

# *Attitudes toward Immigrants, Immigration, and Multiculturalism in New Zealand: A Social Psychological Analysis*<sup>1</sup>

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The research examines attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy based on a random sample of 2,020 New Zealand households. The analyses revealed that New Zealanders have positive attitudes toward immigrants and endorse multiculturalism to a greater extent than Australians and EU citizens. In addition, structural equation modeling produced an excellent fit of the data to a social psychological model commencing with multicultural ideology and intercultural contact as exogenous variables, leading, in turn, to diminished perceptions of threat, more positive attitudes toward immigrants, and, finally, support for New Zealand's policies on the number and sources of migrants.

## *INTRODUCTION*

New Zealand has always been a nation of migrants, built originally upon the tribal base of its indigenous Maori population. The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi permitted early British settlement, and European migration to New Zealand grew steadily in the late nineteenth century due to widespread labor shortages in the country. Although New Zealand was also home to a smaller number of Chinese and Indian settlers during this period, Asian migrants were subject to racist legislation and discriminatory practices (Leckie, 1995; Ip and Pang, 2005). There were few changes in these patterns throughout most of the twentieth century as New Zealand's immigration policies continued to favor European settlers, particularly those of British, Protestant Anglo-Celtic origins.

<sup>1</sup>The research and manuscript preparation were supported by the Foundation for Science, Research and Technology (UOWX0203, Strangers in Town), Victoria University of Wellington (#121980), and the Royal Society of New Zealand (James Cook Fellowship). The authors would like to thank the staff at the CATI facility, University of Waikato, for their work on data collection.

Indeed, an unofficial “white New Zealand policy” was practiced by all governments until 1945, and at the end of World War II, New Zealand had one of the most ethnically homogeneous societies of European settlement (Brooking and Rabel, 1995).

The postwar period saw a flurry of Pacific migration due to severe labor shortages and New Zealand’s special position in the region. However, as the labor market cooled, so did the enthusiasm for Pacific migration, and the government engaged in drastic measures to identify and deport overstayers in the 1970s (Teaiwa and Mallon, 2005). It was not until the 1980s that the policies underpinning the steady stream of almost exclusively European migration to New Zealand underwent a radical change. In 1986 the government opened the doors to nontraditional sources of migration, and in 1991 the active recruitment of skilled and entrepreneurial immigrants commenced (New Zealand Immigration Service, 1991). Since then, Asian migration has seen an enormous burst of activity, increasing 240 percent in the last ten years. China and India have been the largest contributors to New Zealand’s growing population this century, and at present almost 40 percent of overseas-born persons in New Zealand originate from Asia and the Pacific (New Zealand Immigration Service, 2004; Zodgekar, 2005).

In 2003 the New Zealand population reached 4 million. On the basis of its 2001 census the ethnic origin of the population was recorded as: 80% European, 14.6% Maori, 6.5 Pacific, 6.6% Asian, and 6.9% other.<sup>2</sup> One in five of these persons is now overseas-born. Future projections forecast a growth in all ethnic minorities over the next 15 years, ranging from 28 percent (Pasifika) to 120 percent (Asians). Cultural diversity is a reality now and will only increase in the future (Smeith and Dunstan, 2004).

Nevertheless, if these developments are viewed in an international context, New Zealand has had a comparatively short time to accept and respond effectively to its increasing cultural diversity. The transition from what has traditionally been regarded as a bicultural society, founded on the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, to a *de facto* multicultural nation has further complicated the situation. Consequently, it is worthwhile to examine New Zealanders’ current attitudes toward immigrants, immigration, and immigration policy as well as their general acceptance of multiculturalism. It is also instructive, where possible, to compare these attitudes with those held in other countries, particularly

<sup>2</sup>The New Zealand Census permits the identification with more than one ethnic group; consequently, the total exceeds 100%.

countries with different immigration policies and histories. These are the first two objectives of this study.

It is also important to examine the predictors of attitudes toward immigrants and their relationship to the endorsement of immigration policy (Esses, Dovidio, and Hodson, 2002). A range of factors may be associated with these outcomes – personal factors, such as age and gender; demographic factors, such as place of residence or proportion of migrants in one's neighborhood; and socioeconomic factors, such as employment and income (Berry, Kalin, and Taylor, 1977; Kirchler and Zani, 1995; Quillian, 1995; Jackson *et al.*, 2001). This research, however, concentrates on social psychological factors as predictors of attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policies. As such, it follows Dovidio and Esses's (2001) suggestion that psychology has an important role to play in understanding the processes associated with immigrants and immigration and Pettigrew's (1998) recommendation that the discipline should apply its insights to international affairs.

### *A Social Psychological Model of Attitudes toward Immigrants*

While immigration has been studied extensively by sociologists, political scientists, demographers, historians, geographers, and economists, psychologists have traditionally been relatively silent on the issue (Dovidio and Esses, 2001). Nevertheless, psychology does have a significant contribution to make to immigration studies, particularly in terms of understanding and predicting intergroup perceptions and relations, including attitudes toward immigrants and immigration.

Classic social psychological theories of intergroup relations emphasize the central role of threat and competition in predicting intergroup attitudes (Levine and Campbell, 1972; Tajfel and Turner, 1979), and empirical research has consistently borne out their negative consequences for attitudes toward immigrants in international and multicultural research (Quillian, 1995; Jackson *et al.*, 2001). Threat is most commonly discussed in terms of realistic and symbolic domains with the former referring to tangible threats arising as a result of scarce resources, particularly economic assets and employment opportunities, and the latter concerning differences in norms, beliefs, and values that constitute a threat to the ingroup's worldview (Stephan and Stephan, 1996). Threat has also been discussed in relation to "zero-sum beliefs," the notion that as more resources become available to immigrant outgroups, less is accessible to the native-born ingroup (Esses, Dovidio, and Hodson, 1998; Esses *et al.*, 2001). Realistic and symbolic threat, as well as zero-sum beliefs,

have been shown to predict attitudes toward immigrants in a variety of settings (Stephan *et al.*, 1998; Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman, 1999; Esses *et al.*, 2005).

More distal influences on attitudes toward immigrants include both personal factors, such as general attitudes toward diversity, and situational experiences, including the quality and quantity of contact with immigrants. Attitudes toward diversity have been examined under the auspices of multicultural ideology and associated with a sense of economic and cultural security as well as greater acceptance of immigrants (Berry, Kalin, and Taylor, 1977; Berry, 2006). Decades of research have also established a link between intergroup contact and attitudes. Contact in friendship, work and neighborhood domains has had beneficial effects in reducing prejudice, particularly when contact occurs under equal status, voluntary, and cooperative conditions (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000).

What has been much less frequently considered, however, is the relationship between the above variables and support of immigration policy (*see* Jackson *et al.*, 2001, for an exception). This research tests a social psychological model that commences with two sets of exogenous variables: multicultural ideology and intercultural contact. It is proposed that stronger endorsement of multiculturalism and greater contact lead to a reduction of perceived threat and, consequently, to more positive attitudes toward immigrants and, in turn, to more support for current immigration policies that recruit migrants from nontraditional sources and target their number at about 1% of the population per annum. This is the third objective of this research.

## METHOD

### *Participants and Procedure*

Two thousand and twenty adults (877 males and 1,143 females) aged 18 and over, who were drawn from a random sample of households in New Zealand, participated in the research. Their ages ranged from 18 to 65+ and were distributed as follows: 18–25 (9%), 26–35 (15%), 36–45 (22%), 46–55 (20%), 56–65 (16%), and 65+ (18%). The majority of the respondents (70.4%) described themselves as New Zealand European. Five percent of the respondents classified themselves as Maori, 4% as Asian, 1% as Pacific, and 6% as dual or multiethnic; the remainder generated other categories to describe their ethnic backgrounds (*e.g.*, Greek, Persian, South African).

Fifty-nine percent of the respondents were married. The majority of participants was New Zealand-born (76%), New Zealand citizens (89%), and reported English to be their first language (91%). Sixty-nine percent were employed at the time of the survey. With respect to level of education, 83% had

completed at least secondary education and 60% had post-secondary credentials, including 30% tertiary degree holders. Respondents were grouped into three relative income levels: low (22%, under \$20,000), medium (40%, \$20,000–50,000), and high (26%, over \$50,000).

The surveys were administered by trained research assistants using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) facility. Participants were selected from households throughout New Zealand from a list of randomly generated telephone numbers that were purchased for research purposes and were not accompanied by the names of the participants. The interviewers prefaced the survey with an introduction explaining the nature of the study and emphasized that participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary. A total of 3,811 eligible participants were contacted, and 2,020 completed the interview, representing a 53% response rate.

### *Materials*

In addition to a section on demographic information, the survey included measurements of: Multicultural Ideology, Acculturation Expectations, Contact with Immigrants, Perceived Intergroup Threat, Attitudes toward Immigrants, and Support for Immigration Policy.

#### *Multicultural Ideology*

Multicultural ideology was assessed by a measure of attitudes toward diversity. This was composed of three items (*e.g.*, “How much do you agree or disagree that we should recognize that cultural and racial diversity is a fundamental characteristic of New Zealand?”) adapted from various international surveys, including the International Study of Attitudes toward Immigration and Settlement (Berry, 2006) and the Eurobarometer (2000) survey. Each item was rated using a 5-point scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* (1) to *Strongly Disagree* (5). Higher scores indicate a stronger endorsement of a society that promotes cultural diversity.

#### *Acculturation Expectations*

Attitudes toward integration, separation, and assimilation were assessed. Responses to three statements were made on 5-point *Agree–Disagree* scales with higher scores indicating stronger endorsement of a particular strategy. The statements were: (1) Immigrants should maintain their original culture while

also adopting New Zealand culture (Integration); (2) Immigrants should maintain their original culture as long as they do not mix it with New Zealand culture (Separation); and (3) Immigrants should give up their original culture for the sake of adopting New Zealand culture (Assimilation).

### *Intercultural Contact*

Intercultural contact was based on two measures. First, the frequency of contact was measured across three domains (*i.e.*, “How often do you interact with immigrants in your workplace/social life/neighborhood?”). Respondents indicated the extent of their contact with immigrants in each of these three areas using 5-point rating scales ranging from *Never* (1) to *Very Often* (5).

Second, an intergroup anxiety measure comprised of three items was adapted from Stephan *et al.* (1998) to assess how respondents would feel when asked to imagine they were interacting with a group of people from a different ethnic background. A sample item is, “How impatient do you think you would feel?” Respondents used 3-point rating scales ranging from *Not at All* (1) to *Very* (3) with higher scores indicating a greater level of anxiety.

### *Perceived Threat*

Three scales were used to assess feelings of threat and competition in relation to immigrants: realistic threat, symbolic threat (3 items each), and zero-sum beliefs (4 items). Sample items are: “How much do you agree or disagree that immigrants take jobs away from other New Zealanders?” (realistic threat); “How much do you agree or disagree that immigration tends to threaten New Zealand culture?” (symbolic threat); and “How much do you agree or disagree that the more political power immigrants obtain, the more difficult it is for New Zealanders already living here?” (zero-sum beliefs). Each of the intergroup threat measures was assessed using a 5-point *Agree–Disagree* scale with higher scores indicating stronger feelings of intergroup threat.

### *Attitudes toward Immigrants*

Two measures were used in the assessment of attitudes toward immigrants. Three items tapped New Zealanders’ Attitudes toward Immigrants (*e.g.*, “Immigrants have made an important contribution to New Zealand”). These items were rated on 5-point *Agree–Disagree* scales with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward immigrants.

In addition, intergroup perceptions were assessed using a general measure (“If you were to describe your general views of immigrants on a numerical scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is very unfavorable and 100 is very favorable, what would your rating be?”). Ratings were also obtained for migrants from specific countries: Australia, Great Britain, South Africa, China, India, Samoa, and Somalia.

### *Support for Immigration Policy*

Support for immigration policy was assessed in two domains, the number and origins of immigrants. In each instance New Zealand’s current policy was elaborated, *i.e.*, that approximately 45,000 new immigrants are targeted per annum and that immigrants are drawn from a worldwide pool, rather than from selected (traditional) countries. In the first instance participants responded on a 1 (*Much too Low*) to 5 (*Much too High*) scale with the midpoint (3) being “*About Right*.”<sup>3</sup> In the case referring to policies supporting the ethnic diversity of immigrants, participants used a 5-point *Agree–Disagree* scale. In this case, higher scores indicate greater support of current policy.

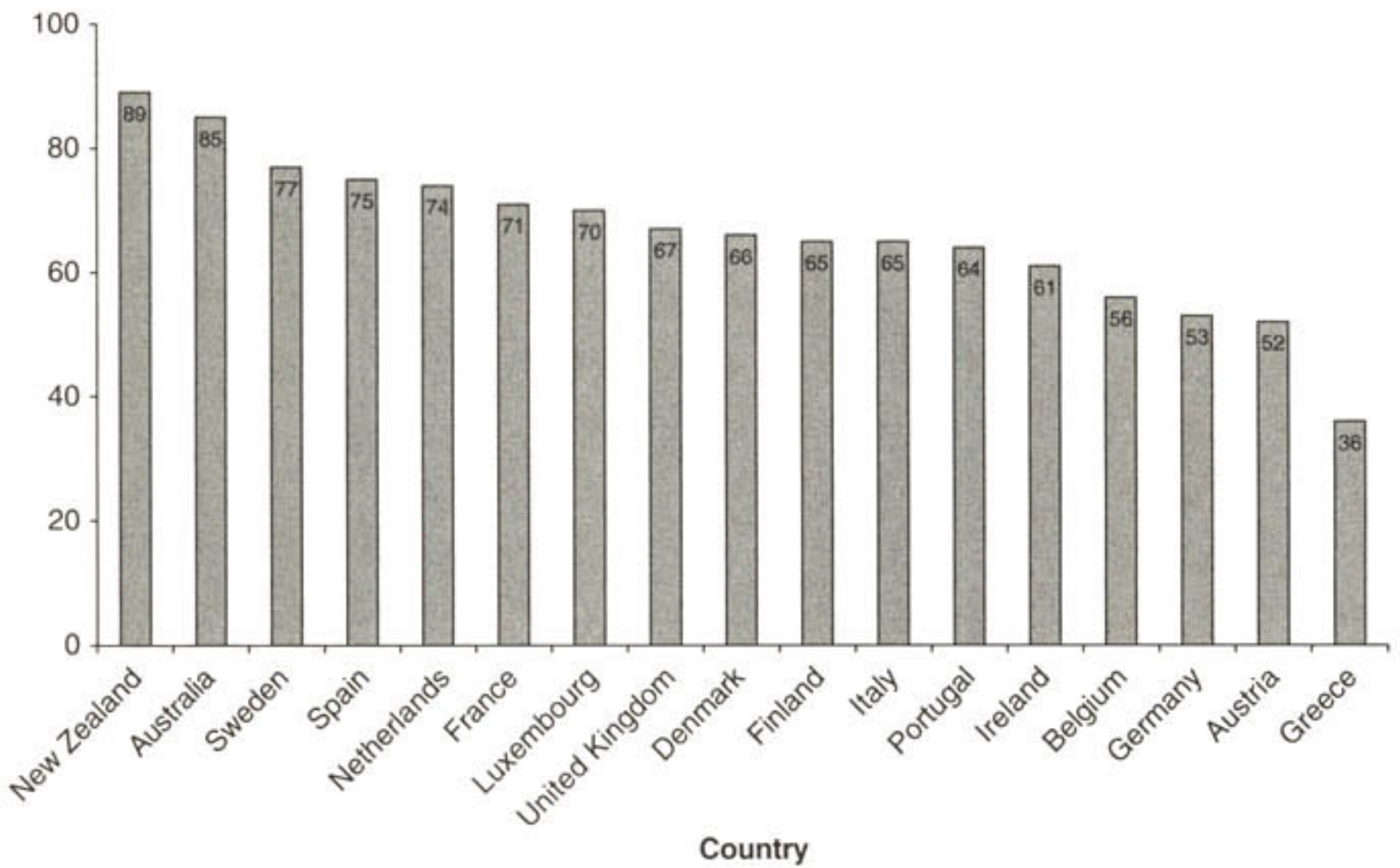
## *RESULTS*

The results are reported in four parts: (1) the preliminary psychometric analyses of the measurement scales; (2) descriptive data on attitudes toward immigrants and immigration, including international comparisons; (3) analyses of the relationship between personal characteristics and attitudes toward immigration; and (4) a structural equation model of attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy based on the psycho-social variables of multicultural ideology, intercultural contact, and threat.

### *Psychometric Analyses*

The psychometric analyses were conducted for the internal consistencies of all multi-item measures. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the scales

<sup>3</sup>A small proportion of participants (7.8%) responded that immigration rates in New Zealand were much too low or too low. Consequently, to assess policy endorsement in the subsequent structural equation model, these respondents were excluded from the analysis, and the measurement scale was recoded on 3-point scale (1 = Much too High; 3 = About Right) so that higher scores indicate greater endorsement of government policy.

**Figure I. Endorsement of Multiculturalism in 17 Countries**

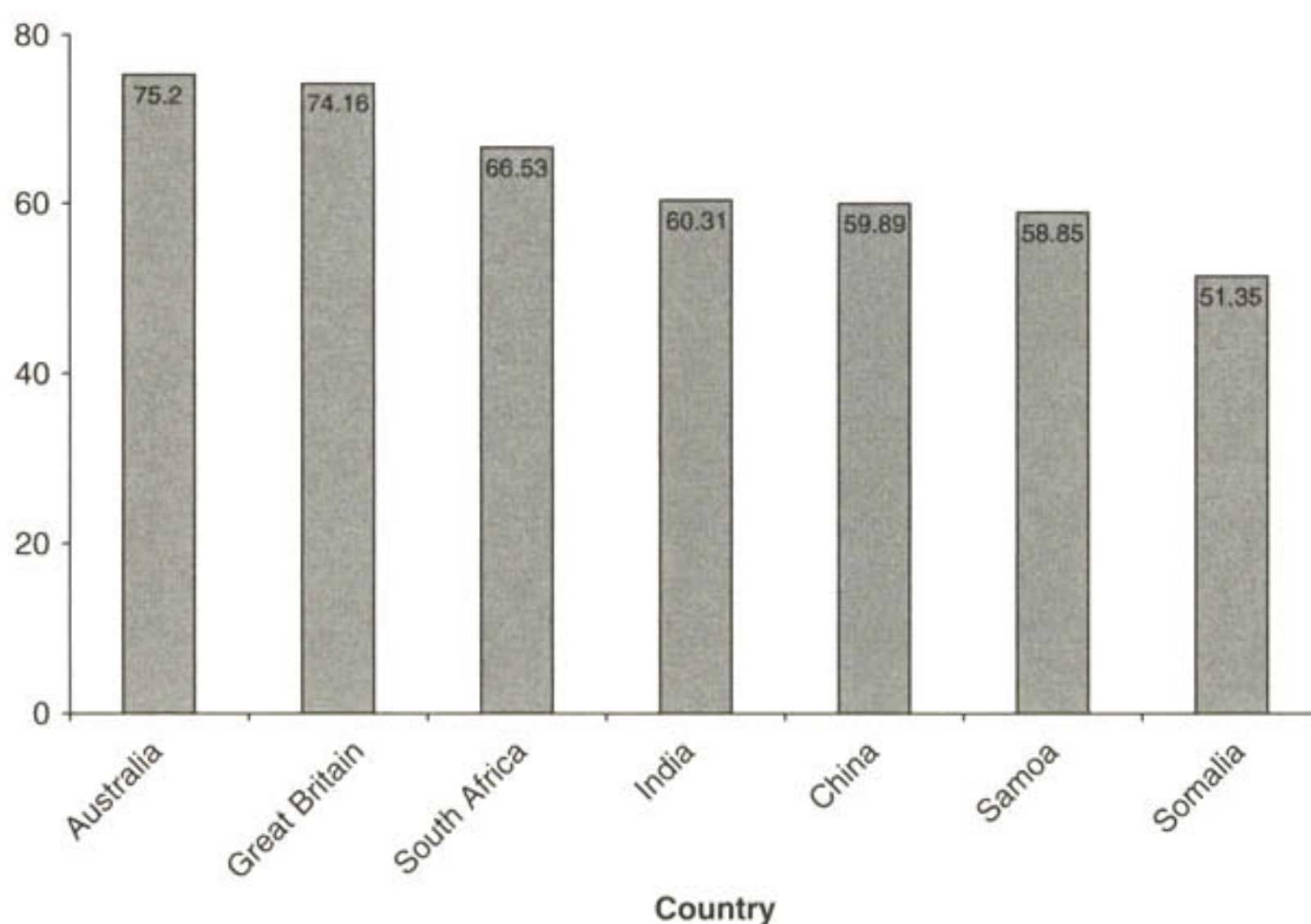
assessing multicultural ideology (3 items, 0.74), intercultural contact (3 items, 0.59), realistic and symbolic threat (6 items, 0.81), zero-sum beliefs (4 items, 0.84), and attitudes toward migrants (3 items, 0.72) demonstrated acceptable internal consistency considering the small number of items in each scale. This was confirmed by the calculation of the mean interitem correlations for the scales, which in all cases fell between the optimal range of 0.2 to 0.4 as recommended by Briggs and Cheek (1986).

#### *Attitudes toward Immigrants and Multiculturalism*

The findings revealed that New Zealanders strongly endorse a multicultural ideology. Eighty-nine percent agreed that it is a good thing for a society to be made up of people from different races, religions, and cultures. This is significantly greater than agreement found in Australia (85%,  $z = 4.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Dunn, 2003) and the 36–75% agreement found in European Union countries ( $zs > 4.3$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Eurobarometer, 2000).<sup>4</sup> The comparative results are presented in Figure I.

<sup>4</sup>Comparative calculations were based on total sample sizes in Australian and EU surveys as the item level numbers were not available.



**Figure II. Perceptions of Immigrants from Seven Source Countries**

Support for multiculturalism was also evidenced by 80% agreement with the statement that it is important to accept a wide variety of cultures in New Zealand and a strong preference for migrant integration. Eighty-two percent of respondents endorsed integration compared to only 21% support for assimilation and 28% support for separation.

On the whole attitudes toward immigrants were positive. For example, 81% agreed that immigrants have made a valuable contribution to New Zealand, and 82% agreed that immigrants have qualities that they admire. That being said, perceptions of some immigrant groups were more favorable than others ( $F(6, 1547) = 181.2, p < .001$ ). Figure II presents the ratings of immigrants from seven countries. Post hoc tests following the repeated measures analysis of variance revealed that immigrants from Australia were perceived significantly more favorably than all other groups. The preference for Australians was followed by British, South African, and Indian migrants, with each of these groups differing significantly from the others. There were no significant differences in perceptions of Indians and Chinese or between Chinese and Samoans, but immigrants from Somalia were viewed less favorably than all other immigrant groups.

The perceptions of realistic and symbolic threat were low to moderate. Twenty-six percent agreed that immigration increases the level of crime, and

TABLE 1  
PERCENTAGE OF AGREEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND AND CANADIAN SURVEYS

Domain	Item	NZ		Canada	
		N	%	N	%
Multiculturalism	It is important to accept a variety of cultures.	2,020	80	1,981	93
Threat	Immigrants take away jobs from New Zealanders/Canadians.	1,995	25	1,932	16
Endorsement of Policy	The number of immigrants is about right.	1,910	53	1,640	50

21% maintained that allowing immigrant cultures to thrive means that New Zealand culture is weakened. These responses are compared to Canadian data in Table 1 (Hiebert, 2003). Analyses indicate that Canadians were more supportive of multiculturalism ( $z = 6.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and less likely to perceive economic threat ( $z = 6.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Nevertheless, New Zealanders were just as likely to agree that the number of immigrants is about right ( $z = 1.79$ , *ns*).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, just over half (53%) supported government policy on the number of migrants. In addition, 61% agreed that migrants from diverse source countries should be admitted.

### *Personal Characteristics and Attitudes toward Immigrants*

More positive attitudes toward immigrants were found in those who were overseas-born ( $M = 3.98$ ), compared to New Zealand-born ( $M = 3.80$ ;  $t(1999) = 5.46$ ,  $p < .001$ ). More favorable attitudes were also observed in those who could speak a language other than English or Maori ( $M = 3.99$ ) compared to those who could not ( $M = 3.79$ ;  $t(2001) = 6.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In addition, tertiary-educated respondents ( $M = 4.05$ ) had more positive attitudes than others ( $M = 3.77$ ;  $t(1999) = 8.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, there were no differences between men and women ( $t(2004) = 1.48$ , *ns*), between employed and unemployed ( $t(1035) = 0.15$ , *ns*), or across income levels ( $F(2, 2001) = 0.57$ , *ns*). Age was also unrelated to attitudes toward immigrants ( $r = 0.01$ ).

### *Attitudes toward Immigrants and Immigration: A Structural Equation Model*

A key objective of the current study was to test the adequacy of a theory-driven model predicting the functional relationships among social psychological

<sup>5</sup>In both surveys immigration figures were cited. For Canada, 200,000 migrants and 30,000 refugees in relation to a population of 30 million (0.76%) and in New Zealand 45,000 migrants in relation to a population of 4 million (1.1%).

variables. The model proposes direct paths linking five latent variables: Multicultural Ideology, Contact, Perceived Threat, Attitudes toward Immigrants, and Endorsement of Immigration Policy. The proposed model was tested using AMOS 6.0 (Arbuckle, 1999). Figure III presents this model showing the relationships of the indicator variables to the latent variables as well as the functional relationships among the latent variables.

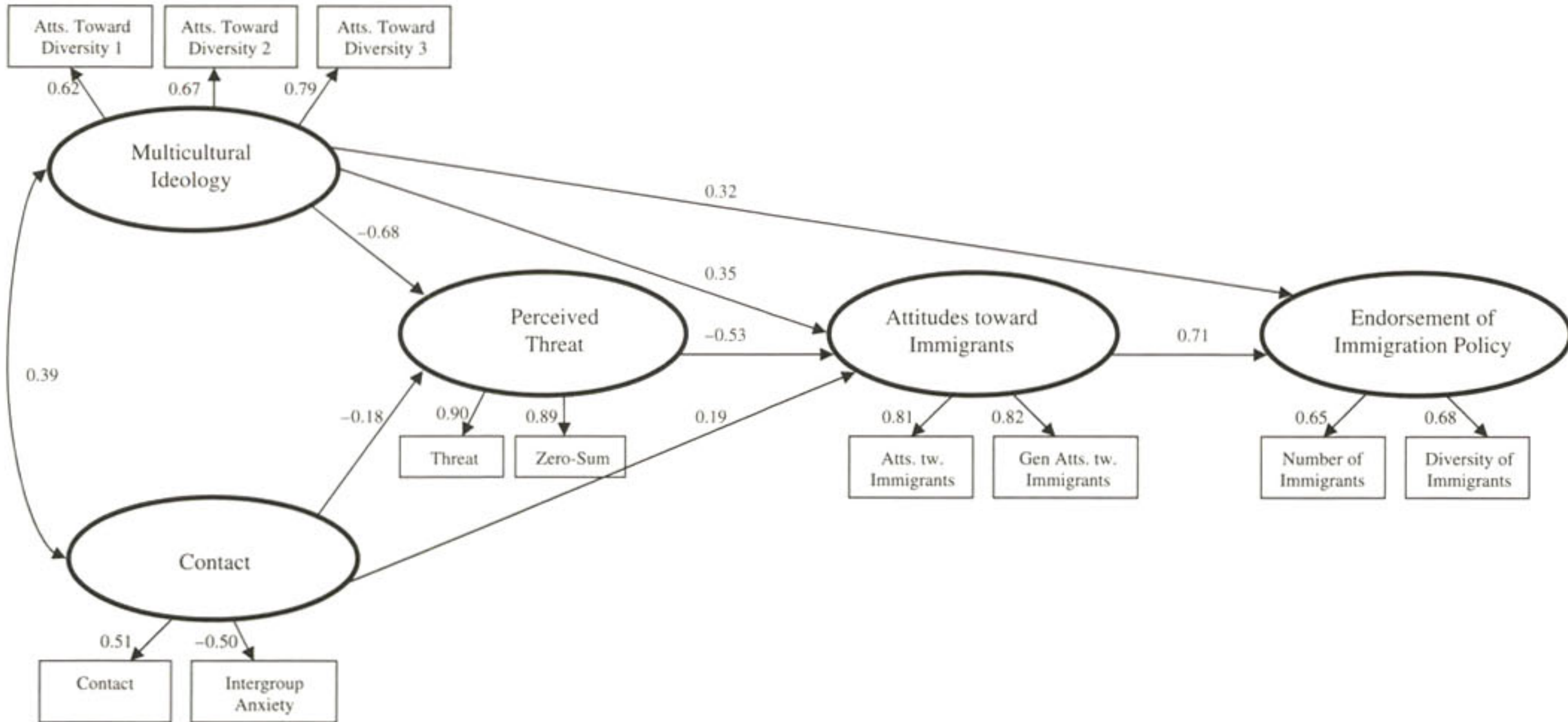
As shown in Figure III, two of the latent constructs, Multicultural Ideology and Contact with Immigrants, are considered exogenous variables in that their causes are not represented in the structural equation model. Three items tapping attitudes toward cultural diversity were used to assess the latent construct of Multicultural Ideology. The latent construct assessing Contact was based on two measures, one made up of two items assessing the frequency of contact with immigrants, and the other made up of three items assessing feelings of intergroup anxiety.<sup>6</sup>

The remaining three constructs are endogenous latent variables, *i.e.*, variables that are influenced by (and may influence) other latent variables. These are: Perceived Threat, Attitudes toward Immigrants, and Endorsement of Immigration Policy. The Perceived Threat construct is made up of two indicators: a measure assessing both symbolic and realistic forms of threat, along with a measure of zero-sum beliefs. Attitudes toward Immigrants is based on two attitudinal indicators: a measure of attitudes toward immigrants and a favorability rating of immigrants in general. All of the coefficients for the measurement model were significant and substantial in magnitude suggesting that the measures adequately assessed the latent variables (*see* Figure III).

Structural Equation Modeling techniques were used to assess the adequacy of the predicted model in explaining the relations among the latent variables. The magnitude of these relationships is indicated by the regression coefficients between the latent variables. Assessments of model fit indicate that all of the goodness-of-fit indices are exceptionally good. That is, this model has a chi square/df = 3.866, an adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) of 0.966 (GFI = 0.981), an incremental fit index (IFI; Bollen, 1989) of 0.985, a non-normed fit index (TLI; Bentler and Bonnett, 1980) of 0.976, a comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990) of 0.984, and a root mean square residual (RMSEA) of 0.046. The values for AGFI, GFI, and TLI are all much higher than the recommended value of 0.90, suggesting that the model

<sup>6</sup>In order to maintain the maximum number of respondents in the analysis, one measure of contact (contact at work) was not included in the model.

Figure III. A Model of Attitudes toward Immigrants and Immigration Policy



provides a very strong representation of the relationships among the variables in the proposed model.

In addition to the relationship between Contact and Multicultural Ideology, the modeling analysis confirmed the predicted influence of Multicultural Ideology and Contact on low levels of Perceived Threat and more positive Attitudes toward Immigrants. Moreover, Perceived Threat partially mediates the relationship between both Multicultural Ideology and Contact and Attitudes toward Immigrants. Based on these relationships in the model, a strong Multicultural Ideology, high levels of Contact, and low levels of Intergroup Threat relate directly to positive Attitudes toward Immigrants, and these attitudes in turn strongly relate to the endorsement of immigration policies concerning migrant numbers and sources.

## DISCUSSION

The research commenced with three objectives: (1) to explore New Zealanders' attitudes toward multiculturalism, immigrants, and immigration policy; (2) to compare these attitudes, where possible, to those held in other countries; and (3) to test a social psychological model of attitudes toward immigrants and endorsement of immigration policies. The findings showed that New Zealanders, in the main, have positive attitudes toward immigrants and that they strongly endorse multiculturalism. Their attitudes compare favorably with those of European Union citizens, but are not quite as positive as those held in Canada. Furthermore, the structural equation model demonstrated the mediating effects of perceived threat on the influences of multicultural ideology and intercultural contact on positive attitudes toward immigrants and subsequent support of immigration policy.

New Zealanders' positive attitudes toward multiculturalism are illustrated by their acceptance and valuing of cultural diversity as well as their strong endorsement of integration as a means of migrant adaptation. On the first count, New Zealanders are more likely to agree that it is a good thing for a society to be made up of different races, religions, and cultures than Australian or EU citizens. In addition, they are significantly more likely to favor integration than assimilation or separation as an acculturation strategy for immigrants – in marked contrast to the preference for assimilation in both Germany and the Netherlands (Van Oudenhoven, Prins, and Buunk, 1998; Zick *et al.*, 2001).

The differences observed between New Zealand and European Union countries can be interpreted in light of socio-political and historical factors, including the proportion of immigrants in the population, the extent of

TABLE 2  
INDICES OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY: SELECTED INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

Society of Settlement	% Immigrants	Actual Diversity Index	Policy Diversity Classification
Settler Societies			
Australia	24.6	-0.08	High
Canada	18.9	1.42	High
New Zealand	22.5	0.04	High
Former Colonial Societies			
France	10.6	-0.51	Low
Germany	9.0	-0.85	Low
Netherlands	9.9	-0.78	Medium
UK	6.8	-0.21	Medium
Recent Receiving Societies			
Finland	2.6	-0.65	Low
Norway	6.7	-0.97	Low
Portugal	2.3	-1.11	Medium
Sweden	11.2	-0.59	Medium

Source: Berry *et al.* (2006).

within-society diversity, and the status of diversity policies. These indices were calculated by Berry *et al.* (2006) for eight of the fifteen EU states that were compared to New Zealand on attitudes toward cultural diversity. These indices, along with those of New Zealand, are presented in Table 2. There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from these data. First, New Zealand represents a New World settlement society where approximately one in five of its population is overseas-born. This proportion is significantly higher than former colonial societies such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, each with less than 10% new migrants, and recent receiving societies, such as Finland and Portugal, each with less than 3% new settlers. Second, New Zealand is generally more diverse than EU states, when diversity is assessed in terms of cultural homogeneity, ethno-linguistic fractionalization, and ethnic composition. Indeed, Berry *et al.* (2006) calculated the New Zealand index at 0.04 (in a range of -1.11 to 1.42) in contrast to the negative indices for EU countries. Third, New Zealand has been classified as high on diversity policies, the extent to which governments promote cultural diversity as a national goal. This contrasts with low and medium ratings for diversity policies in the eight EU countries. As New Zealand's policies have determined the extent and the sources of immigration, these trends converge to support Bourhis *et al.*'s (1997) contentions that acculturation expectations and attitudes toward migrants are intertwined with political ideologies and practices.

Despite positive attitudes toward immigrants and favorable comparisons with EU states, New Zealanders appear to lag behind Canadians in that they

are somewhat less likely to agree that it is important to accept a wide variety of cultures and they are slightly more likely to see immigrants as posing threat, at least in terms of employment opportunities. These results are not surprising. Not only is Canada characterized by greater cultural diversity than New Zealand (Table 2), but it has also had an official federal policy of multiculturalism since 1971. The policy identified national unity as an important goal, founded on a sense of cultural security for all and an acknowledgment of widespread multicultural contributions to the structure and vitality of the wider society (Government of Canada, 1971). In short, Canada has had 35 years of experience in implementing its multicultural policies.

New Zealand, on the other hand, has been emerging as a culturally diverse society built on a bicultural foundation. King, Hill, and Haas (2004) have argued that despite the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand has made significant advances in biculturalism only in the last two decades of the twentieth century. They further suggested that the objectives of ensuring Maori participation in national life and their influence on national culture have largely been achieved at present and that the time is ripe to consider a movement toward multiculturalism. Indeed, it may be that the evolution of biculturalism has laid the foundation for the extension to multiculturalism as research has shown that support for an increase in both domains is positively related for New Zealanders of European descent (Ward and Lin, 2005).

Despite these trends, it is clear that New Zealanders perceive immigrants from some parts of the world more favorably than others. In particular, those from countries with Anglo-Celtic backgrounds, such as Great Britain and Australia, are viewed most positively. Those from countries where English is widely spoken, such as South Africa and India, tend to be seen more favorably than migrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds (*e.g.*, China, Somalia). In short, perceptions of cultural distance (*i.e.*, the dissimilarity between culture of origin and culture of contact) affect attitudes toward immigrants in New Zealand, as in other countries (Ward, Bochner, and Furnham, 2001).

In addition to providing baseline and comparative data on New Zealanders' attitudes toward immigrants, the research tested a social psychological model of endorsement of immigration policies. The model emphasized the significant influence of both multicultural ideology and intercultural contact on support for public policies that target a sustained increase in migrant numbers and greater diversity in source countries. The influence of positive attitudes toward diversity and multicultural ideology on acceptance of immigrants has been noted by Berry (2006) in his Canadian-based research. In addition, Voci and Hewstone (2003) reported that interpersonal contact predicted more positive

attitudes toward immigrants in Italy, and this has been replicated in large-scale EU studies (McLaren, 2003).

The model also corroborated the role of threat in the prediction of attitudes toward immigrants and endorsement of immigration policy. The significance of threat has been documented in a number of studies, including research in Germany (Florack *et al.*, 2003), Canada (Esses *et al.*, 2001; Berry, 2006), the United States (Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman, 1999), Spain, and Israel (Stephan *et al.*, 1998). More importantly, the model demonstrated that threat at least partially mediated the influences of ideology and contact. This is in line with research on attitudes toward minority groups as well as Jackson *et al.*'s (2001:437) contention that "the proximal cause of contemporary racial and policy attitudes toward all immigrant outgroups is threat."

One of the novel aspects of this research is linking social psychological variables to endorsement of immigration policy. Our model identifies multicultural ideology and intercultural contact as exogenous variables, diminishing threat, leading to positive attitudes toward immigrants, and finally to support for policies that add 1% to the base population by annual immigration from diverse sources. In addition to the influence of multicultural ideology and intercultural contact on endorsement of policy being mediated by both threat and attitudes toward immigrants, multicultural ideology exerts a direct positive effect on policy endorsement.

### *Implications for Policy and a View to New Zealand's Future*

The research findings have important implications for immigration policy and practices in New Zealand. First, there is strong evidence that enhancing an appreciation of cultural diversity and a general acceptance of multiculturalism will directly lead to greater support for current immigration policies. There have already been some initiatives in this area, including the Human Rights Commission's annual Diversity Forum and the We're All New Zealanders campaign. The latter also has implications for national identity in New Zealand. Policies and practices that encourage a superordinate national identity that encompasses diversity have been shown to be very effective in enhancing intercultural relations and improving attitudes toward immigrants (Berry, 2000; Billiet, Maddens, and Beerten, 2003).

Second, increasing intercultural contact leads to more positive attitudes toward immigrants. Although contact per se is linked to more positive intercultural perceptions and relations, international research has revealed that contact under favorable circumstances – that is, intimate, cooperative, positive,



and equal-status contact with shared common goals – is most effective (Hamberger and Hewstone, 1997; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2000). Facilitating and improving this type of interaction in contexts where culturally diverse groups routinely meet will lead to a range of positive outcomes, including support for current immigration policy.

The school and the workplace are important contexts for these activities. New Zealand research has shown that cultural inclusiveness in the classroom is associated with more intercultural friendships and more positive intergroup attitudes (Ward and Masgoret, 2005). Changes in curricula and educational practices that address issues arising in multicultural classrooms have been recommended in New Zealand (Ho, Holmes, and Cooper, 2004), and programs such as Excell, recently introduced in some New Zealand institutions, have been shown to produce positive changes (Mak *et al.*, 1999). In the workplace, diversity training has proven effective in improving intercultural skills and attitudes. The Office of Ethnic Affairs' intercultural training programs for government departments is a positive move in this direction. Overseas, comparable training schemes in the private sector have been linked to broader community initiatives for social change (Ferdman and Brody, 1995), and this option may also be explored in New Zealand.

Finally, strategies and interventions that diminish the sense of threat that is often associated with immigration will contribute to greater support of government policy. In contrast, both negative media messages and anti-immigration political rhetoric work against achieving these goals (Esses, Dovidio, and Hodson, 1998; Esses *et al.*, 2002). The issue of threat is particularly relevant to the position of Maori in New Zealand, who are already disadvantaged in terms of objective health, educational, and social indicators (Durie, 1995; Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Maori have also objected to political and cultural marginalization, sometimes attributed to new migrants who are seen to compete for limited resources and cultural recognition (Ip, 2003). Along these lines, research has shown that Maori feel more threatened by migrants in both realistic and symbolic domains, are more likely to favor exclusion, and have more negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration (Leong and Ward, 2007). Alleviating Maori disadvantage and acknowledging the importance of Maori cultural recognition and maintenance are precursors to a successful immigration policy. Maori have occupied a special place in New Zealand as the indigenous peoples and partners in what has historically been a bicultural nation. A sense of Maori security and their acceptance of current policies, if not their active support, are required for New Zealand to evolve into a truly multicultural society.

In conclusion, this paper has examined views on multiculturalism, acculturation expectations, and attitudes toward immigrants in New Zealand. The research has been situated in an international context by comparing New Zealand attitudes with those held in Canada, Australia, and the European Union. Although the findings have been interpreted in a socio-political and historical context and their policy implications have been emphasized, the research has essentially been undertaken from a social psychological perspective. The work illustrates the significance of social psychological factors, including perceived threat, in policy-related matters and supports the contention that psychology as a discipline can make a valuable contribution to the study of immigration.

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