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**SELECTION BIAS OPERATING AGAINST SKILLED
CANDIDATES FROM
COUNTRIES-OF-ORIGIN OTHER THAN
NEW ZEALAND**

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ABSTRACT

New Zealand is opening up its borders to attract skilled migrants to fill occupational shortages highlighted as important for New Zealand's economic and social development. Despite highly skilled immigrants gaining residency, many are unable to secure employment in their area of expertise. This logjam suggests that there are specific human factors such as selection biases operating against candidates from certain countries in the New Zealand employment context.) The issue of selection bias was addressed by examining the perceived similarity between country-of-origin to country-of-destination, and the perceived social dominance of country-of-origin vis-à-vis country-of-destination. Eighty Subject Matter Experts with approximately 10 years experience participating in/watching selection panels completed a scenario format that elicited their estimates of Human Resource and Line Managers' selection preferences for jobs in twelve key occupations. Candidates were presented as coming from countries-of-origin that varied from Australia to Southern and South East Asian, Southern African, and Pacific Island nations, but were otherwise equally skilled, qualified for the given job, and costly to employ. Despite this equality of match to the job, there were significant biases for and against different countries-of-origin. Specifically, candidates from countries-of-origin perceived to be more similar to New Zealand, and candidates from countries-of-origin perceived to be socially dominant, were preferred over candidates from countries-of-origin less similar and subordinate. The discussion focuses on improving the methodology, and opening up the discussion field for future research.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The media over recent times have highlighted the plight of highly skilled new immigrants coming to our shores (New Zealand Herald, February 9, 2002; New Zealand Herald, February 12, 2002). Attracting skilled migrants to New Zealand is part of the Government's 'innovation framework' policy which aims to lift the country's economic performance (New Zealand Herald, February 16, 2002; Dalziel, 2001). "Skilled workers create, improve and apply new knowledge, which stimulates technological advance and thus productivity" (Glass & Choy, 2001, p.9). This new initiative is in part a response to the current debate on the "brain drain" hypothesis (Bushnell & Choy, 2001, p.10). This is the idea that New Zealand is losing many skilled people to other countries, which pulls down standards of living for those left behind. However, evidence seems to suggest a "brain exchange" with the rest of the world (Glass & Choy, 2001, p.40). New immigrants are often more skilled than our emigrants (and in fact than the local New Zealand population). The economic impact of this brain exchange inevitably depends in part on how quickly immigrants can find jobs to start applying their skills. The problem though, is that highly skilled immigrants are coming to our shores, but are unable to get jobs to make use of their skills. They are therefore unable to contribute to the economic well-being of New Zealand. Many have university degrees and a wealth of experience in their professions yet these skilled newcomers are unable to secure jobs despite an economic environment where employers profess difficulties in finding highly skilled staff.

This logjam suggests that there may be specific human factors operating against people from certain countries in the New Zealand employment context. Here in our New Zealand context for example, there could be selection biases. This project sets out to test that possibility and to explore reasons why it might be happening.

Immigration Policy

In the interests of understanding why there are increasing numbers of highly skilled immigrants coming to New Zealand, it is important to look at the wider context of immigration. In particular, it is necessary to examine and review the changes in immigration policy that have led to greater numbers of highly skilled immigrants coming from a wider variety of countries.

During much of the past 100 years “immigration policy has been relatively ‘exclusivist’, aiming to preserve cultural and racial homogeneity by giving preference to British stock” (Kasper 1990, p.25). Therefore, immigrants have primarily come from Europe, where unrestricted access has been granted primarily to people of British and Irish birth and descent. (Trends in Residence Approvals, 2001). This unrestricted access ceased in 1974, after deteriorating economic conditions in New Zealand. From 1974, British migrants were required to obtain entry permits as were other people wishing to immigrate to New Zealand. Since then, there have been a number of changes in immigration policy that have affected from which countries immigrants are given residency in New Zealand, and the level of skill and education they bring with them.

Through the 1970’s and the early 1980’s, the main method of regulating immigration was the occupational priority list. This allowed for the entry and residence of people who had skills that were in short supply in New Zealand (Zodgekar, 1997). However, the criteria for occupations and family reunification were easily managed to continue to favour immigrants from Britain who, in 1978-79 for instance, accounted for 6,628 out of just over 20,000 long term migrants. Against this, Dutch migrants for example, accounted for just 716, North Americans 1,664 and Australians, 4,832 (New Zealand Official Year Book on the Web, 1999). In that same year, only 1,948 immigrants came from the whole of Asia (New Zealand Official Year Book on the Web, 1999). So, although immigration policy had been modified, the majority of immigrants were still ‘European’ and similar in culture, way of life, and colour to the local population of New Zealand. Not surprisingly perhaps, there appear to have been no glaring issues or significant barriers with regards to these new immigrants gaining employment and assimilating into the New Zealand way of life. “The objective was always to ensure that immigrants could be readily integrated without upsetting or influencing existing New Zealand society and culture” (Kasper, 1990, p.28).

In 1987 however, the Immigration Act provided new direction in immigration. This new direction eliminated the restrictions on entry based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex, marital status, religion, or ethical belief. Eliminating these restrictions widened the range of people and countries from which occupational immigrants could be selected, and had an immediate effect on the pattern of immigration (McKinnon, 1996). Migrants from European and American countries fell from 54% of the total in 1986, to 29% in 1989. Now, there was an increase in immigrants from the Pacific Islands (from 22% to 37%), and an increase in immigrants from Asia (from 20% to 31%) (Zodgekar, 1997). Subsequently, a greater number of immigrants gaining residency in New Zealand appeared different to the local New Zealand population, in terms of beliefs, culture, colour and language.

Furthermore, under a points system introduced in 1991, which still operates today, new migrants gaining residency in New Zealand tended to be highly skilled. The assumption in this system was that by selecting highly skilled migrants, their settlement in New Zealand would be easier, and their arrival would make a more positive contribution to New Zealand (Trends in Residence Approvals, 2001). Even today, the New Zealand Government is continuing its drive to increase the quota of highly skilled migrants being granted residency in New Zealand. In September 2001 for example, part of the Government's 'innovation framework' policy, which 'aims to lift the country's economic performance' (New Zealand Herald, February 16, 2002; New Zealand Herald, October 15, 2001), involved the introduction of a 'Talent Visa' policy. The 'Talent Visa' will target highly skilled and employable people and will be part of the skilled/business residence approval stream (one of three residence approval streams, the other two streams are family sponsored and international/humanitarian) that aims to make up 60% of a projected 45,000 migrants. Having such a target set in immigration policy clearly indicates that the New Zealand Government regards tertiary qualifications as a good indicator of assimilation and employability in the New Zealand context.

So why the drive to increase immigration and attract skilled migrants to New Zealand? The government has largely justified its intentions to attract skilled immigrants on economic grounds. For example, it has argued that business opportunities, the creation of jobs and increased spending power are consequences of the employment of skilled immigrants. As Kasper (1990) points out "with a flexible skill pool, improved technical

know-how and a more entrepreneurial climate, New Zealand is likely to become an attractive location for internationally mobile resources and a virtuous circle of resource mobilisation, investment and growth” (p.xiii). In this respect, New Zealand is aiming to become ‘an employer of choice’, utilising migration to add to New Zealand’s skill base, and to “widen our set of international links” (Towards Higher Living Standards for New Zealanders, 1999, p.19).

This long-term objective of increasing migration is an important one for New Zealand. As the OECD Economic Outlook (2000) suggests, OECD countries, including New Zealand, are facing ageing and declining populations. Live birth figures available from Statistics New Zealand to December 2001 (55,800) were down for the fourth successive year, continuing a downward trend evident since 1990. The declining birth rate was about 4% below the level required for the population to replace itself with migration, and was coupled with a 4% increase in the death rate (27,800). Hence, with a population unable to replace itself, there will be fewer workers who are able to contribute to the community and the economy. Ultimately, a declining population will affect New Zealand’s economic well-being, and the consequences will negatively impact material living standards (OECD Economic Outlook, 2000). Therefore, New Zealand needs highly skilled migrants who are able to engage their skills in the economy to compensate for our declining and ageing population. Even more so, New Zealand needs migrants in order to expand their globalised labour force to remain competitive in an increasingly globalised market place.

Recently, the debate on boosting our population by increasing immigration has focussed on the role that immigration may play in addressing skilled labour shortages. A number of OECD countries have already adapted their legislation in order to facilitate the entry of skilled foreign workers as a partial response to skilled labour shortages. For instance, “in the United States, caps to temporary immigration have recently been raised, and in the United Kingdom and France a fast-track work permit system has been introduced to speed up the recruitment of foreign workers by companies experiencing severe skill shortages. Germany too has launched a temporary immigration programme in order to recruit information technology specialists” (OECD Economic Outlook, 2000, p.7). In fact, many OECD countries are competing for highly skilled immigrants for the same reasons, i.e., to “address skilled labour shortages and to somehow ease the economic

and budgetary impacts of declining and ageing populations” (OECD Economic Outlook, 2000, p.1). Clearly, New Zealand is not the only country seeking to attract skilled workers to its shores to ensure our economic growth continues. Thus, if migrants are unable to secure employment in their area of expertise here in New Zealand, they may apply their knowledge and skills elsewhere.

While the New Zealand Government increases quotas for skilled immigrants to live and work in New Zealand, concern is also being expressed about large levels of emigration and the ‘brain drain’ of New Zealanders which is said to have contributed to shortages of skilled workers in many industries (see for example Auckland Chamber of Commerce, 2002; Reserve Bank of New Zealand, 1986). According to Bushnell and Choy (2001), New Zealand has lost almost 484,000 New Zealand citizens over the last 47 years. These citizens however, have been replaced with 81,159 Australian citizens and 676,257 other citizens, for a net gain of 273,416 citizens. So while New Zealand has gained migrants on average over the past 40 years, “the net effect on human capital will depend on whether there are differences, in terms of skill composition, between the people leaving and the people coming in” (Bushnell & Choy, 2001, p.4).

Bushnell and Choy (2001) conducted an analysis of permanent long-term arrivals and departures for the period 1992-2000 in various skill categories – low skilled, semi-skilled and high skilled occupations. They found that, during the 1990s, there was a net in-flow of people in high-skill occupations, and net out-flows of people in semi- and low-skilled occupations. Their conclusion was that immigrants coming to New Zealand are likely to be more highly skilled than the overall local population. So, rather than a ‘brain-drain’, Bushnell and Choy (2001) suggest that New Zealand is experiencing a ‘brain exchange’ with the rest of the world. This of course, raises a critical question, whether employers are accessing all the skills that new immigrants are bringing to New Zealand.

An analysis by Bushnell and Choy (2001) suggest not. After producing evidence that immigrants were likely to be more skilled than those who leave, Bushnell and Choy (2001) explored whether the skills of new immigrants were being productively used. Previous research conducted by Winkelmann (2000), and Bedford, Ho and Lidgard (2000) found that unemployment rates of recent migrants were typically high. Overall

across the different ethnic groups 35 per cent of migrants were unemployed in their first year of residence in New Zealand and up to 59 percent of migrants from South Asia were unemployed in their first year of residence in New Zealand. Poot, Nana and Philpott (1988) further conclude that Pacific people's were particularly disadvantaged on arrival. Citing results from these studies, Bushnell and Choy (2001), concluded that "while net migration has added numbers to the New Zealand population (over the longer term), the incoming migrants may, in fact, not be a complete replacement for citizens who departed (at least in the short run), despite being apparently higher skilled on average" (Bushnell & Choy, 2001, p.12). For example, according to Winkelmann and Winkelmann (1998a), many immigrants coming from Asia or the Pacific are often highly educated with several years of work experience. However, these immigrants still find it difficult to find satisfying employment, and are thus denied the ability to integrate into the labour market. This denial is particularly problematic for immigrants from Asia or the Pacific who do not speak English. The result of such exclusion is that a typical immigrant, despite being relatively highly educated, is likely "to have a lower income and lower probability of participation and employment than a New Zealand-born person of the same age and education level in the first years after arrival" (Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998a, p.xi). So while New Zealand citizens are being replaced by a slightly larger inflow of immigrants, who, on paper, appear slightly higher skilled, in practice these new migrants still find it hard to make *use* of those skills in the New Zealand employment context.

Winkelmann and Winkelmann's (1998a) study was based on census statistics from the 1981, 1986, and 1996 New Zealand Population Censuses. A more focussed quantitative study was undertaken by Basnayake (1999) amongst Sri Lankan migrants living in Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton, and Palmerston North on behalf of the Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Trust. Of the 114 respondents, more than 96 percent had professional qualifications and experience in their field of expertise, mostly in engineering, science or accountancy, and more than 75 per cent were in professional jobs prior to migration. More than 92 per cent of the Sri Lankan migrants reported they were fluent or very fluent in English. Nevertheless, only 60 percent of respondents had been employed in the profession they were qualified in, and more than half were employed in less senior positions. Overall, the respondents believed they were being discriminated against by New Zealand employers and felt that their "lack of New

Zealand experience; New Zealand employers not understanding job applicants from other countries; and difficulties with recognition of qualifications” (Basnayake, 1999, p.5) were significant barriers to gaining satisfying employment in their area of expertise.

Similar results to Basnayake’s (1999) research have also been found in more recent exploratory research. On behalf of Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), Oliver (2000) conducted twenty-three semi-structured interviews with representatives from three migrant cultures: Iraq, Sri Lanka and Mainland China. As a group, these respondents were characterised as having high qualifications, some of the group had obtained satisfying and sustainable employment, but the majority were unemployed. Prior to arriving in New Zealand, all twenty-three respondents had been “financially well off in their own countries, possessed a very strong work ethic, had high expectations for their own work performance, and were typically in jobs where they were challenged professionally and intellectually” (Oliver, 2000, p.30). All arrived with a belief that they would settle into meaningful work within six to eight weeks of arriving in New Zealand, and had an expectation that the process would be straightforward. However, all participants in the research reported experiencing multiple barriers to employment and cited “employers’ attitudes, race discrimination and government systems as creating the greatest obstacles to gaining employment” (Oliver, 2000, p.30).

In interpreting these preliminary findings, Oliver (2000) suggests there may well be a kind of “protectionism” operating in New Zealand (p.30). For example, “doctors from South Africa appear to have little difficulty in finding jobs, whereas doctors from Sri Lanka and Mainland China, even where they had qualifications that were acceptable in New Zealand, still encountered difficulties in finding paid employment. The main problem appeared to be reluctance on the part of many New Zealand employers, and especially employers of skilled and professional workers, to take on employees who do not fit the professional image” (Oliver, 2000, p.30). Just what exactly is meant by the comment ‘not fitting the professional image’ may well sound like a veiled euphemism for possible discrimination or bias operating against immigrants.

Similar kinds of employment-related discrimination have also been identified in Australia. In her longitudinal research conducted over three years, Hawthorne (1997) interviewed eighty-one migrant engineers coming to Australia. Based on recurrent qualitative interviewing between 1991 and 1994, Hawthorne's study reported significant evidence of employer bias by region-of-origin. This bias operated in favour of English-speaking-background and European-origin engineers, compared with those engineers of Asian or Middle Eastern origin. To the extent that New Zealand has similar workplace practices and procedures to Australia, for example through Closer Economic Relations (CER), one could expect the same, or similar, biases occurring in the New Zealand context.

In the available limited literature, it would appear that there is a perception on the part of some skilled immigrants, that employers' attitudes, including a stereotyping of cultures and a negative attitude toward employing non-native English speakers, are significant barriers to gaining employment. The issue of perception is an important one when considering whether there are biases operating in the New Zealand employment context. The sample size in the limited literature is inevitably relatively small and self-reporting cannot always be fully trusted. Therefore, this study will address the issue of perception by having Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) participate in the study.

Psychological Theories

Having briefly surveyed the available evidence that possibly points to biases operating against migrants in the employment context, a further question now arises, as to why might this be happening? The research cited so far provides no psychological explanation or theory as a way of understanding these negative attitudes. In New Zealand, the need to understand the psychological theories underpinning these negative attitudes is more acute than most places with its geographic isolation and decreasing population. New Zealand needs to harness as many highly skilled employees as possible, in order to continue to participate within the worldwide economy. The key to utilising these skills is for new migrants to settle into New Zealand society and quickly integrate into the labour market. Employers for example, and the social psychology of their attitudes towards immigrants, play an important role in understanding the selection process. Psychological theories may thus provide a framework from which we can find answers to these issues.

There is an abundance of social psychological research that attempts to understand the factors associated with negative attitudes towards others and groups. Psychological models focus on the individual and internal processes taking place within the individual providing some explanation for discriminatory, prejudice and stereotyping behaviour. As well, inter-group behaviours and attitudes also play a key part in shaping and influencing individual internal processes and responses.

Similarity Attraction Theory

Similarity attraction is one key psychological theory that has focused primarily on inter-individual factors associated with attitudes and behaviour towards others. An assumption made by key researchers like Newcomb (1961) and Byrne (1971) is that perceived similarity is a critical interpersonal factor in predicting attraction. Perceived similarity involves how similar individuals think others are to them. When individuals are perceived to be similar to one-self, there is likelihood that there will be a preference to interact with those individuals (Cushman, Valentinsen & Dietrich, 1982).

According to one of the early key researchers in the area of similarity-attraction, Byrne (1969) suggests people have more positive responses toward people holding similar attitudes because they like people who view the world in the same way as themselves. There is a reassurance that comes from “recognising in others what we ourselves value, support and act on” (Carr, 2003, p.295). Therefore, as people interact with each other and learn about each other’s attitudes, there will be likelihood that people will respond positively to others with similar views and want to be with them. A substantial amount of evidence has been found to support the similarity-attraction hypothesis (e.g., Byrne, 1971; Byrne, 1992; Byrne, Ervin & Lamberth, 1970; Byrne & Griffitt, 1966; Byrne, Griffitt & Golightly, 1966; Bond, Byrne & Diamond, 1968; Cherry, Byrne & Mitchell, 1976). Exploring the many different aspects in which individuals can be perceived as similar, the similarity-attraction hypothesis has been applied in many different areas, for example social class, ethnicity, religion, values, communication style, personality, attitudes and beliefs. Similarity in such factors has been found to influence whether an individual will be attracted to someone or not (e.g., Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Brewer 1968; Byrne, Clore & Smeaton, 1986; Byrne & Wong, 1962; Rokeach, Smith & Evans, 1960; Simard, 1981; Tajfel, 1981).

A significant amount of the research on similarity-attraction has focused on the role of similarity in the development of interpersonal relationships in western societies (Byrne, 1969; Byrne, 1971; Newcomb 1961). However, Byrne (1971) found that there was also a positive response to similar attitudes, and a negative response to dissimilar attitudes, in his research amongst 506 students at various educational institutes in Hawaii, India, Japan, and Mexico. Byrne (1971) concluded that not only is perceived similarity in attitudes a good predictor of attraction in Western societies, but perceived similarity in attitudes is a good predictor of attraction in inter-personal relationships within a diverse range of both 'western' and 'non-western' various cultures. Overall, according to Byrne (1971) people in general show a preference, or are attracted, to other similar people.

Kim's (1991) research applied the similarity-attraction paradigm to an inter-cultural setting. Previous inter-cultural research utilised the 'bogus-stranger' technique for determining the level of similarity. In this technique participants respond to an attitude questionnaire, then are asked to evaluate the same questionnaire supposedly completed by a 'stranger' and then are asked to indicate how much they like or dislike the so-called 'stranger' (Byrne, 1961). This technique does not involve actual interactions between partners. However, participants in Kim's (1991) study (N=122, who were composed of half international students and half U.S. students) took part in a 'get-to-know' face-to-face conversation for approximately 15 minutes. For both U.S. and international students, the perception of attitudinal similarity was a strong correlate of attraction. Therefore, Kim's (1991) conclusions support the similarity-attraction hypothesis by suggesting that people with similar attitudes (e.g., shared beliefs about important topics) are more likely to be attracted to each other, even when they are from different cultures.

Like Kim's (1991) research, Lee and Gudykunst (2001) utilised a face-to-face method of interaction in their study of inter-ethnic interaction. In particular, Lee and Gudykunst (2001) examined interpersonal and inter-group predictors of attraction. In their research, 115 non-European Americans and 168 European Americans were required to have conversations on a number of occasions with each other over a seven-day period. After this period respondents completed various questionnaires measuring social attraction, intellectual attraction and perceived similarity in communication styles.

Lee and Gudykunst (2001) found three further influential predictors of inter-ethnic attraction. Firstly, the results indicate that perceived similarity in communication style were a significant predictor of inter-ethnic attraction. Secondly, results suggest that inter-ethnic attraction will occur when the view an individual has of themselves is perceived as being supported or shared by individuals from another group. Thirdly, Lee and Gudykunst (2001) found if individuals expect their interactions with members of different ethnic groups will produce positive results, they will more likely be attracted to members of those ethnic groups. An individual needs to perceive that they are similar in some aspect with another individual, but the individual also needs to perceive that the 'other party' supports or positively responds to them in order for attraction to take place. For similarity-attraction effects to take place, two people need to both have 'good vibes' about each other, or as Carr (2003) puts it, "A has to find similarity in B, and B has to find similarity in A" (p.295). Until now a greater portion of research has examined the perspective of B, immigrants, in securing employment. Our study seeks to focus on A, the employers' perspective, and their attraction towards candidates from similar countries-of-origin.

Chen and Kenrick (2002) conducted three studies amongst 389 U.S. University undergraduate students in order to understand similarity and attraction and the connection to group membership. They set out from the assumption that people tend to assume that members from their own group hold attitudes and beliefs more similar to their own, than do members from different groups (Rokeach, 1960; Brewer, 1979). Participants were categorised into in-groups and out-groups based on their political party affiliation; sexual orientation, and their political affiliation crossed with a target's (hypothetical person(s) from the other group) obnoxiousness. In all three studies, participants were exposed to information about a 'targets' classification as either an in-group member or out-group member. From this information, participants could learn about the target's attitudes and evaluate how similar or dissimilar they were to the target. Chen and Kenrick (2002) hypothesised that attraction would most likely occur between participants and targets from the same group, as opposed to participants and targets from different groups. However, all three studies provide evidence that, in general, after participants had been exposed to attitude information, they were more attracted to similar than to dissimilar others, regardless of group membership.

Therefore, individuals can still be attracted to each other because of the similar attitudes they hold despite differences of group membership.

The paradigm of similarity-attraction has also been applied in the employment context. Various characteristics have been found to contribute to recruiters' perceptions of similarity or dissimilarity to applicants. Factors such as race, age, gender, employment applications and resumes, as well as verbal and non-verbal communication in the employment interview, all provide recruiters with information that influence perceived similarity or dissimilarity between themselves and the applicant (Byrne & Neuman, 1992; Graves & Powell, 1988; Lin, Dobbins & Farh, 1992). The assumption from these studies is that the more similar the applicant is to a recruiter, the more likely there will be "positive bias in the recruiter's interview conduct, information processing and judgments" (Graves & Powell, 1995, p.86; Dipboye & Macan, 1988; Graves & Powell, 1988; Motowidlo, 1986). For example, in his research on similarity-attraction, Orpen (1984) collected data from 614 'real-life' interviews conducted by 24 interviewers. The research was based on interviewers completing attitude questionnaires, as they [the interviewers] believed a candidate would fill them out. Candidates completed the same attitude questionnaire for themselves. Results from the interviewers' questionnaires were then compared with the results from the candidates' questionnaires. Orpen (1984) found a strong likelihood that perceived attitude similarity led to attraction and a stronger likelihood of a positive outcome in the hiring decision.

To summarise the similarity-attraction position. There are certain factors (e.g., culture, ethnicity, attitudes, communication, personality) that effect why a person will like some people and dislike others. There is a willingness to associate with those individuals who are perceived to be more similar to oneself in both Western societies and within cultures. In the employment context there has also been found a greater desire to hire those individual's who are perceived to be similar. Overall, individuals are more likely to be attracted to another person with whom they perceive some measure of similarity.

Similarity Attraction and Inter-Group Relationships

Similarity-Attraction Theory provides a framework for understanding the attraction that takes place amongst individuals within Western and various ethnic cultural settings. Similarity Attraction Theory can also be utilised at a group level to help understand

what influences an individual's attraction towards a group; the influence a group may have on an individual's attraction toward other groups; and most importantly of all for this project, a group's attraction or dislike of other groups.

In applying the similarity-attraction paradigm to a group setting, a key study was conducted by King, King, Zhermer, Posokhova and Chiker (1997). Their study was conducted in Eastern Europe and focussed on perceived similarity across inter-ethnic groups. Participants in the study (N=214) were Russian undergraduates from St. Petersburg. The questionnaire involved assessing the relationship, and impact on Russian life, of Russians, Ukrainians, Moldavians and Georgians. Participants were also required to assess how similar each group was to their own nationality, and which of the groups was perceived as an external threat to Russia. The assumption behind this research, based on similarity attraction, was that assessments of other ethnic groups would be influenced by how similar each group would compare to Russians. Findings from this study suggest that Ukrainians, who share common Slavic ancestry, religion and culture with Russians, are thought to be more similar and are perceived more positively by Russians than are residents of other ex-Soviet states such as Moldavia or Georgia. Therefore, in support of the similarity-attraction hypothesis, King et al.'s (1997) study suggests that people from different cultural groups generally show a positive preference for other cultural groups, which are thought to be most similar to their own group.

Further research has found broad support for the assumption that similarity between groups improves inter-group relations. For example, studies dealing with racial discrimination reveal that perceived similarity of beliefs consistently reduced discrimination towards out-group members (Insko, Nacoste & Moe, 1983). Berry, Kalin and Taylor (1977), in a large survey of Canadian inter-ethnic attitudes, found a moderately strong positive correlation between respondents' evaluations of nine ethnic groups and their perceived similarity to themselves. Struch and Schwartz (1989) found that religious groups in Israel were seen to have similar values to the respondents' own groups and were viewed with less hostility than those seen as dissimilar. On balance, therefore, the similarity-attraction paradigm is not only applicable to interpersonal relations, but also has a central place in understanding the dynamics of inter-group relations.

Roccas and Schwartz (1993) set out to clarify the link between similarity and positive inter-group relations. Roccas and Schwartz's (1993) research took place in Israel, amongst 149 students from the three most prestigious high schools in Jerusalem. Each student: was assigned to one of three levels of manipulated similarity between their schools; evaluated both schools on dimensions relevant and irrelevant to the school context; and expressed their readiness for social contact with the other school. Roccas and Schwartz (1993) found that the students who strongly identified with their school, and perceived that their school was similar to another school, were more likely to exhibit greater in-group favouritism yet also were more likely to make contact with the other similar school. Therefore, when a group is perceived as being similar, there also is likelihood that inter-group contact may improve.

Similar conclusions were found by Osbeck, Moghaddam and Perreault (1997) who applied the paradigm to a multi-cultural context. Osbeck et al. (1997) set out to discover the extent to which participants from both majority and minority groups would be willing to associate with members of other ethnic groups, and how similar the other groups were to one's own group. After interviewing 605 participants from six ethnic groups in Canada, Osbeck et al. discovered that the more similar groups were perceived to be to each other (on dimensions such as hard working; friendliness; family life; group orientation, and trustworthiness), the greater was the willingness to associate with those other ethnic groups. Like Roccas and Schwartz's (1993) research, Osbeck et al. found that similarity between groups is likely to improve group contact.

So how does the similarity-attraction hypothesis relate to the New Zealand context? New Zealand shares a cultural heritage that is common amongst countries linked to Great Britain. This linked heritage has its roots in colonial expansion undertaken by Great Britain during the nineteenth century when predominantly lower-middle class English and Scottish people came to populate countries such as New Zealand and Australia. The predominant culture of these colonies became more closely aligned with their British roots than with the culture of the indigenous population. In contrast, although countries like India and Pacific Islands were also colonised by the British Commonwealth, the predominant culture remained indigenous. The shared predominant culture and colonial heritage of New Zealand and Australia with Great

Britain would partly explain the greater similarity between these countries than with other countries such as China, India or the Pacific Islands.

Since greater similarity exists between New Zealand, Australia and Britain (as opposed to New Zealand, China, India or the Pacific Islands). It is likely therefore, that group relations between New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain would be fairly positive with reduced discrimination and hostility between these countries (Insko et al., 1983; Berry et al., 1977; Struch & Schwartz, 1989; Osbeck et al., 1997). It would be expected that New Zealand employers would be more favourable towards candidates from countries-of-origin perceived as being more similar to New Zealand.

Inverse-Resonance

Although the similarity-attraction hypothesis might suggest a preference for Australian's, British and New Zealander's, rather than Chinese, Indian and Pacific Islanders, there is a complementary possibility to consider. Similarity may well drive groups apart, particularly in the employment context. One illustrative study of this potentiality was conducted in East Africa. Carr, Rugimbana, Walkom and Bolitho (2001) examined the recruitment practices of selecting expatriates. Ninety-six Bachelor of Commerce students attending University of Dar-es-Salaam were required to complete a questionnaire indicating how local personnel managers might rank East African expatriates, Western expatriates and fellow Tanzanians as job candidates for a range of professional jobs. All job candidates were presented as being equally trained, educated and equally costly to relocate. The only difference between candidates was their country-of-origin. Despite this minimal difference however, expatriates from neighbouring countries tended to be less acceptable than more costly Westerners. Carr, Ehiobuche, Rugimbana and Munro (1996) refer to this as "inverse resonance" (p.271).

The reasons for inverse resonance occurring are still unclear. However one possible interpretation is that the similarity between groups is 'too close for comfort' and drives the groups apart. Such a perception may result in a rejection of the 'best' native candidate for a given job, in favour of hiring Western expatriates (Jones & Popper, 1972). The 'best' candidate may be from within a 'developing area', a neighbouring country, or similar culture, and thus have a greater affiliation and comprehensive understanding of the host country and its work practices and ethics. However, despite

being the 'best' candidate for the job, an expatriate from a 'developed' country is still perceived as being the most desirable candidate for a job, even though he/she does not have the same understanding and familiarity with the host country (Carr et al., 1996). The perception that candidates from less similar, countries-of-origin being more desirable than candidates from similar countries-of-origin is not in line with the view that 'similarity is attractive' (Carr et al., 1996).

There appears to be a point whereby the similarity-attraction "reaches a limiting condition" (Carr, 2003, p.296) and groups reject those groups most similar to themselves in favour of less similar groups. Jones's (2000) research in the employment context in the Northern Territory demonstrates the limits of similarity-attraction. Jones (2000) measured perceived similarity amongst Australian's preferences in selecting expatriates. Fifty management students at the Northern Territory University completed a questionnaire that required them to estimate Territorian personnel officers' hiring preferences for ten key occupations in the local context. The personnel officers were able to choose candidates from the Northern Territory, from South Australia, from the United States, from Great Britain, from New Zealand and from Japan. Following Carr et al. (2001) all candidates were presented as being equally costly and qualified for the given job. Despite this however, there was a significant discrimination towards candidates from neighbouring New Zealand compared to candidates both from within Australia and from further removed countries-of-origin, such as the United States. Jones's research (2000) found support for inverse resonance and the limiting condition of similarity-attraction whereby the candidate from next door is sometimes 'too similar and therefore too close for comfort'. The candidate from next door is thus disadvantaged compared to a candidate from a foreign (i.e., more dissimilar) country-of-origin (Jones & Popper, 1972).

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) was originally developed in an attempt to understand the psychological basis of inter-group discrimination and may provide some understanding as to why inverse resonance occurs. A basic tenet of social identity theory is the desire for people to develop a 'positively distinctive social identity' (Tajfel, 1978). Tajfel and Turner (1979) define social identity as consisting of "those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as

belonging” (p.40). This definition suggests that individuals possess a social identity or self-image based on the group(s) to which they belong, such as race, gender, or occupation. In pursuit of developing their self-concept, or positive social identity, people naturally compare themselves with others, especially those who are similar. In the process of such a comparison, a person would hope to emerge in a favourable light, thus boosting his or her self-esteem (Carr et al., 2001).

Just as individuals compare themselves to others for the purpose of having a positive social identity and boosting their self-esteem, groups will also tend to compare and evaluate themselves against other groups which they perceive as similar (Carr et al., 2001). The need for an individual’s sense of positive value is the basis for the group need for positive value. As members of a group, individuals are motivated to see their group as distinct from other groups, in order to maintain a clear social identity or distinctiveness (Tajfel, 1978). This need for positive value and distinctiveness causes people to compare the group to which they belong, against other similar groups in the hope that their in-group will be seen as being preferable (Moghaddam and Stringer, 1988).

The pressure to be distinctive, or set apart, increases as a group grows closer in similarity to another group (Struch and Schwartz, 1989). Social Identity Theory claims that groups need to be different from each other to be positively valued. As the perception of similarity increases between two groups, there is a greater likelihood that one group will feel psychologically threatened by the other group (Tajfel, 1978). “Similarity increases the dimensions of comparability and makes it more difficult to differentiate between the groups and thereby to protect or enhance the groups unique social identity” (Struch and Schwartz, 1989, p.365).

A similar out-group can threaten the psychological distinctiveness of an in-group simply by being too similar and ‘too close for comfort’. The likelihood is that the threat may cause conflict and antagonism between the groups and the in-group will do what it can to maintain its’ distinctiveness (Tajfel, 1974). This concept has been applied to research in areas such as gender (Hogg & Turner, 1987), ethnicity (Finchelescu and De Lay Rey, 1991), political affiliation (Kelly, 1988) and more recently, been applied to relations between groups in the workplace (Haslam, 2001).

Jackson, Sullivan, Harnish and Hodge (1996) studied some of the ways in which groups favour the in-group in situations of inter-group comparisons. In their experiment, they manipulated the positive or negative value of the groups by changing personality descriptions of the groups. Jackson et al. (1996) found that a negative characteristic was rated less undesirable when it distinguished the in-group from the out-group. The in-group was also rated higher on all other characteristics when the in-group was negatively distinct. Jackson et al. described these as efforts to enhance the positive distinctiveness of the in-group.

From a Social Identity Theory perspective, Australia and New Zealand have much in common, for example: similar historical links to Great Britain; similar educational and health standards; similar ways of working and conducting business; similar sporting interests; similar holidays; and similar traditions. Someone from a different country or culture may perceive Australia and New Zealand's ways of living and culture as indistinguishable. In accordance with Social Identity Theory, New Zealanders naturally evaluate themselves against Australian's in search for a positive identity and distinctiveness, and in the process can be discriminatory towards Australians. For example, in the desire to be distinctive and set apart from a neighbouring rival country, a candidate whose country-of-origin is recognisable and familiar, such as Australia, may conceivably be declined an offer of employment in the New Zealand context over another candidate from a more distinctive country-of-origin such as South Africa.

Realistic Group Conflict

Another possible explanation for inverse resonance effects may be found in the theory of Realistic Group Conflict (LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Sherif & Sherif, 1953). Realistic Group Conflict theory proposes that prejudice and discrimination are often based on conflicts of interest between groups (LeVine & Campbell, 1972). (The theory asserts that inter-group hostility and competition will arise whenever economic resources are scarce. Therefore, in order to survive, one group is going to have to compete against another group(s) for the tangible resource. As the competition for the resource escalates, so does the conflict between the groups. This leads to greater hostility and negative treatment of out-group members.)

In their research on inter-group competition, Esses, Jackson and Armstrong (1998) conducted three studies (Study 1, N=64; Study 2, N=180; Study 3, N=110) to examine the issue of whether perceived competition for resources causes unfavourable attitudes towards immigrants and immigration. Esses et al. (1998) found that negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are likely when there are higher levels of unemployment and therefore, many people are competing for jobs.

Esses et al.'s (1998) findings also suggest that, when unemployment is high, "media coverage of immigration can result in adverse attitudes towards immigrants, particularly if it is made known immigrants are doing well" (p.719). In the New Zealand context, media coverage of immigration maybe fuelling a perception that jobs are under threat by growing immigration.

To sum up, Realistic Group Conflict Theory may provide a part explanation for examples of inter-group-attitudes, particularly in cases of perceived threat of competition for economic and power resources. In the present context, immigrants possess skills that are in demand. The jobs available to highly skilled immigrants are listed on the Government's priority list for occupational demand and thus it is assumed that new immigrants would not be perceived by New Zealanders, to be competing against New Zealanders for those particular jobs.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): All else being equal, we expect that skilled job candidates from countries-of-origin perceived to be more similar to New Zealand will be preferred over candidates from countries-of-origin perceived to be less similar.

Social Dominance Theory

Over the last decade, Social Dominance Theory has been offered up as a useful way of explaining inter-group relations and more specifically, group conflict (Sidanius, 1993; Sidanius, Devereux & Pratto, 1992; Sidanius & Liu, 1992; Sidanius, Pratto, Martin & Stallworth, 1991). Social Dominance Theory proposes that "all societies have a predisposition to form group-based social hierarchies. Across the hierarchies, there are one or more dominant groups at the top of the social structure" (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p.31). Participants or members of groups that are at the upper end, or dominant position, of the social structure enjoy a greater share of "positive social value (such as

wealth, status, and power)” (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p.31). Those participants or members, at the bottom end, or subordinate position, of the social structure are compelled to endure an unjust amount of “negative social value (for example, poverty, lack of prestige, and relative powerlessness)” (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p.31). Therefore, it can be said that “socially constructed groups, are ‘stratified’ across a spectrum of social hierarchies whereby certain socially constructed groups are dominant over other socially constructed subordinate groups” (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p.32).

On the basis of Social Dominance Theory, group-based oppression and conflict is simply evidence of a more general set of processes that establish and maintain group-based hierarchies. These group-based hierarchies foster inequality among social groups whether it be class, race, gender or other group differences. This may include “negative stereotyping of out-groups, internal and negative attribution’s for out-group failures, and active discrimination against out-group members” (Sidanius, Pratto & Mitchell, 1994, p.153).

Central to Social Dominance Theory is the concept of social dominance orientation. According to Sidanius (1993), an individual’s social dominance orientation (SDO) is the influencing variable that will significantly affect what judgements and subsequent behaviour are made about an out-group and its members. Social dominance orientation is concerned with an individual’s aspiration to have their own primary in-group to be deemed better than, superior to, and dominant over relevant out-groups (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle, 2000). For example, support for social dominance orientation is found in a large body of evidence showing that social dominance orientation continues to correlate positively with non-egalitarian political and social attitudes including sexism, racism, chauvinism, patriotism and nationalism and that men support these attitudes more than women (Sidanius, Devereux & Pratto, 1992; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993a; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993b).

However, while social dominance orientation is referred to as an individual difference variable, the present research is concerned with how social dominance orientation operates at a group level. Pratto et al. (2000) points out “that it [social dominance orientation] should not simply be thought of in an individualistic sense for the purposes of promoting the distinctiveness of individuals” (p.278). Rather, social dominance

orientation should be considered in light of 'group-dominance orientation' whereby "different kinds of people (e.g., with high or low social dominance orientation) play different roles (e.g., enhance or attenuate inequality) and have different effects on each other (e.g., in how much they discriminate in the allocation of resources)" (Pratto et al., 2000, p.278). Therefore, the concept of social dominance orientation can be applied at a general level whereby there is a general preference by individuals and by groups, for groups to be hierarchically stratified (Hewston, Rubin & Willis, 2002). "These groups may be defined on the basis of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, region, skin colour, clan, caste, lineage, tribe, minimal groups or any other group distinction that the human mind is capable of constructing" (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p.33).

For example, a number of studies have found that people in a variety of countries have systematic and highly consensual rankings for ethnic out-groups. In a random sample of 823 UCLA undergraduates Sidanius and Pratto (1999) found that there are very clear perceptions about what groups are "dominant" and what groups are "subordinate". On a scale ranging from 1 ('very low status') to 7 ('very high status'), there was a high degree of agreement in regards to rating the social status of American whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians. European Americans were consistently rated the highest in social status, with Asian Americans following, while African Americans and Latinos were consistently rated last.

Consistent perceptions about group-status ratings in multi-ethnic nations have been found in Hagendoorn and Hraba's (1987, 1989) research. Hagendoorn and Hraba (1987, 1989) found a hierarchy in social distance among Dutch students (N=291, N=304) in which the Dutch were followed by the English, Jews, Spaniards, Surinamese, Moroccans and Turks, living in the Netherlands.

Hagendoorn, Drogendijk, Tumanov and Hraba (1998) have also found consistent perceptions about group-status ratings in other multi-ethnic nations. Hagendoorn et al.'s (1998) research was conducted amongst 1,290 students from twenty-seven ethnic/national groups across six locations in the former Soviet Union. After completing a questionnaire(s) measuring perceptions of social distance, ethnicity and ethnic hierarchy, the researchers found in all but one of the twenty-seven ethnic groups,

an in-group agreement on the ethnic hierarchy of the above particular groups. A common factor in the perceived hierarchies was a low preference for Islamic groups, both trans-caucasian and Asian minority groups, and a greater preference for “Slavic groups who occupy political and economic dominance in the former Soviet Union” (Hagendoorn et al., 1998, p.499).

Having found support for in-group agreement on group-status ratings amongst Americans, Dutch and several ethnic groups in the former Soviet Union, Mullick and Hraba (2001) set out to discover whether a hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups existed in Pakistan. Punjabi Business Administration students (N=192) completed a quantitative questionnaire that required them to answer questions in relation to social distance, perceived out-group threat, prejudice, stereotypes, stratification beliefs, ethnic ranking and personal characteristics. There was agreement that Muhajirs, who are generally well educated and viewed as competitors for bureaucratic control of Pakistani resources, were to be kept at the greatest social distance. At the other end of the scale, the Pathans, who were perceived as being the least threatening bureaucratically, were to be kept at the least social distance. The remaining two groups (Sindhis and Balchis) occupied second and third place in terms of out-group ethnic hierarchy. Therefore, amongst Punjabi students in this Islamic country of Pakistan, there also exists an ethnic hierarchy involving discrimination amongst ethnic out-groups in social distance.

According to the premises of Social Dominance Theory, people are predisposed to forming group-based social hierarchies according to a structure. Some groups are perceived to be higher on the social hierarchy, and are considered dominant, and some groups are perceived to be lower on the social hierarchy, and are considered subordinate. Human Resource Managers and Line Managers are likely to be predisposed to stratifying countries-of-origin according to a hierarchical structure. Their perception of the order of countries-of-origin in the social hierarchy will help us to determine how Human Resource Managers and Line Managers perceive the countries-of-origin candidates originate from, and how that perception might then impact on selection decisions.

Having established that there are group held perceptions of ethnic hierarchies, as demonstrated by Sidanius and Pratto (1999), Hagendoorn and Hraba (1987, 1989),

Hagendoorn et al. (1998) and Mullick and Hrabá (2001), Social Dominance Theory then proposes that the place of a group in the social hierarchy will impact the social standing of the individual in the group. For instance, someone belonging to a country that is perceived as being dominant, may be viewed as being highly educated and 'wealthy' simply because he or she comes from that particular dominant country. Conversely, another person belonging to a country that is perceived as being subordinate might be viewed as being uneducated and 'poor' simply because he or she comes from that particular subordinate country. Although subordinate countries may have lower standards of education, health, or wealth, individuals from a perceived subordinate country can still be intelligent, achieve well educationally, or have particular abilities in specialised areas. However, according to Social Dominance Theory, people will still attribute to the person the general perceptions that are characteristic of the group to which they belong (Sidanius, Levin, Rabinowitz & Frederico, 1999).

The position of a group in the social hierarchy has been found to influence the recommendations of employers in placing candidates in high-status, high paying occupations (e.g., lawyer) and lower-status, lower paying occupations (e.g., childcare worker). In their research, Sidanius, Pratto and Bobo (1992) found that men as a group are perceived to be higher in the social hierarchy than women as a group. Pratto, Stallworth, Sidanius and Siers (1997) set out to investigate the link between the gender gap in occupations and what influence social dominance orientation may have in sustaining and perpetuating the gender differences between men and women in attaining occupational roles. Four experiments were conducted involving undergraduate university students (N=106; N=57; N=86; N=104). Pratto et al.'s (1997) research showed that the recommendations of employers for the placement of candidates in status-enhancing (i.e., high-status, high paying occupations) and status-attenuating (i.e., lower-status, lower paying occupations) occupations were consistent with the position of the candidate's group in the social dominance hierarchy, in this case what gender group the candidate belonged to.

Although Pratto et al.'s (1997) research was focused on gender imbalances and the preferences for men in high status occupations, its underlying rationale and guiding principles may also be applied to countries-of-origin. The position of a country-of-

origin in the social hierarchy may influence selectors' preferences for candidates. In researching the perceptions of 'foreign talent' (i.e., skilled workers from People's Republic of China and the United States) in Singapore, Ward and Lim (1999) investigated which ethnic or cultural group was preferred when it came to occupational skills that were in high demand. After surveying 134 Singaporean Chinese working in the private sector, Ward and Lim (1999) found there was preference for American expatriates over Chinese candidates in terms of job competence, social skills, contribution to the organisation and to the country. Ward and Lim's (1999) explanation for this outcome is based on Social Dominance Theory, that is, if Singaporean Chinese perceive the United States to be a dominant country with significant political influence and power, Singaporeans would show a preference for American expatriates over Chinese candidates. In the present research, if it is perceived that Great Britain is a country with high standards of living, education and health systems, and significant socioeconomic development and political influence, and the Pacific Islands are perceived as having low standards of living, education and health with little economic power or political influence, it is likely that candidates from Great Britain would be preferred over candidates from Pacific Islands, even if the candidate from the Pacific Islands was exceptionally well qualified and trained for a job.

Social Dominance Theory therefore holds that people tend to perceive various groups according to a position in the social hierarchy, and that a group's social standing will influence the perceptions people have of an individual from that group. Based on this premise, it is possible that Human Resource Managers and Line Managers in a New Zealand setting will 'stratify' countries-of-origin according to a hierarchical position of dominance or sub-ordinance. It is also likely that the social position of the country-of-origin in the hierarchy will influence the perceptions Human Resource Managers and Line Managers have of a candidate from a particular country-of-origin. Therefore:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): All else being equal, skilled job candidates originating from countries-of-origin perceived to be more socially dominant will be preferred over their counterparts from countries-of-origin perceived to be less dominant.

CHAPTER 2

Method

Participants

Eighty Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) participated in the research (21 males, 56 females, 3 unspecified). These SMEs had ranged in age from 21.0 to 56.0 years ($M=38.41$, $S.D.=9.52$) and were drawn from The Human Resource Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ) and four Auckland based recruitment agencies. Fifty-seven of the participants were members of HRINZ and are currently employed within various sectors of Human Resource Management, while the remaining 23 participants, who were not members of HRINZ, were employed in the recruitment industry. Collectively, these SMEs were sought as participants because they have direct, up-to-date experience in human resource management, recruitment and selection, and are aware of, and familiar with, the current practices of selection panels operating within New Zealand. In fact, our sample had an average of 8.04 years ($S.D.=6.5$) of Human Resource/Recruitment experience, and an average of 10.20 years experience participating in/watching job selection processes generally. Such SMEs have been found to be more accurate in appraisal research and rating accuracy than counterparts with less experience (Smither, Barry & Reilly, 1989; Smither & Reilly, 1987).

Our eighty SMEs were asked to indicate their current job title. One-third (26 SMEs) reported that they were Human Resource Directors and 25 SMEs indicated they were either Recruitment Consultants or Recruitment Managers. A further nine SMEs were Human Resource Consultants, six SMEs were Managing Directors or General Managers, and three SMEs indicated they were Training or Team Managers. Another three SMEs indicated they were Organisational Development Managers or Directors and a further three SMEs indicated their current job title as Psychologist, Health & Safety Consultant and Researcher. The remainder (five SMEs) did not state their precise job title.

The ethnicity of participants was as follows. Of the respondents who divulged this information, 61 SMEs (76.25%) described their ethnic background as New Zealand, New Zealand European, Pakeha or Caucasian, and two SMEs indicated they were solely New Zealand Maori. Of the remainder, five (6.25%) SMEs said they were British, and a further four SMEs self-identified themselves as belonging to other ethnic groups (Australian, Chinese, South African, Indian). Eight SMEs did not report any ethnicity.

Materials

The current study consisted of a pilot study and a main study. Before the questionnaire was piloted, approval for all stages of the research was obtained from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. The final version of the questionnaire approved by this process is presented in Appendix I.

From Appendix I, and following a similar questionnaire used in Carr et al.'s (2001) and Jones's (2000) research, participants were asked to estimate the preferences of a hiring person(s) (i.e., Human Resource Manager or Line Manager) in twelve key occupations. The participants were also asked to imagine that the imaginary applicants, from seven different countries-of-origin, were equally qualified and equally costly to employ, with equal English language ability. For each occupation, i.e., Information Technology Manager, participants placed a '1' below the estimated first choice of applicant, a '2' under the probable second choice, and so forth until placing a '7' for the remaining last choice. Such indirect, scenario-type question formats have been recommended for use because they are often relatively immune to social desirability effects (Robinson & Clore, 2001; Sinha, 1989).

Occupations: The occupations selected for use in Part 1 of the research were initially obtained from the 'Labour Market Skills Shortage List' of the New Zealand Immigration Service (February, 2002). The purpose of this list is to enhance and streamline the processing of work permits and approvals, in principle, for work visas or permits where there is a known regional labour market skill shortage.

With several occupations to choose from the Labour Market Skills Shortage List, key occupations were then selected using the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (1999). Occupations are classified according to a hierarchical system consisting of five levels. These levels consist of (1) nine major groups, (2) 25 sub-major groups, (3) 99 minor groups, (4) 260 unit groups and (5) 567 occupations (New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations, 1999). The nine major groups from level 1 are:

1. Legislators, Administrators and Managers
2. Professionals
3. Associate Professionals and Technicians
4. Clerks
5. Service and Sales Workers
6. Agriculture and Fishery Workers
7. Trades Workers
8. Plant and Machines Operators and Assemblers
9. Elementary Occupations (including residuals categories)

Using this classification of major groups, the researcher selected occupations that were primarily from Groups 1,2,3. Occupations from Groups 1, 2 and 3 represent highly skilled occupations. It is in these groups primarily, that skilled immigrants coming to New Zealand are unable to find employment in their area of expertise (Fenwick, 1997; Oliver, 2000). Therefore the occupations included in the questionnaire were as follows (the number following each occupation is the closest corresponding occupational classification number):

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Group 1 | Information Technology Manager (12271), Construction Site Supervisor (12218) |
| Group 2 | Aircraft Engineer (21453), Teacher (Secondary) (23211), Chartered Accountant (241110), Traffic Planner (21481) Marine Designer (21411), Medical Doctor (2221), Speech Therapist (23412) |
| Group 3 | Radiologist (31331) |

Two further occupations were selected from Groups 5 and 7, in order to represent occupations where there is a significant shortage but are also more labour intensive.

Group 5 Chef (51221)

Group 7 Boat Builder (71123)

Countries-of-Origin: The countries-of-origin included in the research were selected using the New Zealand Immigration Department's residence approvals by top ten nationalities for 2000/2001 (Trends in Residence Approvals, 2000/20001). Great Britain, India and China were the single largest source countries (accounting for 13, 13 and 12 percent of all residence approvals respectively). South Africa accounted for 9% of all residence approvals and Samoa and Fiji, who were included in the research as Pacific Islands, represented 5% and 7%. Although Australia did not feature in the top ten nationalities of resident approvals, this country-of-origin was included because of the Closer Economic Relations (CER) agreement between New Zealand and Australia and the fact that Australia is New Zealand's largest single market and strongest trading relationship (Catley, 2001).

Similarity Attraction Measure: Similarity Attraction was measured after Jones (2000). From Appendix I, Part 2 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to rank order between New Zealand and the other countries-of-origin: Pacific Islands, Britain, China, Australia, India and South Africa. Each participant was asked to rank six of the countries-of-origin for similarity. The question was presented, "amongst Human Resource and Line Managers generally, which of these countries' ways of living/systems of belief is MOST similar to New Zealand". For the remaining five times the question was presented it read "amongst Human Resource and Line Managers generally, which of these countries' ways of living/systems of belief is NEXT most similar to New Zealand". Along with the list of countries-of-origin, participants were asked to circle one country in response to each question. This rendered a rank order of countries ranging from 1-6 ordered in terms of similarity with New Zealand.

Social Dominance Orientation Measure: Traditionally social dominance is measured by using the 16 Item Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO Scale). This contains various sub-scales so as to measure different aspects of social dominance orientation, for example, cultural elitism sub-scale, equal opportunity sub-scale, and the patriotism sub-scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 2000). Research with the social dominance orientation scale has shown that it predicts a range of sociopolitical and inter-group phenomena and has been a powerful predictor of generalised prejudice and ethnocentrism (Altemeyer, 1998; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth & Malle, 2000; Sidanius, Pratto & Bobo, 1994).

The scale that has been developed to-date measures individual differences in social dominance orientation i.e., the extent to which the world is seen in stratified (e.g., cultural, elitist) terms, as opposed to perceived differences in dominance between countries-of-origin, i.e., the extent to which others are perceived to stratify specific countries-of-origin against each other. Given this difference between the classical scale and our measurement requirements, the researcher contacted directly the authors of the social dominance orientation scale (Prof. Jim Sidanius, University of California; and Prof. Felicia Pratto, Stanford University) to inquire as to the most accurate way of measuring social dominance orientation in respect to the research being undertaken. Sidanius (personal communication, 2 April, 2002); advised that stereotypical images of certain countries, in the minds of participants, could be measured by having participants rate a list of countries across a broad range of characteristics such as: wealth, power, racial composition, good health, nutrition, low status, poor health etc. In fact, Pratto suggested “really anything people value (positively) or want to avoid” can be used as characteristics (Pratto, personal communication, 2 April, 2002). As a result, and for the purposes of this research, social dominance orientation was defined by the researcher as living standards, education, health and levels of wealth.

Thus, participants were asked to indicate how other Human Resource and Line Managers might generally view each of the selected countries (Pacific Islands, Britain, China, New Zealand India, Australia, South Africa), according to which country has the best, next best, and so on... living standards, education, health and levels of wealth (see Appendix I, Part 3). From Appendix 1, Part 3 of the questionnaire required each participant to rank seven of the countries-of-origin for social dominance. The presented

question in the scale was: “amongst Human Resource and Line Managers generally, which of these countries’ has the BEST standard of living, education, health and wealth?” For the remaining six times the question was presented, it read “amongst Human Resource and Line managers generally, which of these countries’ has the NEXT standard of living, education, health & wealth?” Along with the list of countries, participants were asked to circle one country in response to each question. This rendered a rank order of countries ranging from 1-7 ordered in terms of social dominance.

Qualitative Questions: Referring to Appendix I, participants were asked about their perceived reasons for Human Resource Managers and Line Managers’ opinions, and why Human Resource Managers and Line Managers’ behave the way they (participants’) perceived it. Question 1a asked whether participants had based their judgements for Part 1 of the questionnaire (i.e., the ranking of candidates on a 1-7 scale for preference for occupations) largely on actual observations. Question 1b asked whether participants had based their judgements for Part 2 of the questionnaire (i.e., the ranking of countries on a 1-6 scale for similarity to New Zealand) largely on actual observations. Question 1c asked whether participants had based their judgements for Part 3 of the questionnaire (i.e., the ranking of countries on a 1-7 scale for social dominance) largely on actual observations. These questions required a yes/no answer. If participants had indicated ‘no’ to any one of these questions (i.e., 1a, 1b or 1c) in regards to basing judgements largely on observation, there was opportunity for participants to qualify their answers. For example, if a participant’s response had been ‘no’ to either question 1a, 1b or 1c they were asked to “please explain briefly” their answer(s). These qualitative responses were consequently coded (see results).

Question 2 asked whether participants felt reasonably comfortable filling in the questionnaire. This question required a yes/no answer. If participants’ answered ‘no’ to question 2, there was opportunity for them to comment on the answer they had given. For example, if their response had been ‘no’ they were asked to “please explain briefly” their answer. These qualitative responses were duly noted and assessed (see results).

Demographic Questions: Still referring to Appendix I, participants were also asked a few basic demographic questions about their background and experience, including gender, age and self-reported ethnicity. Participants were also asked to indicate their current job title, years of Human Resource experience and the years of experience participating in/watching selection job processes generally.

Procedure

Ten people participated in a pilot study. These people were employed in management and administrative positions in the education, law and religious sectors. The purpose of the research was outlined, and each individual completed the questionnaire in their own time, and returned it to the researcher at their convenience. All participants in the pilot study completed and returned the questionnaire to the researcher. After receiving the completed questionnaires, and oral and written feedback from these individuals, the questionnaire was modified before distributing it to the main group of voluntary participants. For example, one participant commented that the questions were difficult because the questions felt “loaded”. Subsequently the research questions and pre-brief were substantially modified by the researcher and researcher’s supervisor so that participants felt free, at their discretion, to answer as much, or as little of the questionnaire as they determined. As well, the researcher stressed in the pre-brief that participants were simply to leave any question ‘blank’ where they chose not to complete the question.

At the outset of the study, the objective was to obtain as many as possible useable questionnaires from participants who are presently employed at a level where they are making employment decisions and having experience and expertise about selection practices in New Zealand. The objective for having experienced participants in selection decision making led the researcher to the Human Resource Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ), the professional organisation for people who are interested or involved in the management and development of human resources which has over 1000 members throughout New Zealand. This professional organisation currently has seven branches (Auckland, Waikato/BOP, Taranaki, Manawatu, Wellington, Canterbury, Wild South). The various branches meet monthly and in addition there are several ‘special interest groups’ (SIG) (for example, Change Management, Employment Relations, Leadership, Coaching and Development) that also meet monthly or bi-monthly.

HRINZ Permission to survey members was initially obtained from the appropriate Branch Manager, and executive committee, in the Auckland and Waikato/Bay of Plenty branch organisation after presentations were made outlining the research proposal. When permission was given to access voluntary participants, the researcher contacted the key person(s) for the Auckland and Waikato/Bay of Plenty branch groups, and special interest groups meeting in the Auckland region, to arrange a suitable time to attend a branch meeting or speciality group.

The researcher attended the Auckland and Waikato/BOP branch meetings of the HRINZ and the following HRINZ special interest groups: Change Management; Leadership, Coaching and Development; Remuneration; and Industrial/ Organisational Psychology. This direct approach was adopted to enhance the participation of those agreeing to complete the research. The majority of HRINZ members that attended these various Special Interest Groups had selection experience either as participants for as observers.

At the beginning of each meeting, and after introductory comments by a welcoming HRINZ member, the researcher then distributed the Information Sheet (see above under materials) to all participants. During this time, the researcher also orally outlined the purpose of the research (including all ethical considerations) and highlighted, in particular (a) the voluntary nature of participating in the research; (b) that the questionnaire was designed to draw on participants' observations and experience, not their own personal opinions. Specifically, the participants were asked to report what they had seen or knew to be happening in the kinds of occupations sector(s) they worked in; and (c) that the selection decision making scenario (Part 1 of the questionnaire) required them to imagine the seven applicants, each originating from a different country-of-origin, as being equal in terms of education and training, English language fluency, cost of relocation and employment, and desire to work in New Zealand over the same span of time.

After distributing the questionnaire, voluntary participants spent 10-15 minutes completing the research questions. Those participants who did not want to take part in the research sat quietly during this time. If the 10-15 minutes was insufficient for participants to complete the questionnaire at the beginning of the meeting, the HRINZ meeting or Special Interest Group continued with their agenda for the evening while

participants completed the questionnaire. On completion of the questionnaire, voluntary participants returned the questionnaire to a return box placed either at the front or rear of the room.

The researcher also contacted four recruitment agencies by phone and e-mail and gained permission from the agency manager(s), to present the research proposal to those employees interested in participating in the research and who were currently involved in recruitment and selection. Employees were then briefed by their manager about the research, and were notified that attendance at the research presentation and completion of the research questionnaire was voluntary. Presentation of the research was conducted in the boardroom of the various recruitment agencies and followed the same standardised procedure as used for the HRINZ presentations.

CHAPTER 3

Results

Criteria for Inclusion in the Returned Research

Overall, 104 questionnaires were returned. This data was then screened carefully to ensure participants had based their responses to the questionnaire on actual observation. This was checked using several objective criteria. The criteria that needed to be met for inclusion in the research analysis were:

- (a) Part 1 of the questionnaire, which involved estimating the most likely preferences of hiring persons (i.e., Human Resource Manager or Line Manager), in ranking applicants from various countries-of-origin, against a range of occupations, was fully or at least partially completed. Partially completed questionnaires were useable because we could still analyse predicted preferences for those sections of the questionnaire answered. Participants may have only ranked candidates for some (not all) of the occupations listed. For example, if participants only ranked candidates for Information Technology Manager, we only included this occupation in the final analysis.
- (b) There were no tied ranks in Part 1, for example, participants did not give candidates from different countries-of-origin the same rank number.
- (c) Participants had indicated by circling a “yes” answer, that their judgments for Part 1 of the questionnaire were based largely on their actual observations. If participants had indicated a “no” answer, they were not included in the research unless there was sufficient information in their comment that warranted inclusion in the research (see below “under (c)” for further explanation).

Applying these criteria, 24 of the original 104 questionnaires were not useable (final N=80).

Of the 24 questionnaires not useable, under (a), there were eight participants who did not attempt to complete Part 1 of the questionnaire, which involved estimating the most likely preferences of hiring persons (i.e., Human Resource Manager or Line Manager) in ranking applicants from various countries-of-origin. Under (b), two participants filled out Part 1 by repeatedly using tied ranks. Under (c), 14 participants completed Part 1, but indicated they had not based their judgements in Part 1 on actual observation. These questionnaires were not included in the data analysis.

Of the 80 questionnaires that were included in the research, under (a), there were 11 participants, who restricted themselves to certain occupations when ranking candidates. For example, two participants indicated they could only base their judgement on actual observation for the occupation of Information Technology Manager. Two participants restricted their judgements to three occupations, one participant restricted himself/herself to six occupations, and another participant restricted himself/herself to nine occupations. A further three participants restricted their judgements to 10 occupations and a final two participants restricted their judgements to 11 occupations. Although these participants restricted their answers in Part 1 of the questionnaire, their judgements for those occupations were based on actual observation and thus were included in the data analysis for those particular estimates only.

Of the 80 questionnaires that were included in the research there were seven participants, whom under (c) indicated they had had not based their judgments on actual observation. However, these seven participants made a qualifying comment, which indicated they had indeed based their judgements on actual observation. One participant commented “[I based judgements on my] own observations and information from other practitioners”, while another participant remarked, “[I based] some [judgements] on actual observations, some on perceptions”. Another participant remarked, “I estimated most of the positions on the grounds of my experience with the views of hiring managers in the industries I’ve recruited for”. Qualifying comments such as this one enabled a questionnaire to meet the criteria, that judgements for Part 1 be based largely on actual observation, and was therefore retained in the final data analysis. One can only assume that the participants concerned had simply misunderstood the meaning of “actual observation” to mean personal belief (see Appendix II for full transcripts).

Although not a criterion for exclusion, participants were also given an opportunity to indicate whether or not they felt reasonably “comfortable” filling in the questionnaire as a whole. The question read as follows, “all things considered, did you feel reasonably comfortable filling in the questionnaire?” Participants were then to circle a “yes” or “no” answer, and where they indicated “no” there was an opportunity for them to briefly explain their answer.

There were 28 participants (i.e., 35% of the total sample) who indicated feeling some discomfort in the procedure. This was not unexpected, because having worked in the human resource industry herself, the researcher was aware that human resource decisions are inherently difficult. In addition, these 28 responses all indicated that they had based their judgements on actual observation. Twenty-five of the 28 participants qualified their response with a comment and the remaining three participants did not comment at all. Eight of the 28 participants commented on a conflict between their own personal beliefs and what they had observed, for example, “[selection decision making] is an uncomfortable subject and general observations do not include my own opinion”. Another participant felt that “I am trying to reflect other people’s views rather than my own”. This level of conflict was acceptable for inclusion in the final data analysis because participants simply found it difficult to report what they had indeed seen, which went against their own values.

Seven participants found discomfort in the procedure due to their recognition of discrimination. For example, one participant comments that it “looks like I generally have a preference for New Zealanders or Europeans”. Another participant felt “judgemental” in giving his/her answers while another participant felt he/she “indicate[d] a sense of ‘elitism’ or even racism” to answers. However, any type of human resource decision making can be viewed as being judgmental or even discriminatory. Once again, this was not sufficient grounds to exclude these participants from the research, especially since these participants had based their answers on their own observations.

A further 4 of the 28 participants, who indicated feeling some discomfort in the procedure, when explaining, commented simply that selection decisions often depend on the situation and other factors such as “personality attributes, drive, energy and

enthusiasm". These participants were acknowledging that the research had deliberately simplified the mix of factors normally at play during real selection decision making. This was not deemed sufficient grounds to exclude these participants from the research.

Another four participants indicated they found it difficult to generalise their answers beyond the scenario presented in Part 1 of the questionnaire. For example one participant commented, "[they are] difficult questions, [it is] hard to generalise and stereotype in this way". Another participant simply stated "I didn't feel it [the questionnaire] was adequate in allowing us to give our opinions". However, these participants also, still based their judgements on actual observation. Thus, their responses were included in the final data analysis.

The three remaining participants who indicated that they did not feel reasonably "comfortable" filling in the questionnaire as a whole, and had not given any written comment, were included in the research because they had still based their judgements on actual observation.

Mean Ranking

Table 1 contains the mean ranking for each profession by country of origin. A low mean rank equals a higher estimated preference. In order to test for agreement between raters, Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) was utilised. As a non-parametric statistic, W ranges between 0 (no agreement) and 1 (complete agreement). In Table 1, W measures the variability in column totals for each country-of-origin being ranked. In order to test against the null hypothesis of zero concordance, W can be converted to a chi-squared statistic with $N-1$ degrees of freedom, provided there are seven or more raters. In this research, there are 80 raters. The conversion to a chi-squared statistic usually provides a conservative estimate of statistical significance (Howell, 1992).

From Table 1, an inspection of the various W 's for each job reveals a consistently significant degree of agreement between the raters in ranking each occupation's applicants. If there were no clear preferences, there would be very similar mean ranks within each row of entries. From Table 1 however, these entries clearly differ. Even with a Bonferroni correction procedure, which adjusts the alpha level to .004 instead of .05 as a caution against Type I error, there is still clear concordance between raters.

Thus, there is unambiguous statistical evidence of perceived skews away from chance, in perceived preferences within selection panels in a New Zealand Human Resource context, amongst this sample of SMEs.

Table 1: *Mean Ranking for Each Profession by Country of Origin*

	New Zealand	Australia	Great Britain	South Africa	India	China	Pacific Islands	W	p(W)
Information Technology Manager	1.7	2.8	2.6	3.9	5.3	5.3	6.6	0.664	<0.001
Aircraft Engineer	2.1	2.7	1.9	3.9	5.7	5.2	6.6	0.742	<0.001
Teacher (Secondary)	1.1	2.4	3.0	4.2	6.1	6.0	5.2	0.785	<0.001
Chef	1.9	3.1	3.1	5.0	4.5	4.6	5.8	0.394	<0.001
Construction Site Supervisor	1.3	2.5	3.4	3.7	5.8	6.1	5.3	0.680	<0.001
Chartered Accountant	1.3	2.7	3.0	4.2	5.2	5.5	6.3	0.676	<0.001
Traffic Planner	1.9	2.6	2.4	4.0	5.4	5.4	6.4	0.669	<0.001
Marine Designer	1.3	2.2	3.0	4.2	5.8	5.8	5.7	0.725	<0.001
Radiologist	1.5	2.8	2.6	4.1	5.3	5.1	6.6	0.687	<0.001
Boat Builder	1.1	2.4	3.6	3.9	6.0	6.0	5.0	0.723	<0.001
Medical Doctor	1.3	2.9	2.9	3.9	5.4	5.6	6.2	0.680	<0.001
Speech Therapist	1.3	2.7	2.4	4.0	5.9	6.0	5.7	0.778	<0.001
Overall Mean Rank	1.1	2.5	2.4	4.2	5.8	6.0	6.2		

Given that there is significant concordance in each row within Table 1, the next task is to ascertain where the similarities and differences lie, i.e., between which of the various paired combinations of countries-of-origin. As a first step in this process, the entries within each row in Table 1 were ranked on a scale from 1-7. Following this ranking within each row, each of the entries in any given column was summed and averaged, resulting in an overall mean rank score for each country-of-origin. These mean ranks scores are given at the foot of Table 1.

From Table 1, and its overall mean ranks, it seems that there are clear similarities and differences in certain pairs of overall mean rankings. There appears to be more similarity between Australia and Great Britain, which as a pair, are numerically distinct from New Zealand. These two countries-of-origin (Australia and Great Britain) in turn, appear to be distinct from South Africa. South Africa, in turn, appears to differ in overall mean rank preference from India, China, and Pacific Islands, which themselves are reasonably close in overall mean rank. Thus, from Table 1, the mean estimated preference for different countries-of-origin appear to be clustered.

As far as assessing the statistical significance of the similarities and differences in Table 1, there are clearly many pairs of comparisons that could be made. However, due to the relatively large magnitude of variation across many of the column entries in Table 1, and the high number of potential comparisons (between pairs of entries within each row in the table), it was decided to focus on pairs of entries (and associated raw data sets) that appeared comparably similar and conceivably not statistically different from each other.

Following Carr et al. (2001) the Binomial test was used to test for any skews away from chance, in the number of times one country-of-origin's raw rank score was greater than, versus, less than, its counterpart from another country-of-origin.

From Table 2, there is no preference for candidates from Australia over Great Britain (or vice-versa) on seven out of the twelve occupations. For example, for the occupation of Information Technology Manager, there is no evidence of any systematic preference between Information Technology Managers who originate from Australia or from Great Britain. The same applies to the occupations of Chef, Chartered Accountant, Traffic Planner, Radiologist, Doctor and Speech Therapist. There is also no systematic preference (or bias) for candidates from either India or China on ten out of twelve occupations. For example, for the occupation of Traffic Planner, there is no preference whether Traffic Planners come from either India or China. The same applies to the occupations of Information Technology Manager, Teacher, Chef, Construction Site Supervisor, Marine Designer, Radiologist, Boat Builder, Doctor and Speech Therapist.

Table 2: Binomial Tests of Occupations by Country-of-Origin: Non-Significant Comparisons

Occupation	Countries of Origin						
IT Manager	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
		P = 0.911			P = 0.314		
Aircraft Engineer	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
		P = 1.000					
Teacher	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
					P = 1.000		
Chef	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
		P = 0.470			P = 0.336		
					P = 0.810		
					P = 0.630		
Construction Site Supervisor	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
					P = 0.166		
					P = 0.166		
					P = 0.248		
Chartered Accountant	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
		P = 0.111					
Traffic Planner	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
		P = 1.000			P = 0.909		
		P = 0.051					
Marine Designer	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
					P = 0.727		
					P = 0.907		
					P = 0.907		
Radiologist	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
		P = 1.000			P = 0.166		
Boat Builder	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
			P = 0.561		P = 0.416		
Doctor	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
		P = 0.727			P = 0.201		
Speech Therapist	NZ	Aust	Britain	SA	India	China	PI
		P = 0.561			P = 0.561		
					P = 0.081		
					P = 0.907		

To sum up, from Table 2, there is very little evidence of differences between country-of-origin comparisons. There are many non-significant Binomial comparisons to be found: (a) between Australia and Great Britain (and to a lesser extent, New Zealand); and (b) between India and China (and to a lesser extent, South Africa). Overall, this sample of SMEs tended to predict that preferences amongst Human Resource selection panels would probably cluster into candidates from countries-of-origin that are: (a) Asian countries (Southern and South East Asia) versus; (b) countries that were formerly linked through emigration and immigration within the British Empire (Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain) while South Africa lies between these two clusters.

Similarity Attraction Theory (H1)

Figure 1 plots each overall mean rank preference (from Table 1) as a function of mean perceived similarity of New Zealand to each of the respective countries-of-origin. The perceived similarity means are plotted along the x-axis of Figure 1 and are as follows: New Zealand=0 (by default), Australia=1.05, Great Britain=2.15, South Africa=3.11, Pacific Islands=4.11, India=5.27, and China=5.31.

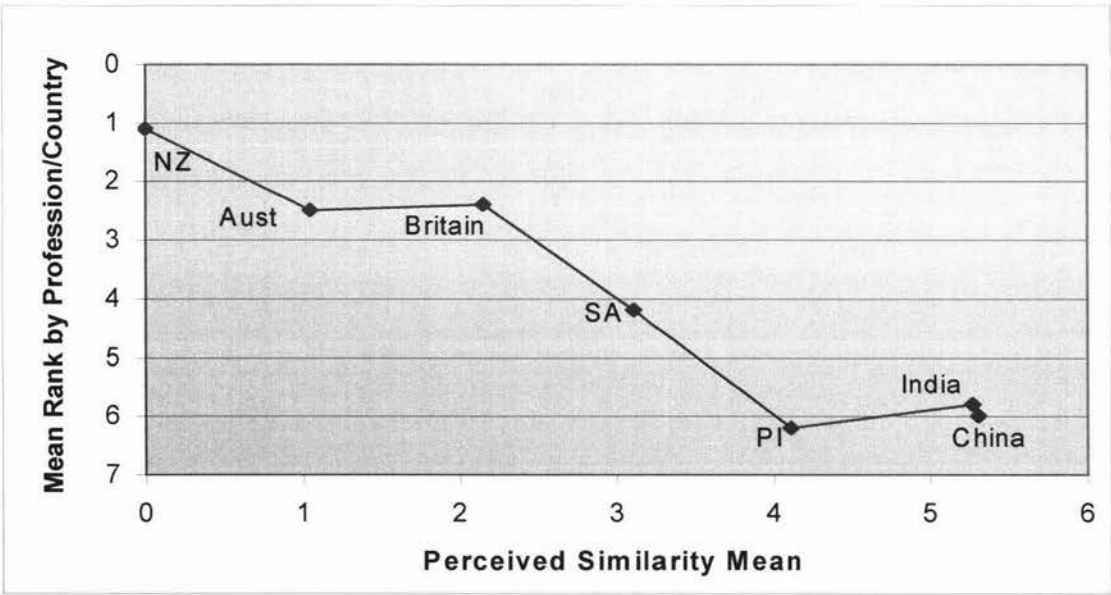


Figure 1: *Similarity Attraction Slope*

From Figure 1, as perceived mean similarity decreases, so too do mean predicted rank preferences. This downward trend is broadly consistent with Similarity Attraction

Theory. However, the gradient of the slope is not completely smooth. It visibly drops in steps as well as sloping downwards, and these steps are not particularly regular. Hence, in order to ascertain the statistical significance of these fluctuations in overall mean rank, by perceived similarity, a series of Sign Tests were conducted (after Carr et al., 2001). The raw data for these comparisons are the various overall pairs of columns in Table 1. The results of these Sign Tests, comparing pairs of countries-of-origin, are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Sign Tests for Comparing Pairs of Countries-of-Origin (from Table 1)

<i>Countries-of Origin</i>	Negative Differences	Positive Differences	Ties	p
New Zealand/Australia	0	12	0	0.000
New Zealand/Great Britain	1	11	0	0.006
Australia/Great Britain	5	5	2	N.S
Great Britain/South Africa	0	12	0	0.000
India/China	3	5	4	N.S
China/Pacific Islands	5	7	0	N.S
South Africa/Pacific Islands	0	12	0	0.000
Pacific Islands/India	5	7	0	N.S
South Africa/China	1	11	0	0.006

Rejection Region: for $\alpha= 0.05$ (0.01) and for a two-tailed test: Reject H_0 if $|z| > 1.96$ (2.58)

From Table 3, there is an overall estimated preference for the following: New Zealand candidates over Australian candidates; British candidates over South African candidates; and South African candidates over Pacific Island candidates. The remaining comparisons (Australia/Great Britain; India/China; China/Pacific Islands; Pacific Islands/ India) are not statistically significant.

Social Dominance Theory (H2)

Figure 2 plots each overall mean rank preference as a function of mean perceived ‘social dominance’ to each of the respective countries-of-origin. The perceived social dominance mean of each country-of-origin is plotted along the x-axis of Figure 2. These values are as follows: Australia=1.65, New Zealand=1.48, Great Britain=2.49, South Africa=4.13, China=5.49, Pacific Islands=5.89, and India=6.13.

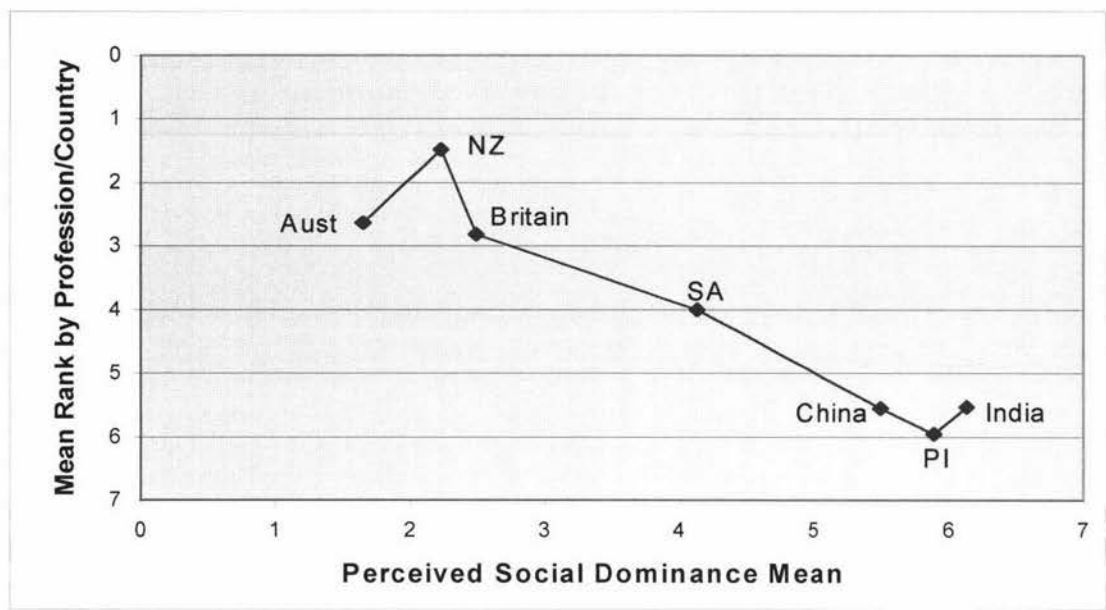


Figure 2: *Social Dominance Slope*

From Figure 2, as perceived mean social dominance decreases, so too do mean predicted rank preferences. This is broadly consistent with Social Dominance Theory. However, there is an apparent anomaly regarding Australia and New Zealand, and perhaps also with India. In order to verify the statistical significance of these ‘blips’ or irregularities, in the social dominance curve, a series of Sign Tests were again conducted. The raw data for these comparisons are, once more, the pairs of columns in Table 1. The results of the Sign Tests, on these pairs of columns comparing two countries-of-origin, are outlined in Table 3.

Referring to Figure 2, and the analysis reported from Table 3, there is an overall estimated preference for the following: New Zealand candidates over Australian candidates. Then there is a significant positive blip for New Zealand candidates over

British candidates and British candidates over South African candidates and South African candidates over Chinese candidates. Australia is not where we would expect it to be on the basis of its social dominance. The remaining comparisons (China/Pacific Islands; Pacific Islands/India) are statistically non-significant. Thus, the only significant irregularity in Figure 2 concerns Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain. Either New Zealand breaks the upward trend, or Australia breaks the downward trend, or both.

Qualitative Responses to the Research Questionnaire

Participants in this study were given an opportunity to comment on their responses made in the three main sections of the questionnaire. These responses were analysed following Robson (1995). Once the researcher and her assistant¹ had agreed upon the themes of the responses, the researcher then coded these themes. The qualitative responses given by participants, with a list of themes, were then taken to an accountant, who had no previous knowledge of the study being undertaken. The accountant also coded the responses using the same schema. Following this dual coding, an index of agreement was calculated utilising Cohen's Kappa (K) (Robson, 1995).

Reasons given for Perceived Rank Order of Candidates (Responses to Question 3a)

Of the 80 participants, 62 (77.5%) took an opportunity to comment on their answers to the question, "Why do you think Human Resource and Line Managers generally, would have the kind of preferences you've indicated in Part 1?" Part 1 of the question had involved estimating the most likely preferences of hiring persons (i.e., Human Resource Manager or Line Manager) in ranking applicants from various countries-of-origin against a range of occupations. The Kappa for the themes in Table 4 was 0.77 (see method for procedure). According to Robson (1995), this magnitude of Kappa is normally considered 'excellent' ($K > 0.75$). Table 4 is a summary of the themes identified in our content analysis of the answers (see Appendix II for full transcripts).

Overall from Table 4, the principle reasons (as estimated by the SMEs) for Human Resource and Line Managers for ranking applicants from various countries-of-origin against a range of occupations can be attributed to their [Human Resource and Line Managers'] specialised human resource knowledge and experience of recruiting and

selecting of candidates. As well, from Table 4, there appears to be a sense of confidence that comes from working with, and recruiting those people who are similar and thereby, ipso facto, familiar (this line of thinking is put forward by Jones, and Carr, (personal correspondences, 2002). Finally from Table 4, both prejudice and stereotyping, as well as perceptions of other countries’ level of education and skill levels are also perceived to influence other Human Resource and Line Managers’ ranking of job candidates.

Table 4: *The Principle Reasons for the Perceived Rank Order by Country-of-Origin estimated by the SMEs.*

Theme	Count	%
1. Human Resource and Line Managers’ knowledge is based on human resource experience.	23	37
2. Similarity and familiarity with self and others.	17	27
3. Prejudice and stereotyping toward people from other countries.	11	18
4. Human Resource and Line Managers’ perceptions and understanding of other countries’ level of education and skill levels.	9	15
5. Miscellaneous.	2	3
Total response frequency to question 3a	62	

From Table 4, the modal response category (37%) was that knowledge, based on Human Resource experience, is a factor influencing participants’ responses to Part 1 of the questionnaire. Examples of the theme are, “most managers and human resource people consider ‘experience in the NZ market’, interpersonal skills, and team fit important and therefore select people who fit in with this requirement”, and “[organisational] cultural fit is very important for many organisations”. Therefore, it would appear that Human Resource and Line Managers’ knowledge and experience of recruitment and selection and ‘what works’ in attaining organisational ‘fit’ will most likely influence their selection decisions.

¹ Practicalities demanded the researcher’s husband assist her.

From Table 4, a secondary theme concerns similarity and familiarity. These two have been 'hooked' together because often one implies the other. For example, if something is recognised as similar, it is by definition also familiar, or, it is difficult to make a judgement about similarity until you are familiar with it. Similarity is clearly illustrated in the following comments, "New Zealander's like to recruit New Zealanders first and foremost", and "likes attract" and "recruit someone like me". One participant remarks, "they [Human Resource and Line Managers] are more likely to be confident in their abilities to assess performance potential or competencies in 'like' peoples". Familiarity is expressed by one participant who comments that "they [Human Resource and Line Managers] feel comfortable with what they know best", and another participant suggests there is "familiarity [and therefore] comfort with what they [Human Resource and Line Managers] know". It would appear therefore, that when candidates are similar in likeness to the Human Resource or Line Manager there is familiarity with that candidate and hence a comforting knowledge, feeling of safety, that they [Human Resource and Line Managers] are better able to assess performance potential and organisational 'fit' with regards to the candidate.

From Table 4, theme 3 is expected prejudice and stereotyping. This is reflected in participants' comments such as, "I think that recruiters in New Zealand are bias(ed) towards races and ethnicities that are similar to their own and discriminate against Pacific Island, Asian and Indian cultures", and "recruitment people are restricted by their client's needs. New Zealand people and businesses are racist and do not offer very much training". One participant suggests that Human Resource and Line Managers generally would have the kind of preferences he/she indicated in Part 1 were "mostly based on stereotypes and perceptions picked up through their [Human Resource and Line Managers] limited dealings with certain ethnic groups". According to this participant, "despite having excellent communication skills, New Zealand, Australian and British candidates seem to be the most favoured candidates, and Indian and Chinese the least".

Therefore, limited information about candidates from countries-of-origin dissimilar to New Zealand, and limited experience and training in working with these candidates in an employment environment appears to negatively impact Human Resource and Line Managers' perceptions of candidates from different countries-of-origin.

In Table 4, nine participants indicated that selection preferences were influenced by perceptions of other countries' level of education and skill level. One participant commented that this included, "beliefs that different countries specialise better in some skills more than others". Another participant pointed out that "there is a high level of ignorance regarding education and qualifications in places like India and China. People view things they don't understand with suspicion". Once again, limited information, knowledge and experience in working with candidates from countries-of-origin that are perceived to have a different or lower standard of education to New Zealand lead to over cautious and suspicious perceptions.

From Table 4, the miscellaneous theme includes communication and loyalty issues and knowledge of other cultures gained through media information as influencing reasons for the selection preferences of Human Resource and Line Managers.

To sum up, the principle reasons (as estimated by the SMEs) for Human Resource and Line Managers to rank applicants from various countries-of-origin against a range of occupations is primarily based upon the specialised Human Resource knowledge and experience of Human Resource and Line Managers. This experience appears to be primarily focussed in the New Zealand employment scene and knowledge of what will achieve a suitable organisational and team fit, in what has traditionally been a New Zealand workforce. A secondary reason for Human Resource and Line Managers to rank applicants from various countries-of-origin against a range of occupations is that Human Resource and Line Managers (as estimated by the SMEs) appear to be more comfortable with assessing and recruiting candidates who are similar to them, possibly because with similarity comes a sense of familiarity and therefore better understanding and a sense of knowing 'what works'. A final reason influencing Human Resource and Line Managers (as estimated by the SMEs) choice of candidates from various countries-of-origin is due to prejudice and stereotyping that may have resulted from negative experiences with people from countries dissimilar to New Zealand.

Clearly, the secondary themes identified in this analysis support the two theories of Similarity Attraction and Social Dominance. Themes 1 and 2, Human Resource and Line Managers' professional knowledge (37%) and substantial reference to similarity and familiarity (27%), support Similarity Attraction Theory. There appears to be an assumption on the part of Human Resource and Line Managers (as estimated by the SMEs) that 'like' people will 'fit' together 'more easily' in a team and that organisational culture 'fit' happens amongst 'like' minded people.

Theme 3, prejudice and stereotyping (18%), indirectly supports Social Dominance Theory because prejudice and stereotyping serve as a way of structuring the world (and countries-of-origin) in a hierarchal fashion. Theme 4, Human Resource and Line Managers' perception and understanding of other countries' level of education and skill levels (9%), also directly relates to Social Dominance Theory, because it relates to perceptions of living standards, education, health and levels of wealth, which forms the basis of this theory. These findings support our quantitative results that highlight social dominance co-variance with preference (see Figure 2).

Reasons given for Ranking Countries-of-Origin by Perceived Similarity (responses to Question 3b)

Table 5 contains a summary of the themes identified from the 60 participants who commented on question 3b (see Appendix II for full transcripts). The Kappa (K) for the themes in Table 5 was 0.72. According to Robson (1995) this magnitude of Kappa is normally considered 'good', ($K .60 < .75$). Question 3b asked, "Why do you think Human Resource and Line Managers generally, would have the kind of preferences you've indicated in Part 2?" Part 2 of the questionnaire had asked participants to indicate how other Human Resource and Line Managers might generally think about the degree of similarity between the countries listed and New Zealand according to each countries' ways of living and systems of belief.

Table 5: *The Principle Reasons for the Perceived Similarity Mean by Country-of-Origin estimated by the SMEs.*

Theme	Count	%
1. Human Resource and Line Managers' knowledge and experience of recruitment.	14	23
2. Human Resource and Line Managers' knowledge and experience of other cultures gained through interaction and travel.	13	22
3. Prejudice and stereotyping toward people from other countries.	13	22
4. Similarity and familiarity with self and others.	12	20
5. Media portrayals of the country-of-origin.	7	12
6. Miscellaneous.	1	2
Total response frequency to questions 3b.	60	

Overall, from Table 5 it is clear the factors which influence Human Resource and Line Managers' (as estimated by the SMEs) perceptions of similarity between New Zealand and other countries-of-origin, are sheer amount of interaction, and by implication increased knowledge, they have with a wide range of people that comes with working in human resource management and recruitment. Closely following theme 1, is theme 2, the information and knowledge of Human Resource and Line Managers', which has been gained through interaction and travel. A third influencing theme that appears to influence Human Resource and Line Managers perceptions of similarity is that of prejudice and stereotyping that has resulted from negative experiences with people from countries dissimilar to New Zealand. Following on from theme 3, similarity and familiarity with self and others and theme 4, media portrayals of the country-of-origin, are further influencing factors that can both positively and negatively influence perceptions of similarity.

From Table 5, fourteen participants (23%) claimed that Human Resource and Line Managers' perceptions of other countries' ways of living and systems of belief are influenced by their [Human Resource & Line Managers'] knowledge and experience of

recruitment. For example one participant remarked, “experience and perceptions of recruiting from overseas”, while another participant referred to his/her “experience of interviewing”, as influencing the estimates they [participants] made. Theme 1 is also illustrated in another participant’s comment who remarks that “dealing with people on a daily basis from all walks of life” influences perceived similarity mean. Therefore, it appears that interaction with candidates from various countries-of-origin via the recruitment process has influenced Human Resource and Line Managers’ perceptions of other countries-of-origin similarity to New Zealand.

Interaction and travel with other cultures and countries-of-origin is theme 2, from Table 5, identified by 13 participants (22%). In giving reasons for Human Resource and Line Managers’ (as estimated by the SMEs) perceptions of similarity between New Zealand and other countries-of-origin, one participant comments, “most people who work in recruitment or human resources tend to have travelled in their lifetimes, so would have a good perception about the belief systems of other nations”. Another participant suggests that “knowledge of cultural similarities”, and “experience, travelling, media information reported, people met [and] people recruited”, are reasons for Human Resource and Line Managers’ perceptions of other countries’ ways of living and systems of belief. Therefore, face-to-face information and knowledge gained from other countries-of-origin appear to positively influence people’s perceptions of similarity.

From Table 5, 13 participants (22%) identified prejudice and stereotyping as theme 3. One participant, for example, suggests that Human Resource and Line Managers’ perceptions of other countries’ ways of living and systems of belief are “based on their negative experiences with certain groups or individuals, which they then attribute to entire ethnic groups”. Another participant suggests that “[Human Resource & Line Managers] are biased towards [their] country of origin”, and another participant suggests that, “[Human Resource & Line Managers] are conditional about different races [and] racism”. It would appear therefore, that prejudice and stereotyping, resulting from negative experiences with people from other countries, negatively influences people’s perceptions of similarity.

The theme of similarity and familiarity is identified in Table 5 by 12 participants (20%), from the following comments, “they (Human Resource and Line Managers) consider European countries, i.e., British influence to be preferable”, and there is a “belief that European nations are more closely aligned than Asian or Pacific Island nations”. This theme of similarity and familiarity is further reflected in another participant’s comment, “their education system is more familiar to ours”. Another participant suggests “most [Human Resource and Line Managers] like New Zealanders”, and that there is “familiarity, [and therefore] comfort with what they [Human Resource and Line Managers] know”. Furthermore, “they [Human Resource and Line Managers] feel that people who come from a standard of living most similar to New Zealand will fit into the environment more easily”. Thus, countries-of-origin whose population is similar to New Zealand’s population and whose standard of living is similar to New Zealand positively influences Human Resource and Line Managers’ perceptions of familiarity.

Overall, the main narrative that emerges from this analysis is again, convergent with Similarity Attraction Theory. Reference to European nations being more closely aligned to New Zealand, and therefore similar, as well as a belief that people from similar standards of living will fit better in the New Zealand environment support this theory. The ‘comfort’ of familiarity which in turn leads to a knowledge of ‘what works’ indirectly supports Similarity Attraction Theory. Interaction and travel with other cultures and countries may indirectly support Similarity Attraction Theory because from this basis, comparisons with New Zealand are easily made. These findings support the quantitative results found in our research, i.e., as similarity of country-of-origin increases, as demonstrated in Figure 1, so does preference for candidates from that country-of-origin.

Theme 2 supports Social Dominance Theory in that Human Resource and Line Managers’ travel and interaction with other cultures can serve as means of structuring views of other cultures and countries. The latent reference to prejudice and stereotyping (theme 3) indirectly supports Social Dominance Theory because of the way these mental images serve as a means of structuring countries-of-origin in a hierarchal fashion. Overall, these findings support our quantitative results that highlight social dominance with preference (see Figure 2).

Theme 1 indirectly supports Similarity Attraction. Human Resource and Line Managers’ perceptions of similarity with other countries-of-origin are influenced by their interaction with a variety of people through Human Resource practices. This results in comparisons of similarity and dissimilarity between themselves and candidates being made.

Reasons given for Ranking Countries-of-Origin by Perceived Social Dominance (responses to Question 3c)

Table 6 continues a summary of the themes identified from the 61 participants who commented on question 3c (see Appendix II for full transcripts). The Kappa (*K*) for question 3c was 0.76. According to Robson (1995), this magnitude of Kappa is normally considered ‘excellent’, ($K>.75$). Question 3c asked, “Why do you think Human Resource and Line Managers generally, would have the kind of preferences you’ve indicated in Part 3?” Part 3 of the questionnaire had asked the participants to think about the countries listed, and to indicate how other Human Resource and Line Managers might generally view each country according to which country has the best, next best and so on, living standards, education, health and levels of wealth”.

Table 6: *The Principle Reasons for the Perceived Social Dominance Mean by Country-of-Origin estimated by the SMEs.*

Theme	Count	%
1. Knowledge and experience gained through travel and interaction with other cultures.	19	31
2. Similarity and familiarity to self and with others.	14	23
3. Human Resource and Line Managers human resource experience.	12	20
4. Predicted prejudice toward people from other countries.	10	16
5. Media portrayals of the country-of-origin.	6	10
Total response frequency to question 3c.	61	

Overall, from Table 6, the main factor that influences Human Resource and Line Managers' perceptions of standards of living (social dominance) of other countries is personal, first hand knowledge gained through travel and interaction with other cultures. Similarity to themselves and familiarity with others also influences how Human Resource and Line Managers' perceive the standard of living of other countries while predicted prejudice toward people (and hence candidates) from other countries, also influences Human Resource and Line Managers' perceptions.

From Table 6, the majority of participants (31%) regard knowledge and experience gained through travel and interaction with other cultures, as a reason for the perceived social dominance mean as estimated by the SME's. As one participant comments, this is due to "their [Human Resource and Line Managers] experience of those cultures". From another participant, "exposure to people, and stories from these countries..." influence perceived social dominance mean. Another participant suggests that Human Resource and Line Managers perceived social dominance mean is as a result of "looking and observing them [people from other cultures] and their behaviour". Therefore, first hand knowledge and experience of other countries and cultures influence perceptions of living standards, education, health and wealth levels both positively and negatively, depending on the amount of time spent in a particular culture or country. More experience in a country may be equated with a more positive evaluation of that country?

Fourteen participants (23%) from Table 6 commented that theme 2, similarity and familiarity factors, is another reason for the perceived social dominance mean from country-of-origin estimated by the SMEs. As one participant points out "ignorance [and] preconceptions [result in a desire] to 'recruit someone like me'". Another participant suggests that "most [Human Resource & Line Managers] like New Zealanders". While there is "alignment with New Zealand expectations", as expressed by a participant, "western society [and therefore] New Zealand seems most aligned to these factors". Another participant points out that, "familiarisation with values and lifestyle preferences" will influence what it means to achieve an "[organisational] culture fit". Overall, Human Resource and Line Managers' perceptions of different countries might negatively influence their view of how candidates from non-western countries could 'fit in' with the New Zealand organisation.

From Table 6, twelve participants (20%) suggest that theme 3, human resource experience, is a reason for the social dominance perceptions of Human Resource and Line Managers. One participant remarks that “they [Human Resource and Line Managers] feel the background values and beliefs that people come from will predict their fit with the rest of the team”, and another participant suggests that “beliefs really come into play in achieving an appropriate [organisational] culture fit”. As one participant points out, a “fit into [the] culture of [a] company, [may imply they are then] easier to train and learn [the] role”. Therefore familiarity or even non-familiarity with beliefs and values of other countries-of-origin might, together with negative human resource experiences, negatively influence Human Resource and Line Managers view of how candidates from non-western countries or cultures could ‘fit in’ with the New Zealand organisation.

Predicted prejudice is another reason suggested by ten SMEs for the social dominance perceptions of Human Resource and Line Managers. One participant suggests Human Resource and Line Managers are “biased towards [their] country of origin”, and another participant remarks that “stereotypes [and] personal biases” are reasons for these perceptions. One participant suggests that “habit” plays a part and another participant comments that [Human Resource and Line Managers] are “conditional about difference, races [and] racism”. Once again, prejudice appears to negatively influence Human Resource and Line Managers’ perceptions of social dominance.

To sum up, there is support in the qualitative data for Social Dominance Theory in so far as people were perceived to prefer candidates from more ‘developed’ economies. From Table 6, theme 1, knowledge and experience gained through travel and interaction with other countries-of-origin serve as means of structuring our views of other cultures and countries. Theme 4, predicted prejudice and media portrayals indirectly support Social Dominance Theory, because prejudice and stereotyping serve as a way of structuring the world (and countries-of-origin) in a hierarchical fashion.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

Summary of Main Findings

The objective in this research was to explore the possibility that there may be specific human factors operating against certain countries in the New Zealand employment context. In particular, Similarity-Attraction Theory and Social Dominance Theory were tested to help understand what human biases might be impacting selection discrimination. The data obtained in the study are consistent with these two theories.

Our first hypothesis was that skilled job candidates from countries-of-origin perceived to be more similar to New Zealand would be preferred over candidates from countries-of-origin perceived to be less similar. The data in this research is consistent with this hypothesis. As selectors perceived candidates from countries-of-origin to be more similar to New Zealand, the more likely these candidates were preferred. Specifically, the Pacific Islands, India and China were perceived by selectors as being less similar to New Zealand, than Australia, Great Britain and South Africa and candidates from these latter countries-of-origin were more favoured than the former. Our second hypothesis was that skilled job candidates originating from countries-of-origin perceived to be more socially dominant would be preferred over their counterparts from countries-of-origin perceived to be less dominant. The results of this research generally support this hypothesis, although there were one or two anomalies. For example, Australia was perceived to have a greater social dominance than New Zealand yet New Zealand candidates were preferred over Australians. Overall however, when we consider the data broadly, both hypotheses are generally supported.

Links to Theory

Similarity-Attraction Theory: The theory of similarity-attraction predicts that when people and groups are similar, they are likely to be attracted to each other (Byrne, 1971; Newcomb, 1961; King et al., 1997; Lee & Gudykunst, 2001; Osbeck et al., 1997). Our data supported this hypothesis in that there was a relationship between perceived similarity and preference (see Figure 1). Human Resource Managers and Line

Managers were predicted to be attracted to those candidates from countries-of-origin they perceived as being similar. Specifically, there was a greater preference for candidates from Australia, Great Britain, and South Africa. These quantitative findings are supported by SME's qualitative remarks that openly state, "likes attract", and "recruit someone like me". A comment such as "Australia and England have the same value systems, we know each other's country, economy and education" and, "the work environment [in a country-of-origin similar to New Zealand] and type of work is more likely to be similar to New Zealand," implies that a candidate from Australia or Great Britain will be more favoured in terms of employment, all else being equal.

Mere Exposure/Familiarity: Our qualitative data exposed an unexpected finding. That is, attraction may also have been influenced by the effects of perceived familiarity, or what is known as 'mere exposure effect' (Zajonc, 1968). The mere-exposure effect suggests that when there is repeated exposure to a particular stimulus, such as names or photographs, there will be likelihood to prefer that specific stimulus over other less exposed stimuli (Bornstein, 1989; Hamm, Baum & Nikels, 1975; Harrison, Tutone & McFadgen, 1971; Zajonc, 1968). With repeated exposure, there is a likelihood that a specific social stimulus will, over time, "produce a growing belief that they [others who we meet] are similar to us in many ways" (Moreland & Zajonc, 1982, p.396). This is simply because when there are no clear differences between people, "we assume that the people we meet, share at least some of our own attitudes" (Moreland & Zajonc, 1982, p.396).

Repeated exposure implies that there will be a growing familiarity with an object or stimulus (Carr, 2002) and may even "enhance feelings of attraction toward people represented in the stimulus materials" (Moreland & Zajonc, 1982, p.396). Any unfamiliar person or object is perceived as being potentially dangerous and threatening, whereas familiar objects are perceived as being predictably safe because they caused no harm previously (Moreland & Zajonc, 1982).

There exists a high degree of familiarity between New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain. The familiarity that exists between these countries can in many ways be likened to the mere exposure effect. New Zealander's have had repeated exposure to the people, culture, ways of living, and experience of the education and health systems

of Australia and Great Britain via travel, work and overseas experience. On the other hand, there has been less exposure via travel and work to South Africa, and even a lesser amount of exposure to China, India and the Pacific Islands. Exposure to these latter countries have been very much via a tourists view (for example, a bus tour, or back-pack trip that focuses on the tourist spots), with limited exposure to ways of living, education and health systems. There is not the same degree of familiarity with these countries, as there is with Australia and Great Britain. There is the likelihood that New Zealand Human Resource Managers and Line Managers would prefer a candidate from a familiar country-of-origin such as Australia and Great Britain, as opposed to a candidate from an unfamiliar country-of-origin.

Our findings are partially consistent with the 'mere exposure effect'. Human Resource Managers and Line Managers have had repeated exposure in recruiting and selecting New Zealanders and somewhat less exposure in selecting Australian, British and South African candidates. Moreland and Zajonc (1982) suggest that repeated exposure to other people generally produces greater liking of them "simply because there is a consistency and balance that often leads to the belief that they are similar to ourselves in their attitudes and values" (p.397). Based on perceived familiarity, Human Resource and Line Managers would naturally assume candidates from Australia, Great Britain and South Africa would share some similar attitudes with themselves. Moreland and Zajonc (1982) comment,

when we encounter people who are similar to us, we are spontaneously reminded of ourselves and about our past experiences. These memories may produce a sort of 'halo' effect, in which we regard the people who evoke them as more familiar (p.404).

Hence, the belief that a candidate from a country-of-origin which is perceived as being similar to one's own country, increases a perception of familiarity leading to greater attraction and ultimately, an offer of employment (Orpen, 1984).

There may also be a converse or negative response to the 'mere exposure' effect. Rather than producing a positive attraction towards a social stimulus, repeated negative exposure to a social stimulus could possibly produce a negative response. In our study, it may be that repeated negative exposure of Pacific Islanders already living and working in New Zealand, has had a negative impact in the minds of Human Resource

and Line Managers. Negative employment experiences of Pacific Island work practices, lifestyle and values may provide some explanation why SMEs were more reluctant to prefer Pacific Island candidates. There may be an 'inverse mere exposure' effect that impacts employment preferences.

Social Dominance Theory: Overall, the data support Social Dominance Theory; that is, societies are stratified into hierarchical groups and the order of stratification is widely recognised and consensually validated. The general trend of our findings is consistent with those of Sidanius & Pratto (1999), Hagendoorn & Hraba (1987), Hagendoorn and Hraba (1989), Hagendoorn et al. (1998) and, Mullick and Hraba (2001) whereby there are consistent perceptions about group-status ratings. For example, in our research, Human Resource Managers and Line Managers perceive countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, and South Africa to hold a greater amount of "positive social value" (Sidanius et al., 1999, p.82) or social dominance, as defined by living standards, education, health and levels of wealth. Countries-of-origin such as China, Pacific Islands and India are perceived by Human Resource Managers and Line Managers to be at the lower end, or a subordinate position, on the social structure as defined by standards of living, education, health and levels of wealth.

Social Dominance Theory predicts also that candidates from countries-of-origin seen as more socially dominant will be preferred over candidates from countries-of-origin perceived as less socially dominant. This relationship is supported in the graph plotted (see Figure 2) showing a correlation between perceived social dominance and preference. These findings are consistent with those of Pratto et al.'s (1997) whose research showed that men are perceived as being more socially dominant than women and that employers were more likely to recommend men for placement in higher status occupations over women. Applying the underlying rationale and guiding principles of Pratto et al.'s research to countries-of-origin, candidates at the lower end of the social dominance hierarchy are likely to be less preferred for employment in higher skilled occupations over candidates from the higher end of the social dominance hierarchy.

Consistent with Social Dominance Theory, candidates from the Pacific Islands would be perceived as possessing lower standards of education, health and levels of wealth. Thus, despite a Pacific Island candidate being highly educated, experienced or intellectual for instance, he or she is likely to be discriminated against simply because of his/her membership of the ethnic group. This is illustrated at the bottom of our curve (see Figure 2) indicating that given a choice of candidates from a variety of countries-of-origin, Human Resource Managers and Line Managers will consistently be unfavourable towards a candidate from the Pacific Islands. For example, candidates from the Pacific Islands were *the least* preferred for the occupations of Information Technology Manager, Aircraft Engineer, Chef, Chartered Accountant, Traffic Planner, Radiologist and Medical Doctor.

Ongley and Blick (2002) from Statistics New Zealand confirm unfavourability towards candidates from the Pacific Islands for skilled occupations. They suggest that despite the increased social mobility amongst younger Pacific Island people acquiring qualifications and skills and thus obtaining white collar jobs, there continues to be an over-representation of Pacific Islanders in less skilled manual jobs. In our research it is only in the occupations of Teacher and Boat Builder that a candidate from the Pacific Islands would be preferred over candidates from India and China. Perhaps SMEs perceive that Pacific Islanders have more developed practical skills in boat building consistent with their heritage. With the teaching profession, perhaps SMEs would prefer a Pacific Island teacher over an Indian teacher since demographically New Zealand has a greater proportion of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand than Indians (Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998). Therefore, SMEs may feel more inclined to choose a Pacific Island teacher to relate to the proportion of Pacific Island students.

Both India and China are also reported as being at the bottom end of the group-based social hierarchy. Like the Pacific Island candidate, despite a candidate from India or Asia being highly educated, experienced and fluent in English, he or she is likely to be discriminated against simply because of his/her membership of one of these two ethnic groups.

There are clearly stereotype issues underpinned by a social dominance orientation at work with regards to candidates from subordinate countries-of-origin. By stereotyping someone, we are “attributing to that person some characteristics that are seen to be shared by all or most of his or her fellow group members (Brown, 1995, p.82). Such stereotyping is reflected by the following comment suggesting that Human Resource and Line Managers make selection decisions “based mostly on their negative experiences with certain groups or individuals which they then attribute to entire ethnic groups”. Clearly, there are group held stereotypes of people from the Pacific Islands that are negatively impacting their ability to secure employment. As one SME comments “[there are] no brown faces in HR [Human Resource Management]” which indicates there is not even a representation of this culture on many selection panels.

At the same time as supporting Social Dominance Theory, there are some possible irregularities with the predicted preferences for candidates from Australia and New Zealand. Moving to the top of the graph (see Figure 2), there is a noticeable kink in the curve. Australia was widely perceived as being the most socially dominant country over New Zealand, Great Britain, South Africa, India, China and the Pacific Islands. It was expected that candidates from Australia would be favoured over candidates from New Zealand. However this was not the case. Although Australia was perceived as having better living standards, education, health and levels of wealth as opposed to New Zealand, there was clear preference for New Zealand candidates over Australian candidates. Clearly, Social Dominance Theory on its own is not sufficient to explain the entire pattern within the data.

Inverse Resonance: One possible interpretation of this concern is inverse resonance. To briefly recap, inverse resonance occurs when groups reject those groups most similar to themselves in favour of less similar groups (Carr, 2003). The relationship between the two groups is often fractious and strained. This kind of strain is seen in the relationship between New Zealand and Australia, for example in New Zealand’s sporting affiliations with Australia. It is this situation that helps us to understand how inverse resonance works.

There has been a long history of trans-Tasman rivalry between New Zealand and Australia. Australians may be perceived by many New Zealanders as threatening the psychological distinctiveness of New Zealand. The occurrence of inverse resonance, may well be “amplified or dampened by wider...contextual factors in politics (and) history” (Carr, 1996 in Carr et al., 1996, p.275). While Australia and New Zealand have sought to improve regional trade over the years, trade agreements such as the New Zealand Australia Free Trade Agreement (1965), and Closer Economic Relations may have contributed further to the trans-Tasman competition and “tensions” that pervade the majority of our economic relations and sporting associations with Australia (Bureau of Industry Economics, 1995, p.65; Cobban, 1992). This rivalry between the two countries may partly manifest itself in the selection process as discrimination and bias against candidates from Australia. In an attempt to maintain some degree of social distance and to preserve the individuality and uniqueness of the in-group (Tajfel, 1974), a candidate from Australia may be seen as partly representative of a country that New Zealand is in conflict with and to that extent be less preferred for a job, all else being equal.

Summary: This research clearly demonstrates that one psychological theory may not be sufficient to explain human behaviour and selection biases in the workplace. Although the main purpose of this research was to test two theories, it is clear additional theories are needed to account for our findings. Similarity-Attraction Theory does not fully explain the attraction that selectors had towards candidates from similar countries-of-origin. From our qualitative comments, we found that familiarity may have had a moderating effect on attraction. Similarly, Social Dominance Theory on its own could not fully explain the irregularities found in the relationship between preference and social dominance (see Figure 2). Inverse Resonance provides a potential part explanation for the ‘blip’ between New Zealand and Australia, however it was Social Identity Theory that provided the understanding as to why inverse resonance might occur. Social Identity in essence, then provides a link back to Similarity Attraction Theory in providing an account for why similar groups experience tension and conflict with each other.

Limitations of the Study

While this research has provided some interesting results, the investigation is subject to some limitations. We did not anticipate that familiarity effects would influence the relationship of similarity and attraction. Moreland and Zajonc (1988), suggest “there may actually be a reciprocal relationship between familiarity and similarity in which each factor enhances the other until some form of perceptual equilibrium has been attained” (p.410). Future research may therefore want to include testing for familiarity, or exposure effects. We also identified the potential for an ‘inverse mere exposure’ effect where repeated negative exposure of a country-of-origin may produce a negative response to a candidate. The suggested factor of ‘inverse mere exposure’ needs to be elaborated and future research may be useful to determine the reality and extent of this concept on inter-group relations and employment decisions.

Initially, it was thought by the researcher that realistic conflict processes had been eliminated by only including those jobs that were posted on the list of occupational *shortages*. Realistic Conflict Theory proposes that inter-group conflict arises as a result of competing for a scarce resource (Esses et al., 1998). Esses et al.’s (1998) research found that competing against new immigrants for jobs was a strong predictor of negative attitudes toward migrants and migration. However, while Realistic Conflict Theory is based upon competition for *actual* scarce resources, the effects may also occur when there is a *perception* that a particular resource is scarce (Esses et al., 1998). New Zealanders may perceive the influx of immigrants to be a significant threat to their livelihood, even though statistically they are not. If it is the case, that skilled immigrants are occupying jobs that can be filled by locals, there would be plenty of reason for New Zealanders to feel threatened and reject new immigrants (Esses et al., 1998; Stephen, Ybarra & Bachman, 1999). However, many of the skilled immigrants that come to New Zealand are granted residency on the basis that they have the skills to fill the occupational shortages as posted by the Department of Labour. In sum, while New Zealanders theoretically should not feel threatened by immigrants coming to New Zealand shores, there may be a misguided perception of competition for jobs. These misperceptions are likely to exacerbate the potential for bias and discrimination immigrants are experiencing. To control for Realistic Conflict Theory in any future research, the same study method could be followed, but another process could be included whereby the perception of competition for employment is measured.

A further limitation in the present study was that our sample was small (N=80). It is desirable that the sample size be larger. However the research reported here is one of few studies that has focused on the collective expertise of Human Resource Managers and Line Managers perceptions of what is occurring in the New Zealand employment context in regards to highly skilled immigrants. It is this depth of expertise (e.g., average length of Human Resource experience is 10 years) that gives some weight to the reported results. However, this research has focussed solely on the perspective of the employer, in particular the perceptions of Human Resource and Line Managers in selection decision-making. Obviously there are two sides of the story to be told. The success of the selection process depends also on the perspective of the candidate. In particular, the perspective of the candidate may include the acculturation and adaptation process the he/she has gone through, and the job hunting strategies the candidate may have employed. As suggested in the introduction, attraction is a process of interaction between A and B, and B and A.

An obvious improvement in future research would be to firstly, assess the acculturation and adaptation processes of new immigrants (see Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999; Ward, 1996) and secondly, evaluate the effectiveness of job search strategies of new immigrants. This evaluation may include: examining the writing and distribution of curriculum vitae to targeted organisations; and assessing interview skills of new immigrants with a view to providing appropriate and adequate training in these areas.

A further possible weakness may be in the constraint of scenario based questions. Human Resource and Line Managers would not normally have to be making selection decisions between such a wide variety of candidates in terms of their country-of-origin. Nor would it be likely that candidates would be presented as having 'all things equal' in terms of education, training, application letter, curriculum vitae, cost to relocate, and English ability. However, to attempt any such research in the real world would be unethical.

Despite the constraints of scenario based questions Torrieri, Concilio and Nijkamp (2002), in their research on risk management in the event of volcanic eruptions, hail the value of scenario based research. Torrieri et al. (2002) suggests that in uncertain

situations, scenario analysis “provides a framework for generating and digesting information for balanced policy decisions” (p.96). Wren (2003) also utilised a scenario-based approach in her research and suggests this method “provides more information than if rating scales are used” and “provides opportunity for increasing the knowledge and skills of teachers in the process” (Wren, 2003, p.130). Therefore, although there are limitations to scenario based questions, it is nevertheless an effective approach with its benefits. In the present research it was possibly the most effective method that allowed us to control for the myriad of issues that surround selection bias as well as highlighting, in the minds of our SME’s, the unconscious selection decisions Human Resource and Line Managers are making.

A more subtle critique is that the scenarios presented were ‘busy’ requiring the SMEs to rank order candidates from seven countries-of-origin across twelve occupations. Future research may want to minimise the complexity of the scenarios by having candidates from regions-of-origin and reducing the number of occupations.

Furthermore, the study tells us nothing about selection biases based on gender. The present study did not indicate the gender of the candidate. Gender is a very salient factor in job selection and it would be interesting to know what gender was envisaged by SMEs as they participated in the research. The issue of gender could be fixed by making the gender of the candidate explicit, or by asking participants to report what gender came to mind as they completed a questionnaire.

This present research made no attempt to investigate selection biases operating against New Zealand Maori candidates. The researcher implicitly assumed that the candidate from New Zealand would be perceived as a white English speaking European. Given that New Zealand is a bi-lateral country and has obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi it is therefore desirable to include Maori in any future research. Future research could focus on differentiating between a European New Zealand candidate and a New Zealand Maori candidate to see if perceptions vary towards these two applicants. Like gender, participants could be asked to report what ethnicity came to mind as they completed a questionnaire, or more ideally, candidates from New Zealand could be presented as New Zealand European and New Zealand Maori.

Future Directions

Clearly, new immigrants coming from countries-of-origin deemed less similar, to New Zealand and countries-of-origin deemed subordinate are at a disadvantage in terms of gaining employment. Human Resource and Line Managers' limited exposure to employing candidates from countries-of-origin less similar to New Zealand automatically places the novel immigrant, in the mind of the selector, in a potentially dangerous or threatening position. A candidate from a country-of-origin less similar to New Zealand (such as Pacific Islands, China or India) is not predictably familiar. There is not the same amount of positive exposure to create a perception of similarity leading to greater attraction and an offer of employment.

It may now be time for Industrial/Organisational Psychologists to take steps to address some of the conscious and unconscious selection biases, that are driven by theories such as similarity-attraction and social dominance. The first step is recognising that Human Resource and Line Managers are susceptible to selection biases and distortions. However, these biases can be minimised in several ways. Training Human Resource and Line Managers to be aware of, and to compensate for their susceptibility to judgemental influences, can reduce selection biases. At a minimum, such training programs need to alert Human Resource and Line Managers to the possibility of bias based on psychological theories such as similarity-attraction and social dominance. The use of structured, situational interviews to focus on job relevant variables will help to overcome selectors' tendencies to form their own impressions of a candidate based on whatever criteria are most important or salient to them (Dipboye, 1992; Maurer & Fay, 1988; McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt & Maurer, 1994). Furthermore, selection panels should be carefully constructed to ensure there is adequate representation of ethnic groups, seeking to become more knowledgeable about other cultures, education levels, and work ethics.

If a Human Resource Manager or Line Manager has had little opportunity for travel and limited interaction with other cultures (particularly those countries at the lower end of the social dominance scale), and and/or if that experience has been a negative experience, this will likely fuel a negative perception of candidates from countries-of-origin perceived as subordinate. As reported in the results "an understanding of culture", "experience of those cultures", "experience of people from those cultures" and

“word of mouth”, will be contributing to either a positive or negative perception of candidates from those countries-of-origin and their ability to ‘fit’ in with a New Zealand organisational ‘culture’.

The media may also be contributing to misguided perceptions about immigrants as highlighted by Esses et al.’s (1998) research. In the New Zealand context, media coverage may also be influencing attitudes towards immigrants. For instance, talkback radio and the likes of particular politicians who campaign to reduce the number of immigrants coming to New Zealand shores, together with media coverage of these views, may be contributing to unwarranted negative attitudes towards immigrants. More often than not, what the media reports on this issue is done so in a dissenting and pessimistic manner. If the media can play such an influencing role in affecting people’s attitudes towards new immigrants, the media influence may also be impacting Human Resource and Line Managers perceptions of candidates from other countries-of-origin who are ‘taking jobs from locals’. In our research ten percent of participants reported that media portrayal of countries-of-origin influence a Human Resource or Line Managers perception of social dominance or sub-ordination of a particular country. Therefore, how the media present any news items about immigrants needs to be conducted in a sensitive and balanced manner.

While the New Zealand Government has set immigration policy to attract skilled immigrants to fill job demands, clearly the process of acquiring employment is not smooth. If the Government wants to succeed in the *brain-exchange*, knowledge based economy and fully utilise global skills and knowledge, immigrants need to be able to secure employment in their field of expertise. For example, the government needs to: be aware of, and address the selection biases that are operating against immigrants; promote to employers the advantages of employing immigrants; and ensure that migrants’ qualifications are accepted in New Zealand. Minimal changes such as these examples, will go a long way in enabling immigrants’ ability to secure employment in their field of expertise and in making it possible for them to make a positive contribution to the economic well-being of New Zealand.

By starting to address the issue of selection biases operating against candidates from countries-of-origin other than New Zealand, there will be a continued ability on the part

of Human Resource Managers and Line Managers, to embrace cultural diversity. In turn, this will enable the capacity of organisations to remain competitive in the worldwide economy, as the workforce becomes increasingly 'globalised'.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has investigated specific human factors operating against certain countries in the New Zealand employment context. This project set out to test that possibility and to explore reasons why it might be happening. The results suggest that Human Resource Managers and Line Managers are more likely to select candidates from countries-of-origin that they perceive are more similar to New Zealand, and they are more likely to select candidates from countries-of-origin that they perceive to be more socially dominant than subordinate. The findings are relevant to government policy makers, local and multinational companies, those people who participate in selection panels, including Human Resource Managers and Line Managers, and new immigrants themselves. However, the research is somewhat limited by the small but unique sample, and the constraints of a 'busy' scenario based questionnaire. As New Zealand continues to increasingly open up its borders and diversify its labour force, it is recommended that future research be expanded to include the perceptions of migrants, differentiation between male and female candidates and differentiation between New Zealand European and New Zealand Maori candidates.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

Part 1

We would like you to imagine that the twelve jobs on the following page (e.g. Information Technology Manager) are being applied for in New Zealand today. Please imagine that each of the seven applicants per job originates from a different location, namely India, Britain, China, South Africa, Australia, Pacific Islands and New Zealand. All of them are now living in New Zealand. Imagine also that all seven are the product of a similar education and training, have written a similar application letter/cv, would cost the local organisation about the same to employ, and are equally easy/costly to relocate to the place of employment. Furthermore, please imagine that all the applicants are equally fluent in English, and wish to work in New Zealand over the same span of time.

The questionnaire is designed to draw on your observations and experience – or what you have seen or know to be happening in the kinds of occupational sector(s) you have worked in. We are not asking for your own personal opinions about these candidates. Please remember that there are absolutely no “right” and no “wrong” answers to the questions below. We would just like you to express your own estimates about likely preference patterns among selectors, based on your own considerable expertise and experience working in HR or Recruitment generally. Please remember if you have any questions, I am here to answer them.

For every job, we would like you to try and estimate the most likely preferences of the hiring persons (ie, human resource manager or line manager) who would be interviewing such applicants. For each occupation, **place a ‘1’ below the estimated FIRST choice** of applicant, a **‘2’ under the probable SECOND choice**, and so on, **until placing a ‘7’ for the remaining probable last choice.**

Country of Origin

For each occupation, place a ‘1’ below the estimated FIRST choice of applicant, a ‘2’ under the probable SECOND choice, and so on, until placing a ‘7’ for the remaining probable last choice.

Occupation	Pacific Islands	India	Britain	China	New Zealand	Australia	South Africa
Information Technology Manager							
Aircraft Engineer							
Teacher (Secondary)							
Chef							
Construction Site Supervisor							
Chartered Accountant							
Traffic Planner							
Marine Designer							
Radiologist							
Boat Builder							
Medical Doctor							
Speech Therapist							

Part 2

Most people, including Human Resource Managers and Line Managers, have an idea or image of other countries according to those countries' **ways of living and systems of belief**. Can you indicate how Human Resource Managers and Line Managers might generally view each of the following countries, according to the degree of similarity between their ways of living/systems of belief, and those in New Zealand.

1. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries' ways of living/systems of belief is **MOST similar** to New Zealand?

(please circle one)

Pacific Islands Britain China Australia India South Africa

2. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries' ways of living/systems of belief is **NEXT most similar** to New Zealand?

(please circle one)

Pacific Islands Britain China Australia India South Africa

3. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries' ways of living/systems of belief is **NEXT most similar** to New Zealand?

(please circle one)

Pacific Islands Britain China Australia India South Africa

4. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries' ways of living/systems of belief is **NEXT most similar** to New Zealand?

(please circle one)

Pacific Islands Britain China Australia India South Africa

5. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries' ways of living/systems of belief is **NEXT most similar** to New Zealand?

(please circle one)

Pacific Islands Britain China Australia India South Africa

6. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries' ways of living/systems of belief is **NEXT most similar** to New Zealand?

(please circle one)

Pacific Islands Britain China Australia India South Africa

Before turning over, please go back up the page and check you have circled each country only once.

Part 3

Please think about the **living standards, education, health and levels of wealth** of different countries. Some countries will have higher living standards, education, health and levels of wealth than other countries.

Can you indicate how Human Resource and Line Managers might generally view each of the following countries, according to which country has the best, the next best, and so on... living standards, education, health and levels of wealth.

1. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries has the **BEST** standard of living, education, health & wealth? *(please circle one)*

Pacific Islands Britain China New Zealand India Australia South Africa

2. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries has the **NEXT best** standard of living, education, health & wealth? *(please circle one)*

Pacific Islands Britain China New Zealand India Australia South Africa

3. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries has the **NEXT best** standard of living, education, health & wealth? *(please circle one)*

Pacific Islands Britain China New Zealand India Australia South Africa

4. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries has the **NEXT best** standard of living, education, health & wealth? *(please circle one)*

Pacific Islands Britain China New Zealand India Australia South Africa

5. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries has the **NEXT best** standard of living, education, health & wealth? *(please circle one)*

Pacific Islands Britain China New Zealand India Australia South Africa

6. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries has the **NEXT best** standard of living, education, health & wealth? *(please circle one)*

Pacific Islands Britain China New Zealand India Australia South Africa

7. Amongst HR and Line Managers generally, which of these countries has the **NEXT best** standard of living, education, health & wealth? *(please circle one)*

Pacific Islands Britain China New Zealand India Australia South Africa

Your Experiences and Reflections on the Questionnaire

1. a. Did you base your judgments in Part 1 largely on actual observations?
Yes/No (*please circle one*)
If no, please explain briefly.
- b. Did you base your judgments in Part 2 largely on actual observations?
Yes/No (*please circle one*)
If no, please explain briefly.
- c. Did you base your judgments in Part 3 largely on actual observations?
Yes/No (*please circle one*)
If no, please explain briefly.
2. a. All things considered, did you feel reasonably comfortable filling in the questionnaire?
Yes/No (*please circle one*)
- b. If your answer to 2a was No, please briefly explain:
3. a. Why do you think Recruitment Consultants, Human Resource and Line Managers generally, would have the kind of preferences you've indicated in Part 1?
- b. Why do you think Recruitment Consultants, Human Resource and Line Managers generally, would have the kind of preferences you've indicated in Part 2?
- c. Why do you think Recruitment Consultants, Human Resource and Line Managers generally, would have the kind of preferences you've indicated in Part 3?

To end, we would just like to ask you a few basic demographic questions about your background and experience.

Gender: Male Female *(please circle one)*

Age: _____ Ethnicity _____

Current Job Title: _____

Years of Human Resource/Recruitment Experience: _____

Years of experience participating in/watching selection processes generally: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND CONTRIBUTION!

Appendix II: Summary of Qualitative Responses

Answers to Question 1a:

Did you base your judgments in Part I largely on actual observation? (comments from participants who answered 'no' to this question, but whose questionnaires were still included in the research based on their remarks).

- Own observations and information from other practitioners.
- Only filled out IT [information technology] area – largely guessing because had little experience with those other occupational groups.
- Some on actual observations. Some on perceptions.
- All 'things' are not equal.
- Very unlikely that you would get everyone with the same skills.
- Half/half felt the study was forcing us to be prejudiced.
- I estimated most of the positions on the grounds of my experience with the views of hiring managers in the industries I've recruited for and my knowledge of the race of people in those occupations.

Answers to Question 2a:

All things considered, did you feel reasonably comfortable filling in the questionnaire? (comments from those participants whose answered 'no' to this question but whose questionnaires were still included in the research).

- It is an uncomfortable subject and general observations do not include my opinion.
- Difficult to answer exactly how people would feel. It's a very general answer.
- Based on the peoples perceptions not mine, unlikely as all skills/abilities not ever same.
- I find it difficult to comment regarding other people's prejudices.
- Because I am trying to reflect other people's views rather than my own.
- Conflict between personal beliefs and observations.
- When being conditioned not to view or notice race, it becomes difficult to focus on countries for these issues.

- I found it more difficult to “guess” those occupations I hadn’t recruited for before.
- I purposefully keep an open mind re nationality and try to encourage this with my clients.
- Like to think Human Resource professionals look at people without recourse to stereotypes and perceptions.
- Looks like I generally have a preference for New Zealand or European.
- Seemed to indicate a sense of ‘elitism’ or even racism to answers.
- Would like to know more, feels judgmental.
- Didn’t like the picture it painted of the way we recruit.
- Personal bias and racial preference influence decisions
- Asking us to discriminate.
- Similar to my beliefs.
- Sometimes what I have been ‘hearing’ I assumed was a reason for why HR/Line managers didn’t want someone.
- There are many more variables that go into selection decisions, even if technical skills are equal – it is not as simple as country of origin. Personality attributes, drive energy, enthusiasm, presentation etc.
- Final decision would be situational – though would be biases, preferences.
- Too general, depends on situation.
- Difficult questions – hard to generalise and stereotype in this way.
- Tends to be non-specific.
- Because it isn’t this easy, generally from overseas candidates there can be a communication and loyalty issue and this is why they can be lower on the list of ratings.
- I didn’t feel it was adequate in allowing us to give our opinions.

Answers to Question 3a:

Why do you think Human Resource and Line Managers generally would have the kind of preferences you've indicated in Part 1.

1. Human Resource and Line Managers' knowledge is based on human resource experience.

- They are driven by perception and actual recruitment experiences in some cases.
- Cultural fit very important for many organisations.
- From experience in placing and working with people from the countries identified plus from hearing stories of success or failure from others' experiences.
- Fit into culture of company, easier to train, learn role.
- Culture fit, familiarisation with values and lifestyle preferences.
- Ease of integration into organisation and prior experience/awareness.
- Past experience, what fits in an organisation.
- Based on their knowledge or ideas, up to date data of recruitment.
- Through assessment from previous experiences and personal bias.
- Experience.
- Perceptions of not "fitting in" because of different cultures.
- English as a first language, including an easily understandable accent helps in team communication.
- Experience, observation.
- From observing the workplace.
- Cultural fit, compatible work styles.
- Based upon the experiences of people recruited.
- Will have a good understanding of the employment specialities of each country.
- Because of my experience in the industry.
- Dealing with people on a daily basis from all walks of life.
- Because of the importance of culture fit within organisations.
- Communication problems, understanding of job and safety within the workplace.
- Depends on role, skills, required for the role.
- Because most managers/HR people consider 'experience in the NZ market' interpersonal skills and team fit important and therefore select people who fit in with this requirement.

2. Similarity and familiarity with self and others.

- People like what they know.
- Because that's what they are comfortable with, unconscious preferences. Would have to work hard to get past them.
- Likes attract, safe decision making, acceptance of western business practices.
- Ignorance, preconceptions – “recruit someone like me”
- Australia and England have same value systems. We know each other's country, economy, education etc.
- They're likely more confident in their abilities to assess performance potential or competencies in “like” peoples.
- Most like New Zealanders.
- The work environment an type of work is more likely to be similar to NZ.
- Familiarity, comfort with what they know.
- Cultural similarities together with reputation of excellence.
- Habit, candidates reinforce it (ie, Indian work culture quite different.
- Recruit in own image.
- Mostly based on stereotypes and perceptions picked up through their limited dealings with certain ethnic groups – often through others opinions.
- I find New Zealanders like to recruit NZ'ers first and foremost.
- Because they feel comfortable with what they know best.
- In my experience, despite some candidates having excellent communication skills, NZ Australian and British candidates seem to be the most favoured candidates and Indian and Chinese the least.
- They feel more confident in people from this country and their education, work experiences, levels.

3. Prejudice and stereotyping toward people from other countries.

- Line Managers would in particular.
- Prejudice, narrowmindedness.
- Conditioning.
- Typically waspish background and values – no brown faces in HR.
- Prejudice, lower risk, less likely to encounter resistance from others in the organisation over their judgement.

- Line Managers have narrower view, Human Resource Managers see wider picture.
- I think that recruiters in New Zealand are bias towards races and ethnicities that are similar to their own and discriminate against Pacific Island, Asian and Indian cultures.
- I buy New Zealand made.
- Conditional about difference races, racism,
- Recruitment people are restricted by their client's needs. New Zealand people and businesses are racist and do not offer very much training.
- Lack of knowledge.

4. Human Resource and Line Managers' perceptions of understanding of other countries' level of education and skill levels.

- Preconceived ideas as to validity and relevance of qualification.
- Beliefs that different countries specialise better in some skills more than others.
Also racial reasons.
- Perceptions regarding performance, assumptions re skill levels, previous experience.
- What they already see in the market place, also what the perceptions are on the countries strength in education, eg boat builder not seen as popular for countries like India/China.
- Education levels for each occupation in the various countries, opportunities to acquire these skills.
- Beliefs on education.
- Professional recognition through professional bodies, fitting into New Zealand culture.
- Their perception of the skills generally of these groups.
- There is a high level of ignorance regarding education and qualifications in places like India and China. People view things they don't understand with suspicion.

5. Miscellaneous

- Media, knowledge of other countries.
- Due to communication and loyalty.

Answers to Question 3b:

Why do you think Human Resource and Line Managers generally would have the kind of preferences you've indicated in Part 2.

1. Human Resource and Line Managers' knowledge and experience of recruitment

- Experience.
- Fit into culture of company, easier to train, learn role.
- Prior experience.
- Experiences.
- Based on their knowledge or ideas, up to date data of recruitment.
- Through assessment from previous experiences and personal bias.
- Experience and perception of recruiting from overseas.
- Experience plus feeling.
- Through the experience of interviewing.
- Because of my experience in the industry.
- Dealing with people on a daily basis from all walks of life.
- Culture fit again because we are an equal society, beliefs really come into play here.
- Culture fit, familiarisation with values and lifestyle preferences.
- Because they feel the background values and beliefs that people come from will predict their fit with the rest of the team.

2. Human Resource and Line Managers' knowledge and experience of other cultures gained through interaction and travel.

- Experience and from people from those countries.
- Their experience of those cultures.
- Exposure to people from and stories from these countries, who have not worked for them.
- Knowledge and familiarity of countries.
- Travel to and experiences with Managers from each country.
- Travel in most of these countries, news items.
- By looking and observing them and their behaviour.
- Knowledge of cultural similarities.
- Experience, travelling, media info reported, people met, people recruited.

- Travelling experiences of their own, past experience.
- Most people who work in recruitment or human resources tend to have travelled in their lifetimes so would have a good perception about the belief systems of other nations.
- Understanding of culture, similar standards of education/qualifications, language
- General knowledge, perspectives.

3. Prejudice and stereotyping toward people from other countries.

- Biased towards country of origin
- Line Managers would in particular.
- Bias, stereotype, association.
- These are driven by perception.
- Prejudice, lower risk, less likely to encounter resistance from others in the organisation over their judgement.
- Stereotypes, personal biases.
- Conditional about difference races, racism,
- Lack of knowledge.
- Habit, candidates reinforce it (ie Indian work culture quite different).
- Perceptions.
- Recruitment consultants often here to work inside the constraints of the prejudices expressed by the Human Resource/Line Managers they deal with and often, as a result, end up sharing them.
- Human Resource Managers and businesses want local people because they will not train people and are threatened by overseas people.
- A common language makes a huge difference to people's perceptions.

4. Similarity and familiarity with self and others.

- They consider European countries, i.e., British influence to be preferable.
- Countries they identify with most.
- Ignorance, preconceptions – “recruit someone like me”
- Cognitive laziness = snap judgements using superficial data.
- Most like New Zealanders.
- Alignment with New Zealand expectations.

- Western society as New Zealand seems most aligned to these factors.
- Familiarity, comfort with what they know.
- Belief that European nations are more closely aligned than Asian or Pacific Island nations.
- Their education system is more familiar to ours, English as a first language, cultural reasons.
- Because that's what they are comfortable with, unconscious preferences, would have to work hard to get past them.
- Because they feel comfortable with what they know best.

5. Media portrayals of the country-of-origin

- Talking with candidates, media.
- General knowledge of the world and what they know, media, education.
- Information readily available.
- Media coverage, level/education of applicants from the countries (eg observation and experience), stereotypes.
- Media, common beliefs.
- Personal experience in some countries, media coverage, word of mouth.
- Mass media inputs.

6. Miscellaneous

- There are differences to a certain extent.

Answers to Question 3c:

Why do you think Human Resource and Line Managers generally would have the kind of preferences you've indicated in Part 3.

1. Knowledge and experience gained through travel and interaction with other cultures.

- Understanding of culture, similar standards of education/qualifications, language
- Proximity to New Zealand and cultural backgrounds.
- Their experience of those cultures.
- Experiences, general knowledge, research, anecdotal stories.
- Knowledge and familiarity of countries.
- Travel to and experiences with managers from each country.
- From their knowledge and assumptions.
- Past experience, education and background.
- Travel in most of these countries, news items.
- Experience and from people from those countries.
- Personal experience in some countries, media coverage, word of mouth.
- General knowledge, perspectives.
- Knowledge of cultural similarities.
- Experience, travelling, media info reported, people met, people recruited.
- Dealing with people on a daily basis from all walks of life.
- General perceptions. New Zealand always aspires to Australia, UK and USA instead of leading the way forward and accepting their own culture.
- There is a perception that people who have worked in the UK and Australia may have gained broader experience than from elsewhere.
- Britain, traditionally/historically.
- The more affluent West compared to the East.

2. Similarity and familiarity to self and others.

- They consider European countries, ie-British influence to be preferable.
- Because that's what they are comfortable with, unconscious preferences, would have to work hard to get past them.
- Countries they identify with.

- Cognitive laziness = snap judgements using superficial data.
- Most like New Zealanders.
- Alignment with New Zealand expectations.
- Familiarity, comfort with what they know.
- Similar to my beliefs.
- Lack of knowledge.
- Belief that European nations are more closely aligned than Asian/Pacific Island nations.
- The countries with English speaking people would definitely play a part here.
- Because they feel that people who come from a standard of living most similar to New Zealand will fit into the environment more easily.
- Because they feel comfortable with what they know best.
- It's what is known to use, if people can't make a connection with a system then they are unsure of it, i.e., degrees, qualifications

3. Human Resource and Line Managers' human resource experience

- Experience of applicants/workers of those cultures, ie stereotypes.
- "Cultural fit" is something all recruiters would be concerned with as I believe that in New Zealand we are still not good at managing diversity issues in a workplace.
- Culture fit, familiarisation with values and lifestyle preferences.
- Based on their knowledge or ideas, up to date data of recruitment.
- Through assessment from previous experiences and personal bias.
- Beliefs on education.
- Personal observation, recruiting difficulties, retention of New Zealand market.
- Experience plus feeling.
- Through the experience of interviewing and mass media inputs.
- Because of my experience in the industry.
- Education would need to be relevant to New Zealand standards. Don't think that wealth matters to placing candidates.
- Most recruiters and Human Resource people keep up to date with current events and business news so will have a good grasp on the standard of living/education etc in other nations.

4. Predicted prejudice toward people from other countries.

- Biased towards country of origin
- Line Managers would in particular.
- Bias, stereotype, association.
- These are driven by perception.
- Prejudice, lower risk, less likely to encounter resistance from others in the organisation over their judgement.
- Stereotypes, personal biases.
- Conditional about difference races, racism,
- Habit, candidates reinforce it (ie Indian work culture quite different).
- Perceptions.
- Based mostly on their negative experiences with certain groups or individuals, which they then attribute to entire ethnic groups.

5. Media portrayals of the country-of-origin

- Talking with candidates, media.
- Media, perceptions.
- Experience, media, education.
- Media, common beliefs.
- Media information. International company's.
- Observations via the news.

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