

Social Relationships and Social Support

8.1 <i>Introduction</i>	136
8.2 <i>Community connections</i>	137
8.3 <i>Discrimination</i>	142
8.4 <i>Personal safety</i>	145

8

Social Relationships and Social Support

How do migrants connect with others in their new communities? Do migrants maintain their culture and traditions? How safe do migrants feel in New Zealand? What challenges do migrants face?

8.1 Introduction

The initial settlement of migrants and their families involves a host of social as well as economic factors. Previous research has demonstrated that these factors are strongly interconnected, with family and friends playing an important role in the settlement and economic integration of new residents.⁶¹ Often, relationships with members of the same ethnic group provide access to information networks that contribute to social interactions and employment activities. Social networks seem particularly important in the current context since two-thirds of all migrants had existing contacts in New Zealand before becoming residents, and the main source of information for over half of all migrants came from family and friends already living in New Zealand. (See chapter 3.)

This section considers the social networks of migrants, their relationships with both New Zealanders and other members of their own ethnic group, as well as friendships and contact with community groups. In addition, migrants' perceptions of discrimination and community safety are examined.

Key findings

- Almost all migrants (96 percent) had established new friendships since their arrival in New Zealand.
- Half of all migrants reported that either all or most of their friends in New Zealand had the same ethnic background as themselves.
- Sixty-four percent of migrants said it was important or very important to carry on the values and traditions of their ethnic group.
- About one in four migrants felt they experienced at least one incident of discrimination, usually in a public place or at work.
- Eighty-six percent of migrants felt safe or very safe in New Zealand.

61 B R Chiswick and P W Miller. 'Do enclaves matter in immigrant adjustment?' *City and Community* 4(1), pp 5–35, 2005.

8.2 *Community connections*

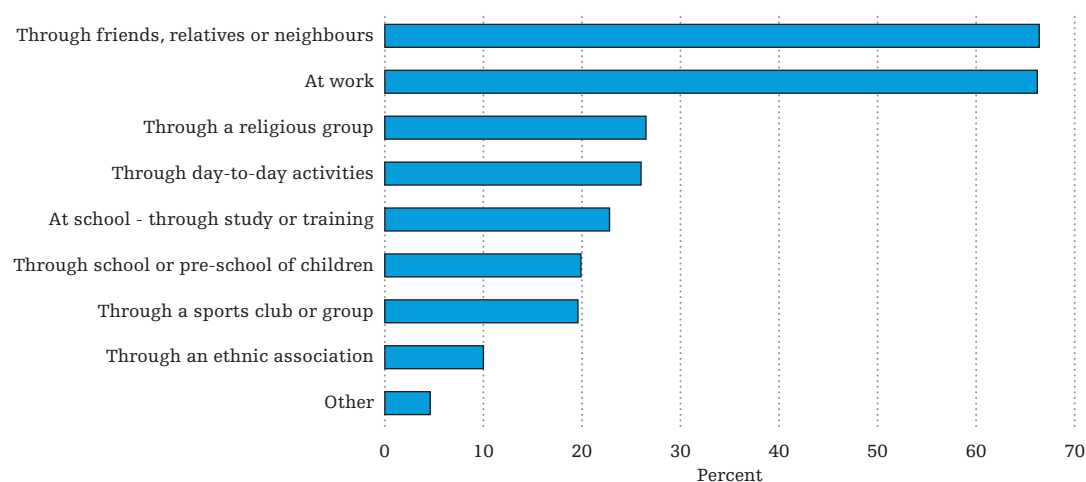
International research has shown that friendships with members of the host community and the migrant's own ethnic community provide important sources of social support to migrants.⁶² Encouragingly, almost all migrants (96 percent) reported having developed new friendships since their arrival in New Zealand.

8.2.1 *How migrants met new friends*

Overall, migrants were most likely to make new friends in New Zealand through other friends, relatives, and neighbours (66 percent) or at work (66 percent). About a quarter of migrants also reported making acquaintances through a religious group or through their day-to-day activities. (See Figure 8.1.)

Migrants from the Pacific region were more likely than those from all other regions to have made friends through a religious group, while migrants from North America were more likely to make friends through their day-to-day activities. Migrants from the UK/Irish Republic were more likely than others (except those from South Africa) to report they had made friends through the school or pre-school their children attended. Migrants from North Asia were more likely to report having made friends at school, through study or training. Migrants from South Asia, South East Asia, and the Pacific were more likely than migrants from other regions to have made friends through an ethnic association.

Figure 8.1: How migrants met new friends



Note: Respondents could give multiple responses, so percentages may not add to 100.

⁶² C Ward, S Bochner, and A Furnham. *The Psychology of Culture Shock*, London: Routledge, 2001, pp 147–150.

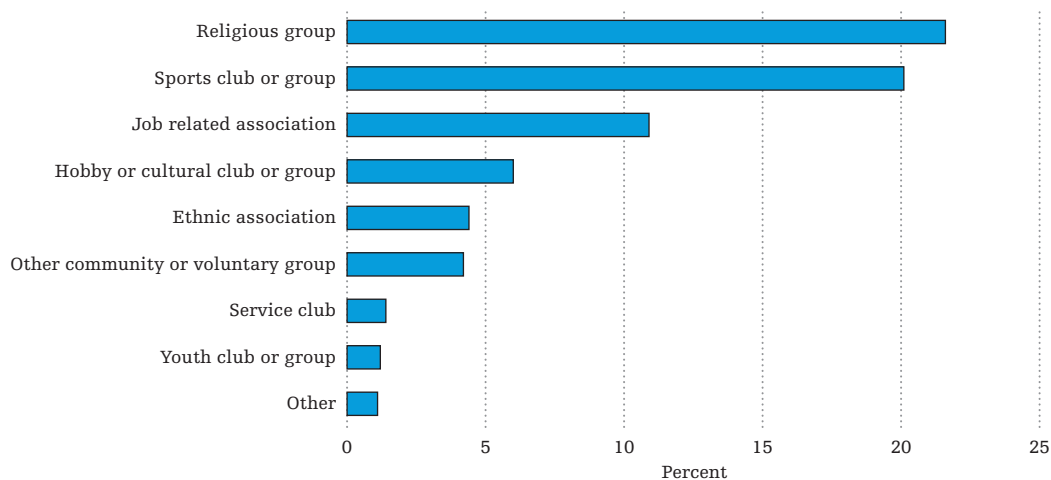
8.2.2 Involvement in clubs and groups

Half of the migrants surveyed said they belonged to various clubs and groups (see Figure 8.2). Overall, the most common types of clubs or groups that migrants belonged to were religious groups (22 percent), sports clubs or groups (20 percent), and job-related associations (11 percent).

Migrants' level of involvement in clubs or groups, and the types of clubs they joined, varied by region of origin. Migrants from South Africa and North America were more likely than those from all other regions to be members of some form of club or group in New Zealand, whereas North Asian migrants were the least likely to be involved in a club or group.

In terms of the types of clubs or groups migrants were affiliated with, those from South Africa and the Pacific were more likely than migrants from all other regions to be members of a religious group, whereas those from the UK/Irish Republic were more likely to be members of a sports club or group. Migrants from the UK/Irish Republic were also more likely to be members of job-related associations than migrants from most other regions (except South Africa and North America), while those from North America were more likely to be members of a hobby or cultural group. In contrast, migrants from South Asia, South East Asia, and the Pacific were more likely to be part of an ethnic association than migrants from other regions.

Figure 8.2: Types of clubs or groups migrants joined



Feature box 8.1 *Migrants find friendship in New Zealand*

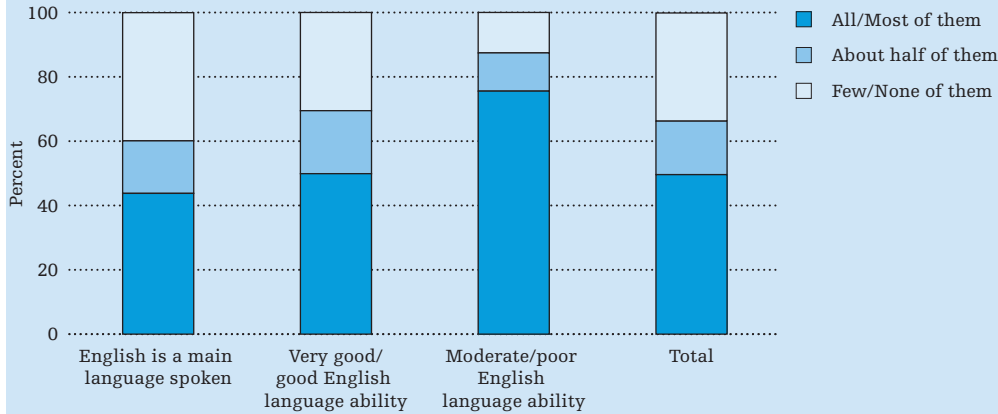
One of the biggest challenges about moving to a new country is to become 'settled' there. Making friends – who can help, offer advice, and share their experiences – is important in the settlement process. Examining the patterns of friendship for new migrants – how migrants make friendships and with whom – is of value in identifying the sources of social support that are available to them.

Some of the challenges new migrants face in establishing friendships with members of the receiving community relate to communication factors, including their language proficiency. This factor and the vitality of the migrant's ethnic group in the migrant's region of settlement contribute to the development of social relationships with members of both the host country and the migrant's own ethnic community.

Insights

- Almost all migrants (96 percent) reported having developed new friendships since arriving in New Zealand.
 - Half of all migrants reported that either all or most of their friends in New Zealand had the same ethnic background as themselves.
 - Seventeen percent reported that about half of their friends were of the same ethnicity.
 - About a third (34 percent) said that few or none of their new friends had the same ethnic background as themselves.
- Migrants who settled in Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury, and the Bay of Plenty were more likely than migrants from other regions to report that all or most of their friends were from the same ethnic group as themselves. Migrants from the Waikato, Manawatu-Wanganui, and the rest of the North and South Islands were more likely to report that few or none of their friends came from the same ethnic community. This is likely attributable to a higher proportion of migrants from the same ethnic group settling in regions of relatively high migrant density.
- Migrants who were more proficient in English were more likely to establish relationships with friends outside their own ethnic group than were migrants with poor English language ability. The less proficient a migrant was in English, the more likely they were to have made most of their friends from the same ethnic group as their own. (See Figure 8.3.)

Figure 8.3: Whether new friends were of the same ethnic group by English language ability

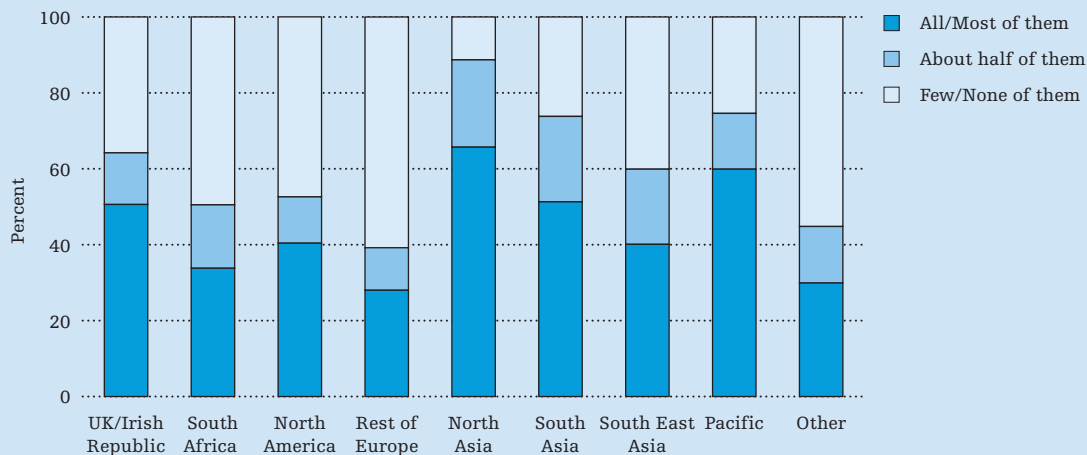


Migrants' friendship patterns also varied by their region of origin (see Figure 8.4).

Insights

- Migrants from North Asia were more likely than migrants from all other regions to develop new friendships with members of their own ethnic group (66 percent); followed by migrants from the Pacific (60 percent) and the UK/Irish Republic and South Asia (51 percent each).
- Migrants from the Rest of Europe were more likely to report that none or few of their friends came from the same ethnic group as themselves.

Figure 8.4: Whether migrants' new friends were of the same ethnic group by region of origin





Almost all migrants have made new friends in New Zealand.

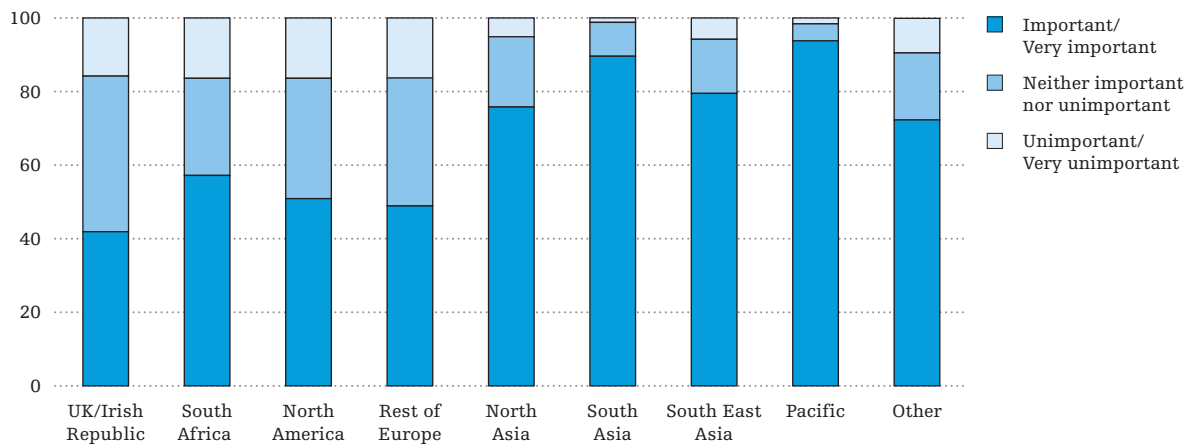
8.2.3 Importance of maintaining values and traditions of ethnic group

Sixty-four percent of migrants indicated that it was important or very important for them to carry on the values and traditions of their ethnic group.

The degree of importance placed on the maintenance of ethnic values and traditions varied across migrants from different regions of origin. Pacific migrants and those from South Asia placed the greatest level of importance on maintaining their cultural values and traditions, followed by migrants from North Asia and South East Asia. Migrants from the UK/Irish Republic, the Rest of Europe, South Africa, and North America were the least likely to report that maintaining cultural values and traditions was important to them. (See Figure 8.5.)

Further analysis showed that migrants who belonged to an ethnic association or a religious group were more likely than not to report that maintaining traditions was important or very important.

Figure 8.5: Importance to migrants of maintaining traditions by region of origin



8.3 Discrimination

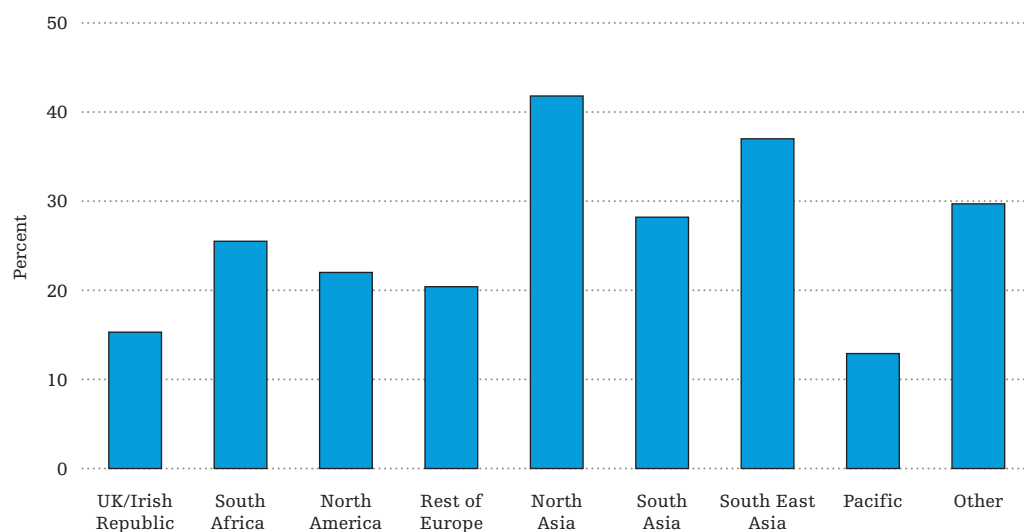
This section describes migrants' perceptions about discrimination⁶³ while they have lived in New Zealand.⁶⁴ Over three-quarters (76 percent) of migrants reported that they had never felt discriminated against in New Zealand, but almost a quarter (24 percent) reported they had experienced at least one incident where they felt discriminated against.

Experiences of discrimination varied across region of origin. Migrants from North Asia and South East Asia were more likely to report having experienced discrimination than migrants from all other regions. Migrants from the UK/Irish Republic, the Rest of Europe, North America, and the Pacific were less likely to report discrimination than were migrants from South Africa, North Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, and Other regions. (See Figure 8.6.)

⁶³ In the context of the LisNZ, it is important to distinguish between migrants' perceived discrimination and the legal definition and consequences of discrimination. New Zealand's Human Rights Act 1993 protects New Zealanders from unlawful discrimination in several areas of life. Under the Act, discrimination is unlawful only when it occurs in one of the prohibited grounds and in one of the prohibited areas of public life.

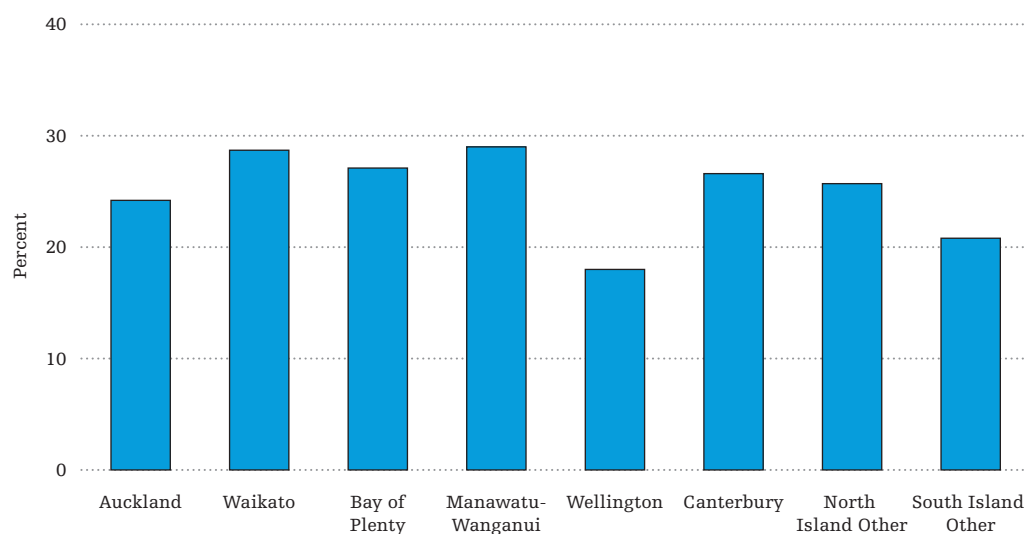
⁶⁴ Includes time in New Zealand before gaining permanent residence.

Figure 8.6: Migrants' experiences of discrimination by region of origin



A few noteworthy variations were also reported according to region of settlement in New Zealand. Migrants from the Wellington region were less likely to report feeling discriminated against than migrants from other large migrant centres (Auckland, Canterbury, and the Waikato) but did not differ significantly from areas of smaller migrant density (the Bay of Plenty, Manawatu-Wanganui, and other areas of the North and South Islands). (See Figure 8.7.)

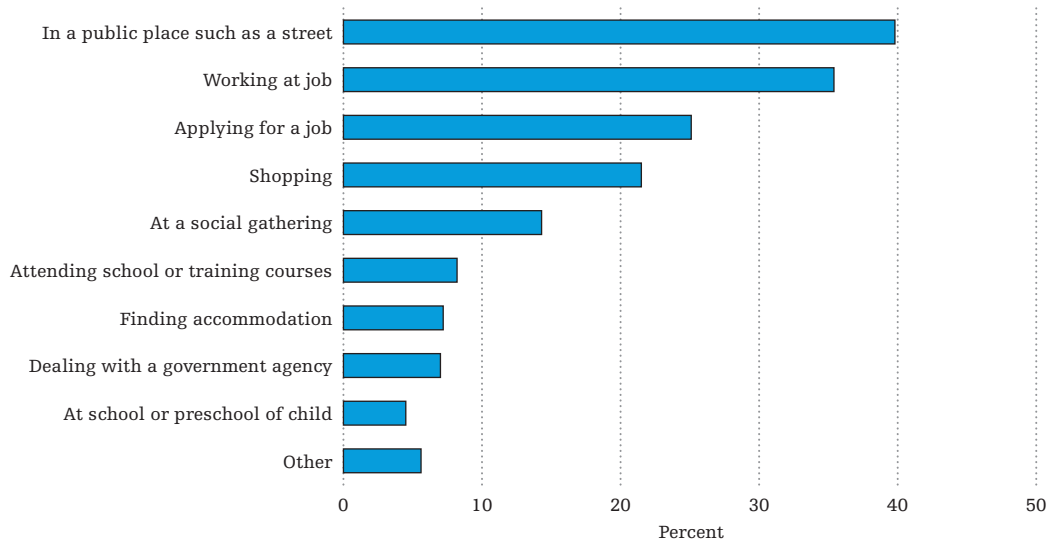
Figure 8.7: Migrants' experiences of discrimination by region of settlement



The main situation where migrants felt discriminated against was in a public place such as a street, although other situations reported included job-related settings (applying for or working at a job), while shopping, and at social gatherings. (See Figure 8.8.)

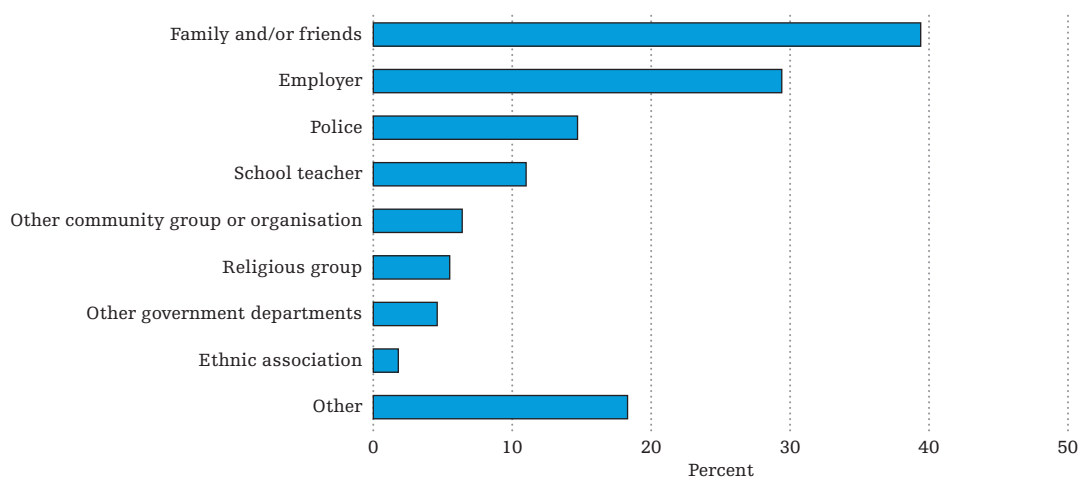
Migrants from North Asia were more likely than those from all other regions to report they had felt discriminated against in a public place, whereas migrants from North America were more likely than most other migrants to perceive discrimination at a social gathering.⁶⁵

Figure 8.8: Situations where migrants felt discriminated against



Most migrants who felt discriminated against did not seek help (87 percent). For those who sought help (13 percent), the three main sources were from family and/or friends (39 percent), their employer (29 percent), or the police (15 percent). (See Figure 8.9.)

Figure 8.9: Types of help migrants sought for discrimination

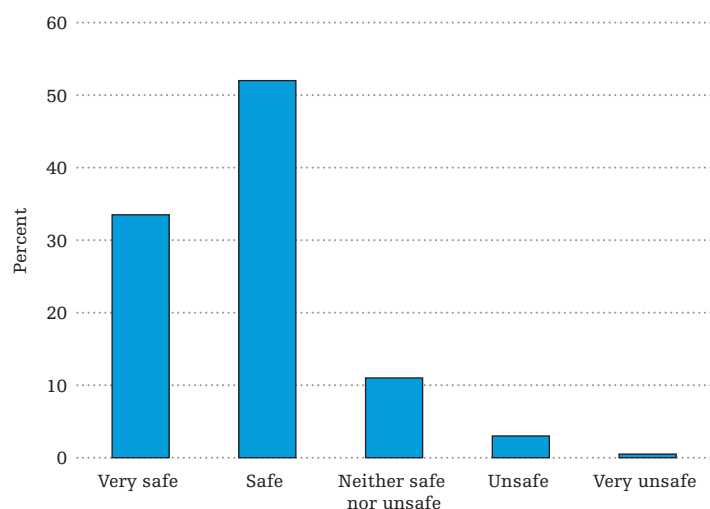


⁶⁵ Differences between North America and the UK/Irish Republic and the Rest of Europe were not statistically significant.

8.4 Personal safety

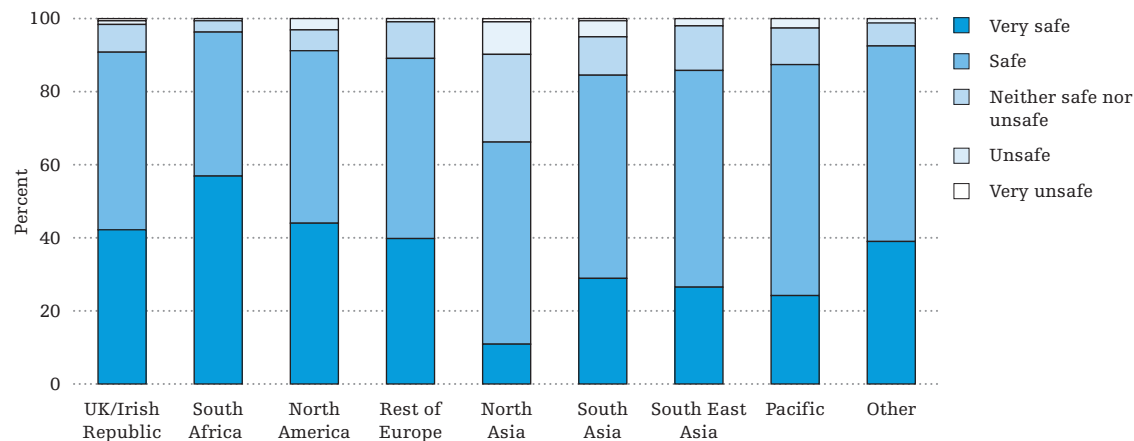
Most migrants felt safe (52 percent) or very safe (34 percent) in New Zealand. A small percentage (3 percent) reported feeling unsafe, and less than 1 percent reported feeling very unsafe. (See Figure 8.10.)

Figure 8.10: How safe migrants feel in New Zealand



Migrants' feelings of personal safety varied according to their region of origin and where they settled in New Zealand. Migrants from South Africa were more likely than migrants from all other regions to report feeling very safe in New Zealand, followed by those from North America, the UK/Irish Republic, the Rest of Europe, and Other regions. North Asians were the least likely of all migrants to report feeling very safe in New Zealand. (See Figure 8.11.)

Figure 8.11: How safe migrants feel in New Zealand by region of origin



Migrants living in the South Island outside Canterbury were most likely to report feeling very safe (64 percent). Migrants living in the Auckland region were less likely to report feeling very safe (27 percent) than migrants living in the Waikato (39 percent), Wellington (43 percent), and Canterbury (36 percent) regions. (See Figure 8.12.)

Figure 8.12: How safe migrants feel in New Zealand by region of settlement

