

ABSTRACT

Why us? Men, masculinity, and the search for meaning

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This oral presentation reflects work to date on a research project exploring the career experiences of tertiary qualified South Asian men who are new to Aotearoa. Literature suggests that professional South Asian men struggle when seeking employment in their chosen field in Western contexts, and often must settle for low skill / entry level work. This has been suggested in my own informal conversations with men in these contexts. In my research, I aim to learn about participant experiences of emigrating and gaining employment in Aotearoa, through using narrative inquiry as a methodology. This presentation will use autoethnographic techniques to explore and analyse my own experiences as a South Asian migrant growing up in England and Aotearoa. This process will in turn help me to understand and situate participant cultural experiences (Ellis et al., 2011). It will outline key theoretical frameworks and intertwine personal vignettes to bring these to life. Literature surrounding career, racism, and cultural ideals of masculinity will be drawn on and woven into my preliminary theoretical framing. Career theory will be used to help explain participant career decisions, and potential avenues for re-training. Critical theory will be applied to understand the intersectional nature of discrimination and some of the existing mitigations. Masculinities and their construction will be central to understanding the men's and my own experiences, in particular the inclusionary and exclusionary effects of the 'kiwi bloke' (Phillips, 1987) to sense making. This preliminary thinking will inform the rest of the project, with semi-structured interviews (planned for March – April 2023) and reflexive thematic analysis used to construct themes (Terry & Hayfield, 2021). Self-reflection grounded in theory will guide the co-construction (with participants) of themes from participant stories.

References

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