

Chapter 2

Background Characteristics

2.1 <i>Introduction</i>	30
2.2 <i>Demographic characteristics</i>	31

2

Background Characteristics

Who was interviewed? Where did they come from? Where do they live now?

2.1 Introduction

This section describes some of the demographic and immigration-related characteristics for the weighted population of migrants in the LisNZ approved for residence between November 2004 and October 2005. Some characteristics, including the number of migrants in each immigration approval category¹³ as well as their age and English language skills, are directly related to immigration policy settings, while other demographics such as sex or religion are not related to policy. Many of the key characteristics described in this chapter are used as key analysis variables in other sections of this report.

Key demographics

- The largest proportion of migrants was approved through skilled migration categories (58 percent).
- The main region of origin of migrants was the UK/Irish Republic (32 percent), followed by North Asia (18 percent) and the Pacific (12 percent).
- Most migrants had been to New Zealand before gaining residence (86 percent) and over half had worked in New Zealand before.
- A large proportion of migrants spoke English as their main language or as a language they spoke best (59 percent), while a further 27 percent reported having good or very good English language skills.
- Over half of all migrants lived in the Auckland region, with the Canterbury and Wellington regions the next most popular.

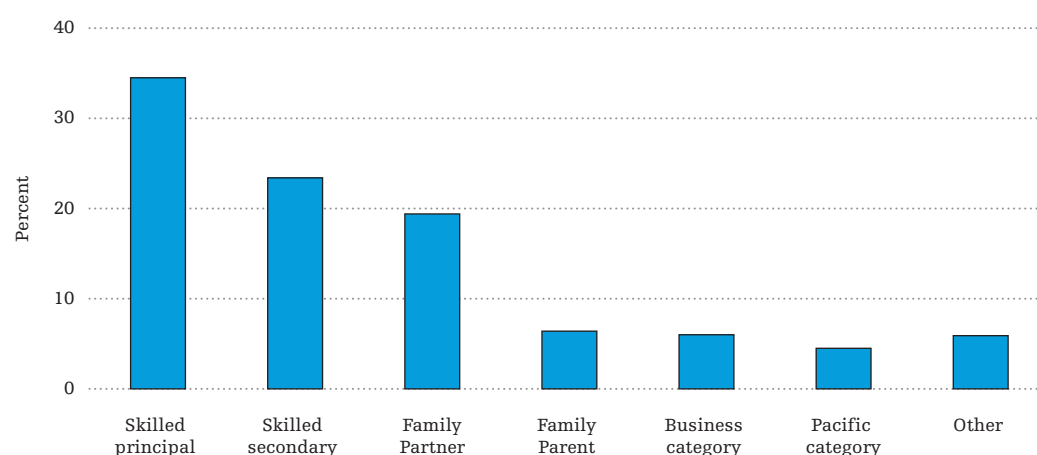
¹³ Appendix A describes how the various immigration approval categories have been grouped to form the analysis groups used throughout this report.

2.2 Demographic characteristics

2.2.1 Immigration approval category and applicant type

The largest group of migrants approved for residence was approved through skilled migration categories (58 percent of all migrants).¹⁴ For the purpose of this analysis, migrants approved through the Skilled categories have been separated into two subgroups: Skilled principal (35 percent) and Skilled secondary (23 percent). Those approved through the Family Partner Category (19 percent) were the next largest group, followed by the Family Parent Category (6 percent). Seventeen percent of migrants were approved through other categories: Business (6 percent), Pacific (5 percent), and Other (6 percent). (See Figure 2.1.)¹⁵

Figure 2.1: Immigration approval category of migrants



2.2.2 Region of origin¹⁶ and location of residence approval

Migrants from the UK/Irish Republic made up the largest proportion of migrants (32 percent), followed by those from North Asia (18 percent) and the Pacific (12 percent) (see Figure 2.2). Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of all migrants were in New Zealand on temporary permits when they were approved for permanent residence. The remainder were approved for residence offshore (28 percent). Pacific migrants were most likely to be approved offshore (47 percent) compared with other migrants. The source countries of migrants in the survey are representative of trends in New Zealand's source countries in recent years.

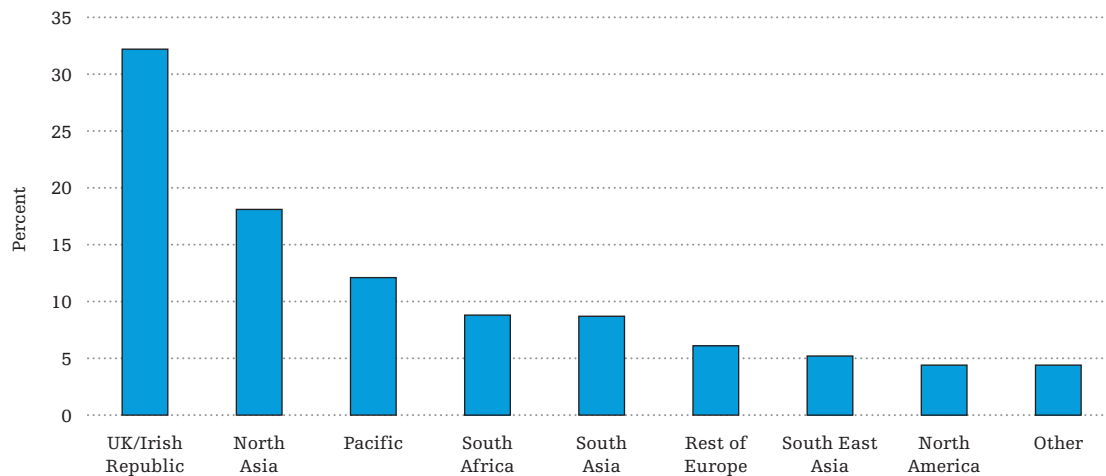
¹⁴ This group consists primarily of migrants approved through the Skilled Migrant Category, but also includes a small number of migrants approved through the General Skills Category (now closed) and the Residence from Work Category.

¹⁵ This category consists of applicants granted residence through various categories not included above. It consists mainly of Family categories (other than Family Parent or Family Partner), including Family Sibling and Family Adult Child (77 percent combined), along with a small number of migrants approved through various International/Humanitarian Stream categories (but excluding refugees).

¹⁶ Region of origin is derived from migrants' passport nationality.

Since the 1980s, the general trend for migration to New Zealand has been an increase in the number of migrants coming from Europe and Asia and a decrease in the number coming from the Oceania region. Since the introduction of stricter language requirements in 2002 and the Skilled Migrant Category in 2003, a greater number of migrants have come from the UK/Irish Republic, the Rest of Europe, and South Africa and a smaller proportion from Asia. However, migration from Asia is expected to remain steady as many international students gain permanent residence in New Zealand. Over the past decade, the proportion of migrants granted residence while in New Zealand (onshore) has increased to about 75 percent of all approvals.¹⁷ The increase reflects the growing number of migrants working or studying in New Zealand before applying for residence, and the immigration policies that support these transitions.

Figure 2.2: Region of origin of migrants



A large proportion of skilled migrants were from the UK/Irish Republic (42 percent), followed by North Asia (13 percent) and South Africa (12 percent). Business migrants were predominantly from North Asia (63 percent). Family migration was more diverse in respect of source countries. The largest regions of origin of Family Partner migrants were the UK/Irish Republic (28 percent) and North Asia (21 percent). The main regions of Family Parent migrants were North Asia (29 percent), the Pacific (20 percent), and South Asia (16 percent). A large proportion of Other category migrants were from the Pacific (36 percent).

2.2.3 Age and sex

Most migrants were aged under 45, with 36 percent aged 25–34 and 30 percent aged 35–44 (see Figure 2.3). The mean age was 36.1 (median 34) for all migrants with little difference between males (mean 36.6, median 35) and females (mean 35.6, median 34).

It should be noted that there are age restrictions on applicants through residence categories such as the Skilled Migrant Category, Pacific Access Category, and Samoan Quota.

¹⁷ Department of Labour. *Migration Trends 2006/07*. Wellington: Department of Labour, 2008, available from <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/814ACAD1-743B-4B8E-A4FB-A2B492360FFD/0/MigrationTrends200607.pdf>.

Figure 2.3: Age and sex of migrants

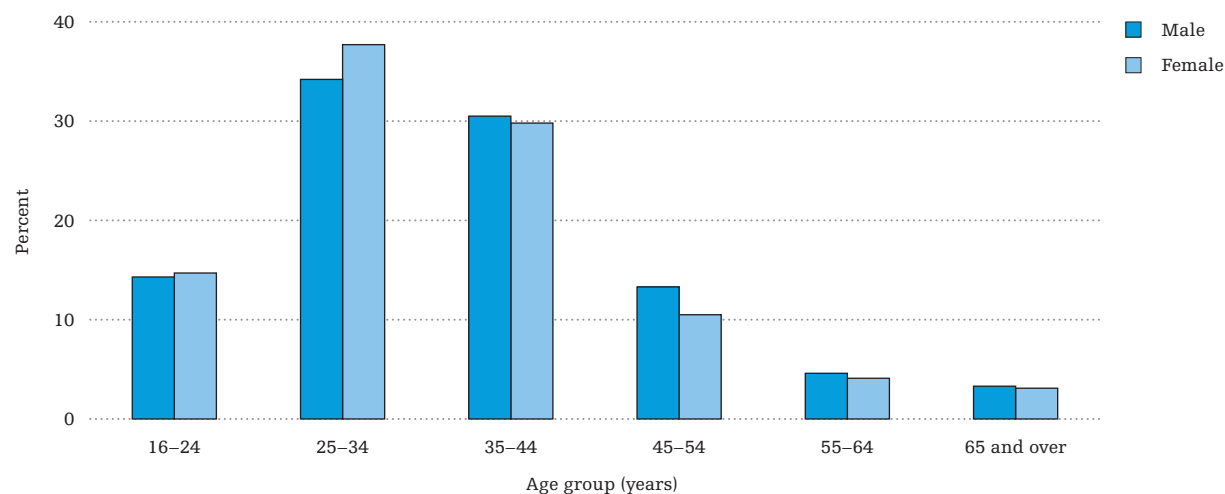


Table 2.1 shows the distribution of migrant age groups by immigration approval category.

Table 2.1: Age of migrants by immigration approval category

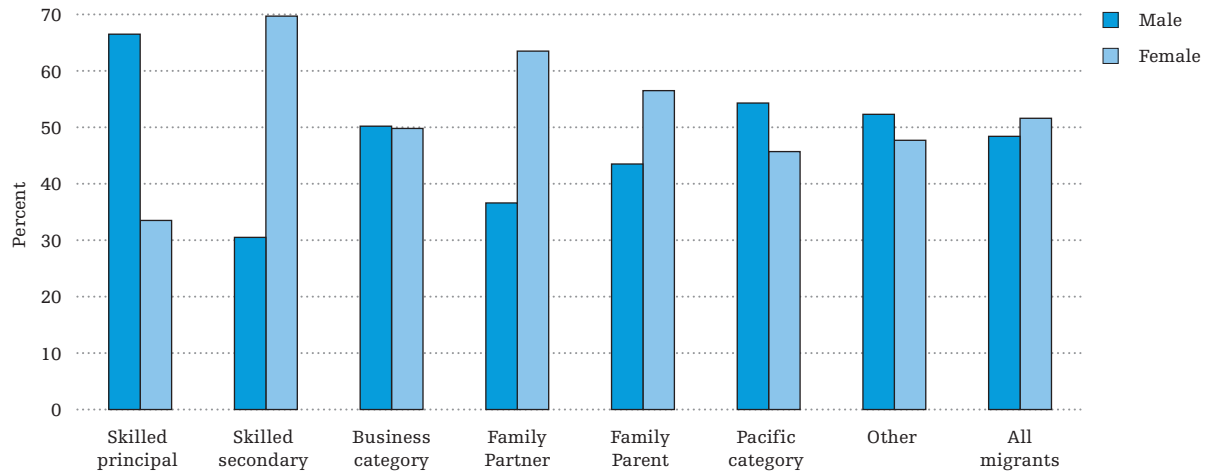
Age group (years)	Immigration approval category (%)							Total (%)
	Skilled principal	Skilled secondary	Business category	Family Partner	Family Parent	Pacific category	Other	
16-24	7.0	16.8	31.1	14.1	7.0	24.1	33.6	14.5
25-34	44.7	29.8	10.0	51.3	1.3	42.0	19.6	36.0
35-44	35.1	39.6	28.3	22.8	S	30.2	22.9	30.1
45-54	12.3	12.4	23.7	8.8	9.6	4.3	12.6	11.9
55-64	0.9	1.4	4.6	2.4	39.1	S	7.9	4.3
65 and over	...	S	1.8	0.7	42.2	S	3.3	3.2
Mean	35.2	34.6	36.2	33.0	60.7	31.4	34.4	36.1
Median	34.0	35.0	39.0	31.0	63.0	31.0	33.0	34.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total weighted	12,490	8,470	2,190	7,020	2,300	1,620	2,140	36,220

Symbols: S = suppressed for confidentiality reasons.

... Not applicable.

Overall, female migrants slightly outnumbered male migrants (52 percent compared with 48 percent), but this result varied by immigration approval category. While the proportion of females was higher for Skilled secondary (70 percent), Family Partner (64 percent), and Family Parent (57 percent) migrants, Skilled principal migrants were more likely to be male (67 percent). (See Figure 2.4.)

Figure 2.4: Migrants by immigration approval category and sex



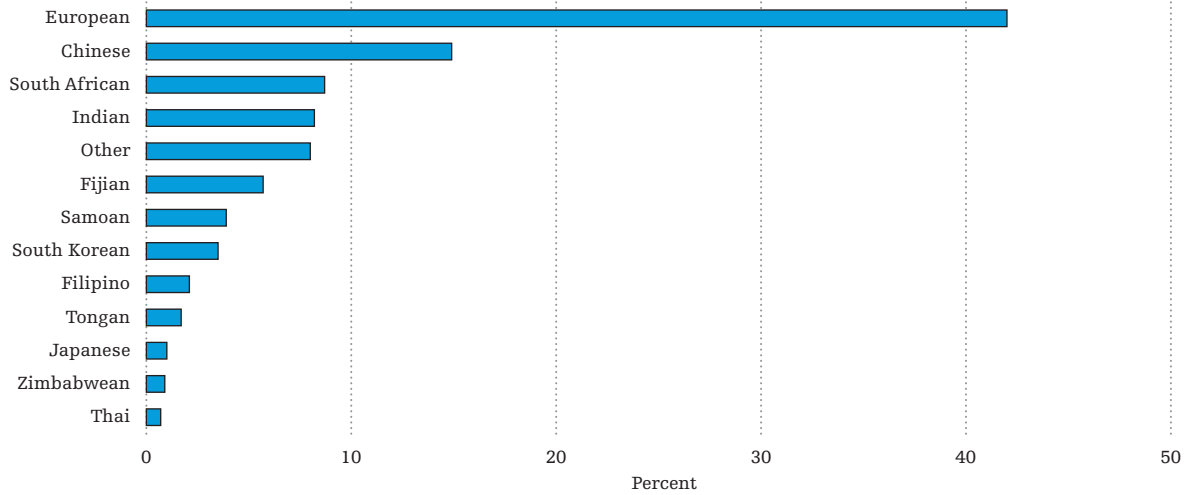
2.2.4 Ethnicity and religion

Figure 2.5 shows the ethnic groups reported by migrants.¹⁸ The four main ethnic groups of migrants were European (42 percent), Chinese (15 percent), South African (9 percent), and Indian (8 percent).

The ethnic composition of certain approval categories varied, reflecting the dominant source countries of different categories. Skilled migrants were more likely to be of European and South African origin than other categories, while Business migrants were more likely to be Chinese. Family Parent migrants were more likely to be Indian.

¹⁸ The definition of ethnicity/ethnic group implemented for the LisNZ has been adopted from the New Zealand *Census of Population and Dwellings* (Statistics New Zealand, 2006): 'Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group.'

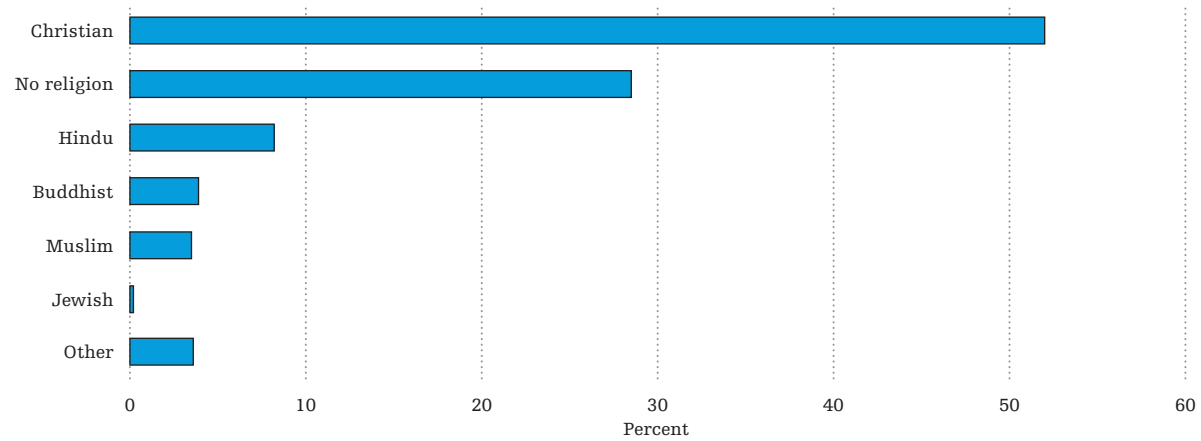
Figure 2.5: Ethnicity of migrants



Note: Respondents could specify more than one ethnicity, so the percentages may add to more than 100.

About half (52 percent) of all migrants were Christian, 29 percent reported having no religion, while the remaining 19 percent reported various other religions. (See Figure 2.6.)

Figure 2.6: Religion of migrants



Note: Respondents could specify more than one religion, so the percentages may add to more than 100.

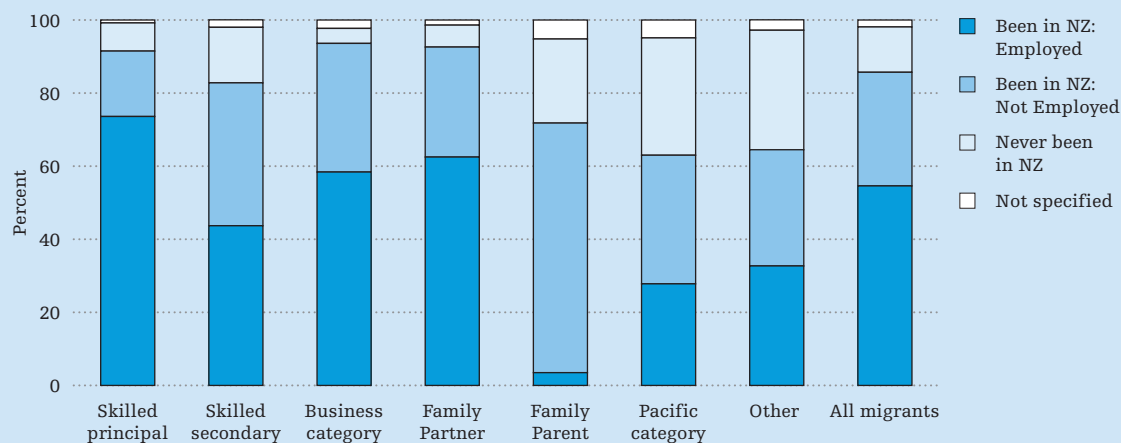
Feature box 2.1 Migrants prefer to 'try before they buy'

Adapting to life and work in a new country can be a major life change for both the migrant and the migrating family who often accompanies them. Results from the LisNZ suggest migrants not only seek information and advice about New Zealand before deciding to migrate, but most choose to visit, study, and/or work here before gaining permanent residence. (See Figure 2.7.)

Insights

- Eighty-six percent of all migrants had been to New Zealand before taking up permanent residence and 55 percent of all migrants had been employed.
- Seventy-four percent of onshore approvals had worked in New Zealand before gaining residence (compared with only 6 percent of offshore approvals). Fifty-four percent of offshore approvals had spent time in New Zealand before residence.
- Business (94 percent), Family Partner (92 percent), and Skilled principal (92 percent) migrants were the most likely migrants to have spent time in New Zealand before permanent residence and Pacific category migrants were the least likely (63 percent).
- Skilled principal migrants were more likely than other migrant groups to have worked in New Zealand before gaining permanent residence (74 percent).

Figure 2.7: Previous experience in New Zealand by immigration approval category



Almost all (91 percent) Skilled principal migrants who were approved onshore had been employed in New Zealand before being approved for residence. For Skilled principal offshore approvals, 54 percent had visited New Zealand (but not been employed), and only 8 percent had been employed in New Zealand previously. Thirty-seven percent of Skilled principal offshore approvals had never visited New Zealand before gaining residence.

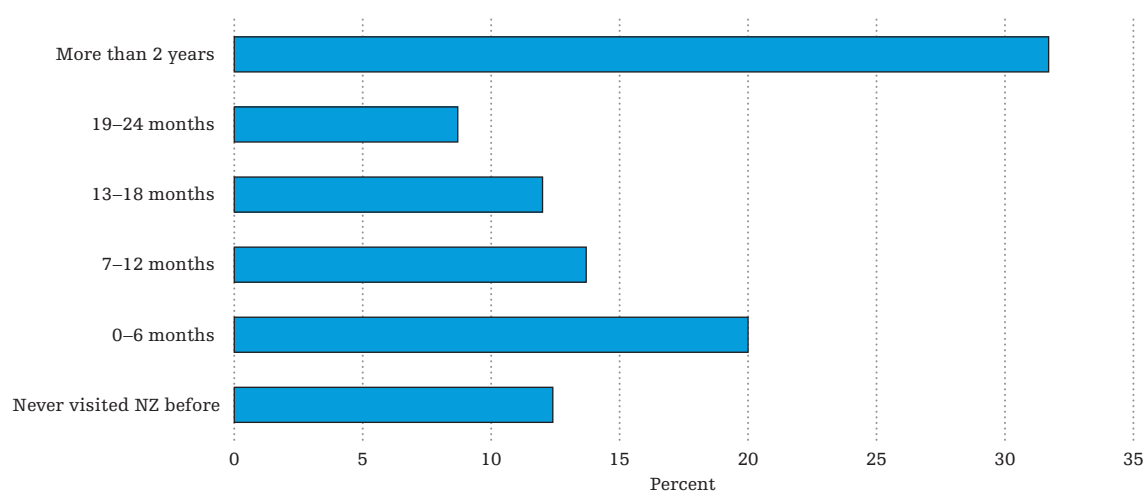
Previous work experience in New Zealand had less effect on the employment rate for Skilled principal migrants than for other migrant categories. This is because immigration policies usually require Skilled principal applicants to hold a prearranged job offer (for more details, see sections 5.2.13 and 5.2.14).

2.2.5 Previous time in New Zealand

Over half (53 percent) of all migrants had spent more than 12 months in New Zealand before gaining permanent residence, and almost a third (32 percent) of all migrants had spent more than two years here. (See Figure 2.8.)

Business migrants had spent the most time in New Zealand, with 78 percent having spent over two years. This reflects the route to residence for Business migrants, many of whom followed a pathway from the Long Term Business Visa (a temporary work permit) to residence through the Entrepreneur Category.

Figure 2.8: Length of time migrants spent in New Zealand before gaining residence



2.2.6 English language skills

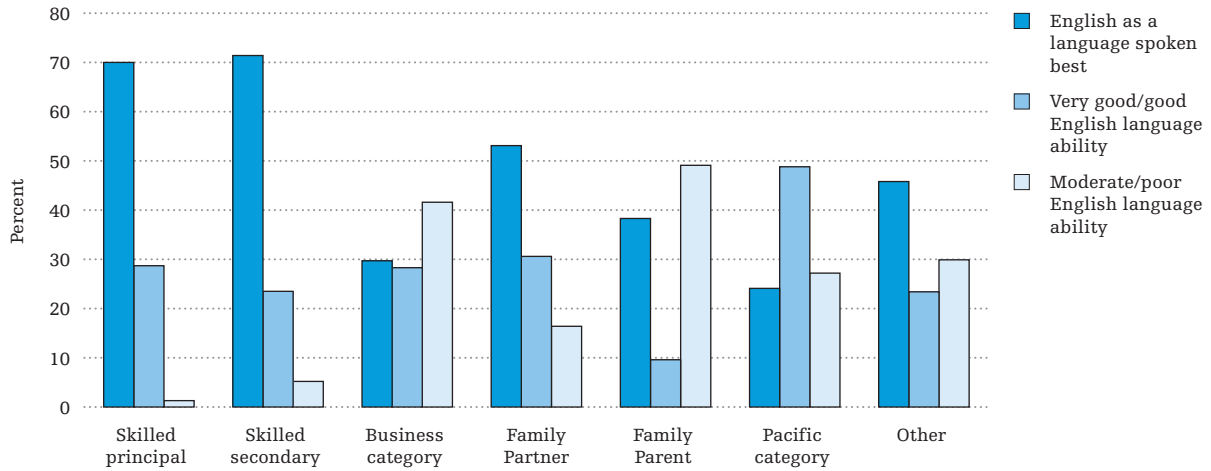
Most migrants who gain residence through skilled and business policies must have a minimum standard of English language.¹⁹ This requirement is reflected in the large proportion of migrants with strong English language skills (86 percent), with 59 percent of all migrants reporting English to be their main language or one of the languages they spoke best, and 27 percent reporting good to very good English language proficiency. Only 13 percent of all migrants reported their English language skills as moderate or poor.

As would be expected, Skilled migrants were most likely to report English as a language they spoke best (70 percent of Skilled principal and 71 percent of Skilled secondary migrants). This was followed by Family Partner (53 percent), Family Parent (38 percent), and Business (30 percent) migrants. Pacific category migrants were the least likely to report English as a language they spoke best (24 percent), although about half of this group (49 percent) reported their English language skills as good or very good. (See Figure 2.9.)

¹⁹ There is no minimum standard of English language skills for principal applicants applying for residence through the Talent Visa and Long Term Skill Shortage List Occupation residence categories.

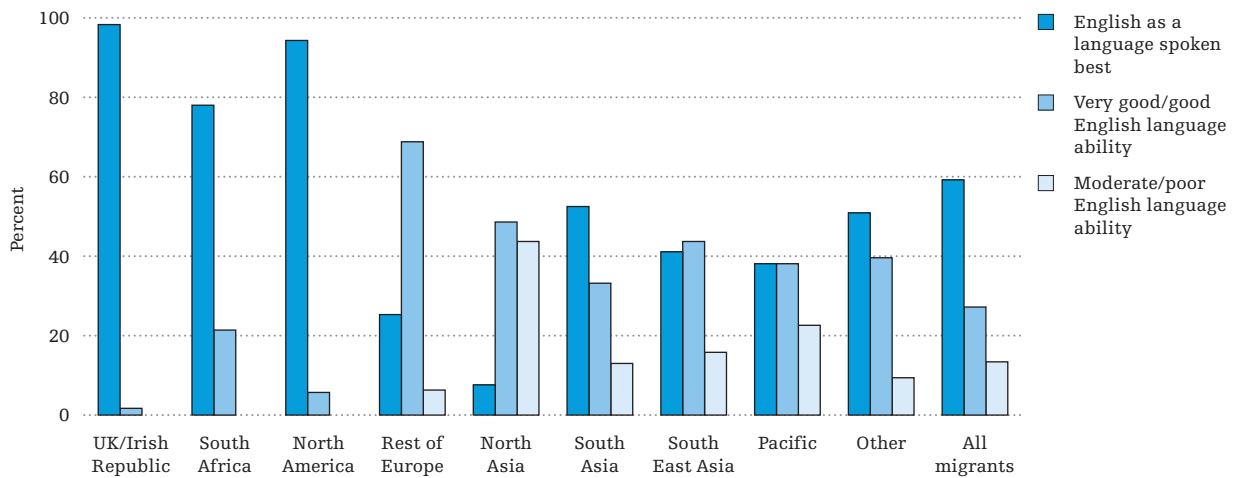
Only about 1 percent of Skilled principal migrants and 5 percent of Skilled secondary migrants rated their English language skills as moderate or poor, whereas almost half of the Family Parent migrants (49 percent) and 42 percent of Business migrants rated their English language skills as moderate or poor.

Figure 2.9: English language skills of migrants by immigration approval category



As would be expected, regional differences in English language skills were evident, with migrants from English-speaking countries reporting the highest proficiency. About a quarter of the European migrants (excluding UK/Irish Republic migrants) reported English as a language they spoke best and nearly 70 percent of this group reported having good or very good English language skills. Fifty-three percent of South Asian migrants reported English to be a language they spoke best. About half of the North Asian migrants and 44 percent of those from South East Asia reported speaking good to very good English. However, migrants from North Asia also reported the lowest levels of English language skills, followed by those from the Pacific, South East Asia, and South Asia. (See Figure 2.10.)

Figure 2.10: English language skills of migrants by region of origin

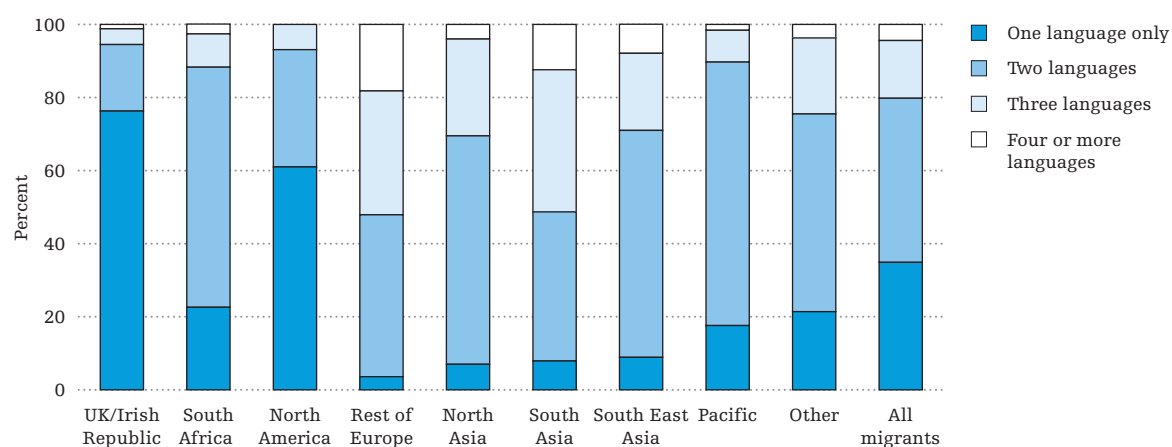


2.2.7 Languages spoken

Migrants were also asked about other languages they could speak.²⁰ More than one-third (35 percent) of all migrants reported speaking only one language, while the remaining 65 percent said they spoke more than one language (see Figure 2.11). The 2006 Census of Population and Dwellings showed that around 81 percent of people in New Zealand speak only one language.²¹

In terms of regional results, migrants from the UK/Irish Republic and North America were most likely to report speaking only one language, while more people from the Pacific, South Africa, North Asia, and South East Asia reported fluency in two languages. About half of the migrants from the Rest of Europe and South Asia reported speaking three or more languages.

Figure 2.11: Number of languages spoken by migrants by region of origin



After English, the most common languages spoken best by new migrants were Chinese dialects (Sinitic nfd), followed by Northern Chinese (including Mandarin), and Hindi. (See Table 2.2.)

²⁰ Languages were classified using Statistics New Zealand's *Standard Classification of Language (1999)*.

²¹ Sourced from the Statistics New Zealand website <http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/census-outputs>.

Table 2.2: Languages spoken best by migrants by immigration approval category

Language	Immigration approval category (%)							Total (%)
	Skilled principal	Skilled secondary	Business category	Family Partner	Family Parent	Pacific category	Other	
English	70.0	71.5	29.7	53.6	38.7	24.1	45.3	59.3
Sinitic nfd ¹	6.1	3.2	8.2	8.1	3.5	S	4.2	5.4
Northern Chinese ²	4.2	3.2	12.8	5.7	6.5	S	3.3	4.7
Hindi	3.3	3.4	2.3	3.7	10.0	13.0	7.9	4.5
Samoan	S	S	S	2.4	3.0	48.1	11.2	3.5
Korean	1.9	2.0	32.0	0.9	1.3	S	0.9	3.4
Afrikaans	3.8	5.3	S	0.6	2.6	S	1.9	3.0
Yue ³	1.4	0.6	5.5	3.0	3.5	S	2.8	1.9
Tagalog	1.5	2.4	S	1.7	S	S	2.3	1.5
German	1.8	2.0	1.4	1.7	S	S	S	1.5
Punjabi	1.0	S	S	4.0	3.0	S	2.3	1.4
Tongan	0.3	S	S	1.3	0.9	12.3	4.2	1.3
Other language(s)	14.7	14.4	9.1	22.1	17.8	8.6	15.4	15.7
Total weighted	12,490	8,470	2,190	7,020	2,300	1,620	2,140	36,220

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

¹Sinitic languages are Chinese dialects; nfd = not further defined.

²Northern Chinese includes Mandarin.

³Yue includes Cantonese.

Symbol: S = suppressed for confidentiality reasons.

2.2.8 Marital status

Three out of four migrants had a spouse or partner. One in 10 had a New Zealand-born spouse or partner. As expected, Family Partner migrants were most likely to have a New Zealand-born spouse or partner (45 percent) compared with other migrants. Skilled secondary migrants were the most likely to have a spouse or partner born outside of New Zealand (85 percent). Migrants classified in the Other category were the most likely to report not having a spouse or partner (51 percent),²² but this is likely to be because most migrants in this category were relatively young. (See Table 2.3.)

²² This category consists mainly of Family Sibling and Family Adult Child (77 percent), along with a small number of migrants approved through various International/Humanitarian Stream categories (excluding refugees).



Most migrants had been to New Zealand prior to gaining residence.

Table 2.3: Marital status of migrants by immigration approval category

Marital status	Immigration approval category (%)							Total (%)
	Skilled principal	Skilled secondary	Business category	Family Partner	Family Parent	Pacific category	Other	
Partnered	71.6	87.1	60.3	81.5	68.3	65.4	49.5	74.7
NZ-born spouse/partner	3.0	0.7	S	45.0	S	1.2	2.8	10.2
Non-NZ born spouse/partner	67.1	85.2	58.9	36.2	66.5	63.6	44.3	63.4
Unknown where spouse/partner born	1.4	1.1	S	S	1.3	S	2.4	1.1
Not partnered	28.4	13.1	39.3	18.5	31.3	34.0	50.5	25.3
Total weighted	12,480	8,460	2,190	7,020	2,300	1,620	2,120	36,180

Note: Excludes responses identified as not specified.

Symbol: S = suppressed for confidentiality reasons.

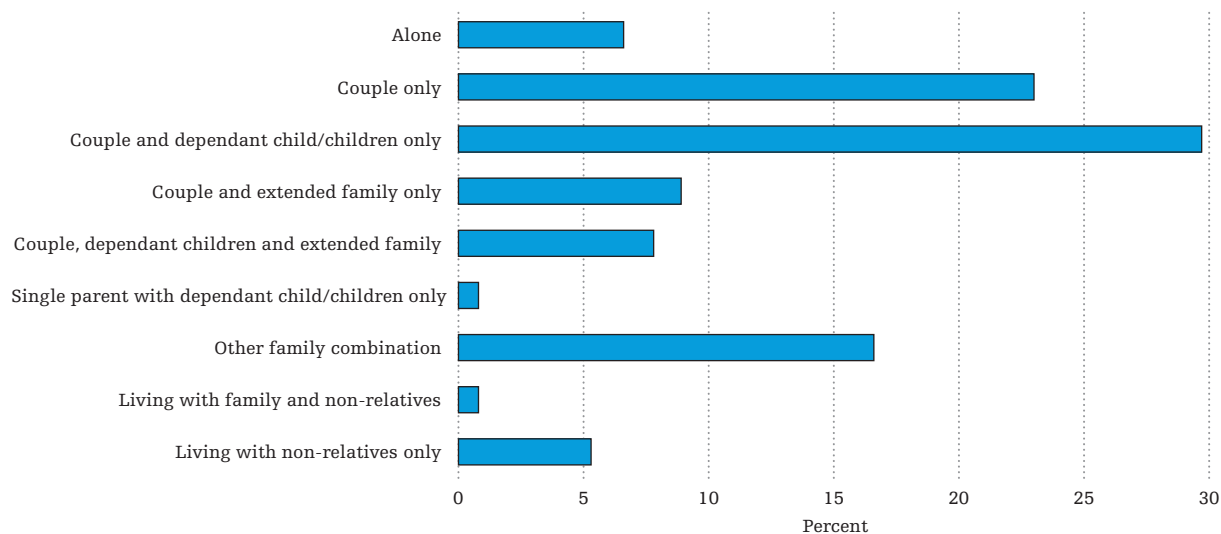
2.2.9 Living arrangements in New Zealand

Most migrants (88 percent) were living with other family members in New Zealand. Thirty-eight percent were living with a partner and dependant children, 23 percent lived with a partner only, while 17 percent lived in other family combinations. (See Figure 2.12.)²³

Migrants' living arrangements varied according to their immigration approval category. Skilled principal migrants were the most likely to live alone or with non-relatives. Migrants from the Family Partner category were most likely to live as a couple without children, whereas Skilled secondary migrants tended to live with their spouse or partner and dependant child/children. Pacific category migrants were most likely to live with their spouse or partner, dependant child/children, and members of their extended family; Other category migrants tended to live in other family combinations.

²³ Other family combinations could include migrants living with a sponsor who is neither a dependant nor an extended family member, such as a parent living with an adult child, or adult siblings living in the same dwelling.

Figure 2.12: Living arrangements of migrants



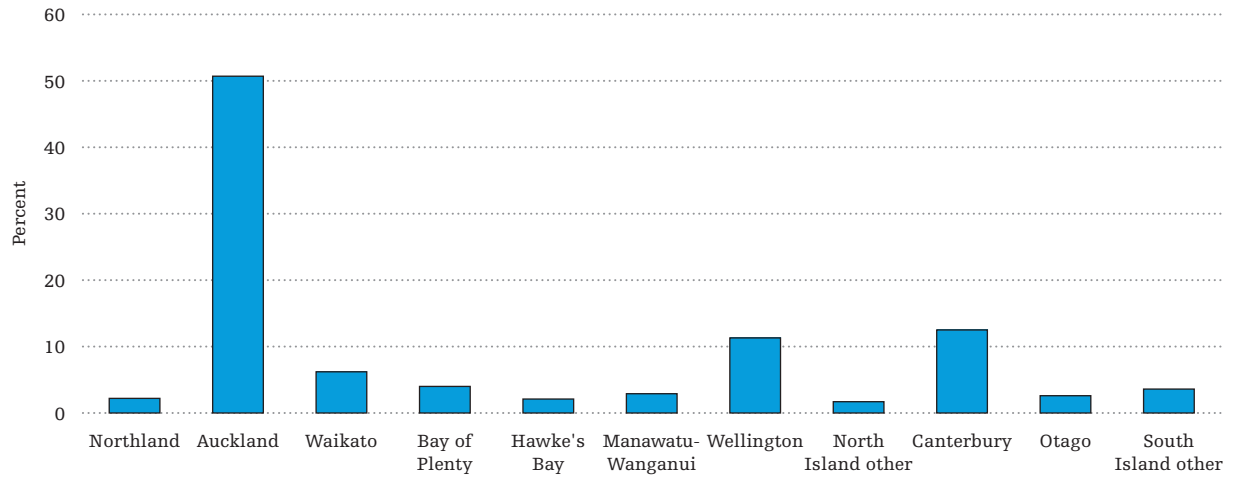
2.2.10 Region of settlement in New Zealand

About half of all migrants were living in the Auckland region, followed by 13 percent in the Canterbury region, 11 percent in Wellington, and 6 percent in the Waikato (see Figure 2.13). The proportion of migrants living in the Auckland region was comparable with the proportion of the total overseas-born population living there. The 2006 Census of Population and Dwellings showed that 52 percent of overseas-born people in New Zealand lived in the Auckland region.²⁴

While most Business (73 percent), Family Parent (74 percent), and Pacific category (76 percent) migrants settled in Auckland, over a quarter of migrants from the Skilled and Family Partner categories settled in the Wellington and Canterbury regions.

²⁴ Sourced from the Statistics New Zealand website <http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/census-outputs>.

Figure 2.13: Region in which migrants lived in New Zealand



Note: Excludes records where the New Zealand region was not recorded.

Overall, migrants were most likely to settle in Auckland regardless of country of origin. A notable proportion of migrants from the UK/Irish Republic (18 percent) and the Rest of Europe (18 percent) also tended to settle in Canterbury. A significant proportion of North Americans (21 percent) settled in Wellington.