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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
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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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