

Attitudes of the dominant European community toward Chinese in New Zealand have undergone major changes during this century, from denigration as undesirable immigrants to acceptance as a successful minority. The present study identifies and compares the salient dimensions of the current stereotype of Chinese and Europeans. Responses of 318 Chinese and European secondary school pupils showed that the stereotypes held by the two groups were very similar. Both placed Chinese in a positive position on a work ethic dimension characterized by expressions such as hard working and successful and in a relatively neutral position on an individual versus social control dimension. By contrast, Europeans were seen by both groups as somewhat less positive on the work ethic dimension and rather more individually than socially controlled.

## AN EXAMINATION OF STEREOTYPES OF CHINESE AND EUROPEANS HELD BY SOME NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS

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The arrival of the Chinese in New Zealand was regarded largely with indifference by the other settlers until conflict and competition arose when the Chinese participated in the mining of the goldfields. During the depression of the 1880s and over the following decades, intolerance and persecution flared up during hard times right up to the 1930s.

Both American and New Zealand studies have shown that the stereotypic attitudes toward the Chinese have undergone dramatic changes over the past century, from undesirable immigrant to model minority. The Chinese appear to fit better into the family ideal of middle class Europeans than do many other minorities. With their low rates of juvenile delinquency, low rates of psychiatric contact and hospitalization, and high educational and occupational attainment (Abbott & Abbot, 1968; Butterfield, 1986; Choi, 1970;

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JOURNAL OF CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY, Vol. 27 No. 3, May 1996 283-292  
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Chung & Walkey, 1988; McGrath, 1983; Toupin & Son, 1991; Wong 1980), the Chinese have become extremely acceptable in the eyes of their host societies. The *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings* (New Zealand Statistics Department, 1986) reported that Chinese constitute New Zealand's fourth largest ethnic group, numbering 26,523 or 0.8% of the total population. At present, they do not appear to suffer from discrimination. They have assimilated well into the host society, attending European schools, adopting the Western lifestyle, and contributing to the economy of the country.

Following a pattern that apparently is very similar to that found among their American counterparts, the New Zealand Chinese appear to have surpassed all other ethnic groups in New Zealand, both in educational and other achievements. Chinese have a higher percentage of students aged 15 years or over in New Zealand tertiary educational institutions than any other ethnic group. Of all New Zealand females age 15 years or over, 6.2% study in tertiary educational institutions. Among Chinese females in this category, 15.7% do so. More outstanding still are the figures for Chinese male students. Nationally, 6.4% of all New Zealand males age 15 years or over study in tertiary educational institutions, whereas 19.3% of Chinese males do so (New Zealand Statistics Department, 1986).

A high percentage (17.9%) of Chinese are now found in professional, technical, and other related areas compared to the national average of 13.8%. The three predominant occupational groups that Chinese have entered are architecture/engineering, medical/dental/veterinary, and accountancy. The Chinese are therefore rapidly achieving not only academic success but also occupational success.

In the employment area, the 1986 *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings* showed Chinese males (23.3%) and females (13.7%) had the highest percentages in the employer category when compared to those of all other ethnic groups in the country or when compared to the national averages for males (14.8%) and females (4.6%). Further, Chinese males (3.9%) and females (3.8%) had the lowest percentages in the category of unemployed when compared to those of all other groups or to the national averages for males (4.6%) and females (5.5%).

The purpose of the present study is to examine the outcome of these substantial changes in the status of Chinese in New Zealand and in the stereotypes that secondary school pupils with Chinese European origins hold with respect to both their own group and the other group.

## METHOD

### SUBJECTS

Subjects were from third, fourth, and fifth forms (age range 13-16 years) of 14 public secondary schools in the greater Wellington region. The subjects consisted of 75 Chinese females, 75 European females, 84 Chinese males, and 84 European males. This gave 159 Chinese and 159 European subjects, or a total of 318 subjects.

### MEASURES

The semantic differential (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) was used in the study to provide responses that would define current stereotypes. It consisted of 21 pairs of adjectives with a 5-point scale between each pair. At the top of each of the two sets of bipolar scales was the name of the group to be rated (i.e., Chinese in New Zealand or Europeans in New Zealand). The adjectives were obtained from studies of ethnic groups by Anant (1971) and Tzeng, Neel, and Landis (1981).

The adjectives used included strong-family-loyalty/weak-family-loyalty, intelligent/unintelligent, responsible/irresponsible, strong-family-restrictions/weak-family-restrictions, strong-family-commitment/weak-family-commitment, obedient/disobedient, superior/inferior, controlled-by-others/not-controlled-by-others, self-control/lack-of-self-control, express-themselves-freely/express-themselves-with-restraint, emotional/unemotional, practical/imaginative, cautious/reckless, predictable/unpredictable, outgoing/shy, successful/unsuccessful, ambitious/unconcerned, cooperative/unhelpful, determined/gives-up-easily, concerned-for-people/concerned-with-possessions, and hard-working/lazy. A modified version of Osgood et al.'s (1957) instructions were used in conjunction with the scales.

### PROCEDURE

The scales were administered to subjects in groups at their schools as part of a survey of intercultural stereotypes and of cultural differences in academic aspirations.

Separate principal factor analyses were undertaken for the responses of each group as they described themselves and each other. To facilitate the demonstration of similarities and differences between groups in their ratings,

two-factor varimax rotations, which would demonstrate the two strongest components of the description, were undertaken in each case.

The first two factors extracted were virtually identical in all four cases, that is, for both Chinese and European students rating both Chinese and Europeans in New Zealand. Although there were a number of quite substantial variations in the loadings of some of the items, these were probably no greater than might be expected given the normal levels of single-item unreliability. Core groups of items, loading consistently on each of the two factors, were identified. A score representing the mean rating of each target group by each rating group was calculated for the five most consistently salient items on each factor. These mean ratings were then included in a scatter plot of the loadings of each item on each of the two factors.

## RESULTS

### FACTOR ANALYSES

The four two-factor analyses showed some substantial consistencies, with 15 of the 21 items loading at or above the .30 level on the same factor in all four analyses.

The first of these factors is indicated by high loadings on hard working, self-control, responsible, determined, and cautious and by slightly lower loadings on obedient, strong family commitment, strong family loyalty, and intelligent. These all appear to be positive elements of the work ethic, and the factor is therefore called the *work ethic* factor.

The second factor was characterized by high loadings on express themselves freely, outgoing, emotional, limited family restraints, and not controlled by others. Inherent in these are assumptions of internal rather than social control of behavior, and the factor is therefore referred to as the *social versus individual control* factor or more briefly as the *social control* factor.

### CHINESE DESCRIPTIONS OF CHINESE

The mean rating of Chinese in New Zealand by the Chinese students is included on the scatter plot in Figure 1. It is apparent that the Chinese students see their group as highly positive with respect to the work ethic dimension ( $M = .54$ ,  $SD = .28$ ) but around the neutral area with respect to the social control dimension ( $M = -.01$ ,  $SD = .26$ ). Of the 10 designated work ethic items, 9 lie close to the Chinese position, with ambitious, successful, and practical adding to the strength of this work-ethic-dominated self-stereotype.

### CHINESE DESCRIPTIONS OF EUROPEANS

The Chinese ratings of Europeans are shown in Figure 2. On the work ethic dimension, their ratings are much lower ( $M = .11$ ,  $SD = .35$ ). With  $t = 13.22$  and  $df = 158$ , the difference between their ratings of themselves and Europeans is significant beyond the .0001 level. They also rate Europeans as much more individually rather than socially controlled ( $M = .27$ ,  $SD = .24$ ) than Chinese ( $M = -.01$ ,  $SD = .26$ ). With  $t = 9.95$  and  $df = 158$ , this difference is also significant beyond the .0001 level.

### EUROPEAN DESCRIPTIONS OF CHINESE

When the Chinese stereotype of Chinese is compared to the European students' stereotype, given in Figure 3, the most obvious characteristic is the essential similarity of the two. Once again, the predominant element is the strong, positive value on the work ethic factor ( $M = .48$ ,  $SD = .32$ ). This obviously is the dimension that most clearly typifies both the self-concepts of the Chinese students and the way in which they are thought of by their European counterparts. Like the Chinese themselves, the Europeans rate Chinese around the neutral point ( $M = -.05$ ,  $SD = .31$ ) on the social control dimension.

It may be noted that in both the European and Chinese stereotypes, the position of Chinese on the social control factor is just slightly on the controlled side of the neutral axis. In a sense, then, this dimension shows a consistent rather than an outstanding characteristic of the stereotype, and it may be more interesting seen in comparison to the stereotype of Europeans than as a salient descriptor of Chinese.

### EUROPEAN DESCRIPTIONS OF EUROPEANS

The mean ratings of Europeans in New Zealand by European students on the two dimensions are shown in the scatter plot in Figure 4. On both dimensions, Europeans were rated quite differently from Chinese. With respect to the work ethic dimension, the Europeans rate their own group ( $M = .28$ ,  $SD = .33$ ) considerably lower than they rate Chinese ( $M = .48$ ,  $SD = .32$ ),  $t = 5.65$ ,  $df = 158$ ,  $p < .0001$ . By contrast, however, they see their own group as much more individually rather than socially controlled ( $M = .25$ ,  $SD = .26$ ). Their comparable rating of Chinese has a mean of  $-.05$  ( $SD = .33$ ) with  $t = 9.92$  and  $df = 158$ ; this difference is significant beyond the .0001 level.

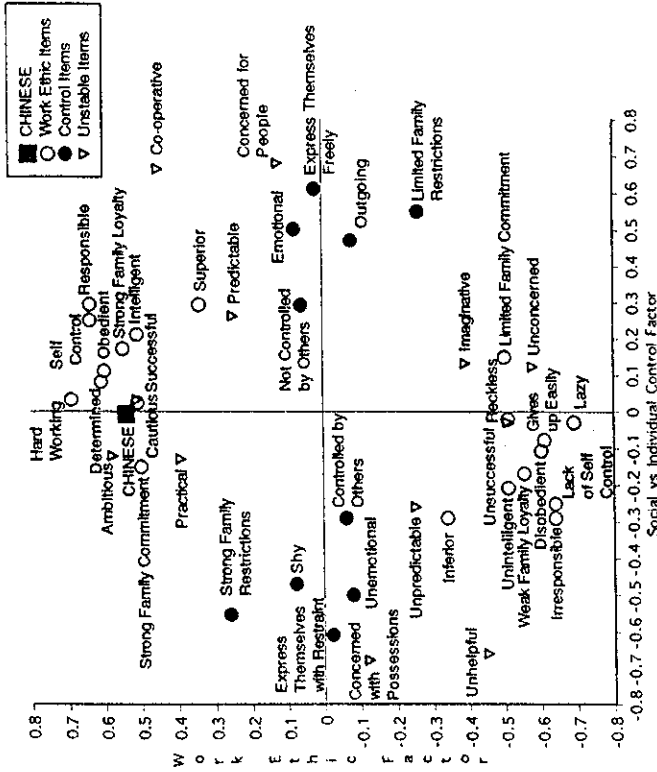


Figure 1: Two-Dimensional Scatter Plot of Chinese Descriptions of Chinese

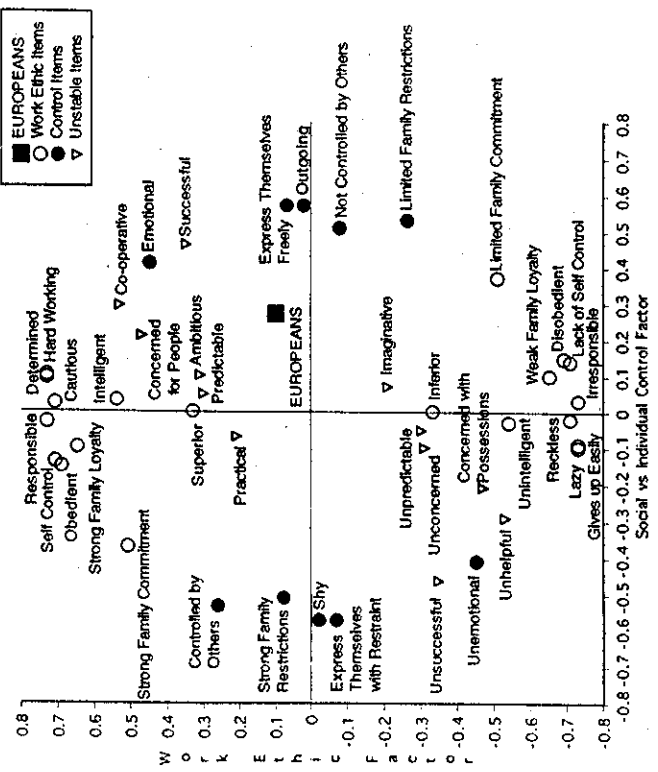


Figure 2: Two-Dimensional Scatter Plot of Chinese Descriptions of Europeans

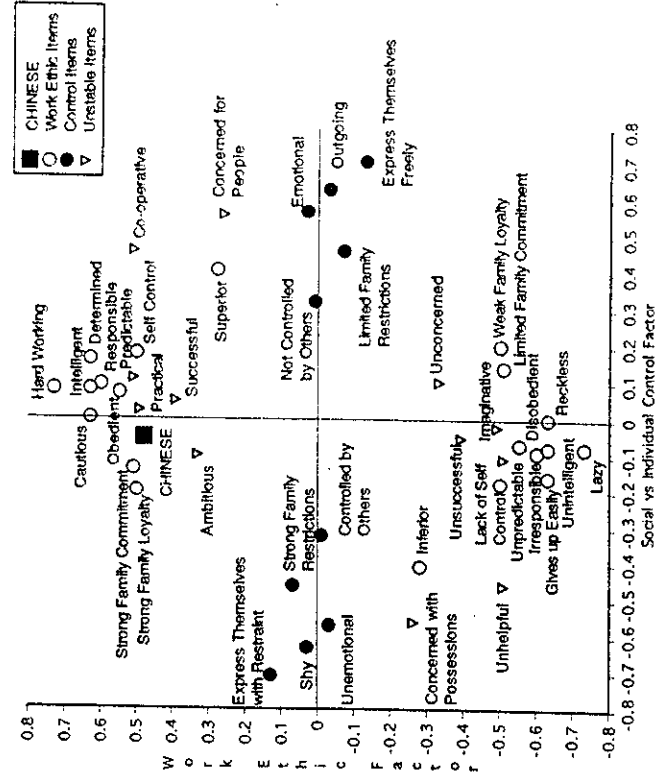


Figure 3: Two-Dimensional Scatter Plot of European Descriptions of Chinese

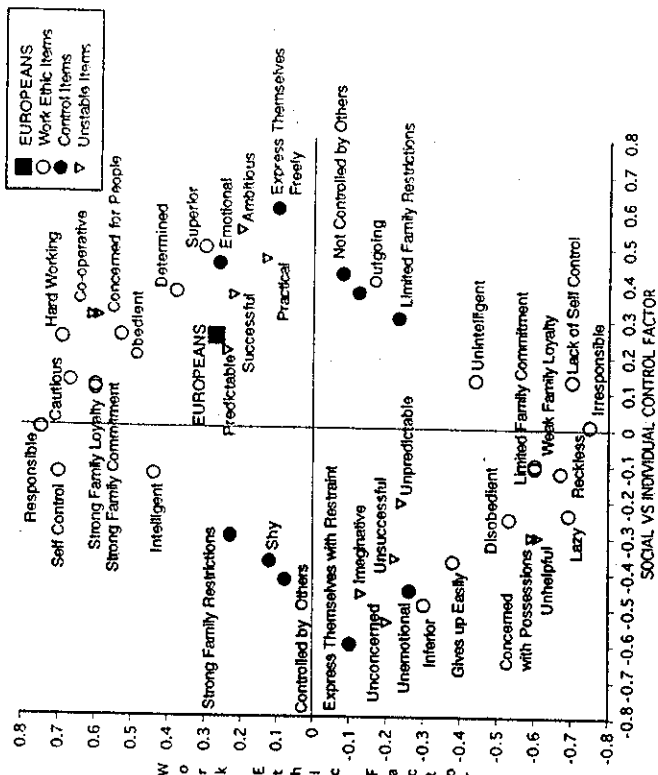


Figure 4: Two-Dimensional Scatter Plot of European Descriptions of Europeans

The stereotypes of Europeans are clearly two-dimensional. Europeans are seen as moderately high on the work ethic dimension and moderately individually rather than socially controlled in the eyes of both rating groups.

An overall comparison shows that the stereotypes of both groups are very similar. The only significant difference found is the rating on the work ethic dimension, where the Chinese ratings of Europeans ( $M = .11$ ,  $SD = .35$ ) are lower than those of the Europeans themselves ( $M = .27$ ,  $SD = .33$ ),  $t = 4.08$ ,  $df = 316$ ,  $p < .0001$ .

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A high level of consistency is seen in the two stereotypes just described. Although both may be regarded as generally positive, they are quite different. Irrespective of the source, a comparative description shows that Chinese were rated very highly on the work ethic dimension, which is characterized by hardworking, cautious, intelligent, responsible, obedient, and strong family loyalties and commitment. Both groups rated Chinese above Europeans on this dimension.

With respect to the social versus individual control dimension, neither group sees Chinese characterized by either end of the scale, although it was noted that both group ratings lay slightly on the socially controlled side of the neutral axis. It is in relation to ratings of Europeans that the greatest interest lies, with both groups rating Chinese as more socially controlled than Europeans.

The general shape of the stereotype that has developed during the massive changes in the status of Chinese in New Zealand over the course of the 20th century appears quite clear, with a high level of consistency between ratings made by Chinese students and those made by students of European origin. There are two dimensions to the stereotype related to the work ethic and to social versus individual control. On both of these dimensions, the ratings of Chinese, both by themselves and by Europeans, may be regarded as positive. A comparative description would characterize Chinese as relatively highly rated with respect to the work ethic and as relatively more socially controlled than Europeans.

This perception of Chinese as hardworking, successful, and responsible and as controlled both by self and by family has been built into a view of the group as a model minority, both in the United States and in New Zealand, where the present study was undertaken. However, the impact of such a highly positive generalization has now been shown to have both negative and positive implications. The negative impact of the stereotype has come under

increasing scrutiny in the United States in recent years (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1991). Following the changing patterns of migration in recent years, some researchers (Ong, 1993; Sue & Sue, 1990) have found two extreme groups within the Asian American population. One group is successful and acculturated, whereas the other group, found particularly among refugees and newly arrived immigrants, is poor, living in poverty, and traditionally oriented. It appears to be within this socially disadvantaged group that the positive stereotype and the myth of the model minority may be having their most serious impact.

Sue and Sue (1990) have indicated that Asian Americans view the stereotypes as having functional value for those with an interest in social control, a view that has implications for other communities, including New Zealand, in which the stereotype has been identified. The myth can be used to support the view that any minority group can succeed if it works hard enough. It can also be used to pit one minority group against another by holding one group up as an example to others, and it can be used to deny access to community assistance to those members of the so-called model group who are actually struggling to survive on the grounds of their stereotyped model minority status. The conclusion that has been drawn from this is that the positive stereotypes also have serious negative implications, and Sue and Sue (1990) have indicated that there is some concern that the myth of the model minority should be dispelled.

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Cross-sectional studies were conducted to examine whether the belief in a just world formed a unidimensional construct in Hungary. Overall, from 1991 to 1994, the scale became increasingly more homogeneous, ultimately measuring a unidimensional construct from 1993 onward. Studies conducted in Slovenia and Slovakia suggested that these changes in the just world structure could not be explained by societal factors such as a changing political system. Support for the validity of the Hungarian just world scale was gained by finding positive associations between just world belief and satisfaction with one's (past) life and religiosity. Moreover, cross-sectional comparisons during 1993 indicated that Hungarian subjects differentiated more strongly between just world belief and belief in future compensation than did German subjects. Further, for Hungarian subjects, just world belief and belief in future compensation correlated positively with religiosity; for Germans, only the belief in future compensation correlated positively with religiosity.

## THE "BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD" CONSTRUCT IN HUNGARY

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People are motivated to hold the view that they live in a just world in which everybody gets what he or she deserves (Lerner, 1970, 1980; Lerner & Lerner, 1981; Lerner & Miller, 1978). When people encounter injustice, they experience a conflict between their belief in a just world and reality. There are different ways to resolve this conflict. One way is to reestablish justice or compensate the victims. Often, however, direct interventions seem impossible or too costly. In these cases, people tend to restore injustice cognitively. One cognitive possibility to reduce the discrepancy between belief in a just world and reality is denial. Another way to deal with this cognitive threat is to blame the victims for their problems. One can also choose to justify one's own better situation as deserved by effort and the like.

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JOURNAL OF CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY, Vol. 27 No. 3, May 1996 293-314  
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