

The social networks of migrants

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Overview

- LisNZ background
- Social networks of migrants
 - Pre-arrival networks
 - Friendships
 - Membership in clubs and associations
- Role of networks in finding employment
- Next steps

The Longitudinal Immigration Survey New Zealand (LisNZ)

- Migrants approved for residence between November 2004 – October 2005
- Interviewed 6, 18 and 36 months after gaining permanent residence in NZ (Waves 1-3)
- 5,000 interviews completed at Wave 3.



Five years on study

- Qualitative study with LisNZ participants
- 64 in-depth interviews, 5 years after gaining permanent residence
- Sample selected from Skilled Principal migrants living in a variety of cities in New Zealand from a variety of countries



What social networks do migrants have?

- Pre-arrival networks
- Friendship - ethnic and non-ethnic friends
- Involvement in clubs and associations

.....Also, prior experience in New Zealand
(88 percent had been to NZ prior to residency)

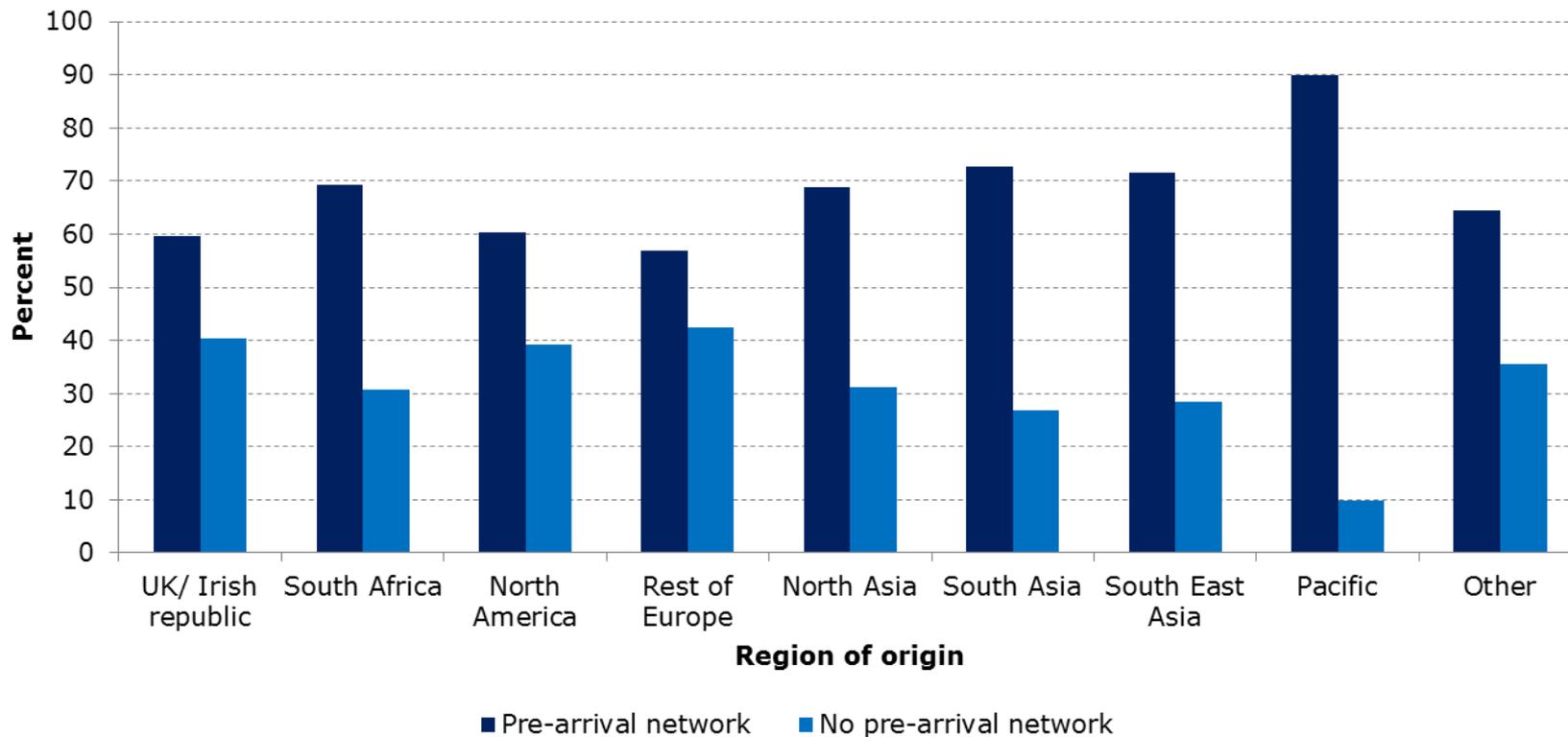




Pre-arrival networks

- 68 percent of migrants had a pre-existing 'network' in New Zealand
- Pre-arrival networks varied depending on length of time in New Zealand:
 - 75 percent of 'new' migrants
 - 67 percent of migrants who had been to New Zealand before residency

Pre-arrival networks by region of origin



Pre-arrival networks

- *'I think from a migration point of view, having a network that we arrive to like that is always helpful...you know, some familiarity, independent of what nationality you are, you connect through that picture that you all share, and so, that helped us settle quite well.'*

Male from South America



Pre-arrival networks

- Having friends/family in New Zealand prior to migration was also a primary factor in the decision to choose New Zealand:
 - *'Because honestly my sister was here, and that was my one reason [for choosing New Zealand]....yeah my relatives, my close relatives'.* Male from Fiji
 - *'Yeah it was friends, that was why I chose [New Zealand] over somewhere else, it was just easier; easier to come knowing someone than go somewhere completely new.'* Female from the UK

Social integration: making new friends

- 96 percent of all migrants have made friends in New Zealand
- Across all 3 Waves, most migrants made friends through:
 - Friends and family (66 percent)
 - At work (66 percent)



Social integration: making new friends

- Differences in how new friends are made by region of origin.
- North Asians were most likely to make friends through study/attending training (40 percent)
- *'you can find lots of friends in the university while you study, but afterwards it's hard... so I deal with them.'* **Male from china**



Social integration: making new friends

- Pacific were most likely to meet through:
 - an ethnic association (24 percent)
 - religious group (28 percent)
- UK/Irish were more likely to make friends through informal channels and sport:
 - friends (31 percent)
 - sport/clubs (47 percent)
 - work (35 percent)



Informal channels: English speaking backgrounds

- *'I guess the majority of my friends were through work, you know, but then one of them will invite you to something perhaps even if it's just the pub or cinema or to dinner and you get chatting to someone. [One friend] invited me to a make-up party...so I went along to that and made friends with another girl there who I've since lost contact with, but she was having a Tupperware party....So then I went to a Tupperware party and I met one of my, my best friends.'* **Female from the UK**
- *'In the early days my wife was going to keep fit clubs and whatever, and then meeting people there, and ...it all just ties together ... those people will then introduce you to ... new people, and then it just rolls on from there.'* **Male from South Africa**



Informal channels: English speaking backgrounds

- New Zealand culture made interacting and making friends for this group easier:
 - *'I find the work culture here quite good for that, quite friendly and Friday drinks...I think it's easier, that people are more sociable in work here than I think in the UK...I think, certainly in Wellington...probably because it's so compact, people you know, everybody stays for a few beers after work on a Friday and...everybody seems willing to do stuff.'* **Male from the UK**

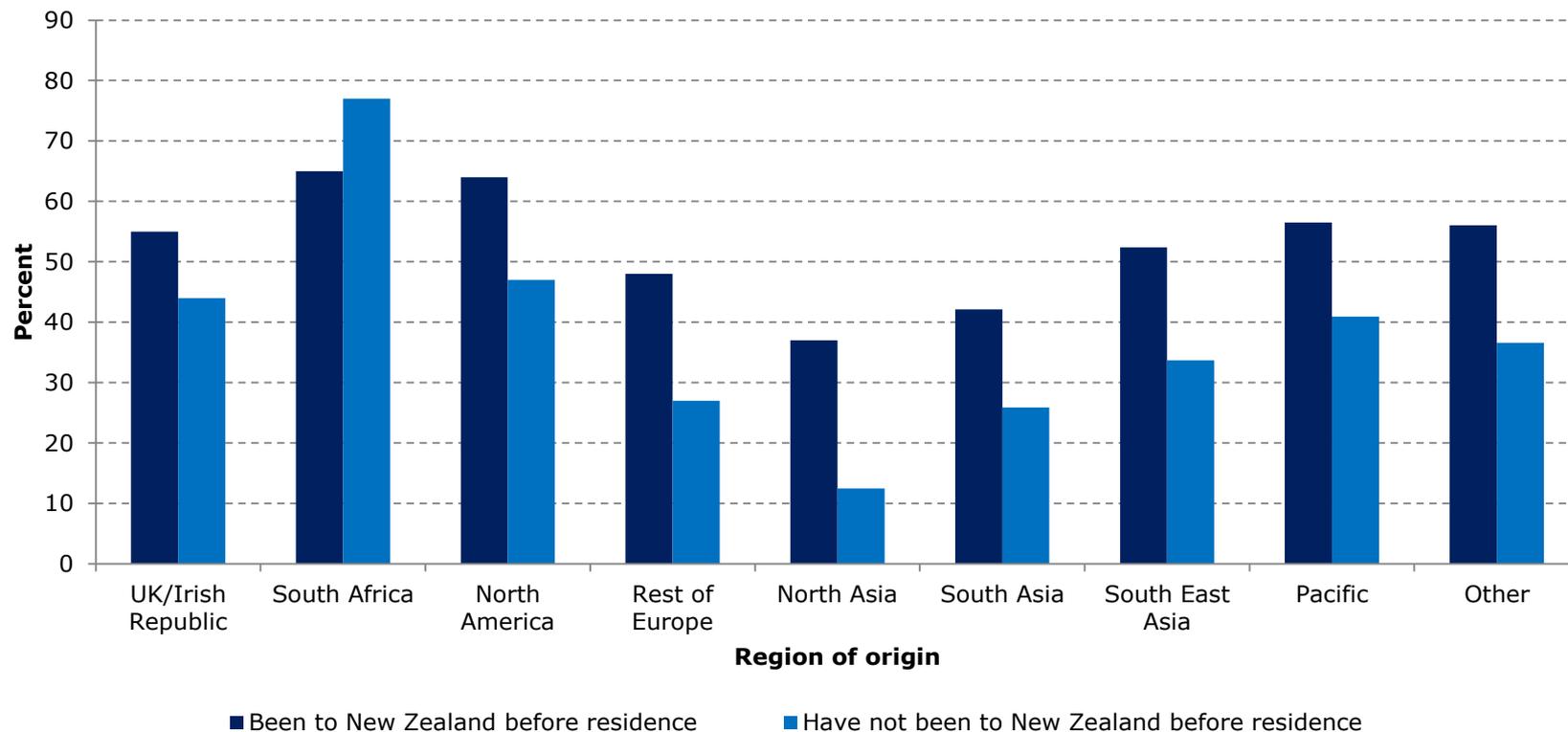


Social integration: Formal mechanisms



- 50 percent of migrants belonged to a club or association (at Wave 3)
- 52 percent of those that had been in NZ before residency belonged to a club or association
 - Compared to 36 percent of those that had not.
- 19 percent of migrants with poor English belonged to a club or group
 - compared to 54 percent of migrants who spoke English as their main language.

Involvement in clubs and groups



Formal mechanisms: Sports/recreation

- *'So when we first came here we both joined the Wellington tramping club, and that was quite good, both to get out and see the countryside and also to meet people. [We] made a couple of friends through that.'* Male from the UK
- *'Last year I really made some good friends at the golf course, some Kiwi friends, so we've had the odd meal together, you know, we enjoy each others company, so I, I'm happy.'*
Male from South Africa
- *'I'm an active member of the sports community in Wellington, I play a lot of volleyball. I've made so many friends that way.'*
Female from the Pacific

Formal mechanisms: Church

- For migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds, social networks were more often formed through church:
- *'Every first Sunday of the month there's a Filipino Mass yeah, first Sunday of the month the whole church is full of Filipinos, yeah so but other Filipinos are married to Kiwis so they come as well so. Yeah, yeah like I'm planning my daughter's first birthday, I got sixty on my list so my family was thinking, "Oh are you having a party so who will be your visitors?" So, but I'm expecting sixty people on my list!'* **Female from the Philippines**

Formal mechanisms: Church

- *'Every second Wednesday...[we join] a group...who live in the area, have a Bible study, have lunch there, have dinner together. So yeah, yeah, it's great because we have a young family and we get connected with other young families, so the kids can play with them...church is our main social network'. Male from Indonesia*



Ethnic networks

- 48% had made mainly ethnic friends and 48% mainly non-ethnic friends.
- 64% of Pacific, 61% of Business and 62% of family parent category migrants had made mainly ethnic friends in NZ
- 63% of North Asians had made mainly ethnic friends
- 75% of those with poor English had mainly ethnic friends.



Ethnic community

- Ties with ethnic communities for those from Asian countries was particularly strong:
 - *'I'm kind of a traditional, I prefer the way, you know, social life with Chinese people.'* **Female from China**
 - *'Making friend is okay because now more and more Chinese people from China, so surrounding us is quite a lot of Chinese people.'* **Male from China**
 - *'I had one friend and then this friend had friends, so she introduced me to other friends and then we, we are part of a community, a community in the Philippines.'* **Female from the Philippines**



Making use of networks – finding work

- Social and professional networks were important for finding work.
 - At wave 1, 24% of migrants found their first job through friends or family.
 - At wave 3, 26% of migrants said making contacts through friends and family helped them the most to find work.
 - 20% of migrants were working in an 'ethnic workplace' across the 3 waves.



Making use of networks – finding work

- Migrants heard about, applied for, and gained employment with the assistance of friends and colleagues:
 - *'I got this job through another scientist who works there [and] who I'd met around the place.'* Female from the UK
 - *'I got the job through a friend of mine, he goes to the same church as I did ... I said, 'Hey I am looking for a job', and he said, 'yeah, I'll connect to the boss and see how it goes.'* Male from Indonesia
 - *'[I found the job through] someone in New Zealand, an ex-colleague of mine' who 'said, "We've got a job for you at a school in Masterton would you like to come?"'* Male from South Africa



Making use of networks – finding work

- *I did want to contact Kiwi companies but I think most of the Kiwi companies they don't look at immigrants as such...they want New Zealand residents. But, a lot of Chinese or Asian companies they will look at, immigrants or they will look at people who have open work permits. They understand that they will have to support those people and they understand that they have to sponsor those people to get a proper work permit or residency later on.*

Female from China



Making use of networks – finding work

- *'So, the owner of the restaurant went to Thailand...seeing my father because he do the exporting stuff ...so, like I, I introduced my dad to my, boss. So they become business [partners]... Anyway, my dad say, "Oh [my daughter]...is looking for a new job." And he say, "Oh, hang on," he called [the restaurant manager] said, "Okay... you can come to work for us."...So I left from Chinese restaurant, get the new visa for Thai restaurant and I worked there three years.'* **Female from Thailand**

Conclusion

- Pre-arrival networks provide support and the encouragement needed to migrate
- Most migrants have made friends/social contacts in New Zealand, but there are differences in the way in which migrants go about this depending on their characteristics
- Social networks appear to play some role in gaining employment for some migrants



Next steps

- Model social networks and labour force participation
- Ethnic workplaces and earnings
- Implications for policy and settlement services

