In February 1840, New Zealand’s newly arrived first governor, William Hobson, concluded a ceremony at which a treaty was signed between the British Crown and some Maori chiefs at Waitangi on New Zealand’s North Island, with the words: “He iwi tahi tatou” — We are one people now. Hobson’s optimistic claim (armed conflict between Maori and the British broke out a few years later) is still cited today to invoke national unity in New Zealand. Ironically, it set the stage for a public debate about cultural difference and national identity that has dominated the country’s politics throughout its short post-settlement history. For most of that period, cultural difference was taken to refer to Maori and the British, or Pakeha, but over the past twenty-five years, the claims and discourse of diversity have broadened to encompass a wide range of polyethnic communities created as a result of liberalized immigration policies in the mid-1980s.

Multiculturalism can of course refer to the demographic realities of diversity, or to a set of governmental programs designed to protect, preserve, and promote minority cultures, or to the normative arguments for recognition that underlie these. The demographic facts of cultural and ethnic pluralism in New Zealand, which encompasses both indigenous and polyethic groups, have particular implications for normative arguments and policies. In this chapter I focus on both normative claims and state-sponsored and public discourses around cultural diversity. The terminology is particular in New Zealand: although the term “multiculturalism” referred to settler-Maori relations when first introduced to public debate in the 1970s, it is now assumed to refer to polyethnic diversity resulting from non-British immigration. It thus usually excludes attitudes and policies relating to indigenous Maori. The latter are considered part of “biculturalism,” a policy
position developed in the 1990s and still effectively pursued, although the term is much less frequently used. In terms of demographics, New Zealand is both bicultural and multicultural, but unlike Australia and Canada, it has no specific legislation addressing multiculturalism, nor have governments of any stripe developed dedicated umbrella policies to cover polyethnic diversity. There are, as we shall see, particular policies in the area of state services that refer to minority ethno-cultural groups, often providing special status for Pacific Islander peoples, and grouping them together with indigenous Maori.

This chapter will explore bicultural as well as multicultural claims and arguments, positioning indigenous and polyethnic recognition and rights claims in the context of a matrix of political and historical frames, and examining the way in which multiculturalism is shaped by, and shapes the normative and ideological discourses around political value and meaning that prevail in New Zealand. A consistent theme will be the relationship between cultural pluralism and other state policy projects: political, economic, and nationalist. Multiculturalism is framed by the values and discourses of these projects, but is also developed and invoked in order to support them. In this latter sense, multiculturalism may be understood as a form of governmentality, sustained by a language of value. I rely in this aspect of my analysis (though I do not spell out its theoretical foundations) on a loosely Foucauldian governmentality approach, in which the conduct and attitudes of citizens are shaped by discourses and practices supported by the state in order to maintain its legitimacy. Those discourses and practices reflect the distinctive and complex historical, social, economic, and global matrix in which New Zealand is located. I argue that multiculturalism as a set of normative claims and policy positions is intelligible only in the context that shapes it, and in which it shapes political action and meaning.

Multiculturalism in New Zealand is framed by the country's specific historical circumstances, as well as its current position in global politics and the world economy, and by the terms of its available public discourses. New Zealand is a settler society with a relatively recent colonial history, dating from the early nineteenth century. Colonization brought into contact the indigenous Maori and settler British, who came mainly via the Australian colonies, with their own recent and bloody history of the colonial destruction of indigenous peoples. Although there were some early non-British migrants, such as Chinese and Dalmatians, who migrated to work in the gold and gum industries, the first substantial influx of non-British migrants was the arrival in the 1950s of Pacific Islander (Pasifika) unskilled workers on temporary work visas, many of whom stayed. Broader ethnic diversity dates only from the mid-1980s—not coincidentally, a period of intense modernization in New Zealand's socioeconomic history. Compression in terms of the pace of cultural diversification and social change, and the consequent emergence of cultural anxieties around political and economic, as well as cultural change, are key
factors shaping public discourse about multiculturalism. Maori-settler relations are of course another, and polyethnic multiculturalism is very much shaped in the bicultural or bi-national context of indigenous claims. The status of Pasifika peoples as immigrants who are often grouped with Maori for service provision, is another key framing factor.

Both multiculturalism and biculturalism are shaped by shifting and sometimes competing discourses around civic values and national identity, in the context of broader state economic and regulatory policy. The values of egalitarianism, social justice, and state support for communities are historically key parts of New Zealand's national identity dating back to the 1930s. Despite the devaluing of these elements of national discourse by neoliberal governments since the mid-1980s, social justice is still invoked to justify affirmative action and service delivery to and equal rights for minorities. This is one of several paradoxes around multiculturalism and neoliberalism: the liberalization and acceleration of immigration to New Zealand was part of a raft of modernizing policies starting in the 1980s, and the cultural diversity this policy shift has produced has been appropriated for the construction of a national identity or “brand” that can be marketed abroad. At the same time however, polyethnic cultural diversity has exacerbated public anxieties about withdrawal of governmental support to communities and rapid changes in traditional (white) New Zealand cultural values. The relationship between the neoliberal state and indigenous biculturalism is similarly complex. The revival of Maori political claims, particularly to ownership of resources and culture, has accelerated in response to increased cultural diversity, as Maori have sought to distinguish their status from that of polyethnic groups. At the same time, in order to reinforce its legitimacy, the state invokes traditional Maori culture not only to promote trade and tourism, but also to provide a language of belonging and community membership that is otherwise absent from neoliberal discourse.

These framing factors allow us to analyze multiculturalism in New Zealand in the context of its domestic history and politics. In turn, this facilitates comparisons with other settler societies, particularly Australia, with which New Zealand shares many aspects of national identity but against which it also tends to define itself globally. Multicultural policy is also, of course, influenced by international discourses around cultural diversity, in particular the emergence of an international norm of indigeneity over the past few decades.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND IMMIGRATION POLICY

For most of New Zealand's post-European settlement history, the overwhelming majority of its immigrants have been British, and despite changed migration patterns, this persists, although the gap between British and non-British immigrant numbers has substantially decreased. In 2015–16, 9 percent of all approvals for residence were granted to UK citizens (a steady decline from 26 percent a decade earlier),
compared to 18 percent and 16 percent for arrivals from China and India respectively. Unlike Australia, New Zealand had no official “White New Zealand” policy, but government policies persisting well into the twentieth century aimed to encourage British and discourage Chinese immigrants. The 1881 Chinese Immigration Act imposed a poll tax on Chinese immigrants, and the 1899 Immigration Restriction Act restricted South Asian immigration. It is only in the past two decades that a change in the European/non-European proportions of the population has developed. In the most recent census (2013), 74 percent of New Zealanders identified as European, 14.9 percent as Maori, 11.8 percent as Asian (predominantly Indian and Chinese, followed by Korean, Filipino, and Japanese), 7.4 percent as Pacific Islander (mainly Samoan, but also Cook Islander and Tongan), and 1.2 percent as Middle Eastern, Latin American, or African. The population of Asian New Zealanders has almost doubled from the 2001 Census, while the population of other groups has increased more steadily. The proportion of Asian New Zealanders is expected to rise to 15.8 percent in 2026, up from 9.7 percent in 2006, while the proportion of European (mainly British) New Zealanders is projected to fall to 69.5 percent in 2026, down from 76.8 percent in 2006. As New Zealand’s population rises, its ethnic diversity broadens: between 1996 and 2006, the number of North East Asians who immigrated increased 55 percent; sub-Saharan Africans by 71 percent; South and Central Asians by 66 percent; and Middle Easterners and North Africans by 56 percent. The number of New Zealand residents who originated from the UK or Ireland increased by 9 percent. The proportion of Pasifika New Zealanders has increased, but as a result of this population’s high birthrate, rather than immigration. A high birthrate also fueled an increase of almost 40 percent in Maori New Zealanders between 1991 and 2013.

Increased ethnic diversity is accompanied, not surprisingly, by other forms of cultural diversity. In terms of religion, the 2013 Census showed that 49 percent of New Zealanders identified as Christians, down from 55 percent in the 2006 Census. There was a corresponding increase in the number of New Zealanders identifying with non-Christian religions, particularly Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims, and this is attributable to increased Asian immigration. In overall numbers, a little over 1 percent of New Zealanders identify as Muslim, and a little over 2 percent identify as Hindu. While the percentages are small, the rate of change is fast: the proportion of New Zealanders identifying with non-Christian religions tripled between 2001 and 2013, from 2 percent to 6 percent. In terms of languages, the number of people who could speak two languages rose by from 15.8 percent in 2001 to 18.6 percent in 2013.

The sharp increase in ethnic diversity in New Zealand is the result of legislative change in the mid-1980s, part of a raft of modernizing laws and policies and an economic shift to neoliberalism introduced by Prime Minister David Lange’s Labour government. The Immigration Act passed in 1987 ended explicit preference for British, European, and North American (white) immigrants and
introduced a system whereby skills, and then points, were assessed irrespective of race or country of origin. The new legislation aimed at a less discriminatory, more deliberately internationalist migration policy, targeting work skills needed to fuel national economic growth. This was in line with a new neoliberal policy emphasis on growth and on competitiveness in the international economy. The legislation was preceded by a review of immigration that described New Zealand as an immigrant society, dating from the earliest Maori arrivals. This signaled a shift in conceptions of national identity, normalizing polyethnic diversity as a fundamental aspect of modern New Zealand identity. Diverse immigration to New Zealand has increased rapidly since then, which makes for an interesting comparison with Australia. There, European immigration diversified from the early 1950s, broadening out to Asian and Middle Eastern countries of origin in the 1970s. In New Zealand, public debates and anxieties about immigration generally have arisen at the same time as racist concerns and moral panics about non-European and nonwhite immigration.

Until recently, the accepted policy towards immigrants across the political spectrum was assimilation, with no state recognition of polyethnic cultures. In 1999, Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley commented that cultural pluralism in New Zealand was cast not as a social good, but as a constraining factor or a potential problem to be managed. From around the turn of the twenty-first century, successive left- and right-of-center governments have endorsed cultural and ethnic diversity as a social good for New Zealand. For example, the Ministry of Social Development, under the recent center-right National Party government reported that increased diversity can be a good thing for a society and its economy. This reflects to some extent the “sari, samosa and steelband” version of multiculturalism, which emphasizes the color and celebration of local cultures rather than reducing substantive inequalities. But state agencies and ministries also explicitly address the needs of diverse populations in areas such as social service provision, health, and education, in accordance with prevailing values of social justice in New Zealand. Integration, rather than assimilation is emphasized; state agencies promote the recognition of and dialogue across cultural communities. The Human Rights Commission now lists as a key goal the promotion of “harmonious relations between diverse groups,” and part of the brief of the Race Relations Commissioner is to pursue this. The promotion of diversity and intercultural dialogue was a key policy area for the Labour government of 1999–2008; the “Connecting Diverse Communities” project, introduced in 2007, aimed at “improving connections with cultural identity,” addressing discrimination and strengthening intercultural relationships. There is little difference currently between the two major parties on this issue: in recent national elections both have actively courted Asian votes, elevating Chinese and Indian New Zealanders to prominent positions on the PR party list (New Zealand uses a mixed-member proportional system of election to its unicameral parliament.) In government, the National Party has continued
to promote ethnic and religious inclusiveness, typically invoking the economic advantages of diversity.

This shift to integration policies in New Zealand has coincided with a shift in the opposite direction, toward explicit rejection of multiculturalism in Britain, Europe, and Australia. In part this reflects New Zealand’s relatively small Muslim population—anxieties in the post 9/11 period about fundamentalist Islam in ethnic communities were much more muted here than in other countries (as I discuss below). But it also reflects the role that discourse about cultural difference plays in New Zealand. Recognition of indigenous Maori cultural claims and aspirations has meant that assimilation into a dominant culture cannot be advocated with the same degree of public legitimacy in New Zealand as it can in other countries. But if the bicultural context lends some protection to the recognition of polyethnic diversity, it also limits it: no government has introduced an umbrella policy of multiculturalism or legislation on the issue, and biculturalism remains the dominant discourse of diversity.

THE BICULTURAL CONTEXT

Crucial to understanding both state policy and public responses to ethnic diversity in New Zealand is the central relationship between the dominant white Pakeha society and the Maori. The liberalization of immigration in the 1980s followed a decade of renewed Maori political mobilization, and a new consciousness of indigenous identity as the grounding for sovereignty claims. This took place, of course, in the context of the global emergence of indigenous political movements in settler states. Because the relationship between Maori and polyethnic claims in New Zealand has such an influence on attitudes to multiculturalism in New Zealand, it’s important to establish the distinction between them. While both kinds of groups argue for official recognition of cultural identity and practices, indigenous communities crucially argue for some degree of autonomy, self-governance, and self-determination. In theoretical thinking about this in democracies, we can stake out two key positions: liberalism’s argument based on individual autonomy, as set out by Will Kymlicka, and the argument for indigenous sovereignty based on the illegality of imperial conquest—associated with James Tully, among others.

Kymlicka argues that the difference between polyethnic and indigenous (and minority national) communities is that only the latter constitute societal cultures—that is, they form the entire and self-enclosed context in which the social identities, systems of meaning and value, and life plans of individual members are shaped. In order for members of such communities to exercise their autonomy, their societal cultures, their contexts for autonomy must be protected and preserved. Indigenous communities and national minorities constitute societal cultures, Kymlicka argues, because their members never chose—historically
or currently—any form of incorporation or integration. Polyethnic groups constituted through immigration are by contrast only partial communities; their members have chosen to affiliate to the larger societal culture. Their cultural identities and practices still merit recognition and protection, but only so that those members can be included and integrated as autonomous members of the broader societal culture. Here we can draw also on Charles Taylor: public recognition of cultural membership is an essential aspect of individual members’ sense of personal worth and value. This focus on integration as recognition and inclusion is reflected in the public policies toward polyethnic groups argued for and implemented in New Zealand. As the Ministry of Social Development’s Social Report of 2016 comments: “Cultural identity is important for people’s sense of self and how they relate to others. A strong cultural identity can contribute to people’s overall wellbeing.”

Critics like Tully reject the grounding of indigenous claims on the liberal values of Western postcolonial states, arguing instead that indigenous communities are entitled to self-determination on the basis of their original self-government and independence prior to their forcible incorporation into new states through colonization. The right to self-determination is central to a newly emerged global norm of indigeneity, reinforced by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007, endorsed in 2010 by New Zealand. Maori invoke the argument based on prior-existing sovereignty specifically in relation to the terms of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi, over which there is some dispute: in the Maori-language version, the Maori retained sovereignty, but ceded to the Crown the right of governance. In the English-language version, the Maori ceded sovereignty. The current role of the Treaty, although it is not entrenched as a constitutional document, is so central in New Zealand that Maori claims in general are often referred to as Treaty claims. As Kymlicka notes, there are some disadvantages, however, to shaping the distinctive claims of indigenous peoples in terms of treaties, which tend neither to reflect current political realities, nor to address the current needs of indigenous peoples, inequalities, and issues in justice in contemporary terms. As we shall see, the Treaty of Waitangi has been invoked to support both biculturalism and the distinct position of binationalism.

The prominence of the Treaty of Waitangi in Maori claims is recent; it was declared a nullity by the chief justice of the New Zealand Supreme Court in 1877, and subsequently a policy of Maori assimilation was accepted and pursued. The Treaty was recovered, however, as a grounding for political claims during Maori political mobilization in the 1970s, and it has been incorporated into legislation since the mid-1980s. A key aspect of this historically has been the development of the policy of biculturalism. The Labour government elected in 1984 had committed itself before the election to reviving the Treaty, incorporating it into a bill of rights, and expanding the powers of the Waitangi Tribunal, established in 1975 with limited powers to consider claims based on breaches of the Treaty.
government, Labour focused on the Tribunal and on incorporating the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi into legislation. In 1986, the Puao-Te-Ata-Tu report on a Maori perspective for the Department of Social Welfare recommended strategies to incorporate Maori cultural dimensions into the department’s operations, and this became the model across state institutions.26

Also in 1986, the Royal Commission on the Electoral System “Towards a Better Democracy” heard submissions in Maori as well as English, and recognized the special status of the Maori as indigenous to New Zealand. In 1987, Te Reo Māori was accepted as an official language of New Zealand. These policies of cultural recognition and incorporation constitute the cultural redress dimension of Waitangi Tribunal recommendations, and form a key strand of what became the dominant policy of biculturalism. Biculturalism, the official recognition of both the dominant Pakeha and Maori cultures within public institutions purports to reform state institutions, policies, and regulations so that they include greater participation by Maori people, as well as Maori concerns, forms of expression and cultural practices.27 This has meant a two-stranded strategy: the devolution of service provision to Maori organizations in partnership with the state, and the incorporation of Maori cultural practices into state institutions and processes—originally focused on those that deliver services to Maori, but now more widely adopted. Some of these cultural inclusion policies are more substantive, such as funding for Maori broadcasting and arts, and the inclusion of Maori history and culture in the school curriculum. The preschool curriculum is explicitly centered on Maori cultural values. Maori values are explicitly incorporated into the Resource Management Act, and into the activities of the Department of Conservation. In the social service provision ministries of Education, Social Development and Health, the use of Maori ceremonies, rituals, and language is more symbolic, although policies consistently emphasize the importance of establishing links to the extended family, or whānau, in Maori communities.28

Biculturalism was deemed by the 1986 report to be “the essential prerequisite to the development of a multi-cultural society.”29 The rhetoric of state institutions continues to emphasize the “unique place” of Maori culture, and the situating of polyethnic diversity within a bicultural context.30 However, the relationship between the two founding cultures and subsequent cultural diversity was not spelled out, and the emphasis on cultural expression, recognition, and inclusion in multicultural terms has attracted some recent criticism on the part of Maori. Maori culture has become more visible in public life, but critics argue that rather than challenging Pakeha cultural and political hegemony in New Zealand, it reinforces it by positioning the Maori as a secondary, junior partner to the Crown.31 Maori cultural identity is asserted in the context of Western political and bureaucratic institutions, rather than as a basis for self-determination through independent political structures. Critics argue that the changes introduced by biculturalism are merely window dressing, and that real power relations remain intact.32

Cultural
inclusion, or what Mason Durie calls “cultural capture” is in fact a strategy for managing and deflecting resistance. Tom O’Reilly and David Wood claim that biculturalism’s focus on cultural responsiveness is merely tokenism and point to the superficial use of cultural symbols and practices to satisfy Maori claims for recognition. Nor is the problem simply the superficiality of cultural inclusion. Echoing a common critique of multiculturalism, Dominic O’Sullivan suggests that biculturalism assumes that Maori have developed into a single homogeneous identity and culture. Cultural traditions are assumed to be homogeneous and frozen in time, rather than the products of continual negotiation within and between cultural communities. As a result, real struggles and conflicts within Maori communities over the changing meanings of cultural traditions are repressed. In response to these concerns, and to disputes over the role of Maori ceremonies in state institutions, the Maori Party has called for an investigation into the use of Maori customs, or tikanga, across the state sector. The party claimed that Maori customs are being used by the state to co-opt Maori into institutions that remain essentially hostile to them.

The Treaty of Waitangi is interpreted by some Maori activists as authorizing claims not to the recognition and protection of culture, strategies which are seen as more suitable for polyethnic multiculturalism, but rather to self-determination and autonomy, based on retained sovereignty. This position sidesteps the question of diversity in non-Maori society: Maori are cast not as an ethnic group jockeying for recognition within an increasingly diverse society still dominated by Pakeha culture, but as an independent people negotiating with the Crown. These Maori claims are beyond the scope of this chapter, but I would note that they do not include secession, but focus rather on ownership of resources and the self-management of tracts of lands, resources, and social services. Nevertheless, they do incorporate real transfers of power, and the New Zealand state’s reluctance to pursue self-determination (demonstrated by its refusal for three years to endorse the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) is not surprising.

Maori attitudes towards multiculturalism understood in terms of ethnic diversity and state recognition of minority cultures, are complex and evolving. There has been a long history since the nineteenth century of close relations between Maori and non-British immigrant groups, particularly the Chinese. However in the 1990s, when the impact of liberalized immigration legislation was first becoming apparent, Maori concern about immigration emerged, on the grounds that a more diverse population would not necessarily support the fundamental status for Maori of the treaty relationship with the British Crown. Some Maori commentators, noting developments in Australia, where polyethnic multiculturalism long preceded recognition of indigenous rights, have fiercely opposed any characterization of New Zealand as multicultural. Ranginui Walker castigated the government in the late 1980s and 1990s for failing to consult with Maori over the extension of
immigration policy to cover non-Europeans. Some of this reflected racist anti-Asian sentiments also expressed by Pakeha. Immigrants from Asia were, Walker claimed, driven by “egocentric” motives, rather than “a sense of altruism towards the host country.” They were insufficiently proficient in English, and their contribution to economic growth was low, since they “usually employ their own people.” In response, defenders of multiculturalism argued that non-European immigrants were being excluded from the debate on the New Zealand’s identity and future. Drawing on the liberal philosophical arguments against recognition made by Chandran Kukathas, Ramesh Thakur argued that the state should give no preferential recognition to the language and culture of any ethnic group, including Maori, whom he characterized as immigrants.

A succession of political groups, including the current Maori Party, have requested formal Maori input into immigration policy, and in 1991, a Waitangi Tribunal claim was launched in relation to the Immigration Act. In 2015, a government report found that Maori (and Pacific) New Zealanders were less likely than other groups to hold positive views of migrants. Maori concern about Asian immigrants more than any other demographic group. Nevertheless, over the past decade, public Maori discourse has shifted and has become more explicitly anti-racist, perhaps in response to the expression of Pakeha racist sentiments against both immigrants and Maori. In 2007, the Maori Party co-leader Tariana Turia called for European migration to New Zealand to be reduced, claiming that the government was trying to stop the “browning of New Zealand” by stepping up immigration from Australia, Britain, and Canada. In response to the 2010 Department of Labour report, prominent Maori activist and academic Margaret Mutu advocated a cap on white immigrants to New Zealand, on the grounds that they brought with them “white supremacist attitudes.” She added that Maori were “generally supportive” of immigration from Asian countries. Then Maori Party co-leader Pita Sharples agreed that there was concern about “western” immigration to New Zealand, although the party was, he said, happy with Pasifika immigration, since it recognized commonalities of experience between Maori and Pasifika peoples. Current Maori Party policy on immigration requires only that all new migrants complete a course on the history of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The change in attitude among Maori leaders to multiculturalism, and especially the dropping of opposition to non-British migrants, undoubtedly reflects a shift in Maori political claims to binationalism and self-determination. While biculturalism seeks recognition for indigenous peoples on the grounds of cultural status, a strategy always open to extension to other cultural minorities, self-determination invokes a quite distinct set of political demands and justifications, and one that is not subject to competition from polyethnic groups.
THE LIMINAL STATUS OF PASIFIKA CULTURES

Pasifika peoples occupy a particular position in terms of cultural diversity: as immigrants they constitute a polyethnic community, but as Polynesians and the subjects of colonization elsewhere in the region, they are more closely linked to Maori than are other ethnic groups, and are key to the “branding” of New Zealand’s identity as a Pacific nation. Moreover, they tend to be concentrated in low-skilled, low-wage employment, and are relatively disadvantaged in socioeconomic terms. This has meant that they are often grouped with Maori as the beneficiaries of affirmative action programs. The 1993 Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnicity, among other categories, but specifically exempts provisions that are designed to ensure the equality of disadvantaged groups, such as training schemes and employment assistance measures. Several of these schemes, such as university entrance programs, have been set up to target Pasifika peoples as well as Maori. Pasifika peoples are also identified as the subjects of service provision: government departments such as Health, Social Development, and Education specifically target Pasifika as well as Maori New Zealanders, and there are special Pasifika courts for young offenders, similar to Maori courts.

These accommodations for Pasifika communities suggest that the immigrant/indigenous distinction is less important in shaping multiculturalist practices and policies than the ways in which national values and identity can be mobilized by the groups involved. As integrative multiculturalism has been justified in the past decade in terms of traditional New Zealand values of social justice and equality, provisions for immigrant groups that are systemically economically disadvantaged have been piggy-backed upon policies for Maori without objection. Potentially, this will benefit other disadvantaged polyethnic groups as well, such as refugees from Africa and the Middle East, but Pasifika peoples can also draw on discourse around national identity under globalization. Successive New Zealand governments have mobilized Maori, and increasingly, Pasifika culture, to promote the country as distinctive in the global trade and tourism market.

PUBLIC REACTIONS TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Maori concern about immigration must be interpreted in the broader context of anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly directed at Asians, in the wider community. As is not surprising in an overwhelmingly white and British postcolonial society positioned close to Asia and the Polynesian and Melanesian Pacific, New Zealand attitudes have historically reflected suspicion of and skepticism about nonwhite outsiders. The speed of policy changes in the 1980s and subsequent diverse immigration led to some strong social reactions around racial difference, sometimes expressed as moral panics. A notable example was the article “Asian Angst,” by the conservative former politician Deborah Coddington, published in the mainstream...
magazine *North and South*, in which Coddington argued that Asian immigrants were involved in a “tide of crime.” Coddington pointed to an increase in arrest figures for Asian New Zealanders over the prior decade—without mentioning, however, that the number of Asian New Zealanders had also increased in this period, and that the arrest rate of Asians as a proportion of the population had halved over the decade. The article prompted much public debate, but it is worth noting that it attracted strong public opposition and was condemned by the Press Council. Anti-Asian sentiment has been boosted recently by the fast rise of house prices in New Zealand’s major cities, which is commonly blamed on Chinese offshore investors—a target often expanded by politicians and the popular media to include local New Zealander buyers of Asian ethnicity.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and in London and Bali in 2002 and 2005, and the Danish cartoon controversy the same year produced some anti-Muslim sentiment in public discourse in New Zealand. Opposition to multiculturalism increasingly took the form of verbal attacks on the Muslim community for its alleged support—or at least failure to criticize strongly enough—extremist Muslim radicalism. This became a focus for criticism by the populist politician Winston Peters, who emphasized the theme in the lead-up to the 2005 election, linking increasing Muslim immigration into New Zealand with the threat of terrorism, suggesting that Muslim immigrants came from cultures with no respect for liberal values.

Nevertheless, the government’s 2015 *Community Perceptions of Migrants and Immigration* survey found that respondents were generally positive in their attitudes to migrants. This suggests that there has been a recent decline in public anxieties about the cohesiveness of political community in New Zealand. Although these concerns focused on—or scapegoated—multiculturalism, they originated in broader social and economic changes. They arose in response to the neoliberal economic and administrative reforms imposed in the mid-1980s, which emphasized the country’s need to compete in global markets, and reduced the state provision of social services and institutional support that had become accepted as part of the national identity in New Zealand. Community was redefined in terms of voluntary association, but was given no substantive content. The cultural anxieties this produced were articulated, ironically, by neo-liberal advocate and then-leader of the conservative National Party Don Brash, in a well-publicized and controversial 2004 speech. In terms familiar from international critics of multiculturalism who argue that a common language and culture are essential to the shared practices that constitute the civic nation, Brash argued that state recognition and promotion of diversity detracts from a sense of common identity that holds the nation together. Like other critics of multiculturalism from this perspective, Brash invoked liberal-democratic values as the content of that common identity, but implied in his argument that these are tied to a substantive culture.
While Brash drew on a discourse of civic nationalism to reject biculturalism and express skepticism about state-sponsored multiculturalism, cultural diversity has also played positively in an emergent discourse about civic responsibility, citizenship, and movements for citizenship education in schools. These strands of civic nationalism emphasize intercultural dialogue, respect for difference, and democratic values over substantial cultural content. In a 2002 statement of economic policy intent the Labour government under Helen Clark referred to New Zealand as “a land where diversity is valued and reflected in our national identity.” Moreover, while neoliberalism has seen a move away from state-sponsored discourse about egalitarianism and state support, these long-standing national values continue to have popular traction and are still invoked to justify social support and welfare policies addressing migrants and polyethnic communities, as well as the Maori. In this way, discourses of distributive equality are not contrasted to recognition, as is frequently claimed by critics of multiculturalism, but are mutually reinforcing.

MINORITY CULTURAL PRACTICES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Critics of multiculturalism point to potential conflicts between the cultural practices of traditional society and prevailing Western norms of gender equality. Controversies have arisen in New Zealand involving both Maori and polyethnic communities around particular cultural practices that have been interpreted as being contrary to central national values, entrenched in human rights law. In the case of Maori, this has occurred around the role of women in traditional Maori cultural practices. In 2005, a Pakeha female officer in the Department of Corrections protested publicly when she attended a farewell ceremony for male offenders organized by the Department. The ceremony, a poroporoaki, required women to sit behind men. Pakeha feminists spoke in support of her position; however, the overwhelming public response of Maori women was to reject their arguments, and to interpret the officer’s actions as a refusal to accept the public expression of Maori culture. This is despite the documented history of Maori women making feminist critiques of gendered roles in Maori ceremonies—and indicates that indigenous identification tends to trump gender in New Zealand. In 2006, two conservative women members of Parliament refused to sit behind men at a Maori welcome ceremony, or powhiri, during a parliamentary visit to a Child Youth and Family Services event. New Zealand’s Human Rights Act of 1993 prohibits discrimination on a number of grounds, including sex and culture, and these cases are usually interpreted to reveal an ongoing tension between biculturalism and Western human rights norms. But they also point to the difficulty of identifying fixed and stable interpretations of cultural meaning (another common critique of cultural recognition policies). As historians point out, the position of women in Maori culture shifted considerably after colonization.
Similar conflicts have involved polyethnic cultural practices. In 2004, two women witnesses in an insurance fraud case in the Auckland District court requested permission to give evidence while wearing the burqa. Defense counsel objected, and the judge heard arguments about the issue outside the trial. Supporters of the women invoked the Human Rights Act of 1993 and the Bill of Rights Act of 1990, which prohibit religious discrimination. The judge decided that although wearing the burqa in court was a matter of right for the witnesses, this was outweighed by the impact it would have on the weight of evidence, since it prevented physical personal behavior and facial expression being assessed in cross-examination and was incompatible with the required public nature of the proceedings. In a compromise decision, the women were allowed to give evidence, without the burqa, behind screens, so that they were visible only to the judge, counsel, and female court staff.

Cultural dress for women has in general attracted much less controversy in New Zealand than in Britain and Europe, and there is no movement to prohibit the head scarf, burqa, or other forms of concealing dress in public institutions. The Human Rights Commission advocates a “human rights framework” to balance and assess the conflicts caused by increasingly diverse ethnicity in New Zealand society, according to which rights to cultural expression are balanced against other individual human rights. (This framework has not, however, been explicitly invoked in response to disputes involving Maori.) State authorities in New Zealand have taken a generally pragmatic and conciliatory attitude to cultural dress requirements—women are allowed to wear the head scarf in passport photographs, for example, as long as the full face is shown, and female staff process the application if necessary.

CULTURE AND STATE LEGITIMACY

As we have seen, cultural diversity has played a complex role in conceptions of civic nationalism in New Zealand, deployed by both opponents and supporters of cultural recognition. As the nation moved in the 1990s to market its products in a global economy, a strong national identity was required to project New Zealand as a player on the international stage and distinguish it from competitors. Particularly as New Zealand sought to enter Asian markets, cultural diversity has been emphasized as a key aspect of national identity, central to economic prosperity. Polyethnic multiculturalism has been effectively marketed in Australia as a key aspect of modern national identity, as it has in Canada. In tourism and trade promotion, and in international trade shows, settler societies have emphasized their cultural diversity. While polyethnic diversity is also promoted by New Zealand (notably in the area of selling education, at both school and university levels), particular emphasis has been given to Maori culture. To some extent this reflects long historical practice: since its colonial days, New Zealand has drawn on
its Maori heritage to differentiate itself from Britain and other settler societies. As David Pearson points out, part of the process of emerging national independence in settler societies is the appropriation of indigenous culture. This allows these societies to distinguish themselves from the imperial center, on the basis of the particularities of insider/outsider relations between settlers and natives. In the contemporary context, national identity is drawn upon in the global market as part of the “brand state”—the nation-state’s image is a key aspect of its presentation to the world. Jacqui True and Charlie Gao have shown that New Zealand has cultivated its image as “clean, green” and “100% Pure New Zealand,” and aspects of Maori culture are also key to this distinctive brand. The haka dance has been effectively deployed as a cultural symbol for New Zealand, as well as being marketed by Maori themselves. The ubiquity of this performance in international sporting events has been noted by critics, but generally, the marketing of national culture has mainly been criticized by Maori. Their concerns were recognized in the 2011 Waitangi Tribunal case Wai 262, which recommended, inter alia, that Maori be granted ownership over cultural practices and knowledge, which are to be treated as intellectual property, and protected from commercialization without the consent of their Maori owners.

While niche national marketing accounts for New Zealand’s promotion of Maori culture abroad, more complex reasons must be sought for the emphasis placed on biculturalism at home. As we have seen, biculturalism was developed as part of the response to Treaty of Waitangi claims, but its high level of support from both the state and Pakeha public suggest deeper social and ideological factors at work. Key here is the public concern noted above over the loss of traditional values of community and social support that has characterized political discourse in New Zealand since the neoliberal economic reforms of the mid-1980s. Public attitudes to the role of the state and the value of community have not altered substantially to match the values inherent in neoliberalism. A study conducted by Louise Humpage suggests that despite the individualist and minimal state rhetoric of neoliberalism, support for the public provision of social services such health and education continued unchanged—66 percent of respondents favored free health care in 2005, despite over a decade of neoliberal “user pays” rhetoric. Similarly, support for increased government spending on education remained constant.

These figures suggest that a majority of New Zealanders have continued to expect government to provide key social services notwithstanding the neoliberal rhetoric around personal responsibility and some popular enthusiasm for lower tax rates. Neoliberal rhetoric does not seem to have led New Zealanders to abandon their concern about the social impact of these reforms, especially upon families and children. Moreover, support for the responsibility of the state to provide citizens with jobs remained fairly constant, despite the employment of “personal responsibility” rhetoric. Significant numbers saw the “laziness” of the unemployed as a factor in their circumstances, but Humpage’s own qualitative survey in 2010
found that 82 percent of participants agreed with the statement “Government should take responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for.” Humpage concludes from this that popular attitudes to social and economic policy do not shift neatly in line with changes in official discourse.

In the context of this misalignment between the views of citizens and the state’s own description of its role in maintaining and reinforcing social relations, Maori values of community, family, belonging, and tradition are drawn on by the state to supply a language that is missing in neoliberal rhetoric, but which continues to compel Pakeha New Zealanders. The traditional cultural values supplied or quoted in Maori cultural practices adopted, promoted, and appropriated by the state are easily identified as those that neoliberalism had rejected: communal identification and responsibility, social hierarchies, reverence for history and tradition, spirituality, and an ontological connection to geographical place. Whereas liberal individualism is associated with rationality and communities of choice, Maori culture is presented as a positive alternative to this. As emotional, spiritual, given rather than chosen, and closely linked to the land, it “appreciates the mystical dimension and transcends reason.” As this suggests, cultural pluralism is useful to the state on several levels. By promoting polyethnic and Maori diversity abroad, New Zealand positions itself as a modern nation with a range of skills essential in the global market, but also with a distinctive attractive culture. Domestically, the promotion of Maori culture maintains legitimacy for the state by providing a discourse of belonging.

CONCLUSIONS

The absence of a comprehensive multiculturalism policy in New Zealand is best understood as resulting from the sensitive political relationship between long-standing indigenous claims and the newer demands of polyethnic diversity. As the latter have become more salient as an aspect of the social landscape, governments have responded by acknowledging multicultural realities, while maintaining the unique status of Maori under the Treaty of Waitangi. As the Ministry of Social Development’s 2016 Social Report puts it: “They [the outcomes of social policy] recognise New Zealand is a multicultural society, while also acknowledging that Maori culture has a unique place. For example, under the Treaty of Waitangi, the Crown has an obligation to protect the Maori language.” The duties owed to other minority cultures are not spelled out. Current developments suggest that there is likely to be increasing public recognition of multiculturalism: the increasing shift in Maori political claims away from cultural inclusion and toward self-management and self-determination, evident in the Wai 262 recommendation and in accordance with international norms of indigeneity could potentially decrease tensions between the bicultural and multicultural aspects of New Zealand’s identity. Moreover, the human rights framework advocated by
the Human Rights Commission allows scope for greater formal minority cultural inclusion in public institutions.

As we have seen, the complex, mutually constituting relationship between cultural diversity policy on the one hand, and broader social values and governmental policies on the other, provide strong sources of impetus both for increased formal recognition of multiculturalism, and for a more systematic policy approach. Most importantly, New Zealand's need for growth will promote continued migration based on skills, which will, along with high birthrates in Maori and Pasifika communities, increase demographic diversity. The promotion and marketing of New Zealand in a competitive global market, as against other multicultural societies, will require it to emphasize its cultural and linguistic diversity, as shorthand for modernity, adaptability, and a skilled and flexible labor force. At the same time, the dislocations and upheavals of the global market under neoliberalism are likely to continue to reinforce the appeal of cultural values of community, belonging, and tradition. At the same time, the framing of cultural diversity as a contemporary grounding for national civic ideals of inclusiveness, social justice, and egalitarianism allows for pragmatic policies of cultural recognition in terms of service delivery to immigrants. This has already taken place with respect to Pasifika immigrants, and there is obvious scope to include polyethnic cultures and languages in, for example, schooling and social service delivery. Given current trends, it seems likely that multiculturalism as a discourse and policy program will become a stronger and more permanent aspect of the policy agenda in New Zealand, with a more sustainable future in a binational, rather than a bicultural, context.

NOTES

1. Maori are descended from Polynesian seafarers who arrived in New Zealand in the thirteenth century CE, and are occasionally and controversially described as the country's first immigrants.
6. See the essays in Michelle Harris, Martin Nakata, and Bronwyn Carlson, eds., The Politics of Identity: Emerging Indigeneity (Broadway, NSW, Australia: UTS ePress, 2013).
12. “Quick Stats about Culture and Identity,” ibid.
17. New Zealand, Ministry of Social Development, Connecting Diverse Communities.
18. This culminated in speeches by David Cameron and Nicholas Sarkozy in February 2011 denouncing multiculturalism in Britain and France. See the discussion of Cameron’s position in chapter 2 of this volume.
23. Kymlicka, Multicultural Citizenship.
24. Four set-aside seats were granted to Maori in 1868 to reward loyal supporters of the Crown in the Land Wars. There are now seven set-aside seats, elected by voters who sign up to the Maori voting roll.
28. In 2011, the National Party government in partnership with the Maori Party introduced the Whanau Ora scheme, under which social services for Maori are coordinated and delivered to the whanau, rather than on an individual basis.
29. New Zealand, Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective and John Te Rangi-Aniwaniwa Rangihau, Puao-te-ata-tu.
39. Ibid., 295.
41. Waitangi Tribunal claim Wai 223. No report or recommendation was issued.
61. Ibid., 376.
65. See, e.g., the promotion of New Zealand at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010.
70. The recommendation has not yet been enacted into law, and there is no sign that legislation is planned. For the report, see Waitangi Tribunal, Ko Aotearoa Tenei: A Report into Claims Concerning New Zealand Law and Policy Affecting Māori Culture and Identity (Wellington: Legislation Direct, 2011).
72. Humpage, “Radical Change or More of the Same?” 222.
73. Ibid., 225.
75. Ibid., 12.
76. This argument is explored in more detail in Smits, “Neoliberal State.”