

Values Predict Willingness to Interact with Immigrants:  
The Role of Cultural Ideology and Multicultural Acquisition

Ya Hui Michelle SEE and Aaron Wei Qiang LIM

National University of Singapore

Janet V.T. PAUKETAT

Princeton University

Author Note

This research was supported by National University of Singapore Humanities & Social Sciences Seed Fund WBS R-581-000-196-646. We thank W. Patrick Wade for his comments on earlier versions of this paper.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Ya Hui Michelle See, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore, Block AS4, #02-07, 9 Arts Link, Singapore 117570. Email: [psysyhm@nus.edu.sg](mailto:psysyhm@nus.edu.sg)

## **Abstract**

As globalization advances, immigration has increasingly been contested. Psychological studies of immigration, which are frequently conducted in Western contexts, have established a link between attitudes towards immigrants and individual values. In two studies, the present research investigates this link between values and favourability toward immigrants in an Asian nation with a high proportion of immigrants, Singapore, and considers differences in cultural ideologies and multicultural acquisition, based on the assumption that cultural ideologies and multicultural acquisition share broader underlying motivations with self-transcendence (growth and anxiety-free) and conservation values (protection and anxiety-avoidance). In Study 1, the cultural ideologies of multiculturalism and colourblindness, as reified in the Singapore context, explained how self-transcendence and conservation values predict willingness to interact with immigrants. Greater support for multiculturalism mediated the positive relationship between self-transcendence values and favourability towards immigrants. Lower support for colourblindness mediated the negative relationship between conservation values and favourability towards immigrants. In Study 2, experimentally induced self-transcendence and conservation values interacted with multicultural acquisition to affect willingness to interact with immigrants. Self-transcendence increased favourability towards immigrants for people with greater multicultural acquisition. Conservation decreased favourability towards immigrants for people with less multicultural acquisition. This research has implications for demonstrating that the cultural context matters for addressing how and among whom to improve intercultural contact in diverse, globalized societies.

*keywords:* values, immigration, multiculturalism, colourblindness, multicultural acquisition, intercultural contact