Older Asian immigrants' participation as cultural enfranchisement

Valerie A. Wright-St Clair & Shoba Nayar

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group

Older Asian immigrants' participation as cultural enfranchisement

Valerie A. Wright-St Clair[a] and Shoba Nayar[b]

[a]Active Ageing Research Group, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand; [b]Centre for Migrant and Refugee Research, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Research evidence suggests that older immigrants' resettlement in a new host country is hindered by limited opportunities to engage within communities in deeply familiar ways, using culturally meaningful occupations. A recent study concluded that older Asian immigrants contribute to social capital; yet there is little understanding of how they go about doing so. This New Zealand study examined how older Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrants' participation contributes to civic society. Research partnerships were established with bilingual local intermediaries, who assisted the study's design and implementation. Bilingual research assistants and translators were contracted to assist with recruitment, data gathering, and transcript translation. Recruitment was conducted through venues where older immigrant ethnic groups frequented. The 74 participants were Chinese (24), Indian (25), and Korean (25) immigrants, aged 60 to 83 years, who were aged 55 or older on arrival, and had resided in New Zealand between 1 and 19 years. Nine focus group interviews, three with each ethnic group, were conducted and analysed. Subsequently, 15 participants, five from each ethnic group, were theoretically sampled for individual interview. Three culture-specific provisional theories were developed. Similarities in the theoretical dimensions justified the analytic development of one cross-cultural theory. The resulting theory showed how their engagement with, and participation in, socially embedded older immigrant networks become a form of cultural enfranchisement and a pathway towards wider civic participation. While still largely hidden from societal view, these older immigrants found ways of giving service and strengthening community for the good of all.

As of 2015, an estimated 244 million people across the globe were living in a country other than their place of origin. Of these, nearly half were born in Asia, and about 30 million were aged 65 years or older (United Nations, 2015). The numbers represent a rapid, 40% increase in international immigrants since the beginning of this millennium (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, & Population Division, 2016). The Oceania region, including New Zealand, has witnessed particularly rapid increase in international immigrants over the past 15 years. At the time of New Zealand's 2013 census, there were just over one million overseas-born residents, constituting about a quarter of the 4.4 million total population (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). In the same year, just over half a million (0.54 m) of the total New Zealand population identified as Asian, up from just over a third of a million in 2006 (Butcher, 2010). The

Government's altered policy to attract skilled immigrants, initiated in the late 1980s, was integral to the changing ethnic profile of immigrants choosing to settle in New Zealand. By 2013, Chinese (124,494), Indian (117,204), and Korean (26,616) peoples constituted the largest Asian immigrant groups in the country. Alongside the increase in working-age immigrants there was a substantial increase in older immigrants, including those from Asia (Zhang, 2014).

In humanitarian terms, it makes sense for New Zealand to continue its Parent Category family reunion policy. In practice, up to 4,000 older adults annually are granted approval to join non-dependent adult children already settled in the country. The reasons for being a late-life immigrant under the policy vary. Some migrate, primarily, to assist adult children by caring for the home and grandchildren, some for the proximity to family support as the person transitions into advanced age, and others seek a better quality of life in their later years (Zhang, 2014). In reality, late-life migration is likely to arise from a complex combination of reasons. To illustrate the family reunification policy in play, nearly 2,300 older immigrants, aged 60 years or more, self-identified as having been resettled in New Zealand less than a year at the time of the 2013 census. Of these, about 70% identified as Chinese (1,614), 28% as Indian (648), and less than 2% identified as Korean (30). The largest age cohort (75%) that year was aged between 60 and 69 years, about a fifth (22%) were aged 70 to 84, and a small percentage were aged 85 years or older (Statistics New Zealand, 2013); representing a fairly consistent age cohort pattern over the last decade.

Yet, while numbers tell one story, they say nothing about how it is to be a late-life immigrant or how it is to go about making an everyday life in the, often vastly different, receiving society. At one conceptual level, immigration theories give words to signify the resettlement process as a complex construct. In contemporary theory, the notion of immigrant "incorporation", which holds meanings of a combination of things, seems more descriptive, and less value-laden, than terms such as immigrant adaptation, acculturation, or assimilation (Treas, 2014). Furthermore, incorporation, as a notion, points to a multidimensionality of the resettlement process. It opposes the simplistic idea

that assimilation is positively associated with time in the receiving country (Treas, 2014). In a similarly critical way, naming the process as "segmented assimilation" signifies the multiple pathways to resettlement including the assumption that successful outcomes may include "assimilation into a racialized underclass or the preservation of an ethnic identity and community that aids in socio-economic advancement" (Tiamzon, 2013, p. 353). In other words, late-life immigrants may advance their resettlement through finding belonging through participating in co-ethnic communities or residing within ethnic enclaves (Litwin, 1995; Mireshghi, 2008–2009; Tiamzon, 2013; Treas & Mazumdar, 2002). In accord with this idea, older South Asian immigrants in California expressed their social participation as being interdependent with others of similar age, and the same cultural background (Krishnagiri, Fuller, Ruda, & Diwan, 2013).

The very idea of older immigrants' participation within ethnic enclaves is one that can draw public criticism of 'why did they come here', and serves to feed one discourse amidst a strong anti-immigrant rhetoric in New Zealand (Butcher, 2010). One prominent voice, particularly critical of the rights of older immigrants, is that of the New Zealand First party Leader and Immigration Spokesperson. Peters is reported as saying "you spend your lifetime struggling and you get the same pension and health entitlements as a parent from abroad who comes here at age 55 and contributes nothing" (Small, 2013). Apart from a rights-based argument, critics of older immigrants' co-ethnic participation have claimed that social solidarity is threatened by hastened ethnic diversity from immigration (Kazemipur, 2012; Sabl, 2008–2009). In reality, beyond popular discourses that are maligning, older immigrants are recognised internationally as a largely ignored (Treas, 2014), socially disadvantaged group (Ebrahim & Smith, 1987), who are open to experiences of "discrimination and pressure to conform" (Tiamzon, 2013, p. 355).

Older Asian Immigrants in New Zealand

With immigration research having been focused principally on working-age immigrants (H. Kim,

Hocking, McKenzie-Green, & Nayar, 2016; Nayar, Hocking, & Giddings, 2012; Nayar & Sterling, 2013; Treas, 2014), and occupational science and gerontology research largely ignoring older immigrants (Torres-Gil & Treas, 2008–2009), the nexus of population ageing and immigration, in particular social contexts, is poorly understood. New Zealand research, at large, poses no exception to such condemnations. A relatively small number of studies of older immigrants in New Zealand were located. In a survey with older Chinese immigrants, mostly aged 60–69 years, participation in occupation within their ethnic group was positively associated with planning to stay permanently in the country. Conversely, those who indicated they wanted to leave New Zealand permanently reported lower levels of community participation and contentment (Selvarajah, 2004). Not dissimilarly, older Korean immigrants' feelings of social isolation and exclusion were expressed as going hand-in-hand with lower levels of participation in community-based, social occupations (H-J. Park & Kim, 2013). Likewise, feeling marginalised was associated, subjectively, with experiencing an ongoing conflict between one's cultural values and the host community's standards (H-J. Park, 2015). More recently, immigrants from mainland China aged 64 to 82 years reported being disappointed by the support they received from adult children. Over time, their quality of life came to depend more upon their level of co-ethnic community engagement and less upon family (Zhang, 2014). Such findings indicate the importance of social connectedness and activity networks for older immigrants (Zhang, 2014).

Seemingly at odds with an argument for enabling co-ethnic participation, older Chinese immigrants' autonomous participation in gardening has been observed as a way of repairing "the biographical disruption and loss of domestic control by establishing biographical continuity across time and space between past lives in China and present lives in New Zealand" (Li, Hodgetts, & Ho, 2010, p. 794). Nevertheless, the pattern of enduring evidence in New Zealand, and internationally, is for the benefits conferred to older immigrants as a consequence of their participation within ethnic communities (H-J. Park & Kang, 2014).

Current knowledge suggests that older Asian immigrants' co-ethnic communities do contribute to social capital (H-J. Park & Kang, 2014); yet there is little understanding of how they go about doing so. Therefore, this New Zealand study examined how older Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrants' participation contributes to civic society. In the following section the methods of the study are detailed before the findings are presented. The discussion builds from the findings to argue a case for 'cultural enfranchisement' as a platform for older Asian immigrants' participation in society. The research is situated within the occupational science field with its foundations in developing empirical knowledge on "the capacities, knowledge and skills required for participation; who participates and what is done; the rules, norms or processes governing participation; where and when participation occurs, using what resources; … the kinds of meanings it holds; [and] its sociocultural" context (Hocking, 2009, p. 142).

Methods

The study was conducted in Auckland, New Zealand; chosen for its sizeable communities of older Asian immigrants. The Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee granted approval [number 12/100] for the study. Ethically, the project was designed to, at all times, honour the World Health Organization's (2011) standards for health-related research with human participants. This included taking all reasonable steps to ensure participation was voluntary, written consent was informed, the researchers acted as invited guests in the relevant communities and homes, and communication was in the participants' language of first choice, be it Mandarin, Korean, Hindi, or English.

Given that little is known about the social process of how older Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrants' participation contributes to civic society, grounded theory methodology was used (Nayar, 2015). Grounded theory has been used previously to uncover the occupational processes of Asian immigrants settling in New Zealand (H. Kim et al., 2016; Nayar et al., 2012). The aim demanded a partnership approach to the study design, and the

recruitment and data gathering methods, as the researchers did not speak the prospective participants' languages and had limited understanding of cultural nuances; particularly for the Chinese and Korean communities. A Community Relations manager within the Government's Ministry of Social Development was an initial intermediary for establishing research partnerships with local ethnic communities. Local intermediaries, who were actively engaged with older immigrant groups and bilingual in the native language and English, assisted the study's design and implementation. Next, native-speaking, bilingual research assistants were appointed to assist recruitment and data gathering, and translators were contracted to convert the participant information and consent forms into the relevant language for recruitment and, later, the transcripts into English for data analysis.

The study sought to include Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrants, aged 60 or older, who had resided at least 6 months in New Zealand, and were aged 55 or more on arrival. Recruitment advertisements, in the relevant ethnic community's main language, were posted in venues that older immigrant ethnic groups frequented, such as community and church halls. In addition, the local intermediaries facilitated opportunities for the researchers, via translators, to speak to ethnic community gatherings and answer questions about the study. Potentially interested volunteers contacted the relevant research assistant for written information about the study and to give written consent. Seventy-four Chinese (24), Indian (25), and Korean (25) immigrants, aged 60 to 83 years, resident between 1 and 19 years in New Zealand volunteered for the study. There were equal numbers of men and women, comprising 11 Chinese, 14 Indian, and 12 Korean men, and 13 Chinese, 11 Indian, and 13 Korean women.

Participants self-selected into an ethnic-specific men-only, women-only, or a mixed gender focus group. In total, nine ethnic-specific focus groups were conducted in community venues which were easily accessed by, and familiar to, the participants. The Indian focus group was led by the second author, supported by the research assistant where necessary for Hindi translation. Coaching in grounded theory methods was provided to the Chinese research assistant who facilitated the Chinese focus groups in Mandarin. The local Korean intermediary, assisted by a research assistant familiar with grounded theory, led the Korean participant focus groups. Following grounded theory methods, open questions, such as 'tell me about how you participate in community.' were asked to uncover aspects of the social process.

The transcribed, translated focus group data were analysed by the researchers, using methods of open coding, memoing, and constant comparison as consistent with grounded theory methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Schatzman's (1991) dimensional matrix was then used as a framework for ordering and conceptualising the data, generating three, provisional, culture-specific theories. While the in-vivo expressions were different within the three provisional theories, the observed notions and processes, as well as the development of categories, were noticeably similar across the data. For instance, the strategy of 'Developing Routines' was apparent in both Chinese and Indian datasets; while 'Exchanging Information' was seen across Chinese and Korean matrices. This observation justified moving ahead to develop one cross-cultural (Berry, 1989) dimensional matrix.

The initial analysis of the focus group data informed the theoretical sampling of 15 focus group participants, five of each ethnicity, for in-depth, individual interview. Selection was based on aims to explore ideas and experiences in greater depth and elaborate on disparate and/or contradictory viewpoints, in order to build an emergent theory. The Chinese and Indian participants chose to be interviewed at home, while the Korean participants chose a local senior citizens' centre, or a room at the University, for interview. As for the focus group data, individual interview data were transcribed verbatim, translated to English, and analysed in consultation with the relevant intermediary and research assistant. At this point the data were coded and constant comparative analysis between the individual interview data and the focus group data was conducted to derive a cross-cultural etic understanding, grounded in the three, emic ethnic-specific data sets (Berry, 1989). Thus, the category of Exchanging Information developed alongside the Indian community strategy of Seeking

Opportunities and was conceptualised as an overarching strategy of 'Uniting Minds'.

A hard copy summary of the findings was prepared, and translated into the relevant languages, for feeding back to each participant. Most participants chose to attend a community gathering in which, through translators, they had opportunity to comment on, question, and discuss the findings and the resulting theory of how they contribute to civic society.

Findings

This paper presents the findings of the cross-cultural substantive theory (Figure 1) of how older Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrants' participation contributes to civic society, with particular emphasis on the process of contributing through co-ethnic community participation. Participant quotes are offered to show how the raw data informed theory development. Participants' chosen pseudonyms are used to preserve confidentiality.

Context

Context is the backdrop to life as it is. It is the circumstances that are already there, influencing, to a greater or lesser degree in any one moment, how everyday life goes, and decisions about what to do. Laura, a participant in a
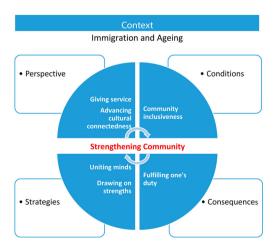
Chinese focus group, shared this excerpt which sets the context for this study's participants.

> I am 75 years old. I came to this country in April, 1996. I am the earliest one among these people. When I arrived here I felt I could not stay here in the first 3 months. During that time, I felt so lonely. Nobody could talk, there was nobody outside. It was so quiet. I almost suffered mental illness in the first 3 months, since I could not communicate with others and my [adult] child went to work. What's more, I did not have a TV and recorder. I liked playing Taichi sword outside, but it got gradually boring. So I had to stay at home. I felt sick at that time. One day, I had some symptoms, such as shivering. Then I borrowed a radio from the neighbour, but all the radio programmes were in English. I said to my husband we could not stay at home anymore. So he began to learn to drive. Then we looked around Auckland by car, in order to find some Chinese communities…. In this way, we would not feel lonely and sick. As a result, we found Potters Park. Several old Chinese people played in this park, like Taichi. It was great. We were saved. (Laura)

The context for these participants is one in which their going about everyday life is influenced by the interplay between their advancing age and being a late-life immigrant in New Zealand, having left behind a deeply familiar life in country of origin. Yet this personal nexus of immigration and ageing, exists within the greater societal nexus of an increasingly ethnically diverse, ageing population (Torres-Gil & Treas, 2008–2009); both new and unfamiliar phenomena within the receiving New Zealand society. An awareness of the participants' unique life context was always present in the data.

Perspective

Perspective refers to the standpoints from which these participants viewed their purpose in life as older immigrants, positioned as seniors in society. The things the participants stood for in life were subtly, and at times explicitly, conveyed through the values evident within their stories.

Figure 1. Theory of how older immigrants' participation contributes to civic society.

Giving service was one foremost perspective evident across participants.

> In church we have a Practicing Love Group. We did volunteer work at a senior welfare centre and also at Auckland City Mission in Auckland central … they provided us only the place. We prepare all the food, such as bulgogi, salad and bread … after serving the homeless people, we sell the remaining food. Some homeless people say "I don't have one dollar," then we give them just free. (Katherine, Korean)

> We should make some contributions to society. Even horses and cattle contribute by pulling carts. Without contribution you are just the same as pigs. So I think we must find ways to contribute to the society, do whatever we can. (Sam, Chinese)

> If this country was so generous to me at that time, now at the age of 75 what can I do? I said at least I can do some volunteering. Okay that sense of duty or whatever you call it was in me. Started developing in me. I should do something for this country. (Kiran, Indian)

Wanting to give service meant the participants sought out ways to contribute to projects that benefitted ethnic and local communities, and society as a whole. These late-life immigrants aspired to participating for the greater community good. A second, commonly-held perspective was that of *advancing cultural connectedness*.

> A few days ago, the primary school where my granddaughter goes held International Day. My granddaughter was to perform a Korean Folk Dance. However, she didn't want to wear proper Korean traditional dress because it was not comfortable. She and her mum fought over 2 days and her mum finally gave up. So I told my granddaughter that you are not a Kiwi, though you are grown up in New Zealand you are a Korean so you should wear your own country's traditional dress … After I talked to my granddaughter and her

friends, they decided to wear Korean traditional dress. On the day of event, everyone was busy taking pictures of them; they were very beautiful in Korean dress. Later she told me she was glad she'd listen to me … I told them how to wear Korean dress properly and explained to them that we have to wear and to show people the proper Korean dress because we are Koreans. (Joyce)

> I got an opportunity from the manager of the library who approached me about the upcoming Diwali festival. Now this manager wished to utilise my services to conduct a celebration in the library on that Diwali day, or near Diwali. I quietly agreed. I have given all the suggestions for what is needed. The moment they asked me, I extended my contribution. (Jaggu, Indian)

Through *advancing cultural connectedness* older Asian immigrants wished to preserve deeply familiar, traditional ethnic practices by embedding them in everyday community life. Always moving toward cultural connectedness, they participated in ways which aimed to enrich family and community relationships. Continuing, and passing on, cultural ways and language was always towards wanting to contribute to a culturally-rich community. The theory proposes that, at any one time, the older immigrants might be working from one or both of these perspectives. How and when they decide on which perspective to forefront depends on the conditions that influence their participation. The next section takes a closer look at the conditions underpinning participation.

Conditions

Conditions are the circumstances that facilitated, interrupted or prevented the Chinese, Indian and Korean older immigrants' participation in, and contribution to, civic society. In this theory, *community inclusiveness* was one such circumstance that emerged as influencing life possibilities. Inclusiveness was conveyed when these late-life immigrants were welcomed into, and facilitated to join with, co-ethnic communities, as described by Kiran.

When I came here in 2004, two people informed me. One was the girl, here at the Auckland Indian sweets shop, and one was at the library, Padmini. She suggested, why don't you go to the [Indian] senior citizens group? That's how I came to go. And then of course, you come to know one person, and then you get to know another person, to go with you. [It is] sort of a chain. (Kiran, Indian)

Auckland's established ethnic diversity means access to information about what is going on in particular communities is made more accessible through dedicated channels, such as community groups for Indian seniors. At times, however, community inclusiveness maybe deficient, inhibiting participation, as described by Harry.

When my wife and I take a walk, or drive a car, young Kiwi people shout toward us. They surprise us and shout abuse. When we take a walk, some people don't stop their dogs approaching to us. It scares us very much. I heard some Koreans were bitten by dogs, but the owners didn't apologise … If we see some big Kiwi people gathering, we have to avoid them. We know they will not harm us, but just in case. When we say hello to them, some people just ignore us. (Harry, Korean)

The data showed how these older immigrants had experienced people acting towards them in ways that invited inclusion in co-ethnic groups. Yet at the same time, they were exposed to disharmony within, and disconnection from, the wider community. Having others act towards them in unwelcoming, and often publicly discriminatory ways, communicated exclusivity as opposed to inclusivity. Such conditions acted to diminish participation.

Strategies

Strategies are the tactics older immigrants used to get involved in community activities. Their perspectives of *giving service* and *advancing cultural connectedness*, informed the tactics used; for example, the pre-eminent strategy of *uniting minds*, is an in-vivo phrase used by Joyce in the first Korean focus group. The phrase encapsulates tactics wherein working as a group, or communities participating together, was a preferred mode for contributing to community.

I continued to participate in a Chinese women's chorus here. Since they usually go out and organise shows, including ones at the library, for anti-violence, and some Māori activities …. They know our Chorus, so we were invited to organise shows for them. I like participating in these public welfare events. I participate in the shows at rest homes every time, since we can give them love. (Mary, Chinese)

In the above quote, Mary deliberately sought out like-minded people in her co-ethnic group with whom she could contribute for the benefit of others. The authors of this paper, in the process of conducting the research, were invited to join with older immigrant gatherings; attending a regular event at the Bhartiya Samaj (Indian) community hall, having lunch with the Korean community after their weekly group occupations, and attending morning occupations at the Balmoral Road church with the Chinese community. Joining in afforded the opportunity to witness the diverse roles that participants filled to enable the success of working as a group.

Alongside *uniting minds*, participants used the strategy *drawing on strengths* to advance their participation, for the express purpose of benefitting those around them.

Since I was 61 I have learnt knitting. I am not fabulous at it but I had various skills. Then I came here [to New Zealand]. Many Korean people asked me about the knitted clothes I was wearing. Through that, I became a teacher for a knitting class at the community centre. Every Monday we have a class. I became a teacher not because I am very good at it but wanted to share what I know with others … It is very hard to teach others but when I see them knitting a vest or sweater I feel very happy. (Michelle, Korean)

I went to the Chinese Church located in [the local community]; the teacher quit.

At the invitation of Mr. [Chinese community leader], I went to teach English there for around 1 year. The others' [Chinese seniors'] English abilities are worse than mine. So I taught them some daily English sentences, as a volunteer. (Xiao Mao)

As late-life immigrants, these participants came to New Zealand with a lifetime of already-developed skills and knowledge; and it was these capacities that participants drew on to enable their own, and others', engagement in community occupations. Participants' stories showed how they had utilised such tactics at some point over the course of their time in New Zealand. Participants noted that through their current occupations they could perhaps learn more about New Zealand and find other opportunities to engage in occupations that would contribute to society.

Consequences

Consequences are theorised as the effects of older immigrants' participation. Naming them as consequences holds an understanding that the effects are of significance; they are important to the co-ethnic communities. Rather than chance outcomes, the data suggest these late-life immigrants acted to galvanise, to cause, the outcomes. All the participants in this study expressed, and recognised, a strong sense of participating in co-ethnic communities to fulfil what they stood for. They acted from the perspectives of *giving service* and *advancing cultural connectedness* and, in doing so, what was effected was *fulfilling one's duty*.

There was a seminar at the Korean Garden in 2008, next to the North Shore Council. I got involved with cleaning up from that time. It was not easy the first time. I felt it was hard to go and pick up the rubbish, because it was a new thing to me. However, I attended every month, once a month, then it became nothing. I do not hesitate to go and pick up the rubbish anymore. I go quickly and pick it up, even with my hand. It became my habit. If I see any trash on the street, or near the bus stop, I pick it up and put it into the rubbish bin, very naturally. Though I stopped attending

the organised cleaning up, I want to show others a good example. However, I am willing to do that anytime, and anywhere. (Harry, Korean)

Participants galvanised their sense of duty to contribute to the receiving society by giving to a purpose beyond themselves. When such felt responsibilities were acted on, purposefulness came in the doing for others; and in this way, paying back, in kind, the support they have received from the New Zealand Government. Thus *duty*, in this context, refers to a moral obligation in which participants acted out of a sense of respect, loyalty, commitment and responsibility to be of service in their host society.

So many [Indian] ladies contribute; they make 20 or 30 sweaters or slips, then they donate them to the small children at the hospital. It's a very good gesture in the sense that they keep themselves busy and they feel happy that they're contributing something towards the people, towards the community … . But there are other examples. Now, as my wife knows, there are a lot of people who are socially isolated, who are living alone; they don't have much company, they can't move about. She has got many friends, so she telephones them. [She is] busy at least 3, 4 hours a day; she just telephones them. Just talking about anything; about food, about cooking, about households, about friends, so she feels happy, they feel happy. (Ram)

These senior Chinese, Indian and Korean participants all spoke about feeling grateful for the support they had received to be reunited with family in New Zealand, and their eligibility for social benefits as senior citizens. They felt such supports were given freely, fuelling their sense of purpose in repaying New Zealand for the political kindnesses offered to them. Participating in and through co-ethnic groups was the way these older immigrants contributed to civic society.

The core process

This study sought to understand the social process at the heart of how older Chinese, Indian,

and Korean immigrants participated in community. Theoretically, the core process is the glue that holds the other dimensions together. In this study, the core process is theorised as *strengthening community*.

> *Personally, I think the community builds the network for communicating among people, in terms of language and hobbies. For old people, we need to communicate with people. We should go outside and communicate with others in our community … . It can help us relieve the loneliness. In a word, we should go to the community and communicate with other people. We can be inspired by the communication.* (Mike, Chinese)

> *We participate in School of Continuing Education in [Korean] Church every day. There are many other activities for senior people but around 100 people come and participate. We know each other very well. However, we have benefited here and are living in better circumstances so we senior members decided to help others even though we can gather only a small amount. Each of us donates 2 dollars every month. Now, 53 members are participating.* (Michelle)

Strengthening community represents the dynamic, on-going process through which these older Asian immigrants deliberately sought ways to contribute to New Zealand society by strengthening their ethnic groups. These participants' ethnic communities, and beyond, were strengthened through collective participation. While the seniors each made individual contributions to their community, they recognised the social power of working as a collective.

Discussion

This grounded theory study explains how older Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrants' participation contributes to civic society. The cross-cultural, substantive theory developed from the findings describes how these 74 older immigrants acted purposefully to enhance the richness of the New Zealand culture through strengthening co-ethnic communities. From the participants' perspectives, community was spoken about as a place for gathering and doing things with and for others. Community is about the relationships at the collective heart, that make a community function. Through their participation in co-ethnic communities they sought to strengthen families, local communities, and ultimately, civic society as a whole. The notion of "ethnic enclaves" (N. S. Park et al., 2015, p. 74) is predominantly used to define geographic regions of high co-ethnic populations, bounded by, and somewhat self-sufficient from, the general population. However, the coming together to participate within, and contribute through co-ethnic groups, could be considered as 'participatory ethnic enclaves'. That is, the social actions engaged in were as co-ethnic older immigrants working together for the greater social good. Their contributions to civic society arose from, and through, the co-ethnic group strengths; a finding consistent with Eckstein's (2001) explanation that such collectivist "volunteerism involves acts of generosity that *groups* (rather than individuals) initiate, inspire, and oversee; individuals participate because of their group ties" (p. 829).

Several conditions seemed influential. On the whole, being a late-life Chinese or Korean immigrant, somewhat less so for the Indian immigrants, meant that their limited English language proficiency restricted opportunities for social participation other than through the co-ethnic group. Language proficiency has been identified as influencing older immigrant social integration "as it limits immigrants' ability to interact with members of the larger society and participate in activities geared toward the mainstream" (Diwan, 2008, p. S185). While this pattern was borne out in the data, the more potent condition influencing participation was the degree of inclusiveness conveyed by the immediate communities. These older immigrants were made welcome and invited to participate in co-ethnic groups by those, from the same countries, who came before them. Common language, cultural practices, and principles created inclusive situations for them. As theorised by Grossberg (2015), "ideology 'yokes together' particular social practices" (p. 67).

So it was for these older Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrants.

In marked contrast to the co-ethnic inclusiveness, were situations that acted to exclude them. Discriminatory comments and behaviours by some in the general community told these older immigrants they were not welcome; it was distancing and disconnecting. Such exclusionary conditions raise the question of what it means for New Zealand to be a receiving nation, a receiving society. And it raises the question of what it means for New Zealanders to be receiving citizens. Theories of immigrant incorporation attempt to take account of why the reception context can be a hostile one, particularly when "continuous migration replenishes the stock of unincorporated newcomers" (Treas, 2014, p. 272). Within an immigration context, the rate of ethnic diversification of communities may have acted to persuasively disturb the "cultural homogeneity of the receiving countries" (Kazemipur, 2012, p. e96). Nonetheless, this study suggests that the process for, by and large, 'unincorporated' older immigrants to participate in, and contribute to, civic society is through 'co-ethnic incorporation' into closely-connected older immigrant communities. Co-ethnic groups, for these participants, as has been noted in the literature, enabled cohesiveness and facilitated the community participation that gave their everyday lives meaning and purpose (Diwan, 2008). The foundations for co-ethnic participation, and later civic participation, were laid by engaging the skills they had already developed and practiced in their country of origin. And, the pre-eminent, collective strategy of *uniting minds* within co-ethnic communities afforded participation through culturally-familiar, culturally-meaningful occupations.

Taking this idea a step further, "acculturation challenges may have provoked a need for participants to preserve their" (J. Kim, Kim, Han, & Chin, 2015, p. 7) traditions, and to want to share them with the host society; as was found in a recent study of older Korean immigrants in the US. In accordance with that finding, engaging with, and through the co-ethnic community is suggested to be a natural occurrence of the 'broken' convoy effect "where the social group, which one would normally expect to follow one over time, is disrupted by one's departure from the country of origin" (N. S. Park et al., 2015, p. 73). As a consequence, older immigrants recreate their social worlds in ways familiar with what they had before relocating. Taking an occupational perspective, these older Asian immigrants' stories suggest a broken convoy effect, wherein the usual occupations they would normally have expected to engage in, while ageing in their place of origin, is disrupted by being a late-life immigrant in New Zealand. Consequentially, they acted strategically to recreate familiar everyday occupational worlds.

The notion of the broken convoy effect is consistent with how this study's participants conveyed a perspective of *advancing cultural connectedness*. However, it does not necessarily explain the compelling perspective identified of *giving service*. Without exception, the older immigrants in this study wanted to contribute, beyond their own lives and beyond those of their co-ethnic groups, for the greater good. Aspiring to give to, and for, others carries meanings of seeking purposefulness as a senior in society. The consequences are evident in the stories these older Asian immigrants shared. *Fulfilling one's duty* was heard within the talk about acting joyfully on a responsibility to contribute in ways that benefitted others, and New Zealand society at large. Showing gratitude was effected through participating to promote social welfare, such as the Indian women's knitting to provide children admitted to the local hospital with warm clothes, the Korean's contributing to environmental clean-up campaigns, and the Chinese choir singing at aged care facilities, having learned songs that would connect with the residents.

Limitations of this study are that all the participants were recruited through established ethnic community groups for older immigrants, therefore it does not address more socially-isolated Asian immigrants' participation, and the data were drawn from participant accounts and not participant observation. However, over the course of the study, the researchers were invited to attend numerous events hosted by the relevant community groups, which enabled first-hand experiences of the wider groups' diverse ways of engaging with, and contributing to, wider society. The study's findings imply

further prospective cohort research to explore how community participation changes over time, post immigration; and research with host communities to explore their readiness to receive older immigrants and how they go about including ethnically-diverse older immigrants.

Conclusion

The substantive theory developed, *strengthening community,* is the social process that was going on through the civic contributions made by 'participatory co-ethnic enclaves'. Their ways of participating, the collective occupations they engaged in, strengthened their personal, and their co-ethnic groups', resolve to contribute to the greater social good. Thus, it was through co-ethnic participation that these older Chinese, Indian, and Korean immigrants effected ways of contributing to civic society.

This study contributes to the occupational science literature by helping fill the gap in understanding older immigrants' community-situated occupations, and by extending the empirical research on collective, or shared, occupations. Rather than cultural homogeneity providing the social glue in the greater receiving society, older immigrants' ties to co-ethnic groups, in which they feel 'at-home' (Tiamzon, 2013), provide the platform for participation. While older immigrants in New Zealand, whether they have citizenship or not, are conferred political enfranchisement through the right to vote (Pedroza, 2015), participation in co-ethnic communities confers 'cultural enfranchisement'. That is, meaningful occupation in their deeply-familiar ethnic groups frees them from the potentially grave, social isolation that being a late-life immigrant can bring. They are empowered through co-ethnic participation.

Acknowledgements

Funding

References

Berry, J. W. (1989). Imposed etic-emics-derived etics: The operationalization of a compelling idea. *International Journal of Psychology*, 24, 721–735.

Butcher, A. (2010). Demography, diaspora and diplomacy: New Zealand's Asian challenges. *New Zealand Population Review*, 36, 137–157.

Diwan, S. (2008). Limited English proficiency, social network characteristics, and depressive symptoms among older immigrants. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 63B(3), S184–S191.

Ebrahim, S., & Smith, C. (1987). Elderly immigrants: A disadvantaged group? *Age and Ageing*, 16, 249–255.

Eckstein, S. (2001). Community as gift-giving: Collectivistic roots of volunteerism. *American Sociological Review*, 66(6), 829–851.

Grossberg, L. (2015). History, politics and postmodernism: Stuart Hall and cultural studies. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10(2), 61–77.

Hocking, C. (2009). The challenge of occupation: Describing the things people do. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 16(3), 140–150. doi:10.1080/14427591.2009.9686655

Kazemipur, A. (2012). The community engagement of immigrants in host societies: The case of Canada. *International Migration*, 50(S1), e94–e116. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2435.2010.00638.x

Kim, H., Hocking, C., McKenzie-Green, B., & Nayar, S. (2016). Occupational experiences of Korean immigrants settling in New Zealand. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 23(2), 181–195. doi:10.1080/14427591.2015.1126168

Kim, J., Kim, M., Han, A., & Chin, S. (2015). The importance of culturally meaningful activity for health benefits among older Korean immigrant living in the United States. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 10(27501), eCollection. doi:10.3402/qhw.v10.27501

Krishnagiri, S. S. R., Fuller, E., Ruda, L., & Diwan, S. (2013). Occupational engagement and health in older South Asian immigrants. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 20 (1), 87–102. doi:10.1080/14427591.2012.735614

Li, W. W., Hodgetts, D., & Ho, E. (2010). Gardens, transitions and identity reconstruction among older Chinese immigrants to New Zealand. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 15(5), 786–796. doi:10.1177/1359105310368179

Litwin, H. (1995). The social networks of elderly immigrants: An analytic typology. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 9(2), 155–174.

Mireshghi, E. (2008–2009). Yesterday's Iranian generation: Creating community among older adults. *Generations*, 32(4), 31–33.

Nayar, S. (2015). Grounded theory: Uncovering a world of process. In S. Nayar & M. Stanley (Eds.), *Qualitative research methodologies for occupational science and therapy* (pp. 37–52). New York: Routledge.

Nayar, S., Hocking, C., & Giddings, L. (2012). Using occupation to navigate cultural spaces: Indian immigrant women setting in New Zealand. *Journal of Occupational Science*, *19*(1), 62–75. doi:10.1080/14427591.2011.602628

Nayar, S., & Sterling, K. (2013) Occupational strategies for settling in New Zealand: Learning from Indian immigrant men. *Journal of Occupational Science*, *20*(1), 62–72. doi:10.1080/14427591.2012.736343

Park, H-J. (2015). Ageing in anomie: Later life migration and its implications for anti-anomic social work practice. *International Social Work*, 1–7. doi:10.1177/0020872815574129

Park, H-J., & Kang, W.-M. (2014). Social participation and transnational engagement among Korean residents in New Zealand: Issues and implications for social work practice. *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development*, *24*(2), 265–274. doi:10.1080/02185385.2014.925818

Park, H-J., & Kim, C. G. (2013). Ageing in an inconvenient paradise: The immigrant experiences of older Korean people in New Zealand. *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, *32*(3), 158–162. doi:10.1111/j.1741-6612.2012.00642.x

Park, N. S., Jang, Y., Lee, B. S., Ko, J. E., Haley, W. E., & Chiriboga, D. A. (2015). An empirical typology of social networks and its association with physical and mental health: A study with older Korean immigrants. *Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, *70*(1), 67–76. doi:10.1093/geronb/gbt065

Pedroza, L. (2015). The democratic potential of enfranchising resident migrants. *International Migration*, *53*(3), 22–35. doi:10.1111/imig.12162

Sabl, A. (2008–2009). Aging and immigration: An ethicist's perspective. *Generations*, *32*(4), 87–92.

Schatzman, L. (1991). Dimensional analysis: Notes on an alternative approach to the grounding of theory in qualitative research. In D. R. Maines (Ed.), *Social organizations and social process: Essays in honour of Anselm Strauss* (pp. 303–314). New York: Aldine Guyter.

Selvarajah, C. (2004). Expatriation experiences of Chinese immigrants in New Zealand. *Management Research News*, *27*(8/9), 26–45.

Small, V. (2013, May 24). Peters: Immigrants, brothels and sin city. *Stuff*. Retrieved April 4, 2016 from http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/8714017/Peters-Immigrants-brothels-and-sin-city

Statistics New Zealand. (2013). *2013 Census of population and dwellings*. Retrieved 19 February, 2016, from http://www.stats.govt.nz/searchresults.aspx?q=2013%20Census%20of%20Population%20and%20Dwellings

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tiamzon, T. J. (2013). Circling back: Reconstructing ethnic community networks among aging Filipino Americans. *Sociological Perspectives*, *56*(3), 351–375. doi:10.1525/sop.2013.56.3.351

Torres-Gil, F., & Treas, J. (2008–2009). Immigration and aging: The nexus of complexity and promise. *Generations*, *32*(4), 6–10.

Treas, J. (2014). Incorporating immigrants: Integrating theoretical frameworks of adaptation. *Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, *70*(2), 269–278. doi:10.1093/geronb/gbu067

Treas, J., & Mazumdar, S. (2002). Older people in America's immigrant families: Dilemmas of dependence, integration, and isolation. *Journal of Aging Studies*, *16*, 243–258.

United Nations. (2015). *Trends in international migration 2015*. Retrieved 3 April, 2016, from http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/populationfacts/docs/MigrationPopFacts20154.pdf

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, & Population Division. (2016). *International migration report: Highlights*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved 3 April, 2016, from http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2015_Highlights.pdf

World Health Organization. (2011). *Standards and operational guidance for ethics review of health-related research with human participants V: Standards and guidance for researchers*. Geneva, Switzerland: Author.

Zhang, J. (2014). Elderly Chinese migrants, intergenerational reciprocity, and quality of life. *New Zealand Sociology*, *29*(2), 11–30.