Social Cohesion in New Zealand

Facts from the
New Zealand General Social Survey 2008
Social Cohesion in New Zealand: Facts from the New Zealand General Social Survey showcases data on selected aspects of social cohesion in New Zealand. These are: people's sense of belonging to New Zealand, their ability to express their own identity, their experience of discrimination, and tolerance of diversity.

The information covers different groups of New Zealanders, for example: recent migrants, people with different ethnicities, and younger and older people.

It helps address a gap in statistical information on: people's attitudes towards others; how people see themselves and their place in society in terms of acceptance of others; levels of trust between people; and what values people feel they have in common by virtue of living in New Zealand.

Key findings

- The vast majority of usually resident people in New Zealand feel they belong to New Zealand, with Māori (98 percent), Europeans (94 percent), and Pacific people (94 percent) more likely than Asian people (87 percent) to say they feel they belong to New Zealand.¹
- Most people (83 percent) find it very easy or easy to express their own identity in New Zealand.
- One in 10 people report that they had been discriminated against in some way in the past 12 months.
- The most common situations where people experience discrimination are in the street or a public place of some kind (41 percent) and at work or while working (39 percent).²
- In general, most people report being tolerant of diversity in New Zealand society. Over 90 percent think it is good that people in New Zealand can have different values and it is good that people in New Zealand can have different ways of living.

Sense of belonging to New Zealand

People were first asked if they felt they belonged to New Zealand - that it is their country. Those who answered ‘yes’ were asked how strongly they feel they belong to New Zealand.

- People with Māori ethnicity (71 percent) are far more likely to say they feel very strongly that they belong to New Zealand compared with Europeans (56 percent), Pacific people (45 percent), and Asian people (24 percent).
- People born in New Zealand are three times more likely to feel very strongly that they belong to New Zealand (61 percent) than migrants who arrived in New Zealand in 2000 or after (21 percent), and nearly twice as likely to feel very strongly that they belong to New Zealand than migrants who arrived in New Zealand before 2000 (37 percent).
- People who feel very strongly that they belong to New Zealand are more likely to be older: 47 percent of people aged 15–24 years, 53 percent of people aged 25–44 years; 57 percent of people aged 45–64; and 60 percent of older people (aged 65 years or over).³
- Those who said they did not feel they belonged to New Zealand are more than twice as likely to report having experienced discrimination in the last 12 months (22 percent) as those who said they felt they belonged to New Zealand (9 percent).
Ability to express own identity

People were asked, ‘Here in New Zealand, how easy or difficult is it for you to express your own identity?’

- Europeans (85 percent), Pacific people (83 percent), and Māori (80 percent) are more likely to say they find it very easy or easy to express their own identity than Asian people (66 percent).\(^1\)
- New Zealand-born people (85 percent) and migrants who arrived in New Zealand before 2000 (83 percent) are more likely to say they find it easy to express their own identity than migrants who arrived in New Zealand in 2000 or after (68 percent).
- People who report that it is relatively difficult to express their own identity are most likely to give as the main reason, ‘I worry about what some people would think’ (49 percent); or ‘some people won’t accept it’ (44 percent).\(^2\)
- Older people (aged 65 years and older; 92 percent) are more likely to report it is very easy or easy to express their own identity in New Zealand compared with 15–24-year-olds (81 percent), 25–44-year-olds (80 percent), and 45–64-year-olds (84 percent).\(^3\)

Discrimination

People were asked if they had been treated unfairly or had something nasty done to them because of the group they belong to, or seem to belong to, in the last 12 months. Those who answered ‘yes’ were asked how many times they experienced discrimination in that time, what situation/s they were in when discrimination occurred, and their perceived reason/s for being discriminated against.

- Of the 1 in 10 people who report they had been discriminated against, 45 percent say they experienced it more than three times in the past 12 months.
- Asian people (23 percent) and Māori (16 percent) are two-to-three times more likely to report discrimination than Europeans (8 percent).\(^1\)
- The most common reasons given for perceived discrimination that occurs in the street or a public place of some kind are ‘my nationality/race/ethnic group’ (55 percent), ‘my skin colour’ (40 percent), ‘my dress/appearance’ (24 percent), and ‘the language I speak’ (14 percent).\(^2\)
- The most common reasons given for perceived discrimination that occurred at work or while working are ‘my nationality/race/ethnic group’ (45 percent), ‘what I do for a job’ (28 percent), ‘my skin colour’ (26 percent), and ‘my gender’ (18 percent).\(^3\)
- Migrants who arrived in New Zealand in or after 2000 are twice as likely to report discrimination (20 percent) than migrants who arrived in New Zealand before 2000 (10 percent) or New Zealand-born people (9 percent).
- Both males (12 percent) and females (17 percent) who experience discrimination are more likely to report being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their lives overall compared with males (5 percent) and females (6 percent) who did not experience discrimination in the past 12 months.

People who experienced discrimination in the last 12 months

By ethnicity

April 2008 – March 2009

![Chart showing the percentage of people who experienced discrimination by ethnicity.](chart.png)

Source: Statistics New Zealand
Tolerance of diversity

People were asked their feelings about four statements: it is good for people in New Zealand to have different values; it is good for people in New Zealand to have different ways of living; it is good for New Zealand to be made up of different ethnic groups; and it is good for New Zealand to have immigrants who are from many different cultures.

- Tolerance of diversity in New Zealand is generally high, with 83 percent of people strongly agreeing or agreeing that it is good New Zealand is made up of different ethnic groups, and 67 percent strongly agreeing or agreeing it is good for New Zealand to have immigrants who are from many different cultures.
- Asian people (95 percent) and Pacific people (94 percent) are significantly more likely to strongly agree or agree that it is good for New Zealand to be made up of different ethnic groups than Europeans (82 percent) and Māori (81 percent).
- Migrants who arrived in 2000 or after (95 percent) are the most likely to strongly agree or agree that it is good for New Zealand to be made up of different ethnic groups compared with migrants who arrived before 2000 (89 percent) and those born in New Zealand (81 percent).
- Older people (aged 65 years and older; 75 percent) are less likely to strongly agree or agree that it is good for New Zealand to be made up of different ethnic groups compared with the other three age groups (15–24-year-olds: 86 percent; 25–44-year-olds: 86 percent; 45–64-year-olds: 82 percent).
- Older people (59 percent) are also less likely to strongly agree or agree that it is good for New Zealand to have immigrants who are from many different cultures than the other three age groups (15–24-year-olds, 67 percent; 25–44-year-olds, 72 percent; 45–64-year-olds, 66 percent).

Proportion of population that strongly agrees/agrees with each tolerance statement

April 2008 - March 2009

1. Good for people in NZ to have different values.
2. Good for people in NZ to have different ways of living.
3. Good for NZ to be made up of different ethnic groups.
4. Good for NZ to have immigrants from different cultures.

Source: Statistics New Zealand
New Zealand General Social Survey at a glance

Sample/frequency: Over 8000 individuals every two years.
Mode: Face-to-face computer-assisted interviews.
Field duration: 12 months (April–March).
Survey topics include: Housing, health, life satisfaction, safety and security, knowledge and skills, social connectedness, human rights, the environment, and culture and identity.

Full questionnaire, data dictionary, and selected reports available at www.stats.govt.nz/nzgss.

Note: Results have been weighted to represent the number of people in New Zealand.
1. Total responses for ethnicity have been used in this paper. People were able to identify with more than one ethnic group, therefore percentages do not add up to 100. The classifications groups ‘Middle Eastern/Latin American/African’ and ‘other’ were too small for analysis due to high sampling errors.
2. Percentages do not add up to 100 due to multiple responses.
3. Ages were grouped into life cycles broadly indicative of young people, prime working age, middle age, and older people.