



## Embracing Asia: Building New Zealand



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# The concept of Asia Savvy: New Zealand Asia Conference 2013

I am delighted to present this year's Asia Savvy Conference under the theme of Embracing Asia: Building New Zealand. As a nation of just 4.5 million people, we are unique in both our diversity and culture. The current rise in diversity is an opportunity for New Zealand to maximise its relationships with emerging countries in Asia for further development in the economic, political and social arena. Therefore, it is crucial that we enhance this ethnic diversity, more specifically in the context of Asia, in order to succeed on the international stage in the 21st Century.

The 2013 Asia Savvy Organising Committee has aimed to provide a dynamic conference for students to openly exchange issues vital to Asia and New Zealand, foster an effective relationship among young emerging leaders from different backgrounds, and to connect students with today's leaders in academia, business and government. This year, with the continued attendance from students from all over the nation, Asia Savvy continues its journey as one of the most visible university forums in New Zealand.

This year's conference consisted of three panel discussion sessions in the areas of business, identity and leadership. Our guest speakers brought their own experience to provide insight into what New Zealanders themselves, as members of a multicultural society, can learn from Asia across a wide range of topics. This one-day intensive conference also provided workshops for students to actively engage in discussions, sharing their own opinions and innovative ideas.

This year's Asia Savvy Conference was a great opportunity for young individuals to come together as future leaders and change makers, and discuss the potential to build on and develop new ties between New Zealand and Asia. I firmly believe this opportunity will promote interaction between students and business leaders, and showcase a range of innovative thinking and approaches.



Ahra Cho  
Project Manager



*The 2013 Asia Savvy Organising Committee, from left: Nick Laery, Ahra Cho, Rachel Gabriel, Lincoln Dam, Sid Jotsingani and Dinah Towle (absent Richard Phillips).*

# Conference programme Saturday 31 August 2013

Embracing Asia: Building New Zealand

## Opening addresses

Dr Natasha Hamilton-Hart      Director, New Zealand Asia Institute, The University of Auckland

Ms Ahra Cho      Project Manager, Asia-Savvy Conference Organising

## Keynote speech: Embracing Asia: Building New Zealand

Mr Mervin Singham      Office of Ethnic Affairs

## **Panel discussion 1: Leadership – what does it take to be a leader in Asia or New Zealand?**

Mr Patrick English      New Zealand China Council

Dr Lisbeth Jacobs      The ICEHOUSE

Ms Elizabeth Chan      UN Youth New Zealand

Mr Nick Laery      Student Moderator, 2013 Asia Savvy Organising Committee

## **Panel discussion 2: Business – what can New Zealand businesses learn from the way business is conducted in Asia?**

Hon Phil Goff MP      Former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr Al Monro      Broadfield Advisory

Mr Cameron Zhang      New Zealand New Milk Ltd

Ms Rachel Gabriel      Student Moderator, 2013 Asia Savvy Organising Committee

## **Panel discussion 3: Identity – how is your multiple ethnic identity an asset?**

Dr Rajen Prasad MP      Former Race Relations Conciliator

Ms Bevan Chuang      Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel member for Auckland  
Council

Dr Melinda Webber      The University of Auckland

Mr Lincoln Dam      Student Moderator, 2013 Asia Savvy Organising Committee



# Embracing Asia: Building New Zealand

On 31 August 2013 the New Zealand Asia Institute (NZAI) hosted its third student-led conference, Asia Savvy. About 90 participants from across New Zealand attended the one-day forum, which featured ten invited speakers. They were Mervin Singham from the Office of Ethnic Affairs; Patrick English from the New Zealand China Council; Dr Lisbeth Jacobs from The ICEHOUSE; Elizabeth Chan from UN Youth New Zealand; Hon Phil Goff MP, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Al Monro from Broadfield Advisory Ltd; Cameron Zhang from New Zealand New Milk Ltd; Dr Rajen Prasad MP, former Race Relations Conciliator; Bevan Chuang, Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel Member for Auckland Council; and Dr Melinda Webber from the University of Auckland.

# Summary of presentations

## Keynote speech

**Mervin Singham**, Director, Office of Ethnic Affairs, Department of Internal Affairs focused his keynote speech on what New Zealand might learn from Asia's rapid growth and accompanying challenges. According to him, the main forces driving Asia's success included vision, ambition, education, family and leadership. He illustrated his observations with the story of industrialist Konosuke Matsushita, who built and sustained electronic giant Panasonic with the insight that business companies should endeavour to help lead society to prosperity rather than strive solely for their own profits and expansion.

*Mervin Singham*







*Panel discussion one.*

## Panel discussion one

Drawing on his extensive experience working in Asia, **Patrick English**, Executive Director of the New Zealand China Council, noted that Asia savvy meant knowing “others” and “yourself”, and adapting the two effectively and sensibly. He cited Fonterra’s milk powder scare in China as an example. Specifically, when it comes to food safety, New Zealand has a “low-regulation, but high-trust” culture, while the reverse is true in Asia. To fare well in Asian markets, New Zealand companies and the government need to work together as partners.

**Dr Lisbeth Jacobs**, Director of Strategy and Implementation at The ICEHOUSE, continued the discussion by comparing different philosophical and cultural foundations of the West and East reflected in their management styles. One important tip from her for

creating successful New Zealand solo or joint ventures in Asia was to balance honesty and courtesy, direct and indirect, and empowering and directive in managing and motivating local employees.

**Elizabeth Chan**, National President of UN Youth New Zealand, complemented their remarks by pointing out that Kiwis could in fact begin their journey towards becoming Asia savvy at home in New Zealand. She encouraged conference participants to take advantage of local Asia-related institutions and programmes, some of which she had benefited from enormously in terms of both knowledge on Asia and employment.



*Panel discussion two.*

## Panel discussion two

**Hon Phil Goff, MP** for Mt Roskill and Labour spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Defence and State Services, recalled the moment when he signed the New Zealand China Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with his Chinese counterpart in Beijing in 2008. It was the first and remains the only FTA China has entered with a Western country. The value of New Zealand exports to China has since more than doubled. Yet repeated incidents – suspected milk power contamination, tonnes of meat stranded at Chinese docks because of a New Zealand paperwork mix-up, or double invoicing for Kiwifruit exports to China – all call for urgent reconsideration of New Zealand’s “cutting-cost” mentality and fragmented approach to doing business with Asia.

**Al Monro**, Principal of Broadfield Advisory, also warned against Kiwi companies trying for quick success or instant profits in Asian markets. In his opinion, Asian business people all seem to take long-term views of growth and are rarely heard talking about quarterly or even yearly returns.

Yet New Zealand/Western ways and Asian ways are not totally incompatible, nor do they have to completely succumb to each other.

Kiwi and Asian companies, argued **Cameron Zhang**, should instead work on the overlapping parts in their respective approaches to business. These may include clear but adaptable rules and boundaries, good working relations, contracts with after-signature negotiations permitted, and further discounts paid up front for a positive cash flow.



*Panel discussion three.*

## Panel discussion three

What is the New Zealand way, and who is a New Zealander? **Dr Rajen Prasad MP** answered this question from the perspective of identity formation. While many take the stance “I am who I am”, a person’s identity does evolve and is context-sensitive. Māori, for example, began to define themselves when they were to restate their relationship with mainstream society. The same should apply to other ethnic minority groups in New Zealand. Today, through education and participation in communities, migrants use what they bring with their identity to establish themselves as New Zealanders. This “Kiwi” identity is what makes culturally diverse New Zealanders confident to live and work together.

**Bevan Chuang**, a 1.5 generation Asian in New Zealand, believes a person’s identity boils down to how and why they best fit in their social-economic environment. A proactive approach and positive attitude could help migrants from Asia find their places in their new home country in an efficient manner.

For her research on the content and consequences of racial-ethnic identity for adolescents at high school, **Dr Melinda Webber** defines “racial identity” as a perception based on internalised notions of race and experiences with racism and discrimination, and “ethnic identity” as a sense of belonging shaped by cultural activities, values and language. Her survey in five multi-ethnic urban high schools in New Zealand suggests that schools are inherently social places for adolescents to pursue social and academic goals in the presence of many others. Adolescents’ participation and experiences of success in different domains enable them to build new friendships and talents within and without the school context. As such, they adopt multiple identities to represent themselves. Adolescents can strategically emphasise identities that are valued, and de-emphasise identities that are not, in a social context. These “multiple identities” appear to effectively protect their psychological wellbeing.



The New Zealand Asia Institute would again like to acknowledge the generous support received from ASB Bank, the Office of Ethnic Affairs, the Confucius Institute, Printing.com, Moustache Milk & Cookie Bar and Wow Catering.

# Student discussions and recommendations

Each panel discussion was followed by a workshop for students moderated by Angela Cruz, Parizad Mullah and Henry Shi, teaching staff. During these workshops students put forward their ideas and recommendations relating to the relevant panel discussion. A summary of these recommendations follows:

## Panel discussion one: Leadership

### What does it take to be a leader in Asia or New Zealand?

Good leaders are able to motivate and inspire those who they lead to achieve goals. The importance of leaders knowing and understanding those they lead is a universal quality. Similarly, the ability of leaders to communicate with those they lead is crucial to the success of their organisations.

Leadership is perceived differently in New Zealand and Asia. In New Zealand a leader is seen as part of an organisation whereas a leader in Asia is often seen as being “at the top” of the organisation. Since social and workplace hierarchy is still evident in many Asian communities, a Kiwi leader in an Asian context may be expected to approach directly only those of similar rank. Similarly, if a New Zealand leader wishes to get in contact with someone of higher rank, he or she may want to do it through someone of a similar rank.

Leaders in New Zealand should also be aware of different approaches to communication in Asia. Whereas in New Zealand, communication tends to be direct, the “filter of face” ought to be taken into consideration in an Asian context. In other words, New Zealand leaders should try to communicate without causing “loss of face”.

## Panel discussion two: Business

### What can New Zealand businesses learn from the way business is conducted in Asia?

In Asia, social capital may be more important to business and more inextricably linked with business success than in New Zealand. It is not news that “guanxi” is important in Asia. Yet it is not a clearly defined concept. Instead, New Zealand business people operating in Asia may want to focus on gaining the trust of those they want to have a sound working relationship with.

Kiwis may gain trust more easily by tapping into the skills, understanding and networks of migrant communities in New Zealand. An Asian face (from New Zealand) in Asia may quickly relax the party opposite a New Zealand delegation and serve as a bridge between the two. In other words, an Asian migrant may provide the initial access by having something immediately in common with the “gatekeepers” of the party opposite the Kiwi business delegation. After the initial access is granted, specialists (often New Zealanders who have less in common with Asians) may go the rest of the way.

Kiwi companies in Asia need to be familiar with and play by the local rules, within reason, rather than “my way or the highway”. This may involve compromises as well. Good cultural knowledge, open-mindedness and respectful communication may help minimise pitfalls.

# Student discussions and recommendations

Kiwi companies looking to do business in Asia should try to make good use of New Zealand Government agencies (eg. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise) and Government-supported groups (eg, Kiwi Expats Association - KEA). They may also want to employ some Asian migrants from New Zealand and local assistants from Asia.

Knowledge is power. The University of Auckland Business School may offer more courses on doing business in Asia and globally. Sister university programmes may also help create knowledge sharing platforms online so students from Auckland can communicate with those in Asia about doing business in their respective countries. Being able to speak the language of the country one does business in is a key to success.



## Panel discussion three: Identity

### How is your multiple ethnic identity an asset?

Having a multiple identity enables adaptation to a wide range of environments. A diverse identity makes an individual more open-minded and better able to “fit in”. For example, a person with an identity that includes different ethnicities may better understand that different contexts of family, work, and friends, require different emphasis of aspects of their identity. Adapting to a work environment with a European client may be different from that with a Chinese client. While identity is what others think you are, and just as much, if not more, as what you think you are, informed and appropriate adjustments are needed to help get tasks done.

On the negative side, though, having a diverse identity sometimes blurs the sense of belonging both in New Zealand and the country of origin.



# Selected student essays

## What can New Zealand businesses learn from the way business is conducted in Asia?

**Richard Hudson**

### The University of Auckland

Business in Asia represents a huge and rapidly growing opportunity for New Zealand companies to both learn from and engage with their Asian counterparts. Understanding the differences in business practice between New Zealand and Asia will not only improve business in New Zealand, it will also set the foundations for New Zealanders to engage with Asian countries in the future.

For my purposes here, I will mostly focus on China and in particular, the innovative approaches Chinese businesses have taken that differ dramatically from business models in New Zealand. It is beyond the scope of this essay to consider all of Asia, so I will stick pretty close to what I know.

Business in Asia, and in China in particular, has placed a premium on innovation. Indeed, China is possibly the first authoritarian state in history to foster an innovative and creative business environment similar to that promoted in Western countries. In China, business is conducted with a view to grow and change, often as a result of competition from well-funded and established Western companies. This is not to say that all Chinese firms are innovation powerhouses. However the emphasis on innovation is certainly present and is a key factor in the way business is conducted.

To take just one example, Chinese firms are strongly connected with universities. As many as 5,000 Chinese firms have taken part in collaboration projects with universities

to link cutting-edge research with the skills necessary to commercialise these products. The system has clear advantages - it connects businesses with resources and research which they could otherwise not afford. These connections have enabled China to establish a growing position in high-tech manufacturing. China is home to the world's fastest computer and the world's largest producer of solar panels, both technology areas which have steep competition from well-funded Western competitors. The fact that China has achieved these successes, with a lower GDP per capita than Mexico, is evidence of their success at innovating domestically.

However, innovation in products is only one way in which Chinese firms have excelled. China has also seen a proliferation of different kinds of commercial entities. Whereas businesses in the West have a similar, reoccurring corporate structure, Chinese companies are far more diverse. The Town and Village Enterprises (TVEs) are just one example. The Chinese government has pioneered the creation of localised firms operating in industries with local relevance. Many small coal mines for example, are operated by TVEs owned by the local community. These TVEs have been very successful, providing strong financial returns for rural communities who would otherwise have been marginalised by rapid industrialisation. TVEs have also proven to be among the most efficient and profitable enterprises in China. Compared to Western economies, China also has many more firms owned by their workers, owned by the state or in a mixed ownership arrangement. While this variety is enabled by China's size, it is also proof of a desire to innovate and improve the way firms are organised.

Having said this, New Zealand businesses are incredibly innovative and many recognise the importance of innovation within their business practices. While the connections between universities and businesses in New Zealand are not as well developed as in China, there is a growing effort to link the two. By connecting otherwise isolated actors, New Zealand has begun to emulate the successes of China's university-business connections. However, there is much more that could still be done to put innovation at the forefront of business development.

Likewise, New Zealand has seen a growing number of different economic actors, particularly iwi, becoming major employers. There are some comparisons to be made between the growing role of iwi in New Zealand's economy, particularly in rural areas, and the role of TVEs in rural China. However, these innovations have yet to affect mainstream business conduct in New Zealand. The most valuable lesson New Zealand businesses can learn from the way Chinese companies are managed is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Creating innovative management solutions that respond to local conditions may be a gamble, but as many Chinese firms have shown, they can often create the most productive enterprises.

The willingness to innovate requires a certain faith in the future, a faith which is sometimes lacking in New Zealand planning. In China, projects are built for a capacity that will be reached in the future. In New Zealand, both government and business would rather wait for the capacity of existing services to be maximised before investing in further improvements. Obviously the Chinese approach has some caveats. Future growth is

almost guaranteed as Chinese cities continue to grow. Likewise, this optimism has led to a growing number of "ghost cities" in China, built for an expected capacity which never materialised. That being said, these failings are infrequent when you consider the size of the Chinese market and they reflect an optimism which underpins the willingness of the private sector to invest in innovation and growth.

China, and Asia more broadly, offers many examples of how not to conduct business. However, there are still many opportunities for New Zealand firms to learn and improve their own practices based on the successes of their Asian counterparts. As Darwin showed, animals survive in hostile environments by finding clever new sources of food; "survival of the strangest" rather than the fittest. In a globalised economy, New Zealand companies must learn that conducting innovative business is essential for maintaining a lead over competitors, a lesson which Asian firms have already learnt.





## **Identity – how do you use your multiple ethnic identity as an asset?**

**Visakham Joseph**

### **The University of Auckland**

“Sometimes we feel we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools,” Salman Rushdie famously declared in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. Both these words “straddle” and “fall” suggest strongly physical states of being. Straddling may be an uneasy balance between two very different realms, while “falling” is a terrifying feeling of plunging. This quote reflects how one who identifies with multiple ethnicities can experience pervasive alienation, of belonging nowhere and to nothing, a constant journey with no concrete destination in sight. It may be a wholly negative experience, yet has the potential to be transformed into an empowering and enriching aspect of our lives, which we can extend to enrich others.

“Where are you from?” Whangarei. “No, no, where are you from?” Oh, I grew up in Christchurch. An exasperated roll of the eyes and the question is repeated again in slow, painfully enunciated English. Well, I was born in India and my parents grew up there too. “Ah, that’s what I was looking for.” The detective’s interrogation reaches a proud conclusion with a grand flourish of achievement. And I am sick of hearing these questions.

What is this thing, identity? Where does it come from? How is it constructed? It is a complex, multi-dimensional entity and evolves as one grows and moves from place to place. So, why should it be limited to one simple statement of place? Why cannot it encompass the vast range of experiences I have had? Concentric circles of identity which wrap around each other, a crazy spool of string from which it is hard to derive the origin. I belong in many places and in many ways. I belong everywhere and yet nowhere. Home is where I am at that moment and where I feel loved.

I carry my identity with me everywhere I go, this reluctant baggage that hangs languidly from my limbs. To many, my external appearance – my skin colour, my hair – are the necessary tokens to judge, classify and label me. But what if I identify with more than my physical manifestations? “You should have an accent when you speak,” someone once told me. I wasn’t sure whether to be offended, amused or bemused, or perhaps a bizarre combination of the three. Over the years, I have become more used to the contradictions of my existence. Part of the migrant diaspora, we decided to stay in this country, to call New Zealand home. My father takes great pride in running summer barbeques. My mother refuses to eat spicy food. My brother only speaks English. We have adopted “Kiwi” ways.

I decided to pick the freedoms of a “multiple ethnic profile”. It lets me have the best of all worlds. I can choose the favourite aspects of my Asian and my New Zealand heritage. I can celebrate Christmas, Easter, Waitangi Day, New Year’s, Diwali, Onam and Independence Day. I can dress in beautiful skirts or Salwaar kameez, or I can just wear jeans and jandals. There is something infinitely liberating about the multiplicity of choice connected with associating with multiple ethnicities.

A more complex cultural background allows me to relate to a wider range of people. I can understand where they are coming from, certain cultural barriers to complete social integration. Difficulties in language, manners, food and clothing often inhibit easy transition to the “new” culture. Adhering to these values can sometimes still cause a visual social stigma. But what if we didn’t have to change to “fit” in? What if we were respected for our differences, our diversities? Wouldn’t that make us more interesting?

I know what it is like to be both an outsider an insider; a peculiar combination of being both the observed and the observer. This ambiguity, far from being uncomfortable, should be a source of empowerment.

## **New Zealand and multiple ethnic identities**

**Miji Lee**

### **The University of Auckland**

New Zealand is an ethnic conglomerate nation, which encompasses many ethnic groups such as European, Māori, Asian, Pacific, Middle Eastern, Latin American and African. The sustained immigration that dates back to the 1800s, intermarriage between ethnic groups and greater societal tolerance to multi-ethnic traits all added towards creating a place where the state and the society collaboratively accommodate the population with singular and or multiple ethnic identities. The multiple ethnic identities, which many New Zealanders commonly have, are valuable assets of cultural versatility. One important question arises: how do we use our multiple ethnic identities as personal and societal assets?

Multiple ethnic identities can be used as personal assets to extend our influence and increase our sphere of contact, irrespective of the geographical confinement and isolation of New Zealand. The interactions people tend to form in a society is limited and influenced by the kind of ethnic practices people practise or their ethnic backgrounds. It is easily seen at schools, at the micro level, that students from particular cultural heritage prefer to socialise within their ethnic group. It is easy and natural for one to associate with the ethnically homogenous group they come from and stick to it, eg. Korean students hanging out exclusively with each other inside the campus. They are limited by the classifications they have put around themselves.

However, the majority of the population in New Zealand has ethnic identities that define themselves as social representatives of various cultures. For example, a man who appears to be a Pākehā would classify himself as English, Irish and German, and a man who appears to be Māori would

classify himself as Māori, Chinese, Tongan and English. The environment established with the aforementioned kind of people creates opportunities and incentives for the habitants to not limit themselves to one particular dominant ethnic group but explore beyond that, because their multiple ethnic identity acts as a key to unlock closed doors. People can use this valuable inheritance to equip themselves as partakers of the globalisation process, by creating ethnic heterogenic communities within our geographical confinement, to follow the international current of globalisation.

New Zealand thrives on a flourishing tourism sector and depends much on the international trade economic performance. The New Zealanders with multiple ethnic identities are able to associate and understand the consumer and supplier behaviours, from their ethnicity, because they share a common denominator of same or similar cultural practices and beliefs. To utilise this societal and personal asset to its optimal level, we need to learn more about where we have come from. We have to study our ethnic origin and develop keener interest to use it for our gain in the globalised market, such as creating a strategic tourist business that targets certain type of ethnicity. Having multiple ethnic identity is itself a great beginning to practise another language. Like many Europeans I have come across, we should develop ourselves as polyglots to encompass greater knowledge of various cultures out there and establish ourselves as true global citizens. From a young age, students should pick up as many languages as possible and participate in diverse cultural activities, such as kapa haka, Asian tea ceremonies or European soccer, to discern the importance of the crucial harmony of many ethnicities that co-exist in our country and its value to the globalised community.

## **Identity – how do you use your multiple ethnic identity as an asset?**

**Le Luo**

### **The University of Auckland**

I was born and raised in China in which I was exposed to the Chinese culture for about 20 years. I have now lived in Auckland for four years where I have been exposed to a quite different culture. The multiple ethnic identity is an asset of mine. The definition of asset is anything owned and controlled by an entity that will bring future economic benefit. How can I use my multiple ethnic identities as an asset?

My fluency in Mandarin and also English has been an asset. New Zealand and China signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on 7 April 2008 and investors from both New Zealand and China have since benefited. The agreement opens up a lot of opportunities for business. These are some barriers for investors doing business between New Zealand and China, and language is the most common. Companies need employees who are able to communicate in different languages, as correct and efficient communication is the key to success in today's competitive business environment. Take the real estate industry as an example - the increasing interest from Chinese property investors creates more opportunity for Chinese-speaking licensee salespeople, who are working in top real estate agents in New Zealand. My ability to communicate fluently in Mandarin and English could give me better career opportunities.

I identify myself as a Chinese individual with skills to thrive in the Western world. Being knowledgeable about different cultures is always a good conversation starter and it helps out a lot during networking and socialising. This benefit cannot be valued in dollar terms. Understanding different cultures could create a great networks between New Zealand and China.

## **Cultural identity in business**

**Olla Shimbereva**

### **The University of Auckland**

The modern globalised world is a “melting pot” of a multicultural society; every day we increasingly interact with people of different nations, backgrounds and cultures. Sometimes we smile at foreigners’ eccentric behaviour and congratulate ourselves on the normality of our own culture. However, there no is such thing as “normal” or “odd” culture. As a student of international business I aim for a successful career in an international working environment. Working internationally is not easy, and it’s not only due to unstable economic situations and never-ending jetlag. In this essay I will discuss how can I use my multiple ethnic identity as an asset.

Culture is a phenomenon of inherited beliefs that guides us how to dress, communicate, what to eat, how to behave in relation to opposite gender and authority, and what to value (Schwartz, 2006, 2008). I spent the first 14 years of my life in Moscow, Russia. As a consequence, my culture, or “software of the mind” (Hofstede, 2005) which was embedded by my parents, social environment and life experiences ,was “programmed” to be Russian because I was directly exposed to the values shared by that culture (Trompenaars,2011). However, when I define my cultural identity I cannot specifically say that I am just “a Russian”. This approach would be too narrow. My culture is a combination of different layers: National culture (Russia), regional (Moscow), educational (New Zealand, Spain, Germany) and religious (orthodox) (Lewis, 2005). Thus, I consider myself “a citizen of the world”.

According to the empirical research by Schiefer (2013), “individuals with a migration background are less strongly guided by the cultural values of the society in which they

live, because they are additionally exposed to cultural values originating from their heritage culture". This relates to me and shows that despite having lived in New Zealand for a long time, I am more strongly guided by Russian values than New Zealand ones.

In order to become an effective global manager, a strong cultural intelligence is necessary to understand the beliefs, values and cultural backgrounds of people you are working with. If you don't collaborate, you will face difficulties negotiating business (Mind tools, n.d.).

On the bright side, since I have been exposed to both New Zealand and Russian cultures, I am lucky to be able to embrace these experiences and use it to my advantage. The first step towards understanding other cultures is stepping back and analysing one's own culture. Because of my migration, I was able to analyse my own culture outside of Russia. As a consequence, due to my dual culture I am able to engage and understand both high and low context cultures. My inner ethnical diversity is a strength and a key driver of innovation and thinking outside the square. Having been given an opportunity to pursue education in various countries with different cultures, I am able not to stick to one culture, but to adapt a diplomatic, polycentric approach. These skills will become valuable resources and will benefit me significantly when working internationally and negotiating with various cultures.

Additionally, since one of my cultural values is "importance of achievement", it stimulates me to lead clubs and work part-time while keeping the household and studying five papers at the same time to achieve my best potential in the best possible way.

Thus, having learned how to be independent, time-manage successfully, work under pressure and achieve my potential

from an early age, this will be a big advantage for my international career.

Achievement plays a vital role in the Russian society. However, since Russia is a hierarchical society, achievement is often associated with money and high status is viewed "as natural and desirable" (Schiefer, 2013; Schwartz, 1999). This principle makes my culture appear very materialistic, especially from the New Zealand point of view where the indication of wealth is a sign of bragging and is considered impolite. New Zealanders usually dress casual and modest while Russians are always "dress to impress". Therefore, despite retaining the essence and invisible on the surface culture - like body language, values, beliefs, religion, attitude towards authority, concepts of time and courtesy, all things that have been embedded in my mind too deep to adjust to New Zealand (Lewis, 2012) - I have adapted and negotiated "visible" parts of my cultural identity like the way I dress, behave and communicate. This is something I had to negotiate in New Zealand in order not to be a "black sheep". It was done in order to shape my sense of belonging and participation in the new environment (Joseph, 2012). The exposure to New Zealand culture has encouraged me to adapt the "Kiwi way of doing things", such as more a laid-back attitude about materialistic things and friendliness towards strangers.

Thus, as an immigrant, I have been exposed to both cultures and have been guided by the cultural values of the host country while maintaining my heritage culture (Berry, 2005). As a consequence, today, I do not see myself as simply a Russian or a New Zealander, but recognise both parts of my bi-cultural identity. This asset helps me to understand and collaborate with many different cultures, which is essential in the modern globalised society.

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## Components of international leadership

### Matthew Shore

#### The University of Auckland

Components of leadership are many and varied, however it is often said that there are foundational traits leaders often have, no matter where they are or what background they have come from. However, there is no one fool-proof leadership strategy or must-have set of qualities, but rather many helpful characteristics which leaders can draw upon. To build on these traits and utilise them to a greater extent, it is important leaders adapt to the situation they are in. For example, being a leader in Asia requires a leader to be Asia savvy to an extent so they may alter their skills to match cultural, economic and political differences.

Possibly the most fundamental leadership quality anywhere in the world is commitment. With strong commitment, a leader has a base from which to work, and his or her followers and teammates can trust that the leader believes in the cause and is dedicated to them, so they can act assuming they will be supported continuously. Commitment generates respect and energy through consistent leadership by example, and these in turn are likely to inspire commitment from those working in the team, thus the cycle may continue.

Alongside commitment must come interpersonal skills, communication skills and teamwork skills. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively with a team, along with the ability to work with them, is a must have for any leader in Asia or New Zealand. This ability is lesser in those leaders who are new to an area or country. This illustrates the importance of being Asia savvy when leading in Asia. Alongside having communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills, there must be a drive to learn about

the culture and the way business is conducted, and to adapt a leadership style to those circumstances without losing touch with the style of leadership that is unique to each person.

This brings us to adaptability. With a strong base of leadership skills and the ability to learn and adapt, a leader can apply skills in a variety of different settings and countries. Part of this adaptability comes from increasing knowledge of the situation or area, and another part comes from a psychological shift which allows the leader to think along the lines of the current situation, while drawing on past experience and current skills as a base to work on.

Finally, the ability to inspire and a positive attitude are two qualities that add to the strength of a leader. Inspiring people will increase their drive for the cause or circumstance, and encourage them to work hard. This is beneficial for the leader because of a greater quality of genuine, unforced work, and also an increase in delegation of work as more people are inspired to take a greater responsibility or workload. A positive attitude on top of inspiration provides an even more inspiring work environment where the team is motivated, energy levels are up and people feel more motivated to devote their best work.

All of these skills and attributes are what it takes for leadership everywhere in the world, and ought to be adapted to reflect the country, culture and situation. There are many more leadership qualities which will add to the effectiveness of these fundamentals; however I believe these are key to attain to ensure you have what it takes to be a leader in Asia or New Zealand.

## **Towards the polo?**

**William Sidnam**

### **The University of Auckland**

As a fourth generation New Zealander of Chinese origin, I have grown up with multiculturalism. It is the only form of society I know, and it is one for which I am grateful. New Zealand is great because it allows people to assume more than one identity. Unlike in some countries, where one's destiny is tied up with one's family heritage, in New Zealand we can be whoever we want to be. And nothing could be more important for me.

Although Asia is where my ancestors once stood, Europe is where my true interests lie. I have always sought to learn about the continent that was as far away from New Zealand as geography would allow. So in high school, I took up French and stuck with it. Then in December 2008, I had the chance to spend six weeks with a family in the south of France, eating French food and making friends with French students at the local high school. My time there was so enjoyable that I sincerely regretted having to leave the country that had welcomed me with open arms. In fact, such was my nostalgia for France that I went on study abroad in Paris last year.

When I came to university, I decided to major in Italian because Italy had always fascinated me. At an early age, I figured the country that had invented pizza must be worth knowing about. So for my first two years at the University of Auckland, I worked hard at Italian, learning its grammar and its unique intonation. At the end of my second year in 2011, I was then fortunate to study at a language school in Modena, where I made friends with students from places as far flung as Brazil and Colombia. My time in Italy was eye-opening on so many levels: while I shared many positive experiences with other international students, I also came to realise that though I was not a Chinese national, that

was how locals saw me. Had I not told them I was “della Nuova Zelanda”, no one would ever have suspected my being so.

When I came back to New Zealand after my time abroad, I worked as a subtitle editor for *Cine Tempestose*, an Italian documentary about Italians who had gone to live in China in the 1950s. The director, who I had met at the Auckland Art Gallery months earlier, had asked me to help him make the subtitles clear to an English-speaking audience. I also helped him with an animated feature about Jewish people living in wartime Europe. Fast-forward a year, I now find myself reading Dante in the dialect that later became the Italian language. There couldn't be anything more rewarding than being able to read, in the original language, the story of one man's trip to the place where doomed souls leave behind every hope.

To be frank, being a minority comes with certain disadvantages: It is easy to become frustrated with people who ask you where you're from, who assume that your place of birth is not the same as theirs, and who find no discomfort in suggesting that you're the one who's different. You can also become hypersensitive to the portrayal of race in the media, noting the stereotyping that passes for insight, and the use of terms like “ethnic” to sell stuff like beans.

But I cannot complain too much about a country that has given me so much. I am aware of having embarked on opportunities that few people in the world are offered. I also take pride in the fact that my ties to New Zealand go back a century.

When I think about it, my grandfather's life couldn't be more different from my own. He grew up in a time when few people in Auckland looked like him. As a result, it didn't take much effort for him to stand out; and that is precisely what he ended up doing. Born on New Zealand soil, but with Chinese roots, he was a man of many firsts: he was

the first Chinese to attend Auckland Grammar School, the first Chinese to gain a masters degree at the University of Auckland, and the first Chinese to score a century in domestic cricket at Eden Park. During the Second World War, he also served as the cricket captain of the New Zealand Army, taking great pride in representing his country.

In a sense, though, it would be disingenuous of me to refer to him as a Chinese, since his way of living was hardly a representation of how people in China go about life. As far as I'm aware, few Chinese people are obsessed with cricket in the way that my grandfather was. I also never heard him speak a word of Chinese; and to this day, I'm still unsure as to whether he could even speak it. But such details are surely immaterial to the bigger picture, namely, his ability to carve out his own space. Cultures, after all, aren't self-contained units; instead, they are large and contain multitudes. Though few lead the life that he lead, my grandfather is as entitled to his New Zealandness as anyone else living here.

My own identity is similarly non-traditional. While my surname is Chinese in origin, it was anglicised in the early 1900s. As a result, were it not for my middle name, a stranger who had not met me before and had only seen my first and last name would not guess my ancestry. The fact that I share a name with a guy who died in Syracuse, New York, in 1929 is at once amusing and strange.

Similarly, though I consider myself Chinese, my upbringing is not what one would associate with Chinese people. After all, I grew up with nursery rhymes and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. To this day, much to my chagrin, I cannot speak a word of Chinese. It is, I suppose, ironic, that I've learnt to speak French and Italian before Chinese; but then again, even while I'd like to learn Mandarin, I don't feel

obligated to do so simply because of my background. If New Zealanders of German origin do not feel ashamed about not knowing German, I shouldn't have to feel that way about my lack of familiarity with Chinese.

Rather, it is important that we be acquainted with the very best that the world has to offer. After all, why limit yourself to one culture, when there are hundreds of cultures out there? Being monocultural is tantamount to eating two Weet-Bix with milk for every meal: delicious though they may be, you'll eventually hunger for something else. It is for that reason, perhaps, that everyone I know is interested in the wider world, and is hence multicultural. In my case, my favourite food is Italian, my favourite band is Icelandic, my favourite film is French, and my favourite writer is Japanese. This is my identity, and I can't imagine it being any different.

## **Pavlovas and prawn dumplings**

**Jessica Wei**

### **The University of Auckland**

I have read the Journeys of the Monkey King and collections of Chinese chengyu. I have also read A Clockwork Orange and Of Mice and Men. I celebrate Christmas but I also celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival. I love pavlovas but I also love prawn dumplings. My multiple ethnic identity is comprised of my Chinese heritage and my Kiwi identity. A multiple ethnic identity is an asset in our increasingly globally connected world where international relations are intense, where various cultural manifestations exist and where our communities are increasingly multicultural. My multiple ethnic identity allows me to flourish in the international context, to foster my cultural growth and to enhance the multiculturalism of my community.

My Chinese-Kiwi background permits me to flourish in the international sphere. Here, by "international sphere", I

refer mainly to political and economic relations. In March 2013, China became New Zealand's largest export partner (Statistics New Zealand, n.d.). As Prime Minister, John Key has been dedicated to fostering good economic relations with China. Likewise, in a white paper, former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard said: "Whatever else this century brings, it will bring Asia's rise." (Australia in the Asian Century White Paper, n.d.). She advocated policies to increasingly teach Asian languages in Australian schools (Attard, 2013). Latin and French have been international languages in the past.

In recent centuries, English emerged as the international language. More recently, as China gains momentum in become a global economic powerhouse, Mandarin has been increasingly used in the international context. As part of my multiple ethnic background, I am able to speak both Mandarin and Cantonese as well as English. I believe that as China increasingly becomes a global economic power in our increasingly connected world, being able to speak different languages would increase my value as human capital. Of course, it is not absolutely necessary to be bi-lingual or multi-lingual to engage in business relations across frontiers, but it surely would be extremely helpful. Having a Chinese background also means that I am more familiar with concepts such as guanxi, a system of networking prominent in China. My multiple ethnic background facilitates my participation on a global scale. My Chinese-Kiwi background facilitates my versatility in the international context in both China and New Zealand.

My multiple ethnic identity facilitates my appreciation of various cultures. By "culture", I refer to a vast range of manifestations of culture. I include everything from Tang poetry to the Rhythm and Vines festival in New Zealand. Culture is a unique apex of each society. A lack of a multiple ethnic identity does not hinder one from appreciating different culture. However, a multiple ethnic



identity facilitates our ability tap into different cultures more easily. Our family celebrates Western traditions, such as Christmas. However, we also celebrate Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival. In my house, I have access to collections of Tang poetry and Song poetry. On my own bookshelf, I have the works of Anthony Burgess and John Steinbeck. My MP3 playlist includes Hong Kong pop songs and well as top songs from the iTunes charts. Having an understanding of many cultures allows us to become more worldly individuals. My multiple ethnic identity fosters my admiration of different cultural, intellectual and artistic creations. It encourages me to learn about different societies and permits me to create a unique identity for myself. Having an insight into different cultural manifestations gives me a more refined understanding of the other. It fosters my unique cultural growth.

My multiple ethnic identity contributes to the multiculturalism of Auckland. I have volunteered as an artist liaison at the Auckland Lantern Festival previously and as a Christmas gift wrapper for Volunteer Auckland. A multiple ethnic identity brings different festivals to the community. Having grown up in New Zealand, I enjoy the Auckland Lantern Festival because it allows me to reconnect with an aspect of my culture and also share my culture with others. I appreciate that those with Indian backgrounds contribute to the Auckland Diwali Festival, another event which I enjoy attending.

Auckland serves as a melting pot of my multiple ethnic identity and the multiple ethnic identities of others. The many people in Auckland with multiple ethnic identities bring authenticity to the cultural festivals which occur throughout the year. In the community, I also belong to the Chinese Family Association. I appreciate having a medium through which I can connect with those also with multiple ethnic backgrounds similar to my own. Again, these groups are not ethnically exclusive, but they foster my social ability

because interacting with different ethnic groups requires a slightly different set of social skills. My multi-ethnic background enhances my ability to engage in the perks of living in a multi-cultural community.

I am proud of my Chinese-Kiwi background. My multiple ethnic identity allows me to flourish in the business world, to foster my cultural growth and to enhance the multiculturalism of my community. Having a multiple ethnic background serves as a valuable asset in our world.

## **My two cents about C-H-I-N-A for Asia Savvy Conference 2013**

**Andrew Zhu**

### **The University of Auckland**

There is an interesting article titled “Have you done business in China?” (Time magazine, January 2013) that reveals five elements of running successful businesses in China. These five elements take the abbreviation of C-H-I-N-A, which represent Culture, Harness, Intellectual Property Rights, Navigate and Anticipate. However, conducting business in China is not only limited to these elements and as a Chinese businessman and researcher in New Zealand, I do have different opinions about these five elements.

### **C: Culture**

Many business research reports conclude that the Western and Eastern cultures are radically different, however based on my personal experience the culture difference between China and New Zealand is not significantly big. New Zealand is a multi-cultural society, most of the ethnic groups adapt and adopt others’ culture with respect and they can often find lots of similarities. For example, The Golden Rule of “reciprocity”

can be observed in nearly all cultures, and it's the norm for all business practice, which represents the mutual exchange of favours, respects and valuable assets etc. Therefore the core for all sustainable businesses is seeking mutual benefits and it applies to both New Zealand and Chinese business people. We cannot avoid facing some awkward moments in communications due to some perspective of culture differences, but as long as New Zealand business people show their good faith, and strong will in co-operation, most Chinese business people would return the respect in kind.

### **H: Harness**

Harness was discussed with respect to government-business relationships in the original article. This seems like a well-known topic whenever you raise a conversation with a Chinese person. It's also known as guanxi, which are social connections or social ties. The Chinese society, economic and political systems have undergone dramatic changes in the last two decades, and the value of harness/huanxi with government may have changed as well. Chinese people cannot live without guanxi, but it doesn't mean a white person needs it. Yes, I used the word "white"; it's not for discrimination, but telling you the value of your skin colour. White Europeans have always been considered as the top class of people in China, it seems like they can enjoy all the privileges presented in China, and they are always being respected by Chinese business people. Working with whites is considered as an honourable affiliation for most Chinese business people, it's the asset for them to leverage their social capital and gain "mianzi" (face value). Therefore, forget about the guanxi and harness with the government, be brave and enter the market with dignity, you will be surprised how many businesses would like to have you on board. But a good Chinese interpreter is still necessary and essential.

### **I: Intellectual property rights**

IP rights in China remain a grey area and there is a lack of government legislation to protect foreign brands. You don't

want to enter the Chinese market and face any IP related legal cases in a short period of time; because even if you win, you are still a loser. You don't want to waste time on legal cases that cannot enhance your business performance, and slow down your penetration into the market. If your customers are high-end consumers, don't worry about your products been forged, because your consumers won't buy them, and all the counterfeit articles are actually promoting your brands, isn't that good to have free advertising? Another thing is that it is necessary to register a Chinese brand, make sure you are ahead of copycats, with a Chinese version of your brand could help you protect your rights been infract when you are well established in the Chinese market.

### **N: Navigate**

An advanced market system like New Zealand relies on business intelligence and market research, however such a system is still in its early forming stage in China. Chinese consumers are pretty much conservative when being asked about their consumption behaviours; therefore you'd better not expect to hear 100 percent truth from them or the local research agencies. What you should do is navigate through the market by yourself. We know it's time consuming and can be costly, but it's still better than pouring money into the market and getting nothing back. You can also seek and pick local business partners - the more you talk to, the more valuable information you will receive.

### **A: Anticipate**

The Chinese market is massive, and there are a variety of business people you are about to face. Yes, you will be highly regarded and respected, but you may also be used and cheated. Therefore you need to have a strong heart to survive in China, and never underestimate your local competitors. Here's my two cents - enter the market with a product that's unique and cannot be replicated easily. Country of origin can help (such as New Zealand dairy products) but don't take it for granted.



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