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East meets West: Asian elders' experiences of ageing-in-place in a Western country

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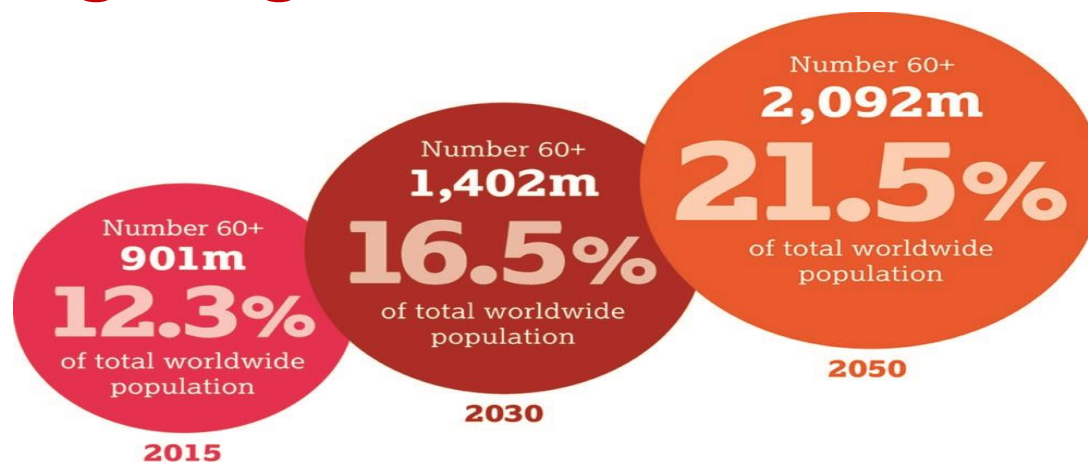
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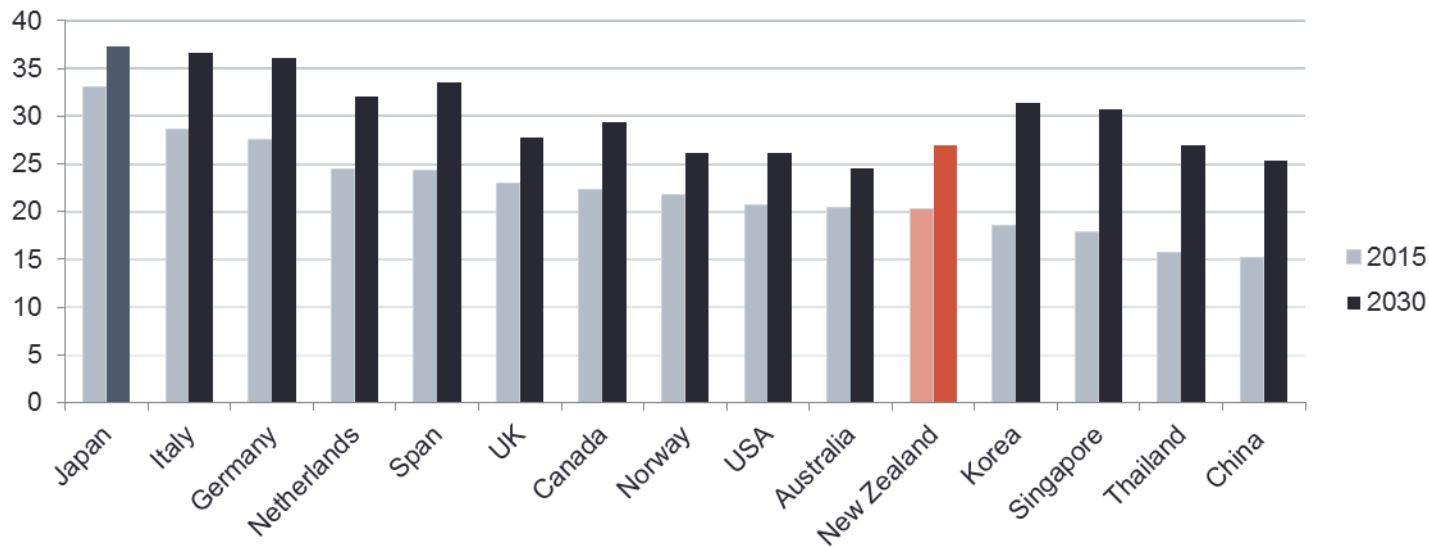
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Global Ageing



% of population aged 60 years or older



Changing views on ageing

Ageing well is not solely maintaining personal health and functional independence, but also continuing to participate in their communities, being valued, and being able and supported to make choices about where to live in later life.

NZ Positive Ageing strategy (2001)

***Older New Zealanders –
Healthy, independent,
connected and respected***

People can age positively; older people are highly valued and are recognized as an important part of families and communities



NZ's older Asian communities, 2013

43,620 Asian people aged 60 years or over in 2013

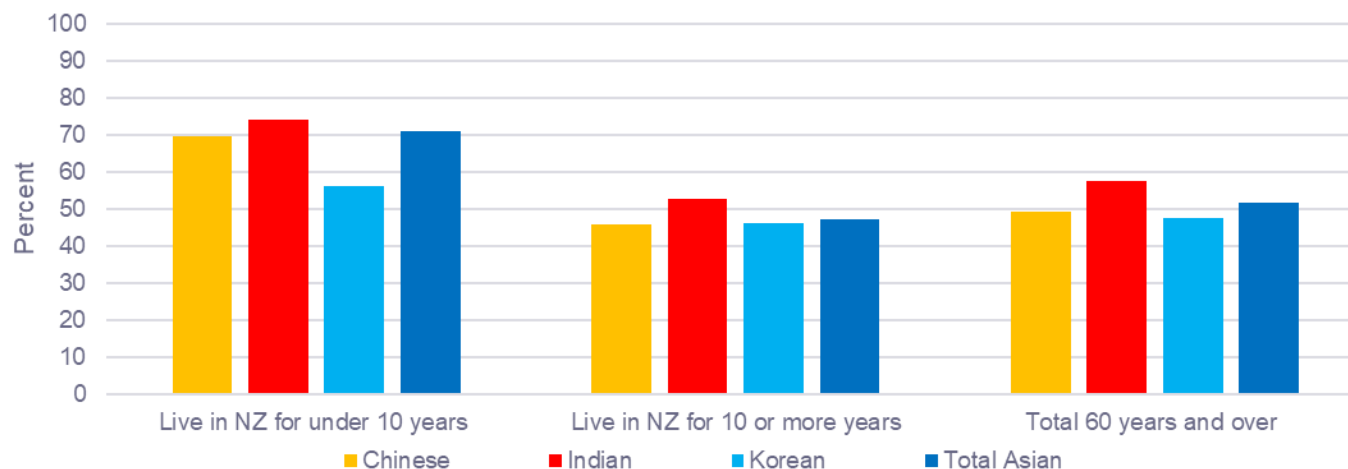
Chinese made up 51% of the older Asian population, Indian 30% & Korean 5%

About one in four (23%) older Asians were overseas-born and lived in NZ for under 10 years

60+, selected ethnic groups

	Chinese	Indian	Korean	Total Asian
% overseas-born	90.8	93.6	99.2	93.3
% living in Auckland	71.0	71.6	74.8	69.1

% living with children by age group & years in NZ



Research questions

The overall aim of this study is to explore the ageing experiences of Chinese, Indian and Korean elders who have migrated to New Zealand in late-life and live independently from their children, in particular:

- What are their demographic and housing characteristics?
- What are their attitudes towards ageing and what influence their ability to age in place in a new country?
- What is needed to enable positive ageing in place for this population?



Research methods

- Qualitative research using in-depth interviews
- Fieldwork conducted in Auckland, NZ's largest city where over two-thirds of the older Asians live
- Fieldwork took place between February 2017 and May 2018
- Participants recruited through purposive sampling and snowballing

Target families

- Chinese, Indians and Koreans over 60 years of age
- Migrated to NZ after 50 years of age
- Living separately from their children



Participant characteristics

	N	%		N	%
Gender			Age		
Male	17	38.6	60-69	9	20.5
Female	27	61.4	70-79	26	59.0
Total	44	100	80+	9	20.5
Country of origin			Arrival year to NZ		
China	10	22.7	1995-1999	5	11.4
India	22	50.0	2000-2009	28	63.6
Korea	12	27.3	2010-2018	11	25.0
Living arrangement			Government benefits*		
Live with spouse	32	72.7	NZ pension	24	54.5
Live alone	12	27.3	OS pension	11	25.0
Children's location			Other	14	31.8
All children in NZ	21	47.7	Driver's licence		
One or more in NZ	17	38.6	Yes	4	9.1
All children overseas	6	13.7	No	40	90.9

* Multiple answers

Reasons for living away from children

- Unsuitable housing/health concerns

My wife has arthritis so she can't climb upstairs.

There the kitchen was upstairs and our room was downstairs. So 3-4 times a day she would have to climb the stairs. [Indian, male, aged 83, lived in NZ for over 20 years]

I lived with my daughter but her house was very small – only two small rooms. I lived in one room and my grandson had to sleep in the lounge. He was in high school. I feel this was no good, so I told my daughter I wanted to move out. [Chinese, female, aged 67, lived in NZ for 9 yrs]



Reasons for living away from children

■ Intergenerational tension

*We felt inconvenient living with our daughter's family. Why? **Because we have different habits.** If we watched TV, we distracted the kid's studies. We like singing, but we could not sing in their house: they would think we are mad. **So moving out can give us freedom, and they have freedom too.***
[Chinese, male, aged 70, lived in NZ for 8 yrs]

*When living with your children, it's good but **the way I educate and how the younger generation teach is different, so there were frequent troubles.** I would get stressed and they would also get stressed ... my daughter would say, 'mum, that's not how I do it'. [Korean, female, aged 70, lived in NZ for 4 yrs]*



Reasons for living away from children

- Changes in the cultural expectations of intergenerational co-residency

All participants acknowledged the importance of living with extended family but also shared that this norm of co-residency is changing.

Traditionally, co-residency was the way of life. But now I don't see how that can be maintained. There are benefits to that but the downfall is that it make each other feel uncomfortable nowadays. Society is changing and so the culture is also shifting. Personally I think it's better to live separately rather than with extended family. It's better for both the young as well as the old. [Korean, male, aged 74, lived in NZ for 18 yrs]



Housing tenure

	Number	Percent
Owner occupancy	7	15.9
Children's house	6	13.6
Public housing	15	34.1
Private landlord	16	36.4
TOTAL	44	100



Housing satisfaction

- Homeowners

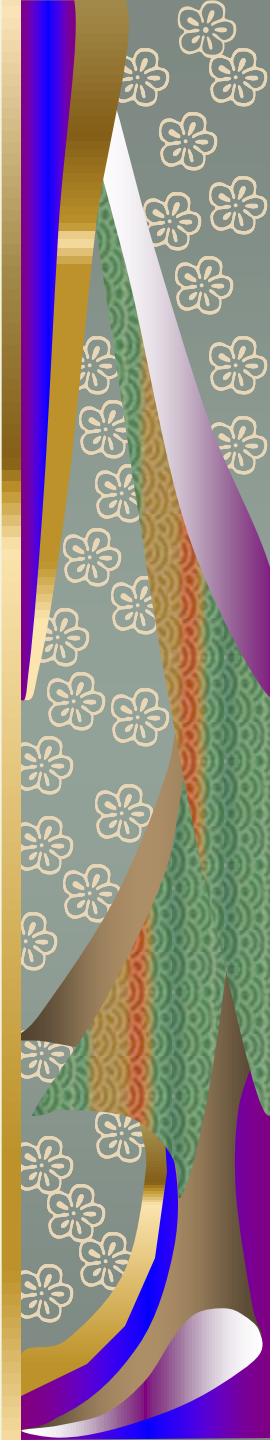
As Chinese, we feel better having our own home. It gives us a strong sense of security. [Chinese, male, aged 70, lived in NZ for 8 yrs]

- Children's house

We don't have any worries because it's our son's house. ... We did some modifications to the kitchen, bathroom and laundry... My son paid for all the modifications – it's their house [Indian, male, aged 83, lived in NZ for over 20 yrs]

- Public housing

Because it is Housing NZ, they don't throw us out but if I was renting a house outside private when those people want to sell their property then you have to move out. [Indian, female, aged 74, lived in NZ for 13 yrs]



Housing satisfaction

- Private renters

It does not make me feel like a home because this apartment is rented and I am not really getting used to this place. [Chinese, male, aged 72, lived in NZ for 6 yrs]

There's uneasiness as it's not my own house, and I may have to leave against my will as I am not the landlord. [Korean, female, aged 70, lived in NZ for 4 yrs]

We have a sense of belonging because we can come when we want and we go when we want. There's a lot of freedom of that kind and I didn't realise this before... here we relax and do what we want, eat what we want when we want how we want.
[Indian, female, aged 86, lived in NZ for 9 yrs]



Location preferences

- Accessible bus routes
- Proximity to amenities
- Proximity to family and community groups
- Safety

*This house is near the bus stop, shopping centre.
Especially because we don't have a car, we go by
bus.* [Indian, male, aged 62, private rental]

*It only takes me 15 minutes on the bus to where my
son lives so I can see my grandchildren when I
want to or they come over.* [Korean, female, aged
78, public housing]

*I like this house because it's in the city and it is safe...
we feel very safe. It's an apartment, it has a
secure entrance.* [Indian, male aged 84, private
rental]



Family relationship

Most participants reported having regular contact with their children and grandchildren

My daughter, she comes practically everyday because we are on the same bus route. [Indian, female, aged 77, lived in NZ for 5 yrs]

Our children and grandchildren come very often and can be very loud when they say, "Bye grandma, bye grandpai". [Korean, male aged 75, in NZ for 12 yrs]

Our two daughters come very often. They get all the heavy groceries for us. Basically we do not need to buy anything. [Chinese, male, aged 70, in NZ for 8 yrs]

I help my daughter to take care of her children... I take my grandchildren to the kindergarten. My daughter helps me a lot, such as interpretation in hospital. [Chinese, male, aged 73, in NZ for 6 yrs]



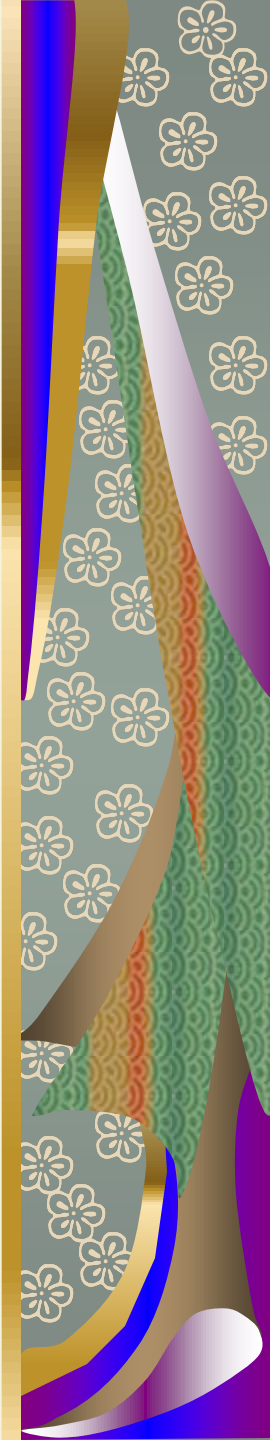
Expectations of filial responsibility from children

I do expect [it] in terms of dire need. But I would like to be independent as far as possible. I wouldn't like to trouble the children. [Indian, male, aged 64]

I am not expecting my children to help to take care of me. I hope I can take care of myself, as following the Western lifestyle. [Chinese, male, aged 72]

We are happy with this [living] arrangement. Our children still look after us in the sense of having interest and checking up on us.. It's easier and comfortable for everybody. [Indian, female aged 86]
in India we don't have a social welfare system like we do here in NZ... Here if my daughter decides she doesn't want to look after me, I know there is social welfare to help me [Indian, male, aged 62]

Thankfully, in NZ there are government benefits so I don't need to think or expect my children to take care of me [Korean, female, aged 78]



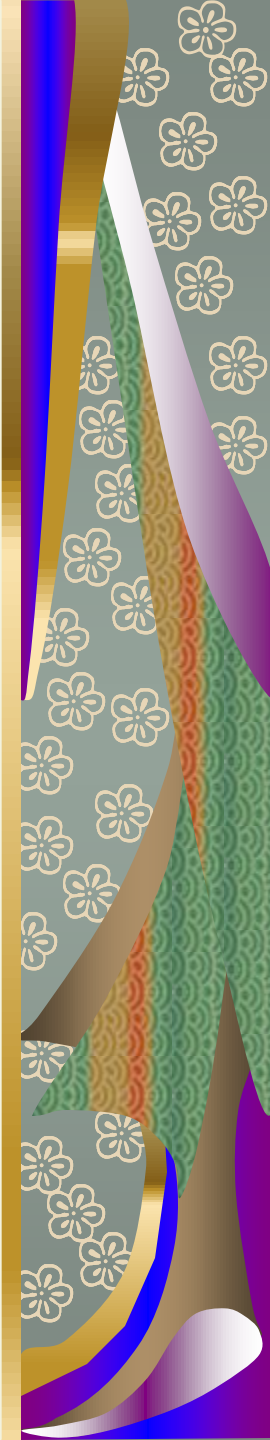
Future plans

No we haven't [thought about moving into rest home] and I don't want to. I want to live with my son really. [Indian, male, aged 67]

I want to stay at home for as long as possible. But if I can't take care of myself, I will go to a rest home [Chinese, male, aged 74]

I don't want to be a burden to my son so will probably have to consider it [moving to rest home] as I'm getting older. I'm doing the best I can to be healthy, eating healthy and exercising so I can die at home. [Korean, female, aged 74]

My son knows that I want to go to a rest home when I can't take care of myself. [Chinese, female, aged 67]



Community participation

Living separately from their children encouraged them to be more involved in the community.

I go out most days, I go to senior school during the week to see my friends. I volunteer out in the parks and gardens of my neighbourhood to pick up rubbish every third Saturday of the month. [Korean, female aged 71]

I participate in a lot of community activities, including this English class organized by the Chinese New Settlers Trust. The activities are well structured, and the teachers are excellent. I feel happy living in NZ [Chinese, female, aged 65]

We visit other seniors in rest homes who are lonely. So we laugh with them, talk with them, sing with them and pray with them. ... We also help at the church. [Indian, female, aged 86]



Facilitators of community participation

- Health
- Government support
- Friends and local community groups

Government is empowering. It affords us independence, freedom and security. We have to thank God for bringing us to a country like this. It is such a beautiful country where we hardly pay anything for medicals and buses are free. We don't get all these facilities in India. It is very important. [Indian, female, aged 75].

When I'm sick my friends will come see ... and they would bring food over. And my neighbour will clean the windows outside for me, I never ask her but she always does it for me. She'll even broom my front bit for me. [Indian, female, aged 72]



Barriers

- Language
- Financial burden
- Lack of access to transport
- Lack of gender appropriate activities

What will elders who don't share the same language talk about? We just all sit and stand still or drink coffee for a bit and just go home. Overcoming language is the hardest. [Korean, female, aged 77]



What influence ageing-in-place

Public health framework for healthy ageing
(Rosenberg, 2018) –

A complex interplay between and within various environments and individual characteristics affect one's ability to age in place.

- Health status
- Housing choice
- Family support
- Community engagement
- Social services (incl. home-based care services)
- Government support



Conclusions

East meets West:

Asian elders embrace two distinct values of independence and interdependence to assist their ability to age in place.

