



English Canadians' Cultural Stereotypes of Ethnic Minority Groups: Implications for Immigration and Acculturation Attitudes

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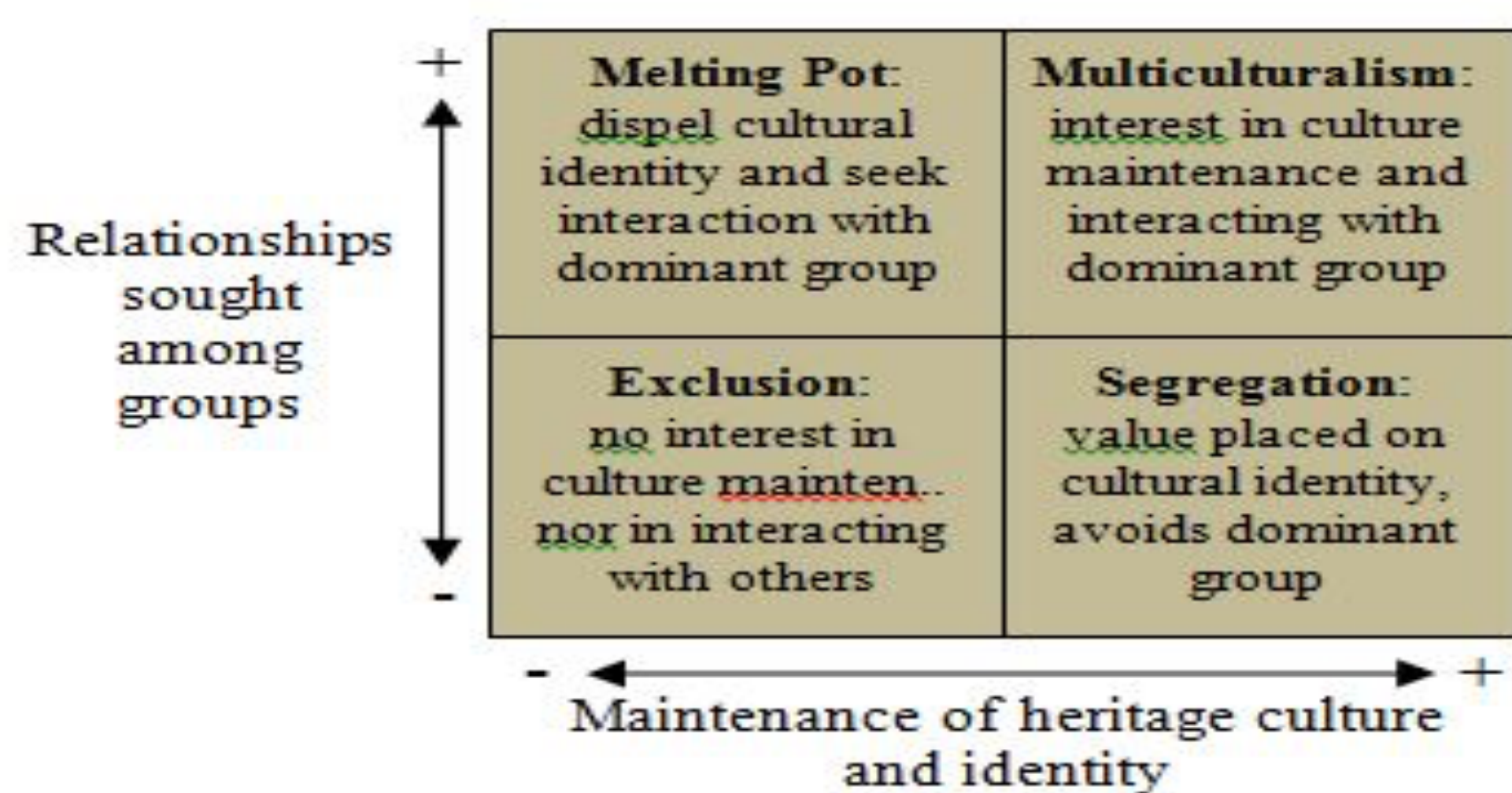


Introduction

Immigrants' experience of acculturation depends on the welcome that they receive from majority group members in the receiving society. This reception may depend on the cultural stereotypes held by the majority group. The Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) proposes that social groups are stereotyped on the traits of competence and warmth, which are predicted by the perceived relative status and perceived competition between groups, respectively. Cultural stereotypes are argued to predict emotional and behavioural reactions to social groups.

This study focuses on how cultural stereotypes relate to attitudes towards immigration and acculturation. According to Berry (2011), four acculturation attitudes (Figure 1) characterize the extent to which maintenance and acquisition of the heritage and mainstream cultures, respectively, are desired. Thus, the present study integrates the SCM and Berry's model to examine the relations between cultural stereotypes, perceptions of the socio-structural relations between groups, and attitudes toward immigration and acculturation.

Figure 1: Acculturation Attitudes



Objectives

1. What are English Canadians' cultural stereotypes regarding ethnic minority groups?
2. How are these stereotypes related to perceptions of those groups status and competitiveness in society?
3. (How) are cultural stereotypes and socio-structural perceptions related to attitudes towards immigration and acculturation?

Method

Participants and Procedure:

136 native English European Canadian university students from Alberta completed a questionnaire survey.

Materials:

Cultural Stereotypes and Socio-Structural Perceptions

- 16 items measuring 2 stereotype dimensions and 2 socio-structural perceptions (Fiske et al., 2002; 5-point scale)
- **Warmth:** "As viewed by Canadians, how friendly are members of this group?"
- **Competence:** "As viewed by Canadians, how capable are members of this group?"
- **Status:** "How prestigious are the jobs typically achieved by members of this group?"
- **Competition:** "How much does special treatment given to this group, such as preference in hiring decisions, make this more difficult for other groups in Canada?"

Attitudes towards Immigration

- 11 items (MIRIPS; 9-point scale): "Immigration tends to threaten Canadian culture." (reversed)

Attitudes towards Acculturation:

- 16-item Acculturation Expectations Scale (MIRIPS; 5-point scale)
- **Melting pot:** "This group should engage in social activities that involve Canadians only."
- **Multiculturalism:** "This group should be fluent in both English and their own language."
- **Segregation:** "I feel that this group should maintain their own cultural traditions and not adapt to those of Canada."
- **Exclusion:** "This group should not engage in either Canadian or their own group's social activities."

Target ethnic groups:

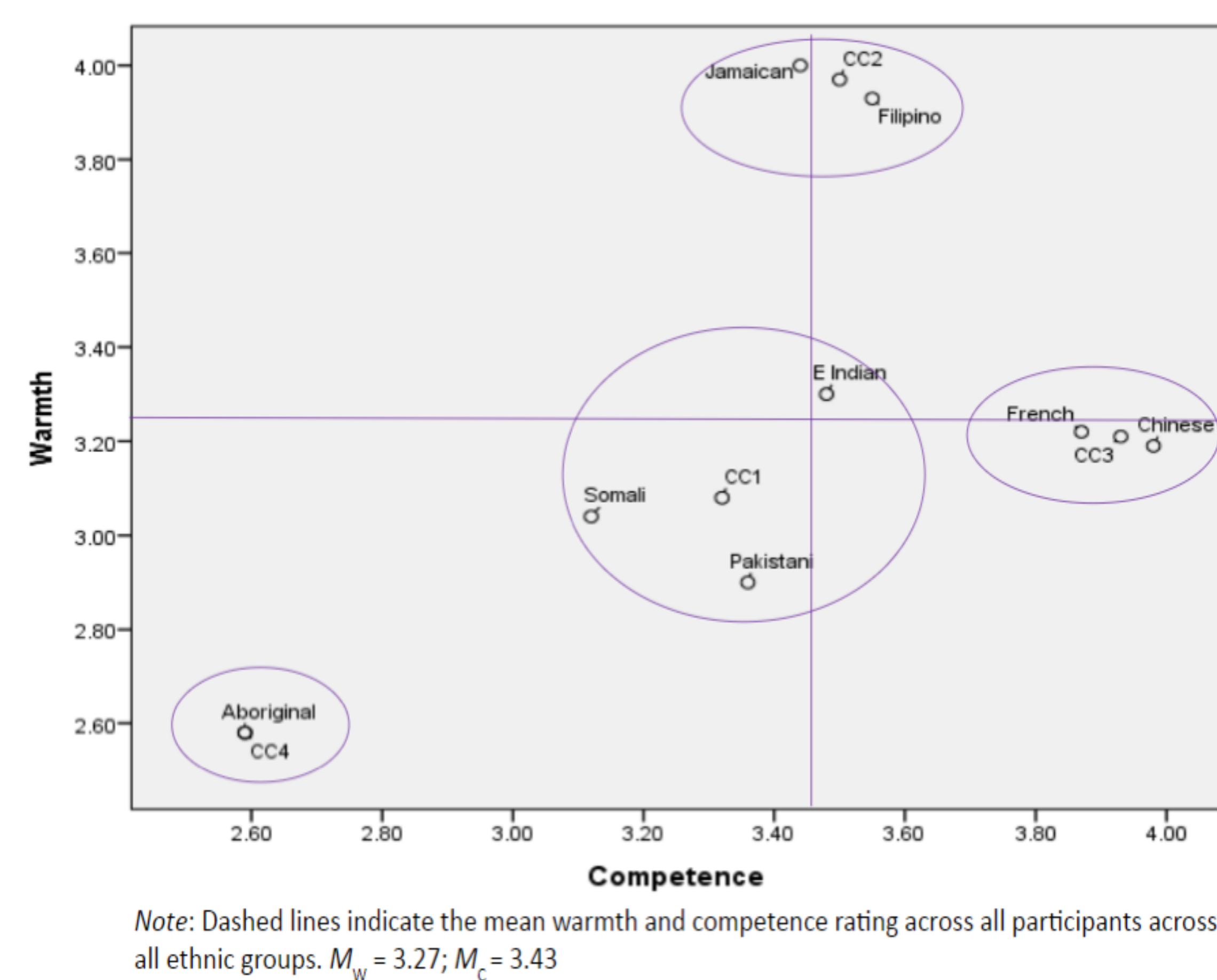
French Canadian, Aboriginal, Chinese, Jamaican, Pakistani, East Indian, Filipino, and Somali.

Results

Objective 1 (see Figure 2):

The ethnic groups clustered into 4 groups. French Canadians and Chinese were rated higher in competence than warmth and Jamaicans and Filipinos higher in warmth than competence. Somalis, East Indians, and Pakistanis were rated moderately high on warmth and competence (and somewhat high on the latter than the former). Aboriginals were rated low on both competence and warmth.

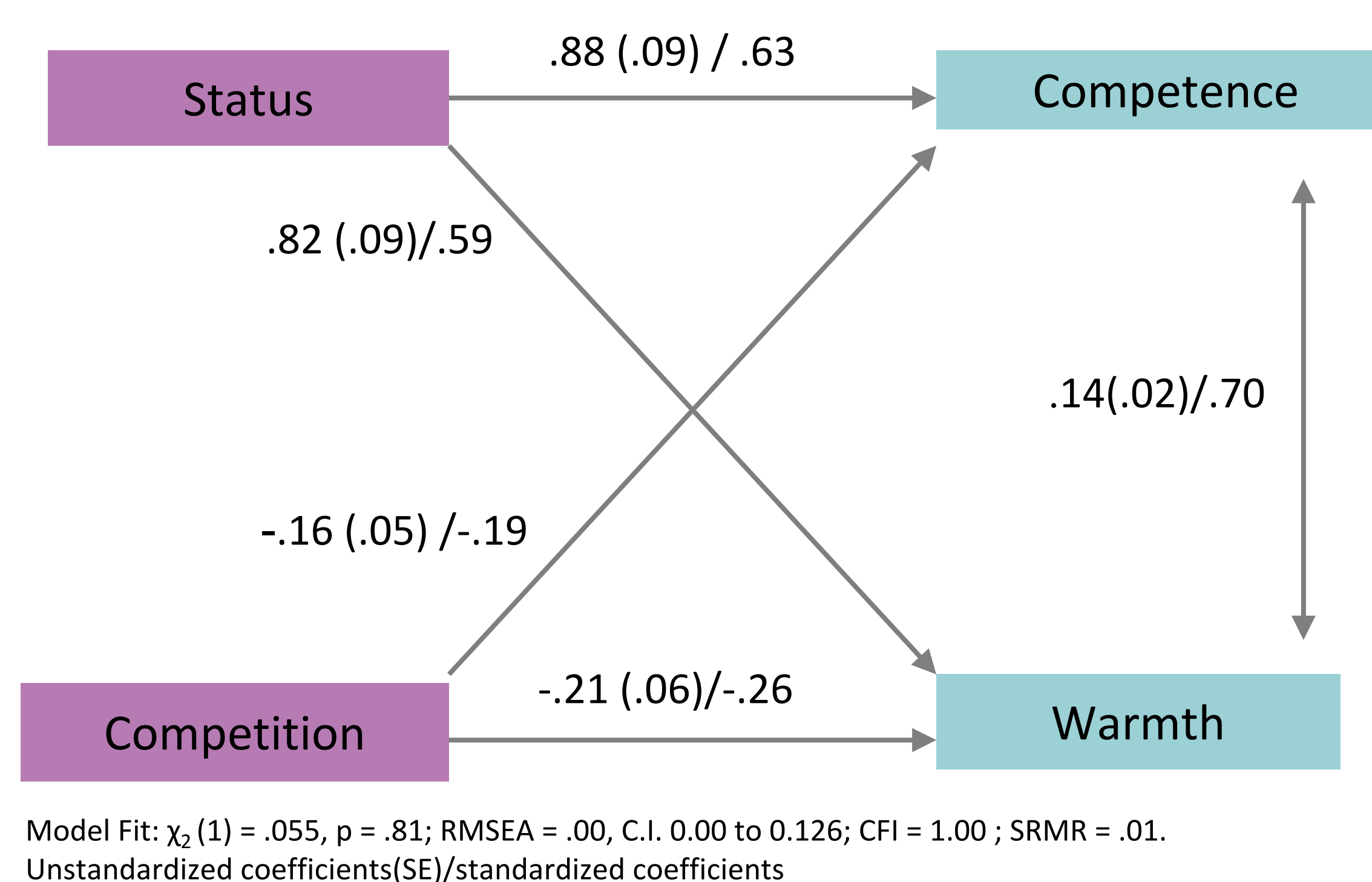
Figure 2: 4-Cluster scatterplot of ethnic groups and cluster centers



Objective 2 (see Figure 3):

Status predicted competence and competition predicted warmth. Contrary to expectation, status also predicted warmth and competition also predicted competence.

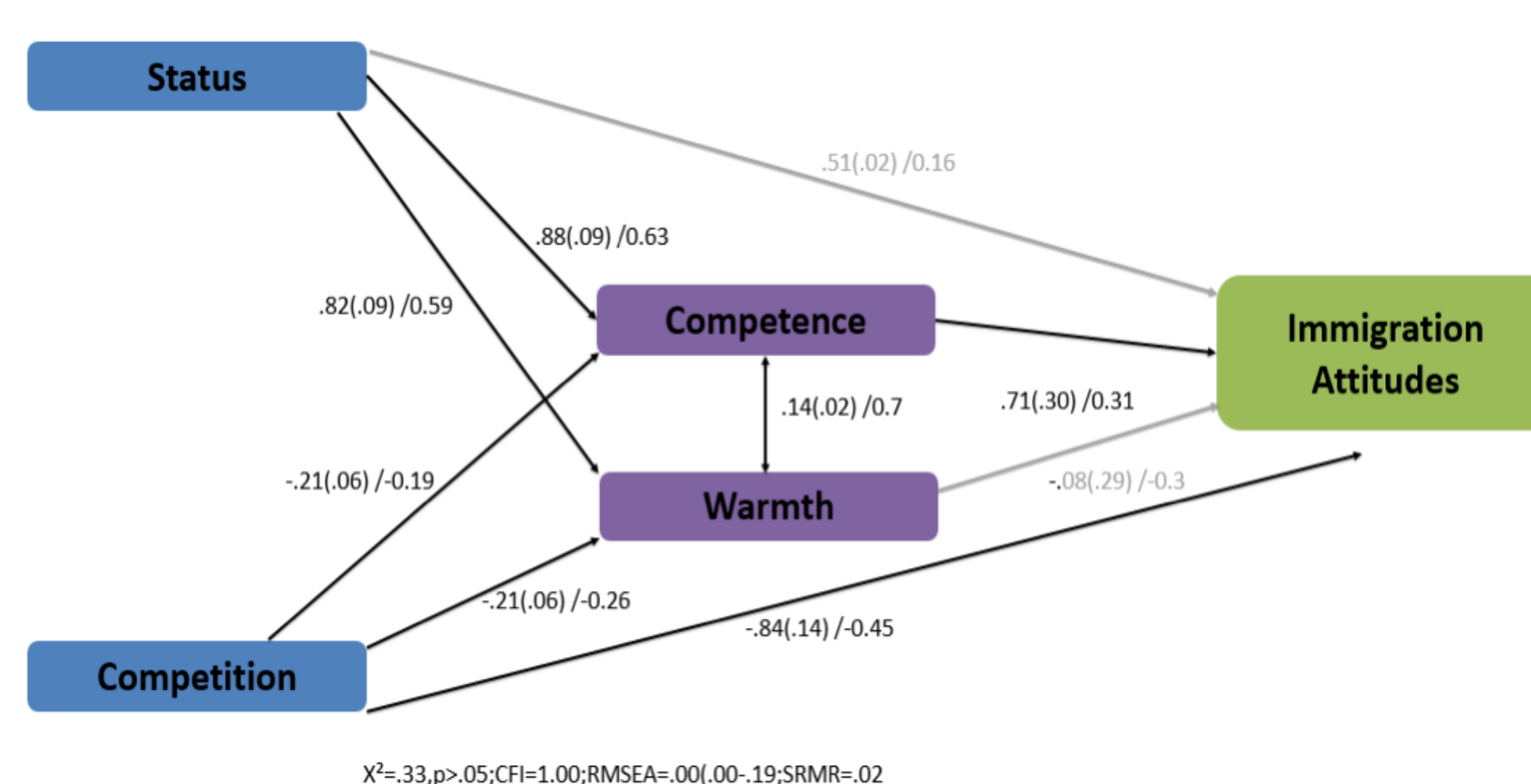
Figure 3: Path Analysis of Relations between Socio-Structural Perceptions and Cultural Stereotypes



Objective 3 (see Figures 4 & 5)

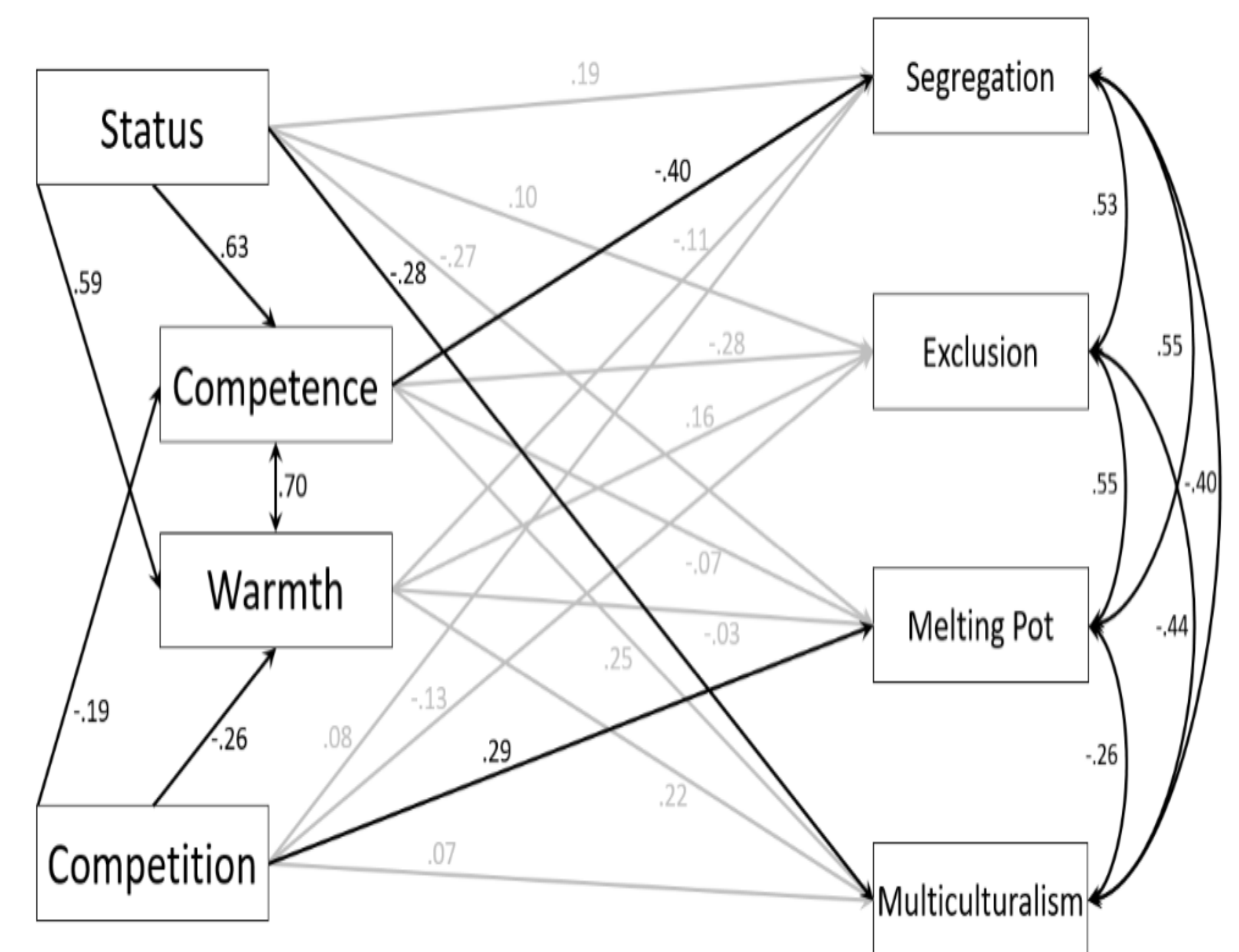
The more English Canadians felt ethnic minorities were stereotyped as competent, the more positive was their immigration attitudes; warmth did not predict immigration attitudes. Perceptions of intergroup competition were directly related to more negative immigration attitudes; perceptions of status were mediated by stereotypes of competence, as hypothesized.

Figure 4: Predicting Immigration Attitudes



The more English Canadians viewed ethnic minorities as competent, the less they endorsed segregation. Stronger perceptions of competition were associated with greater endorsement of a melting pot ideology (assimilation). Greater perceived status was associated with less endorsement of multiculturalism (i.e., integration).

Figure 5: Predicting Acculturation Attitudes



Conclusion

The cluster analysis points towards a generally positive perception of the target groups, with the exception of the Aboriginal cluster. More attention needs to be paid to the prejudices that English Canadians are perceived to hold towards Aboriginal groups in Canada.

The perceived status and competition of ethnic minority groups predict stereotypes of competence and warmth, respectively. However, these perceptions and stereotypes are highly intercorrelated, suggesting that the SCM oversimplifies their distinctiveness.

Stereotypes of competence are more important than warmth in predicting attitudes towards immigration and acculturation. Also important are socio-structural perceptions: the more competitive a group is perceived, the more their assimilation into the mainstream is endorsed, perhaps because their capacities are valued, but threatening to the mainstream culture. As well, the greater their status, the less integration of heritage and mainstream cultures is endorsed. Possibly this relation exists because high status groups (possibly French Canadians) threaten to overshadow the mainstream culture.

References

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- Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J., Glick, P. & Xu, J. (2002). A model of (often mixed) stereotype content: Competence and warmth respectively follow from perceived status and competition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 82(6), 878-902.
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