

New Zealand's Population Conference 2023

Population futures in an uncertain world: The changing faces of Aotearoa New Zealand


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Asian communities' well-being in Aotearoa during Covid-19

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Background and positionality of the Research



Image by Aotearoa-based Korean-Swedish artist Lisa Wool-Rim Sjöblom ([link](#))

- Blaming Chinese and other Asian groups for Covid-19 in New Zealand
- Interpersonal as well as institutional level of racism
- Existential threat and challenges to maintain a sense of belonging
- There is no singular Asian experience or perspective that exist
- Asians are/can become Tangata Tiriti
- Context of racism and white supremacy in Aotearoa



Research Outline



Image by Covid-19 survey research team used for the online campaign

Survey covers

- Access to COVID-19 information and level of trust of the information sources
- Requirement/use of support services
- Experiences of racism and responses
- Expressing ethnic identity, sense of belonging, trust, and life satisfaction

Research Outline

Participants

- All Asian ethnicities (including South, Southeast, East, West, Central Asian and diasporic ethnic groups)
- 16 years or older & Lived in Aotearoa New Zealand since January 2020 or earlier
- English, Korean, Simplified Chinese, Japanese

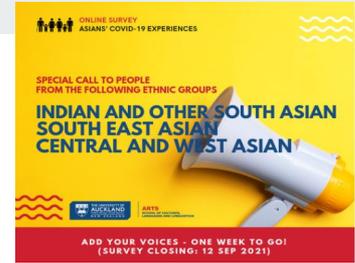
Cross-sectional survey recruiting

- 4 August - 12 September 2021 (40 days, in the middle of National/Auckland lockdown)
- Local district health boards, Asian community organisations / University Website / Ethnic community media / Social media including targeted content (Facebook, Twitter, KakaoTalk, WeChat)
- Online campaign to improve engagement: 2,204 interactions and 1,452 total responses



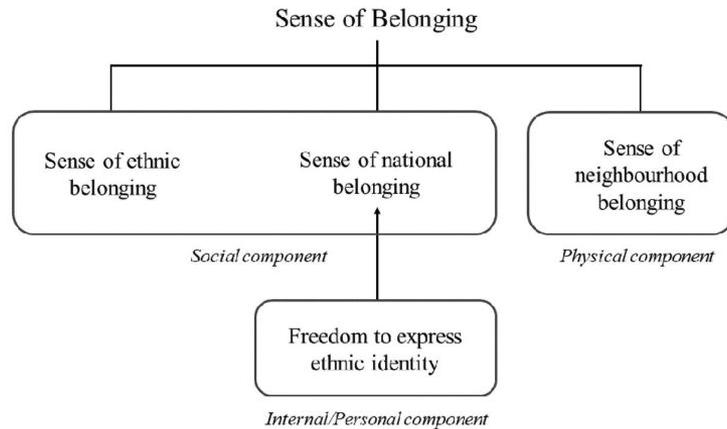
Asian communities' experiences of Covid-19

This survey was developed to collect information on the experiences and opinions of members of the Asian community before, during, and after the outbreak of Covid-19 in Aotearoa New Zealand.



Today's Focus

Figure 1: Sense of Belonging Components



- **Sense of belonging:** One's ethnic group, the larger society (+ freedom to express ethnic identity), and the local community
- **Protective role of a sense of belonging :** Against the adverse effects of racism on individual well-being
- **Research aim:** Explore the potential role of sense of belonging on the adverse effects of COVID-era racism on life satisfaction of members of Asian communities

Who participated? (1,341 responses analysed) 2,204 interactions / 1,452 total responses



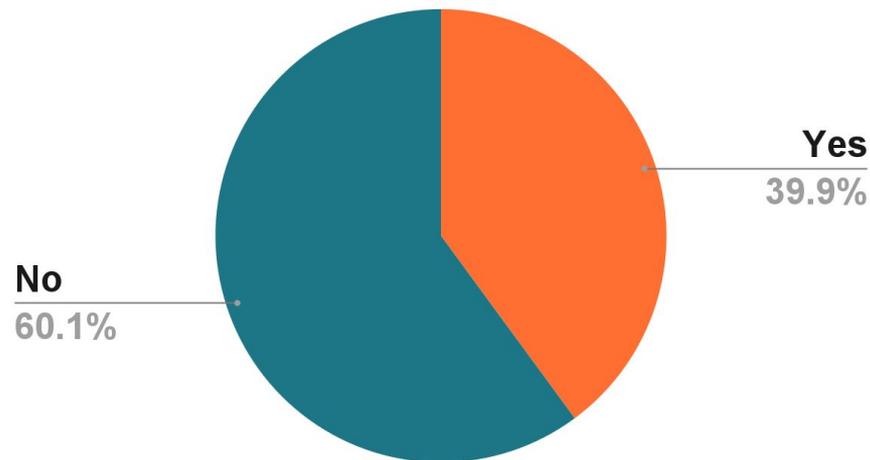
- Female 68%
- 30 + years 67%
- Prioritised ethnicity
 - Chinese 28%
 - Indian 10%
 - Korean 35%
 - Southeast Asian 17%
 - Other Asian 10%
- Non-English as first language 72%
- Permanent visa holder 81%
- Student status 25%
- Essential worker 35%
- In Auckland 75%

Experiences of racism

“Have you personally experienced racial discrimination (directly or indirectly) based on your ethnicity in New Zealand since the outbreak of COVID-19?”

Four in ten respondents (n=535, 39.9%, 95% CI) had experienced racism directly/indirectly in Aotearoa after the outbreak of COVID-19

Experience of racism (n=1,341)





Life Satisfaction

“Please rate how satisfied you were/are with your life in New Zealand before- and since-COVID on a five-point scale”

1= very dissatisfied
2=dissatisfied
3=neutral
4=satisfied
5=very satisfied

- **Life satisfaction dropped**
 - $m=3.88$ (sd= 0.80, 95% CI 3.84-3.91) before-COVID
 - $m=3.62$ (sd = 1.05, 95% CI 3.56-3.68) since-Covid
- **Subgroups with lower since-COVID life satisfaction**
 - Younger people
 - Students
 - Those with temporary visa status
- Previous analyses also identified impact of racism on since-COVID life satisfaction

Sense of belonging

Neighbourhood belonging

"I feel a sense of belonging to my local area"

Ethnic belonging

"I feel a sense of belonging to my ethnic community"

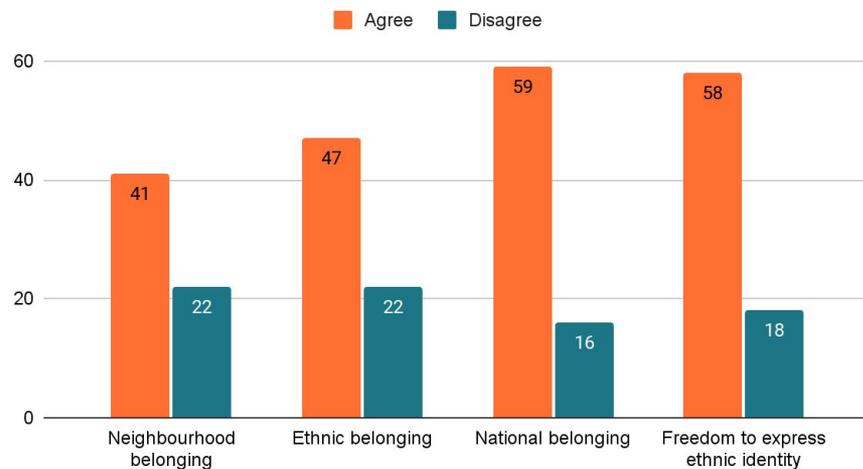
National belonging

"I feel a sense of belonging to New Zealand"

Freedom to express ethnic identity

"I feel that I can fully express my ethnicity in New Zealand"

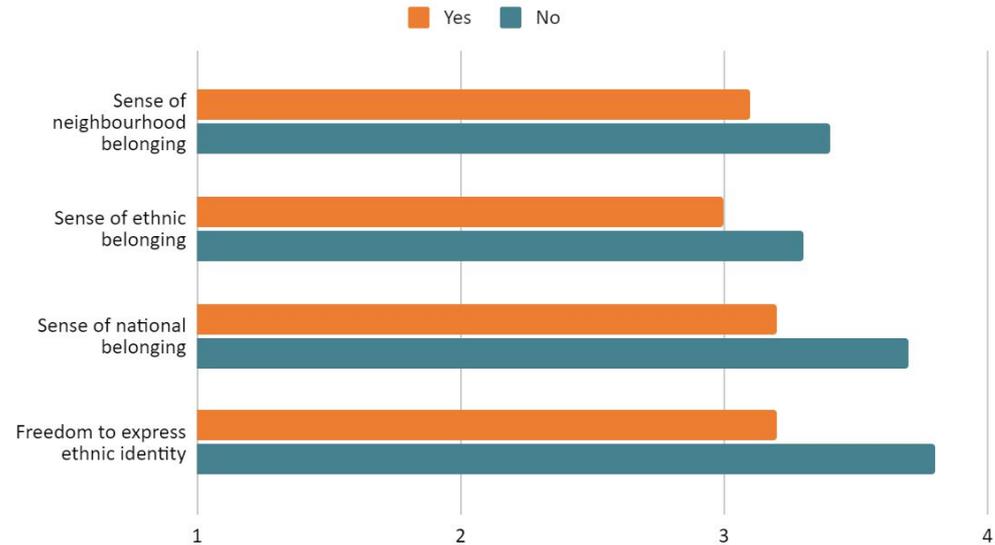
Distribution of Sense of Belonging



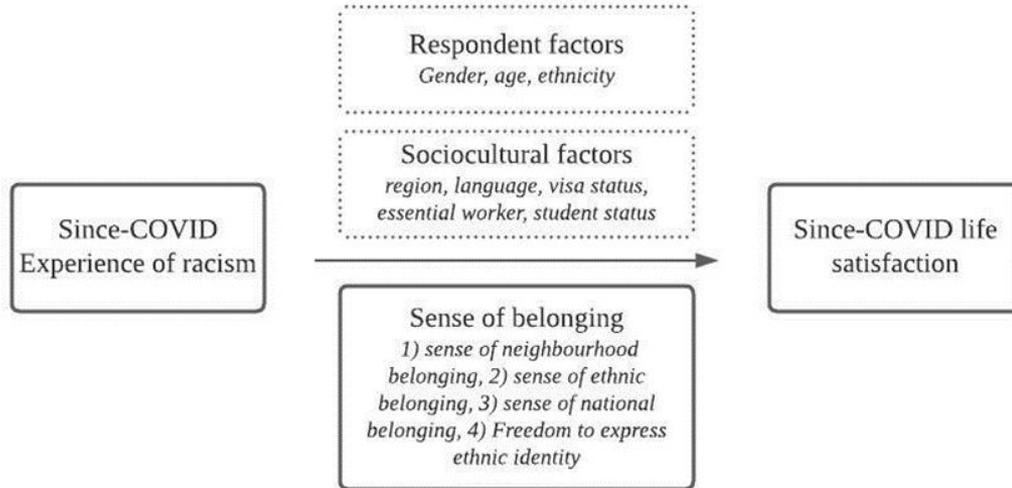
Sense of belonging and impact of racism



Experiencing racism vs sense of belonging (mean)



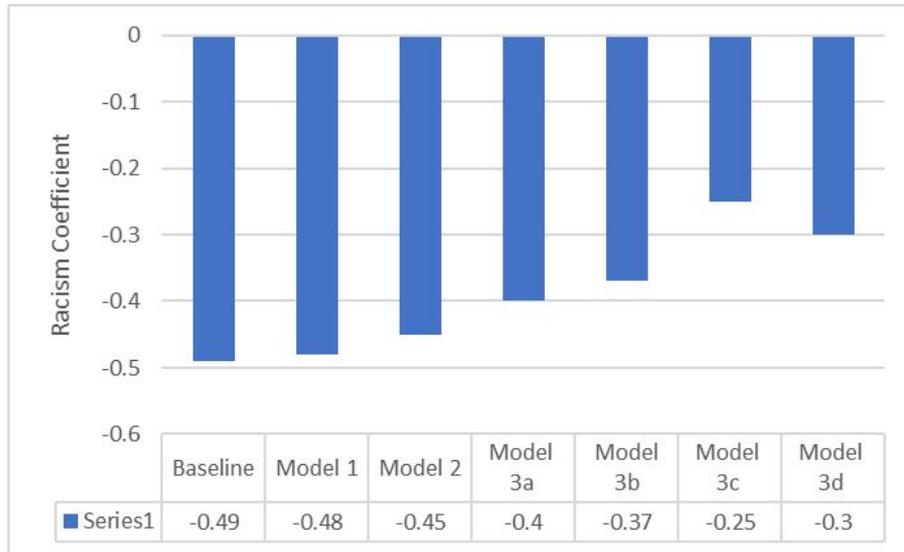
Role of a sense of belonging in the relationship between experiencing racism and since-COVID life satisfaction (model)



Sequential model construction:

1. Baseline model
2. + respondent factors
3. + sociocultural factors
4. + sense of belonging components (separately)

Experiences of racism and life satisfaction since-COVID



Model	Racism coefficient	P-value	95% CI
3a (Ethnic belonging)	-0.4	***	-0.51 ~ -0.30
3b (Neighbourhood belonging)	-0.37	***	-0.48 ~ -0.26
3c (National belonging)	-0.25	***	-0.36 ~ -0.14
3d (Freedom to express ethnic identity)	-0.3	***	-0.42 ~ -0.19



Summary of findings

A snapshot of local Asian community experiences

- Experiencing racism was common
- Life satisfaction decreased since the start of the pandemic (racism adds to this)
- Current state of sense of belonging

Conclusion and take home points

- **Feeling a sense of belonging** has a potentially mitigating role in the association between racism and life satisfaction (especially **national belonging** and **expressing ethnic identity**)
- **Points for advocacy and action**
 - Need for national-level, sustained anti-racist actions which support a sense of belonging and safety to express ethnic identity
 - Value of thoughtful data collection to record and understand the experiences of minoritised communities (especially in times of crisis)
- **How are things now?**
- **Next paper (accessing COVID information and trust)**



Thank you!

Park LS, Jaung R, Park JJ, Song C. 2023. **Asian communities' well-being in Aotearoa during Covid-19 : The mitigating role of sense of belonging in the relationship between racism and life satisfaction.** *Aotearoa New Zeal Soc Work.* 35(1):95–112.

Jaung R, Park LS, Park JJ, Mayeda D, Song C. 2022. **Asian New Zealanders' experiences of racism during the COVID-19 pandemic and its association with life satisfaction.** *N Z Med J [Internet].* 135(1565):60–73.

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