

# Harmonious intergroup relations and spaces of aged care for older Chinese migrants:

## A New Zealand case and its implications to Australia

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# Overview

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# Introduction

- Intergroup relations
  - Aspects of thought, feeling, or action that occurs because of group membership (Mackie & Smith, 1998)

Source: Dickerson (2012). P. 339

1 Individuals think of themselves in terms of their group identity.

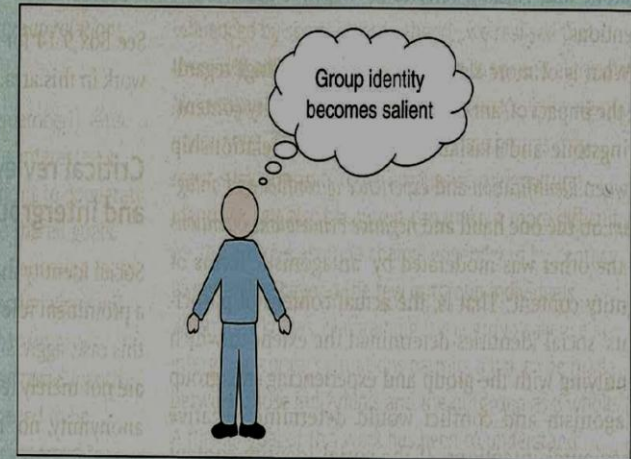


Figure 9.6a A group identity is activated when it is salient

2 Individuals act towards other ingroup and outgroup members on the basis of their own group identity.

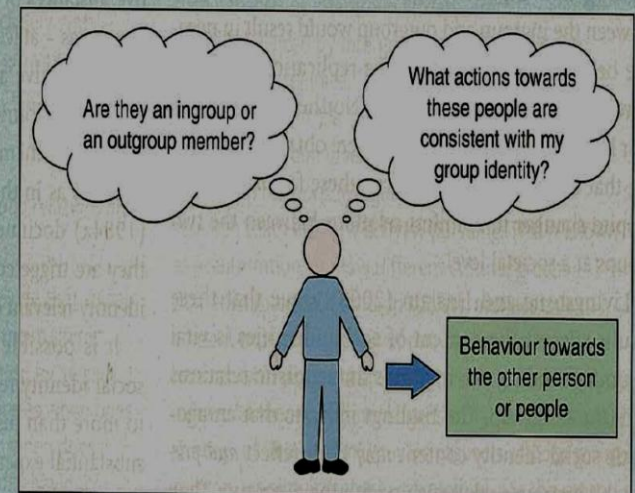


Figure 9.6b The group identity shapes intra- and intergroup behaviour

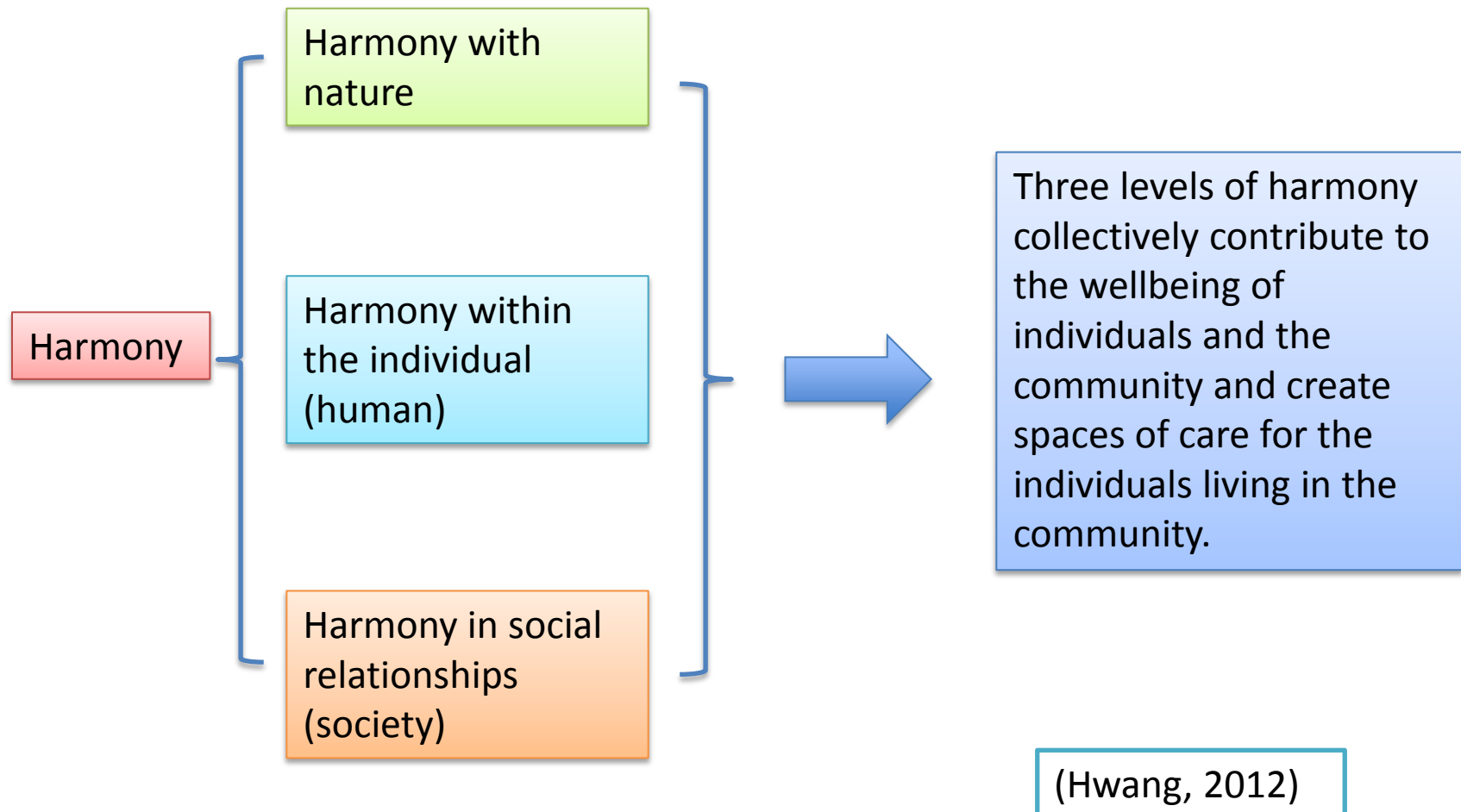
# Introduction

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- Current research has focused more on intergroup conflicts
    - Stereotype
    - Prejudice
    - Discrimination
  - A lack of attention to intergroup relations from a strength-based perspective
  - The present study addresses this research gap through looking at harmonious intergroup relations which creates spaces of care for older Chinese migrants to New Zealand
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# Introduction

- Harmony



# Introduction

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- Space of care (Conradson, 2003)
    - A space of care can then be understood as a socio-spatial field disclosed through the practices of care that take place between individuals.
    - The emergence and endurance of such spaces depends both upon the willingness of some individuals to move towards others upon a receptivity to such initiatives.
    - Spaces of care are shared accomplishments and, in reflection of this, may at times be socially fragile.
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# Method

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- Research participants are 14 males and 18 females ranging in age from 62 to 77 years.
  - All participants were new migrants from the People's Republic of China.
  - At the time of the initial interview, 22 participants lived with their spouse or lived alone, and 10 lived with their adult children.
  - The participants' primary source of income was social benefits of no more than NZ\$10,000 per annum.
  - Prior to moving to New Zealand, the majority were employed as professionals including engineers, medical doctors, nurses, teachers, physiotherapists, and managers.
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# Findings and analyses

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- Establishing good relationships and emotional bonds with their neighbours

I learnt English when I was young. I therefore can speak English. My husband studied in Russia for five years. He can speak Russian. One day, our Russian neighbour, whose children lived outside New Zealand, lost her wallet in a supermarket. She came to us for help. We went to the supermarket with her. She communicated with my husband in Russian. My husband translated what she said into Chinese to me. I explained to the staff member in the supermarket in English. The lady got her wallet back. (smiles) (Hong, 75 yr old female)

- Neighbourhoods have personal and collective aspects that are established through time spent in or with the neighbourhood and supporting residents in the neighbourhood.
  - Personal experiences and social interaction lead the members of the neighbourhood to attach meaning to a defined space.
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# Findings and analyses

- Neighbourhoods may also encompass negative experiences.

Kids threw chips and eggs at my daughter's car. It's frightening. I will remind myself to be careful in the future. For example, lock my doors and windows when I go out, and not to walk closely to a stranger. (Tian, 69 yr old male)



- The concept of place attachment is usually implicitly defined as positive.
- Negative experiences and incidents can erode positive sense of place and provoke fears.

# Findings and analyses

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- Neighbourhoods may also encompass negative experiences.

In 2003, several older Chinese people were attacked by some kids in our neighbourhood. Some girls threw eggs at older Chinese people. A group of young men threw stones at an older Chinese couple while they were waiting by the bus stop near their home. A friend of mine has been afraid to leave his home since a kid hit him with a road cone. We didn't feel safe when we walked on the street even at as early as seven o'clock in the evening. (Hong, 75 yr old female)

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# Findings and analyses

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- Putting effort in turning a negative neighbourhood into a positive one

We organised an informal meeting in our local community centre to talk about our worries for our personal safety. The victims spoke of kids throwing bottles at them, punching them and trying to take their purses. But only one person had gone to the police. A few were scared, but for most inability to speak English and the belief that the police would do nothing, stopped them from reporting the attacks. So we decided to act collectively. We approached Chinese newspapers and mainstream newspapers. The reporters disclosed the attacks. Our collective action pushed the police to set up a call centre for Asians in our community. A Chinese-Kiwi Friendship Programme was also established to help Kiwi people and older Chinese people to better know each other, to keep our neighbourhood safer together. (Ming, 76 yr old male)

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# Findings and analyses

- Putting effort in turning a negative neighbourhood into a positive one



- Culture of civility (Godfrey, 1988)
  - Residents regard multicultural diversity as a civic resource rather than as a dangerous threat.
  - The police initiative offers older Chinese people a place where they feel safer and more comfortable.
  - The Chinese-Kiwi friendship programme provides a platform to foster friendship, to share experiences, and for cultural exchange.

# Findings and analyses

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- Putting effort in turning a negative neighbourhood into a positive one

- Through the culture of civility, older Chinese people develop social networks with local people, become familiar with and in the neighbourhood and produce powerful and positive sentiments for a place in which they age.
  - A space of care for older Chinese migrants are established through the collective neighbourhood building.
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# Implications to Australia

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- Cultural diversity requires much greater consideration in the formulation of policies and social services that address diversity of experiences and of approaches in multicultural society.
  - Cultural diversity requires a reconsideration of the tendency within the mainstream policy literature towards ever more predictable, rational and universally applicable models and approaches.
  - Situating culture in the larger society, and placing more attention on interpreting social issues through the cultural lenses of those concerned will expand responsiveness of social research and policy making.
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