

“We all get along”

Social Cohesion in Auckland

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Why social cohesion?



- “belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy” (Jenson, 1998: 15).
- internal cohesion; external conflict
- sameness at the expense of difference
- social cohesion alongside social justice
- “... everyone living in a community, region or nation state has a stake in understanding ‘what will hold us together’” (Jeannotte 2003: 12)

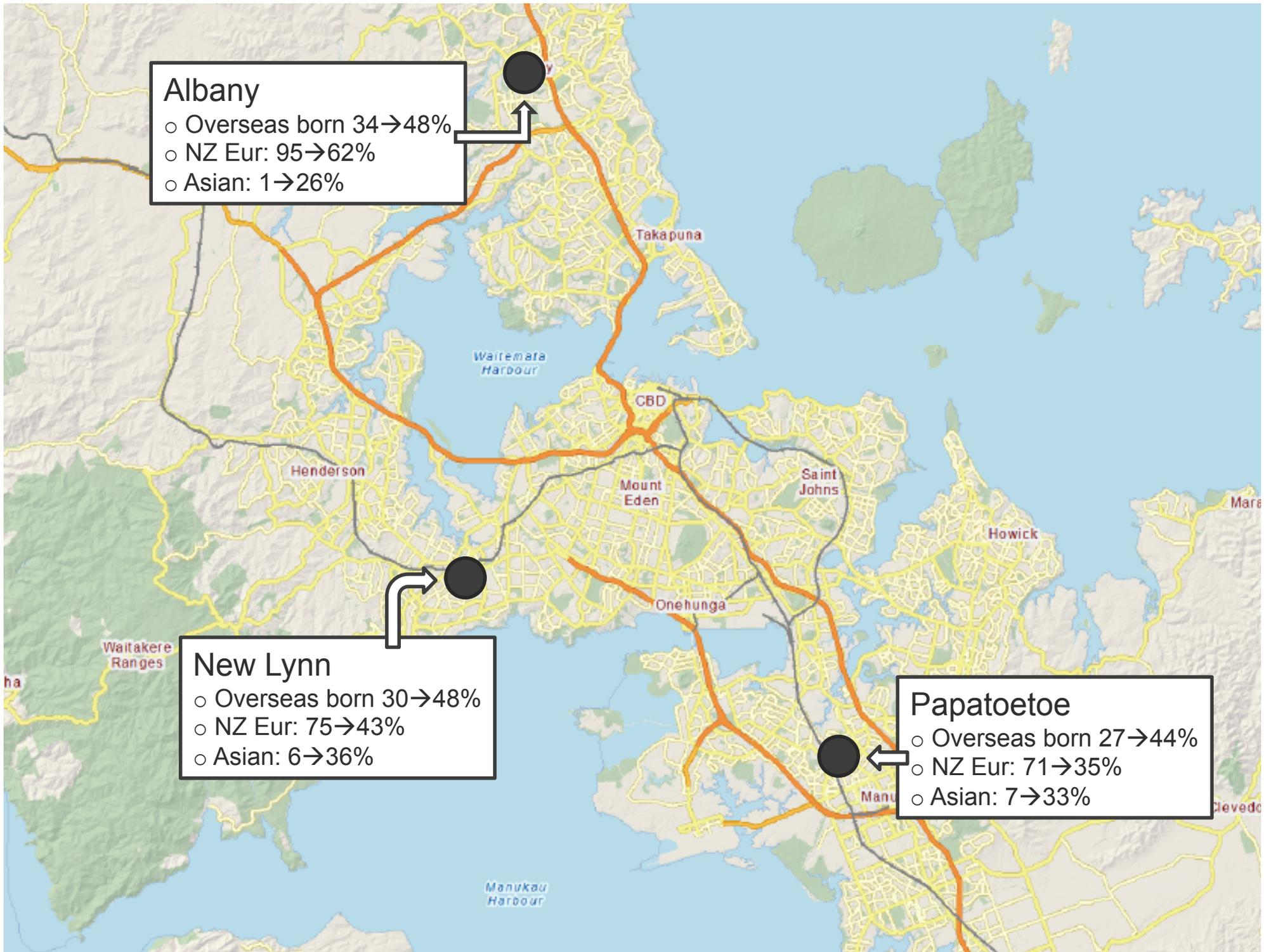
Methodology

- Albany, New Lynn and Papatoetoe
- 3 focus groups with community workers
- Interviews with 54 residents

- What are people's experiences of inclusion and exclusion?
- What organisations, places, spaces and events enhance or inhibit people's sense of belonging?
- Do people have meaningful social interactions with others who are different from them?
- What organizations, places, spaces and events facilitate or inhibit these?



New Lynn night markets



Belonging

A photograph of a night market stall. A man wearing a plaid cap and a dark blue shirt is cooking on a large metal griddle. He is using a wooden stick to handle small, round, golden-brown food items. In the background, a crowd of people, including a woman in a red jacket and a young girl in a pink dress, are looking at the stall. The scene is illuminated by a bright light hanging from the stall's structure. The background shows a cityscape at night with lights.

Yeah ... I used to walk and exercise every evening or afternoon. I walk around and there are nice people. When I meet them on the road they talk and say hello. I think Papatoe is [a] safe place to live. (Papatoetoe, male, 50s-60s, Tongan)

I've only been here for a year and a half and so I still don't think this is my home. I'm still trying to find new things around here to do and stuff. I don't know what's around other than the mall, I don't know much else. (Albany, female, 20s, Māori)

... by and large it's a community where people have tended to stay. You get multiple generations ... You do get to know people ... It helps that sense of belonging because people aren't shy about coming up and saying "hi, how are you? I've noticed you somewhere", or they'll come up and offer help and have a chat. It's quite open. (New Lynn, female, 30s-40s, Pākehā)

New Lynn night markets

Participation

The immediate neighbourhood is very mixed race ... There is such a lot of nationalities in that complex and here from what I see, most people are friendly and will say “hello” and “how are you?” But no mixing. (Albany, female, 70s, Pākehā)

If we can get, in my opinion, the Chinese community to mix in more that would be a huge step forward because there are some brilliant people in there ... You haven't heard anything until you've heard Onward Christian Soldiers or Jingle Bells sung in Mandarin. (Papatoetoe Focus Group)

I think a neighbourhood that does real well is the South African neighbourhood ... You will often see a big BBQ going on outside the little African shop and all the South African community come together – they're a very strong neighbourhood ... I think the Korean community are actually quite happy with their connection with their churches. They're very good at using different parks and things to do stuff. You will see heaps of them out having a fun afternoon or whatever. (Albany Focus Group)

Papatoetoe Christmas parade



Inclusion

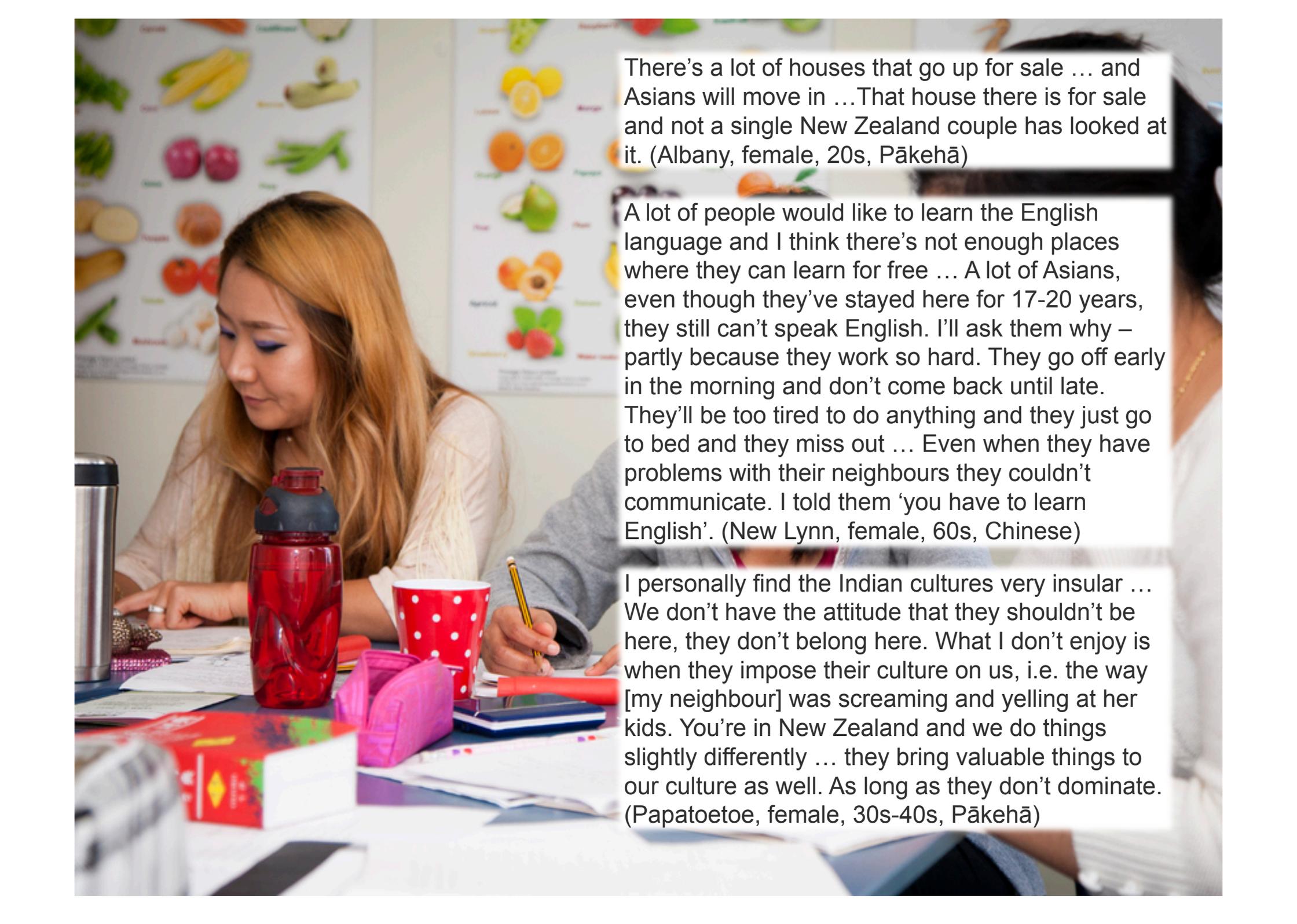
I know that when [they] held the focus groups going back into the last research, the migrant communities said they really would like to meet others – meet Kiwis and meet and interface. That was actually a challenge because going to work and coming home no one is around in the street. How do they connect and interface? (Albany Focus Group)

... if the different types of people don't mix together in the community then you generally tend to find – I'm referring to ethnicity once again – you'll have Koreans doing their own thing, Chinese doing another. It creates a little bit of a barrier and to me that's probably not a nice community. (Albany, male, 30s, Korean)

We've got a large community of Indians in Papatoetoe. They usually tend to keep to themselves ... I don't mind Indians but you don't really go out of your way to speak to them because they're usually together. (Papatoetoe, male, 22, Pākehā)



New Lynn Legends of the Moon Festival



There's a lot of houses that go up for sale ... and Asians will move in ... That house there is for sale and not a single New Zealand couple has looked at it. (Albany, female, 20s, Pākehā)

A lot of people would like to learn the English language and I think there's not enough places where they can learn for free ... A lot of Asians, even though they've stayed here for 17-20 years, they still can't speak English. I'll ask them why – partly because they work so hard. They go off early in the morning and don't come back until late. They'll be too tired to do anything and they just go to bed and they miss out ... Even when they have problems with their neighbours they couldn't communicate. I told them 'you have to learn English'. (New Lynn, female, 60s, Chinese)

I personally find the Indian cultures very insular ... We don't have the attitude that they shouldn't be here, they don't belong here. What I don't enjoy is when they impose their culture on us, i.e. the way [my neighbour] was screaming and yelling at her kids. You're in New Zealand and we do things slightly differently ... they bring valuable things to our culture as well. As long as they don't dominate. (Papatoetoe, female, 30s-40s, Pākehā)

Opportunities

We started participating in Santa parades. We started celebrating our own festivals like Diwali and Baisakhi. Kiwi people started coming to our festivals. They've been participating, they've been visitors, they've been the audience, they've been even chief guests. This has all started merging into the mainstream ... we are holding our Diwali Festival on a very large scale now. Cook Islanders and Samoan people are showing off their dances, beautiful dances ... Our children are participating in ... Pasifika. (Papatōetoe Focus Group)

Community planting days, I enjoy very much ... I strongly encourage the newcomers, particularly like Korean family. Because they are not familiar with the planting with the community because we don't have that kind of programme in our country ... we family just planting some trees in this area and maybe two or three years later the trees are growing also. I'm living here and my belonging is growing – [like] my tree. (Albany Focus Group)



Opportunities

One of the roles that we have as Māori is to look after the visitors. It's that principle of manākitanga ... I think when they get here we have obligations as communities to be able to provide them with knowledge about ourselves. I don't think for the Māori community, and it's the only community that I really can speak about, that we've done that well. I think others have described us instead of us doing that ourselves. Making sure that the relationship is reciprocated so that we learn from the people coming and they learn from us. (Papatoetoe, female, Māori/Tongan)

