived as coming from many members of

the dominant group across a variety of situations, it seems likely to expect that hostility will generalise to the dominant group as a whole (Branscombe et al., 1999).

Such anti-white feelings were indeed manifested in M, T and C's narratives. M found herself particularly defensive against "middle class white male" because they were in most instances the perpetrators of discrimination. When M was tutoring at university, she refused to take an older white male student in her class, and passed him onto another tutor, because she felt he might have issues with her that she did not want to deal with. M felt he represented people with the most money and power and most likely to oppress minorities like herself.

C referred to Europeans as "Gwai lo" throughout her discourse. The term literally means barbarians and foreign devils. While it is a colloquial term for Europeans, it nevertheless has strong racist overtones. Out of the eight participants, C was the only one who used that term consistently. That might be an attempt to set Europeans apart and emphasise their foreignness and an embodiment of her antagonistic feelings towards Europeans in general.

The narratives of the participants showed a distinct difference between isolated discrimination and continuous pervasive discrimination. While individuals could, especially with social support, deal with isolated incidents of discrimination without too much damage to their self-esteem, others who were constantly harassed with racist treatment suffered loss of self-esteem and depression and anxiety. They feared for their safety often and felt they had to be on-guard all the time. It was a painful, awkward place to be.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

All in all, this study had been an interesting and insightful journey into the insiders' view of experiencing racism. Embarking on such a journey had not been easy for the participants. Due to the traditional Chinese values of preservation of social harmony and fear of loss of face, it was difficult for most of them to face up to the experience of discrimination and at times painful and embarrassing to talk about it.

A major finding of this study was the overriding sense of being objectified that all participants felt after discrimination. One of them aptly labelled it as "racial objectification". It appeared that the perpetrators of racism held many negative preconceived ideas and stereotypes about Chinese people. As a result, they needed very little impetus to activate their racial prejudice. The recipients of such racist treatment reacted with shock and dismay because they felt they were treated as objects and stereotypes instead of unique individuals. They felt the image that the perpetrators of racism projected were far removed from their own perception of themselves. As a result, they felt challenged in their perception of themselves as valuable human individuals. They started to doubt their self-worth and the value of their identity.

Another interesting result was that the experience of isolated discrimination was distinctly different from that of prolonged discrimination. While this phenomenon had been found in past studies, the present finding is a useful replication and confirmation of those results. Five of the participants only encountered single incidents of racism. Their negative reactions were short-lived and did not adversely affect their self-esteem or general attitude towards Europeans. However, the three participants who suffered continuous racist attacks experienced a deep sense of vulnerability, helplessness and resignation. They suffered loss of self-esteem, depression and anxiety, and harboured a lot of anti-European sentiments.

The impact of racial discrimination on one's cultural and ethnic identification was another interesting finding that emerged from this study. Individuals who had strong affiliation with Chinese values found that such links insulated them against some of the ill effects of racism. Moreover, being discriminated against made them want to identify with their Chinese culture more strongly for further self-protection. On the other hand, others who did not have strong ties with Chinese culture tended to embrace European culture more to reduce further racial antagonism. The two New Zealand born Chinese participants alternated between Chinese and European values resulting in confusion and a feeling of being trapped.

Confrontation against racial discrimination and its perceived impact on the participants' sense of well-being was yet another significant finding. A few of the participants stood up to their attackers by verbally retaliating or taking assertive actions. In every one of these instances, they felt a sense of victory and control over their predicament. Such a phenomenon was found in past studies but it was especially significant in this research because such open confrontational styles went against the Chinese cultural norm of preserving social harmony. It must have taken the participants a lot of courage and determination to put up such a stance. The rewards it reaped were significant and would provide encouragement for potential targets of discrimination to follow suit. In this way, the present study provided a new way of engaging the problem of racial discrimination for Chinese people.

Initially it was difficult to enlist participants for this study. With persistence and hard work, eight participants were found, of which two were male. Consequently, it was not feasible to explore gender as a factor in the experience of racism. The question remains as to how gender might impact on the phenomenon. Existing findings indicate male dominance of power over female in most societies including Chinese society. At the same time, racial discrimination is perceived as perpetrated by the powerful against the powerless. The interaction of these two findings seems to lead to the conclusion that female victims would suffer more racial discrimination than their male counterparts. Moreover, their overall experience of racism would be somewhat different than that of the male victims. Their way of coping might also be different. In the present study, one of the two male participants confronted his attacker.

Only future studies could confirm if such confrontational style is typical of male victims of racism.

The influence of social and political climate on the prevalence and perception of racism is another topic that warrants future research. In the 1990's, due to the sudden influx of Chinese and other Asian immigrants, there was widespread anti-Asian sentiment especially in places like Auckland where the majority of Chinese immigrants settled. Europeans perceived the physical and cultural differences between themselves and these new comers. To protect their status quo, it took very little encouragement for them to summon up negative stereotypes and in-grained prejudices of Chinese people. It took the slightest racial slur or accusation against the Chinese by a prominent politician to incite racial mistrust and discrimination. Some genuinely thought Chinese and other Asians were taking away their jobs and creating havoc on the road. The resulting discrimination against Chinese people created an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear in the minds of the Chinese people.

Since the influx of Chinese and other Asian immigrants had levelled out in the last five years, the issue of racial discrimination had ceased to be a hot topic in the media. However, based on the narratives of the participants, racism is still very much alive. While discrimination might not be as overt and rampant as before, it still remains a problem that Chinese people have to contend with. Future research could address the relationship between social and political climate and the prevalence and perception of overt and subtle discrimination. It seems reasonable to predict perception of more overt discrimination in a hostile climate and more subtle racism in a more accepting atmosphere.

A major strength of this study is the nationality and background of the researcher. The fact that I am Chinese and can communicate with the participants in their own language meant that there was increased rapport between us and they were more open and free to disclose their experiences. My upbringing in a Chinese family and my first-hand knowledge of Chinese culture helped me to understand some of the cultural barriers participants were facing. My own experience of racial discrimination helped me to identify with some of the participants' feelings and reactions to racism.

Using the criteria guidelines of resonance, accessibility to the reader, plausibility and consequences for one's life, I believe this is a valid study. Having been a victim of racial discrimination myself, I was able to give the "phenomenological nod" to the accounts. I was able to feel the fear and anger and sense the vulnerability of the participants. I have endeavoured to write a clear and succinct interpretative account that readers would find easy to read and comprehend. If readers could put themselves in the shoes of the participants, they would find the accounts very believable.

As to the consequences for people's lives, this study had a cathartic and therapeutic effect on the lives of the participants. It gave them a voice and platform for expression which they did not have before. The findings gave form and life to their hitherto unexpressed feelings and pent-up emotions.

Moreover, I, as the researcher, experienced deep learning, heightened awareness and increased thoughtfulness. I deepened my understanding of the subtleties and complexities of the experience of racism. I felt more empathy for Chinese immigrants who had suffered discrimination.

It is my hope that this study would touch the lives of the readers. Especially for the Europeans who are the majority group in New Zealand, I hope this would give them a taste of how it felt to be discriminated against and help them re-think their attitudes and treatment of Chinese immigrants and other minority groups. I hope the experience of reading this study would encourage the readers to examine their personal constructions of reality by searching for underlying bias in their preconceived assumptions. This would be a first step towards creating a stance to treat all people with respect and dignity.

POSTSCRIPT

Doing this study has been an inspiring and insightful experience for me. I feel I have embarked on a journey of discovery into the life-world of Chinese immigrants who have suffered racial discrimination in New Zealand. I was able to resonate with many of the participants' experiences. Through their narratives, I was able to feel their vulnerability, anger, fear and pain. Hopefully, I have been successful in conveying this "lived" experience of racism to my readers.

Guignon (1983) talked about the "measure of truth" of an interpretive account as pertaining to "its consequences for our lives." Through the experiences of the participants I felt I have become richer in my experience.

Analysing the cultural factors that stood in the way of facing up to discrimination made me realise the complex and intricate interrelationship between culture and perception. I learned not to take things at face value. Just because someone denied having encountered racial discrimination does not mean that prejudice and racist treatment did not happen. It is only after peeling away the cultural layers of meaning that the phenomenon of racial discrimination can be seen in its essence.

Engaging with the experiences of the participants has made me more empathetic towards the plight of Chinese immigrants in New Zealand. I sincerely hope that my readers will be moved by their accounts to become more sympathetic towards Chinese immigrants and other minorities. Having glimpses of their distress and predicament would hopefully make readers pause and reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour towards Chinese immigrants.

For all the Chinese people who have suffered racial discrimination, I hope reading the experiences of other victims of racism would make them feel they are not alone in their distress and anguish. It is hoped they can see racism for what it is, an unfair and prejudicial treatment of people of another race. They would then realise that the racist treatment they received has nothing to do with who they really are or anything

they have done. Hopefully, Chinese readers can recognise the cultural factors blocking their perception of racism and be brave enough to see racism for what it is.

As for the participants, talking about their racist experiences has been distressing to some and enlightening to others. A few of them were embarrassed and at times tearful while narrating their experiences. Old wounds brought back painful memories, which one would prefer to forget. However, being able to talk about their feelings and reactions in such depth and detail also had a cathartic effect for them.

Others found participating in the study a refreshing and helpful experience. A couple of participants commented on the therapeutic effect of talking about their feelings. They had never had the chance to explore their emotions and reactions in such depth. They felt they had come up with fresh understandings and meanings of events. They had developed deeper and new insights into themselves as a result.

It is hoped that the findings of the present study will increase understanding of the lived experience of Chinese immigrants suffering racial discrimination, of the implicit meanings in the different narratives, and the wider implications of the experience for the self and life in general. This will help to raise awareness of intercultural understanding between Chinese people and New Zealanders. An important implication of the present study is that a greater acknowledgement and understanding of racial discrimination among Chinese people in New Zealand would be a first step towards fighting against racism in general.

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APPENDIX A

EXPERIENCING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

INFORMATION SHEET

Who is conducting this study?

My name is Eve Graham. I am a student at Massey University studying towards a Master of Arts degree in psychology. I am interested in looking at your experience of racial discrimination in New Zealand and how it has affected your life. I believe that reading about your experience will help people understand the negative effect of racial discrimination and help to improve their attitudes towards immigrants. My supervisor is Kerry Chamberlain, a senior lecturer in the school of psychology at Massey University. The Massey University Human Ethics Committee has approved this study.

The nature and purpose of this study

This study looks at what racial discrimination means to Chinese immigrants in New Zealand and how their lives are affected. Its purpose is to help people understand how it feels to be discriminated against and hopefully improve their attitude towards immigrants.

What you need to do

If you wish to take part in this study all you need to do is to complete an interview with me. In the interview we will talk about your experience of racial discrimination in New Zealand and how that has affected your life. The interview will be in the form of a conversation and will last for approximately one hour.

Protecting your confidentiality

I need to tape-record our interview so I can analyse and review the material we will be discussing so it is necessary that you agree to be audio taped before you participate. I will then transcribe the recorded interview. The recorded interview and transcript will be accessible also to my supervisor Kerry Chamberlain. We are both bound by a statement of confidentiality and cannot disclose your identity or what you have said to anybody. The tape and transcript will be securely stored and will be destroyed at the end of the study. You are welcome to the tape if you would like it. Only a pseudonym will identify your tape and transcript and it will not be possible to identify you by name in

the report published about the study. We ask that you do not disclose anything on the tape that will identify yourself.

Your rights as a participant in this research

If you agree to participate in this study you have the right to:

- refuse to answer any question, discuss any issue
- withdraw from the study at any time up to the preparation of reports
- ask any questions about the study at any time
- ask for the tape recorder to be turned off at any time
- provide information on the understanding that your identity will not be disclosed unless with your permission
- be given a summary of the findings from the study when it is finished

Contact information

You are welcome to contact me at any time during the study if you require further information. I can be contacted by phone at (09) 4805050. My supervisor can be contacted at (09) 4439799 ex 9078

Thank You

資料冊

誰人做這項研究工作？

我名叫鄭綺嫻 (Eve Graham), 我是 Massey 大學心理學系的碩士學生。我對你在紐西蘭受種族歧視的經歷深感興趣, 並相信你的經歷會使他人明白種族歧視的不良效果, 同時改善他們對新移民的態度。我的導師是 Kerry Chamberlain。他是 Massey 大學心理學系的高級講師。這項研究已獲 Massey 大學的 Human Ethics Committee 的批准。

這項研究的性質及目的

這項研究是有關紐西蘭中國移民受種族歧視的感受及對他們生活的影響。這項研究工作的目的是使一般人明白受種族歧視的體驗, 及改善他們對新移民的態度。

你需要做什麼？

如果你願意參與這項研究你只需接受我的訪問。訪問中我們會談及你在紐西蘭受到種族歧視的經歷, 及這些經歷對你生活的影響。訪問是以談話的方式進行, 大概需要一小時左右。

保持秘密

我需要錄音機錄下我們的談話, 好讓我分析及探討談話的內容。因此你不參加這項研究之前, 需要允許被錄音。我會把錄下來的聲帶抄錄下來。我的導師 Kerry Chamberlain 會獲悉談話的內容。我們兩人都會把你的身份保密, 更不會把談話內容告訴任何人。錄音帶及抄本會

安全保管。研究完畢後將予毀滅。如果你喜欢的話，你可以保存錄音帶。在錄音帶及抄本中我會用偽名來保護你的身份，在這項研究的任何報告中，絕無可能以你的名字認出你的身份。我們並請求你在談話時不要透露自己的身份。

你參加這項研究的權利

- 如果你願意參加這項研究工作，你有權：
- 拒絕回答任何問題，討論任何題目
 - 退出這項研究
 - 隨時提問有關這項研究的任何問題
 - 隨時要求我把錄音機關掉
 - 知道當你提供資料時，你的身份獲得保密
 - 當研究完畢後你會接獲研究結果的概要。

聯絡資料

如你需要有關資料，可於研究進行中隨時與我聯絡。我的電話是(09)4805050。我導師的電話是(09)4439799 x 9078。

多謝你的合作！

(這資料冊以英文本為準)

APPENDIX B

EXPERIENCING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to decline to answer any particular questions and to withdraw from the study at any time up to the preparation of reports.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission.

The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project.

I agree to the interview being audio taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

允許參與表格

我經已閱讀過資料冊，有閩人仕經已詳細解釋這項研究的細節，及回答我所有的疑問，而我也明白我可以隨時提問其他的問題。

我知道我有權拒絕回答任何問題及直至準備報告時隨時可以退出這項研究。

我願意把資料交給研究者，條件是未得我的同意前她不可以透露我的名字。

有閩資料只會用於這項研究及與其有關的印刷刊物。

我同意被錄音。

我知道我有權於訪問時隨時要求你关掉錄音機。

我同意(在資料冊中所列的條件下)參加這項研究。

簽名: _____

姓名: _____

日期: _____