

Does group identification mediate the negative impact of perceived discrimination on well-being and outgroup attitudes?

A study of immigrant adolescents in Greece

Vassilis Pavlopoulos

Frosso Motti-Stefanidi

Dept. of Psychology, University of Athens, Greece

In A. U. Haenni Hoti (Chair), *Exploring intercultural relations: the acculturation of youth in a cross-national perspective*. Symposium conducted at the **22nd Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology**, July 15-19, 2014, Reims, France.

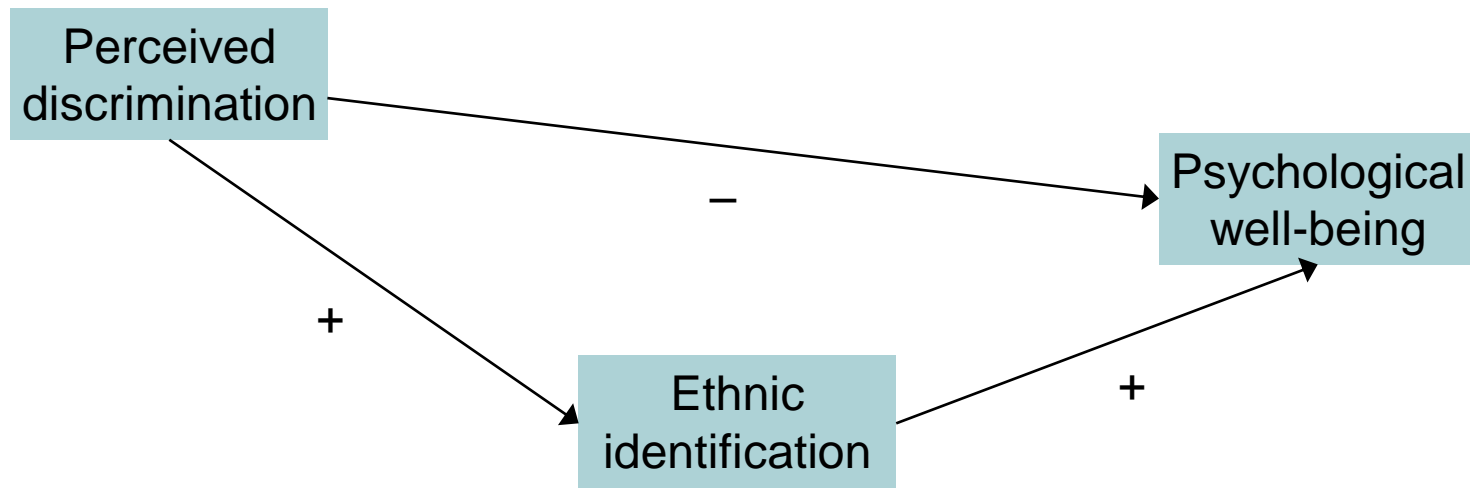
Abstract

Perceived discrimination has been found to pose a serious threat to the psychological adaptation of immigrant youth. At the same time, it may undermine intergroup relations by increasing hostility of immigrants against the nationals. Within the MIRIPS framework, perceived discrimination is closely related to the multiculturalism and integration hypotheses since it can be considered a proxy for cultural insecurity and a barrier in seeking interactions with the dominant outgroup. Various social psychological models attempt to explain the deleterious outcomes of perceived discrimination in terms of group identification. The present study draws on this theoretical background in order to examine whether and how ethnic and national identification of immigrant adolescents in Greece mediate the effect of perceived discrimination on their well-being and outgroup attitudes. The sample consisted of 510 immigrant children and adolescents (52% male, 63% second generation, mean age=12.7 years, age range 10-17 years) of various ethnic backgrounds (58% Pontian remigrants from the former Soviet Union, 32% from Albania) who were enrolled in Greek urban schools of primary and secondary education. Measures included perceived discrimination and national identification items drawn from the MIRIPS study, the revised Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, Nguyen & Von Eye's Acculturation Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. SEM analyses showed that perceived discrimination, as expected, is negatively related to well-being as well as to national outgroup attitudes. Ethnic group identification promoted well-being; furthermore, it was found to buffer the negative effect of perceived group (but not personal) discrimination on well-being. On the other hand, decreased national identification partly explained the negative impact of perceived personal and group discrimination on national acculturation, in line with the Rejection-Disidentification model. The implications of the above findings are discussed in relation to psychological (developmental) and contextual (sociocultural) factors.

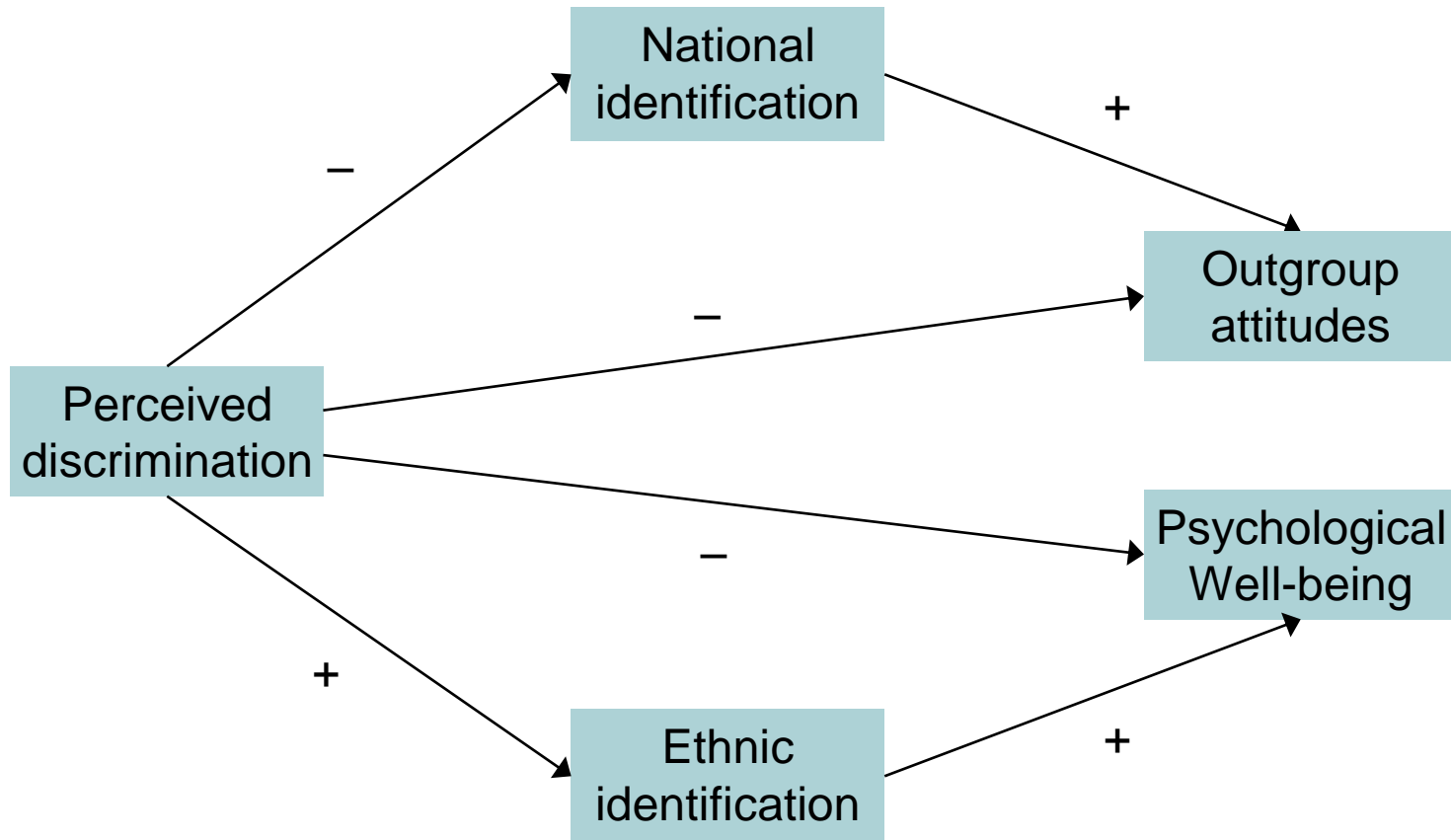
Perceived discrimination and the MIRIPS hypotheses

- *Multiculturalism hypothesis.* PD is expected to result from discriminatory behaviors of members of the majority society in the presence of realistic or symbolic threat (Stephan et al., 1999).
- *Contact hypothesis.* PD may be indicative of a group-based hierarchy and the domination of 'inferior' by 'superior' groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) which, in turn, undermines the conditions for positive contact outcomes.
- *Integration hypothesis.* Several social psychological theories deriving mainly from SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) suggest that PD may lead to increased ethnic group identification and hostile intergroup relations as strategies to maintain a positive self-esteem.

The Rejection-Identification Model (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999)



The Rejection-Disidentification Model (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Solheim, 2009)



Perceived personal and group discrimination

- Research has consistently revealed that minorities tend to perceive a higher level of discrimination directed at their group as a whole, rather than at themselves as individuals, which is referred to as the personal/group discrimination discrepancy (Taylor, Ruggiero, & Louis, 1996).
- Theoretical explanations include motivational and cognitive processes (e.g., minimization of personal discrimination and auto-stereotyping, respectively) and imply differential effects of PPD and PGD on various outcomes.
- Most studies converge on the finding that perceived personal discrimination has a stronger impact on the adaptation of immigrant youth than perceived group discrimination (Motti-Stefanidi & Asendorpf, 2012).

Research findings on perceived discrimination

- In a meta-analysis of 134 samples, Pascoe & Richman (2009) concluded that perceived discrimination has a significant negative effect on various aspects of both mental and physical health, with social support, coping behavior and group identification acting as mediators.
- Schmitt et al. (2014) performed two meta-analyses of research with correlational and experimental data. They confirmed that the pervasiveness of perceived discrimination is fundamental to its harmful effects on psychological well-being.
- Perceived discrimination reported by immigrant youth has been shown to be associated with stronger ethnic identity, weaker national identity, and lower commitment to the new culture (Berry et al., 2006).

Research based on the RIM and RDIM models

- Cronin et al.'s (2012) longitudinal study showed that ethnic identification in response to PD protects well-being and promotes activism, in line with the RIM.
- Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. (2009) reported evidence in support of the RDIM, i.e., PD resulted in national disidentification which, in turn, increased hostile attitudes towards the nationals.
- In the few studies of the RIM distinguishing between personal and group discrimination, Bourguignon et al. (2006) and Armenta & Hunt (2009) found that PGD was related to higher personal self-esteem via group identification, while PPD was associated with lower personal self-esteem.

Research on perceived discrimination with immigrants in Greece

- In a countrywide representative sample of adult immigrants ($N = 1,843$), high levels of PPD were related to the ethnic and diffuse profiles, while low PPD was evident in the integration and national profiles (Pavlopoulos et al., 2011).
- Perceived personal (but not group) discrimination has been found to pose a risk factor in the relationship between stress and school adaptation of Albanian adolescents (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2006).
- In a multilevel longitudinal study, Motti-Stefanidi & Asendorpf (2012) showed that individual attributes, such as personality traits and fewer life stressors, may protect immigrant youth from translating experiences of PGD into PPD.

Research purpose and hypotheses

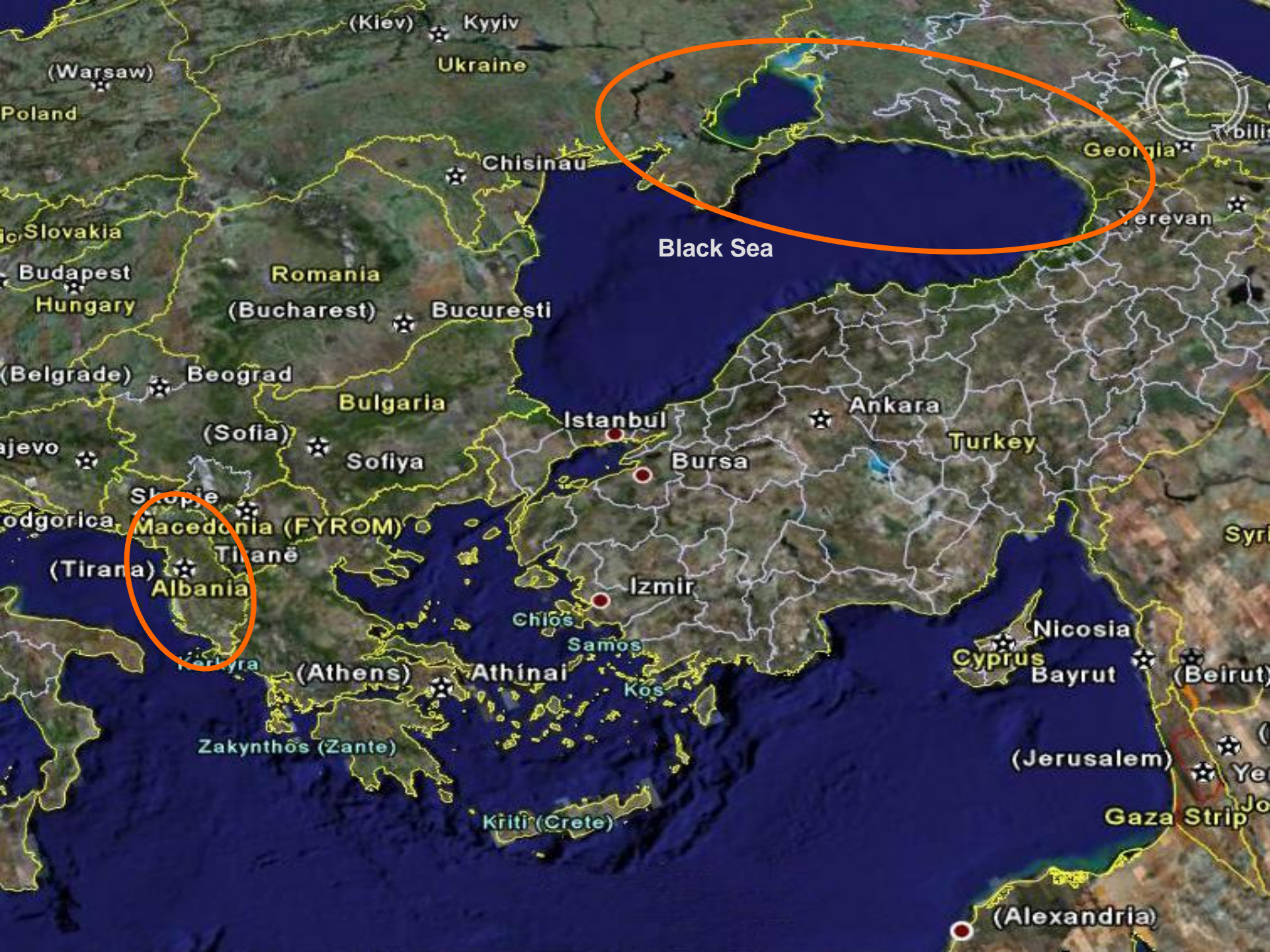
- We draw on social psychological background to explore the consequences of the relation between PD and psychological well-being on intergroup relations, in the context of the integration hypothesis of the MIRIPS project.
- We test the basic assumptions of the RIM and RDIM models by distinguishing between PPD and PGD.
 - ✓ PGD is expected to increase ethnic identification of immigrant youth in an attempt to maintain positive psychological functioning. At the same time, PGD will have negative impact on national identification and on relations with Greeks.
 - ✓ PPD will be negatively related with both ethnic and national identification, thus posing a risk factor for psychological well-being and intergroup relations.

Demographic profile of participants (*N* = 510 students)

- Country of origin/ethnicity
163 (32%) Albania; **296 (58%)** Former USSR (Pontian Greeks);
51 (10%) other
- Generation status
190 (37%) first generation; **315 (63%)** second generation
- Sex
265 (52%) male; **245 (48%)** female
- School class (Mean age)
212 (42%) Primary (**11,2 yrs**); **298 (58%)** Junior High (**13,7 yrs**)
- Place of residence
216 (42%) Athens; **223 (44%)** Thessaloniki
35 (7%) Volos; **36 (7%)** Rethymno

Participating immigrant groups

Albanian immigrants	Pontian remigrants
Ethnic Albanians (few of Greek origin)	Immigrants of Greek origin from Former Soviet Union
Former communist regime, moved in the '90s	Former communist regime, moved in the '90s
Economic immigrants, voluntary minority (Ogbu, 2003)	Officially treated as remigrants and given full citizen status
They speak Albanian; religion not important	Speak Pontian Greek (and Russian); Greek Orthodox
Spread around the country (over 60% of immigrant population)	They often settle together in enclaves (about 160,000)



(Kiev) Kyiv

Ukraine

(Warsaw)

Poland

Chisinau

Georgia

Tbilisi

Yerevan

Black Sea

Slovakia

Budapest

Hungary

Romania

(Bucharest)

Bucuresti

(Belgrade)

Beograd

Bulgaria

(Sofia)

Sofiya

Istanbul

Ankara

Turkey

Skopje

Skopje

Macedonia (FYROM)

Bursa

Podgorica

Tirane

(Tirana)

Albania

Izmir

Syria

Athina

(Athens)

Athinai

Chios

Samos

Kos

Nicosia

Bayrut

(Beirut)

Zakynthos (Zante)

(Jerusalem)

Kriti (Crete)

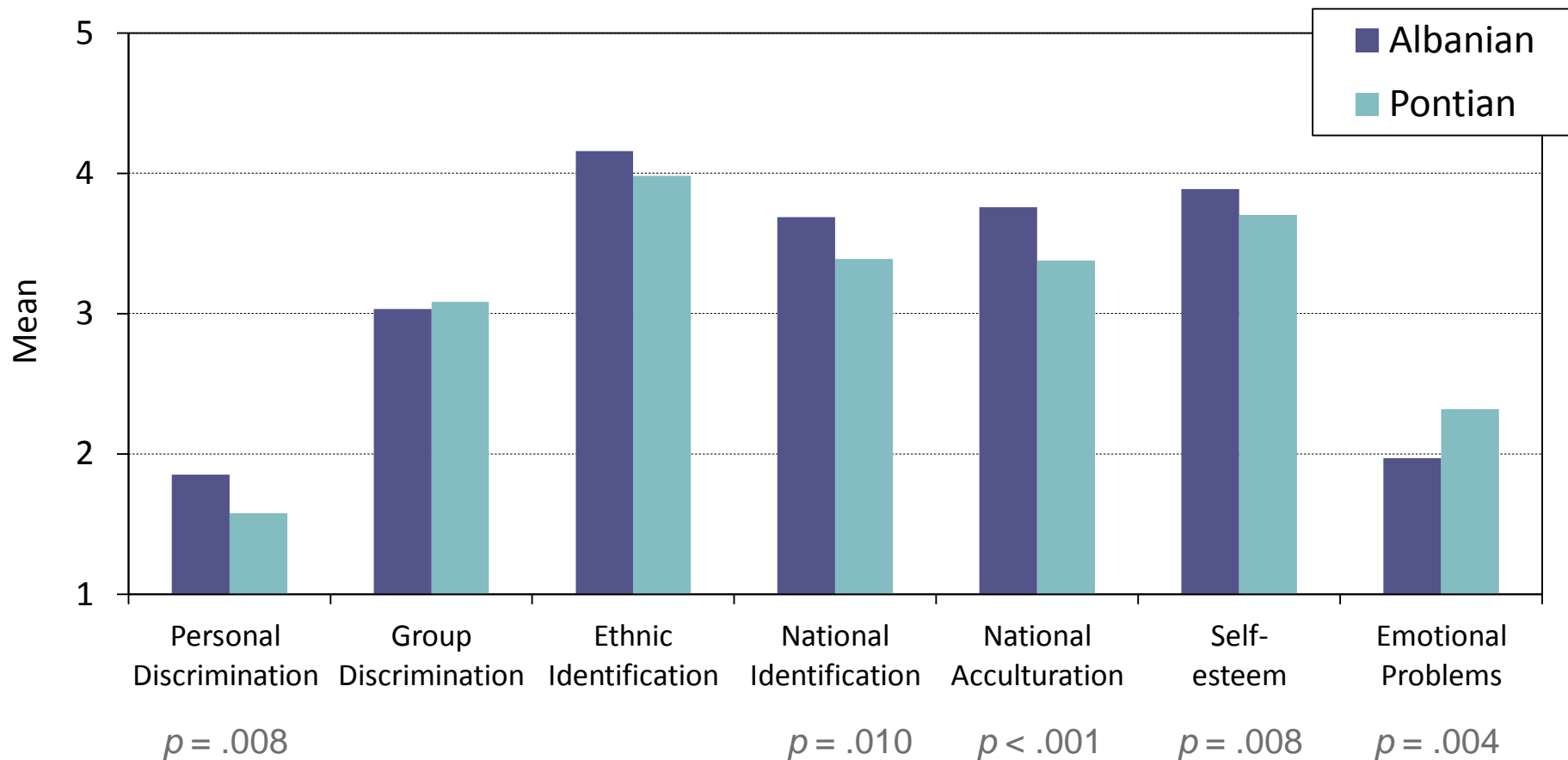
Gaza Strip

(Alexandria)

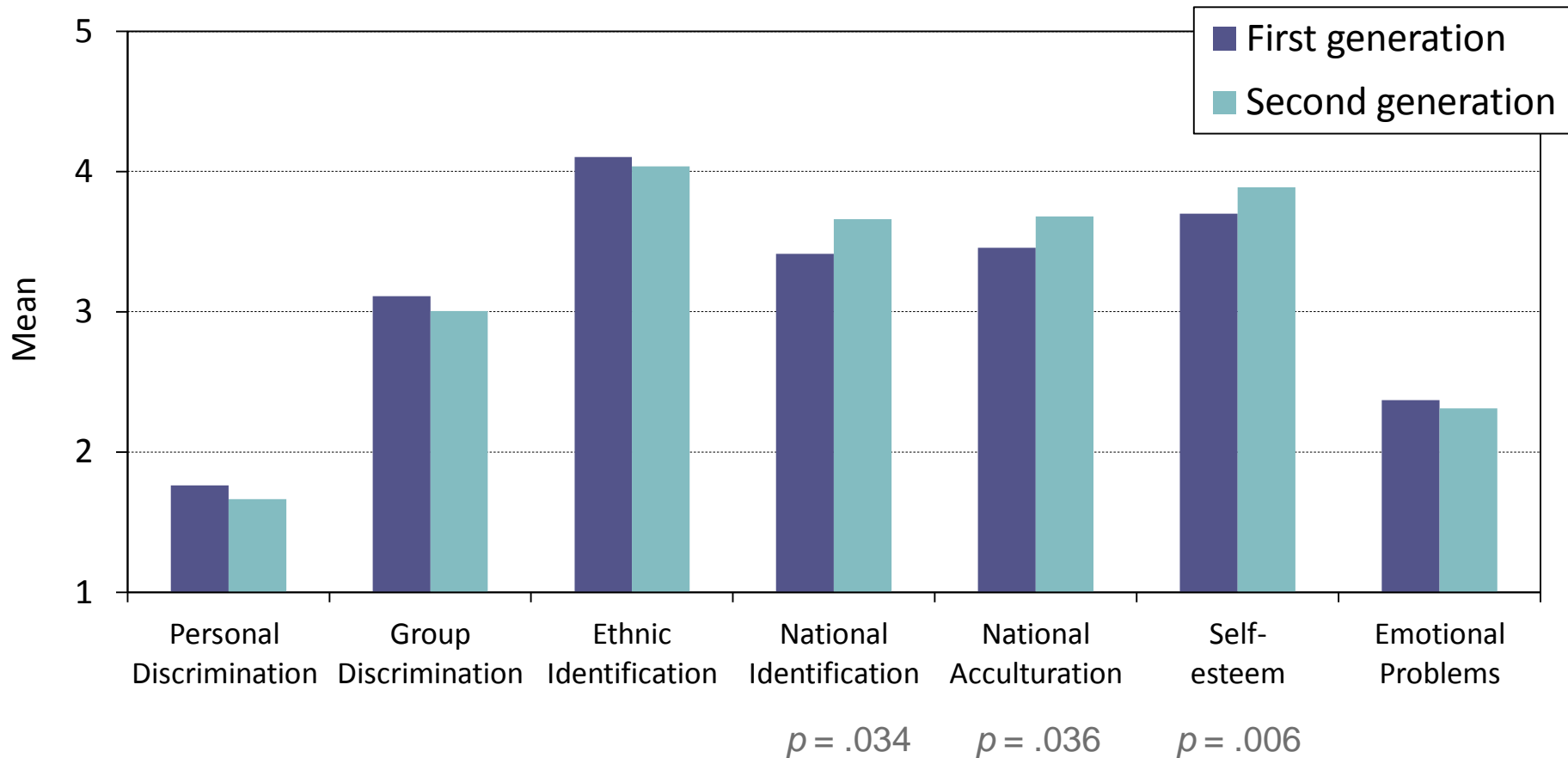
Measures

- **Perceived Discrimination** (based on MIRIPS and AStRA studies)
 - ☞ Against the ethnic group (3 items, $\alpha=.66$)
 - ☞ Against the self (3 items, $\alpha=.79$)
- **Ethnic Identification** (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007)
 - ☞ Sense of belonging to the culture of origin (3 items, $\alpha=.77$)
- **National Identification** (based on MIRIPS)
 - ☞ Sense of belonging to the Greek culture (2 items, $\alpha=.69$)
- **Acculturation** (Nguyen & Von Eye, 2002)
 - ☞ National orientation – intergroup relations (5 items, $\alpha=.86$)
- **Psychological Well-Being**
 - ☞ Global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965; 10 items, $\alpha=.72$)
 - ☞ Emotional symptoms (Goodman, 1997; 5 items, $\alpha=.67$)

Perceived discrimination, cultural identification and psychological well-being by ethnicity



Perceived discrimination, cultural identification and psychological well-being by generation status

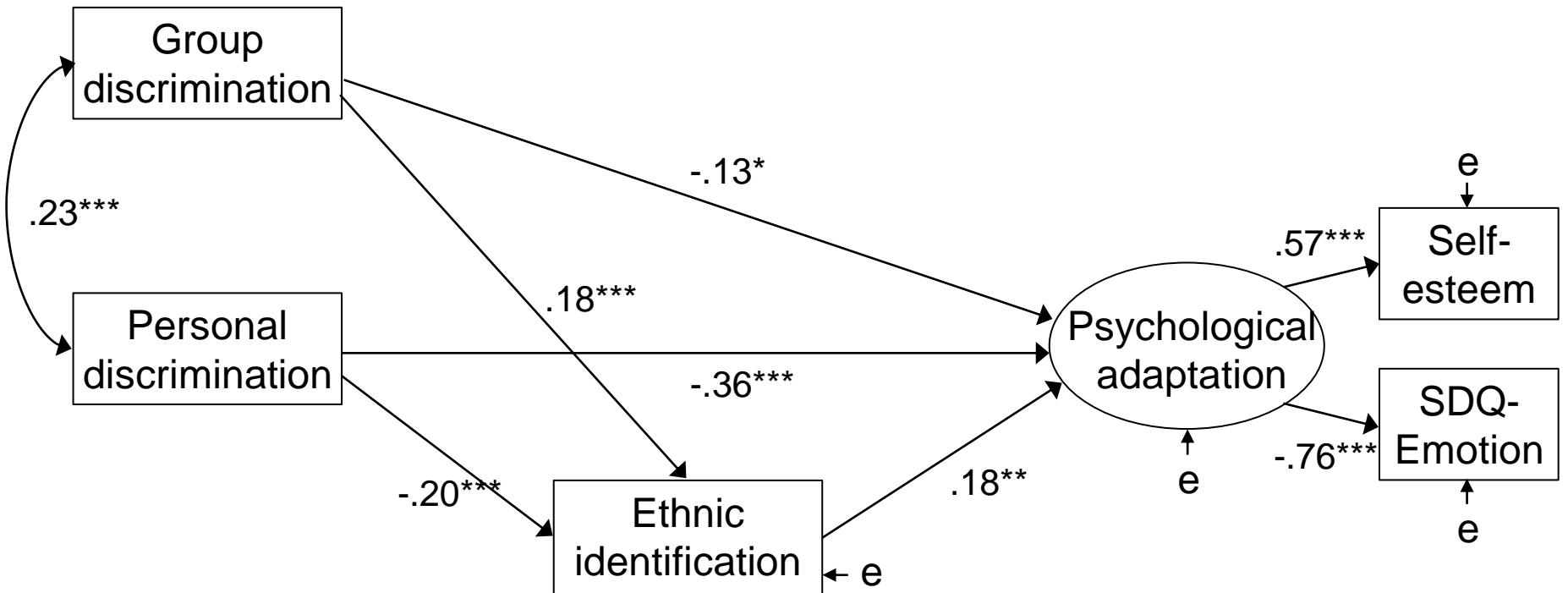


Correlations among perceived discrimination, cultural identification, well-being, and national acculturation

	PerDis	EthId	NatId	SelfEst	Emot	NatAcc
Group Discrimination	.23***	.11*	-.07	-.10*	.11*	-.12**
Personal Discrimination	--	-.20***	-.13**	-.20***	.31***	-.18***
Ethnic identification		--	.20***	.15**	-.17***	.17***
National identification			--	.14**	-.12**	.48***
Self-Esteem				--	-.45***	.10*
Emotional symptoms					--	-.11*
National acculturation						--

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

SEM analysis of the Rejection-Identification Model including group and personal perceived discrimination



$\chi^2(2) = 1.82, p = .401; CFI = 1.00; NFI = .99; RMSEA = .00; SRMR = .01$

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Mediation analyses (PROCESS; Hayes, 2012)

Perceived personal discrimination predicting self-esteem through ethnic identification

	Coef.	Boot SE	BootLCI	BootUCI
Direct effect of IV	-.117	.030	-.177	-.058
Indirect effect	-.015	.007	-.033	-.001

Perceived group discrimination predicting self-esteem through ethnic identification

	Coef.	Boot SE	BootLCI	BootUCI
Direct effect of IV	-.074	.030	-.133	-.016
Indirect effect	.010	.007	.001	.028

Mediation analyses (PROCESS; Hayes, 2012)

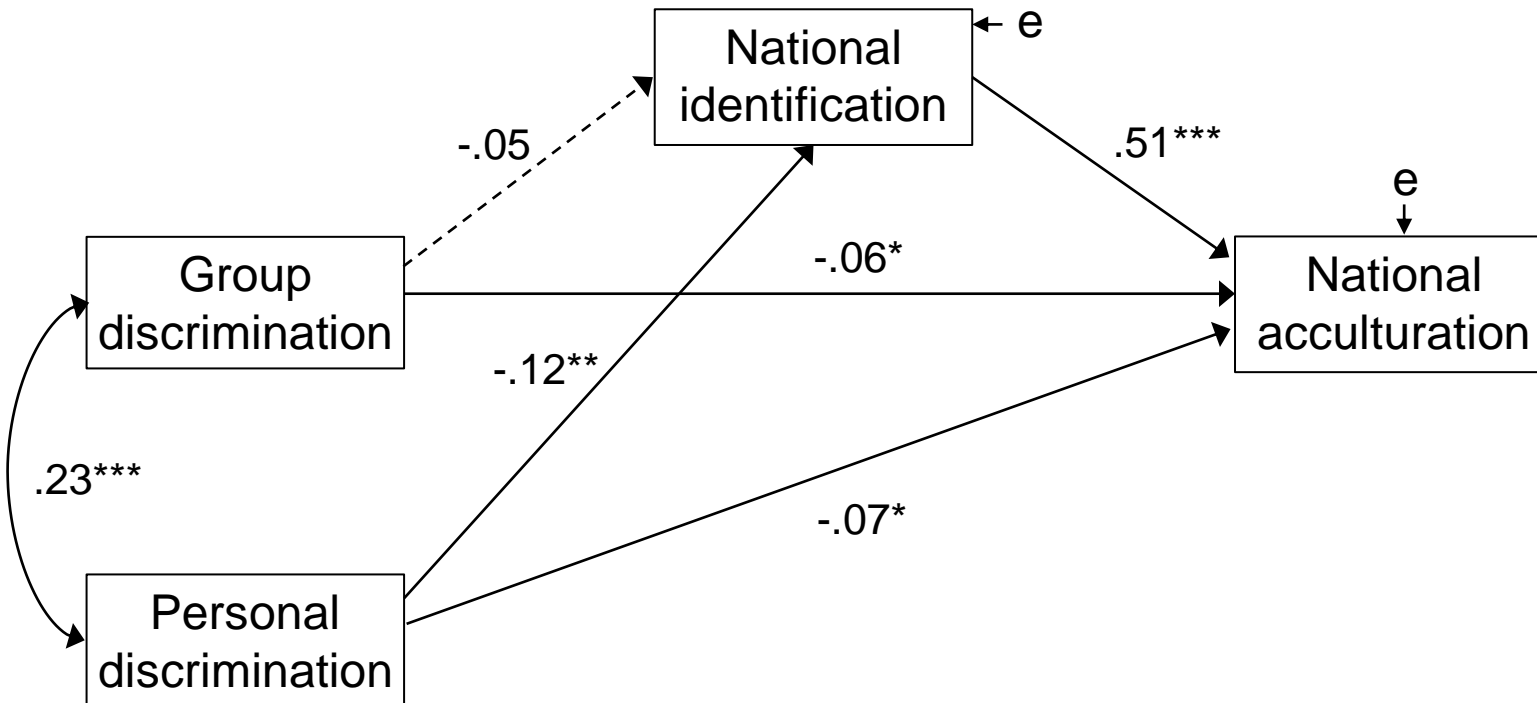
Perceived personal discrimination predicting emotional symptoms through ethnic identification

	Coef.	Boot SE	BootLCI	BootUCI
Direct effect of IV	.084	.014	.056	.111
Indirect effect	.006	.003	.002	.014

Perceived group discrimination predicting emotional symptoms through ethnic identification

	Coef.	Boot SE	BootLCI	BootUCI
Direct effect of IV	.038	.013	.013	.063
Indirect effect	-.005	.003	-.013	-.001

SEM analysis of the Rejection-Disidentification Model including group and personal perceived discrimination



$\chi^2(0) = 0.00$; CFI = 1.00; NFI = 1.00; SRMR = .00

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Mediation analyses (PROCESS; Hayes, 2012)

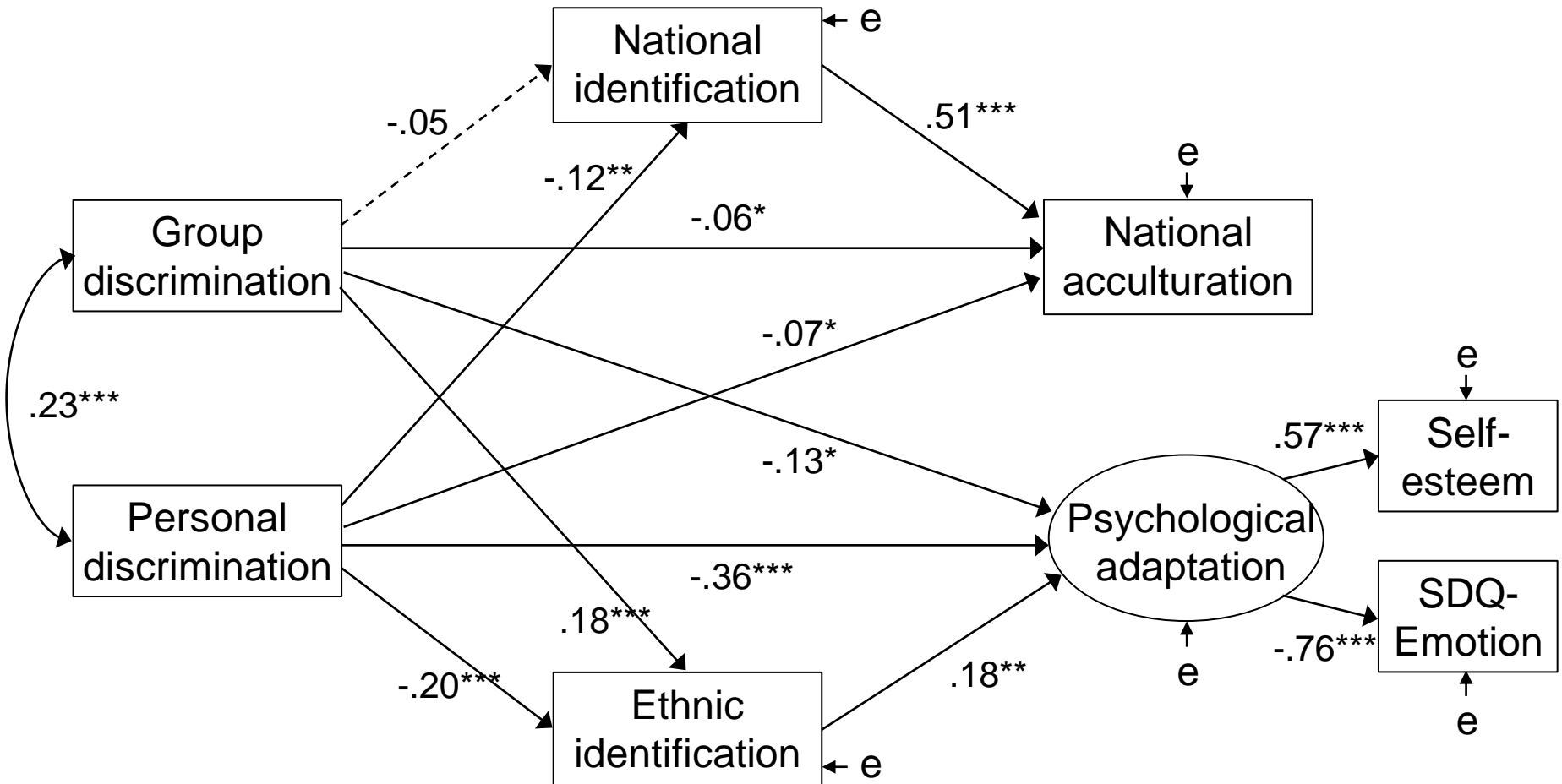
Perceived personal discrimination predicting national acculturation through national identification

	Coef.	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Direct effect of IV	-.086	.043	-.170	-.002
Indirect effect	-.103	.043	-.189	-.023

Perceived group discrimination predicting national acculturation through national identification

	Coef.	SE	LLCI	ULCI
Direct effect of IV	-.055	.034	-.122	-.001
Indirect effect	-.021	.042	-.106	.057

SEM analysis of the combined RIM and RDIM models including group and personal perceived discrimination



$\chi^2(8) = 23.24, p < .001$; CFI = .98; NFI = .97; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .05

* $p < .05$
 ** $p < .01$
 *** $p < .001$

Multigroup SEM comparisons by ethnicity and generation status

Ethnicity (Albanian vs. Pontian)

Model comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	p
Measurement weights	0.048	1	.826
Structural weights	12.865	11	.302
Structural covariances	13.949	14	.454

Generation status (first vs. second generation)

Model comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	p
Measurement weights	0.279	1	.597
Structural weights	5.473	11	.906
Structural covariances	7.579	14	.910

Summary and conclusions

- Both PPD and PGD showed to have a consistent, negative impact on indices of psychological (self-esteem, emotional symptoms) and socio-cultural (intergroup relations) adaptation.
- The protective role of ethnic identification on well-being, as suggested by the RIM, was evident only for PGD. By contrast, PPD had negative direct and indirect effects on well-being, through low ethnic identification.
- National disidentification explained the path between PPD and less willingness to engage into relations with the national out-group, in line with the RDIM. On the other hand, the direct effect of PGD on national acculturation was not mediated by national disidentification.

Summary and conclusions

- The differential role of PPD and PGD may be viewed in the light of the personal/group discrimination discrepancy, which was replicated in the present study.
- PGD can be protective for psychological well-being through the minimization of personal experiences of discrimination (Taylor et al., 1996), which is enhanced by making social comparisons within one's ethnic group.
- On the other hand, PGD may not necessarily result in national disidentification, as cultural identity shift is considered an individual mobility strategy in order to defend one's threatened social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Summary and conclusions

- PPD is a major risk factor in the acculturation and adaptation of immigrant youth in manifold ways:
 - ✓ by directly threatening psychological well-being,
 - ✓ by undermining relations with the national peers,
 - ✓ by decreasing identification with *any* cultural group, which can bring serious detrimental effects in the acculturation (e.g., marginalization) and developmental processes (e.g., diffused identity).
- Multigroup comparisons showed that no ethnic group or immigrant generation is immune to the toxic effects of perceived discrimination, independent of group differences at the mean level.

Limitations and future directions

- The causality of effects is not easy to establish in a cross-sectional design. Mutual accommodation implies reciprocal relationships. According to the Interactive Acculturation Model (Bourhis et al., 1997) immigrant acculturation orientation may directly influence the attitudes of the host majority.
- It is of interest to understand what is the impact of the economic crisis in Greece on all components of the models under study (i.e., PPD, PGD, cultural identification, psychological well-being, and intergroup relations).
- Just as PGD does not always translate to PPD (Motti-Stefanidi & Asendorpf, 2012), macroeconomics do not directly explain levels of perceived threat, which makes psychological research more socially relevant than ever...



Thank you for your attention!

 vpavlop@psych.uoa.gr

 <http://users.uoa.gr/~vpavlop/>

References

- Armenta, B. E., & Hunt, J. S. (2009). Responding to societal devaluation: Effects of perceived personal and group discrimination on the ethnic group identification and personal self-esteem of Latino/Latina adolescents. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *12*, 23–39. doi:10.1177/1368430208098775
- Berry, J. W., Phinney, J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006). Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *55*, 303–332. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2006.00256.x
- Bourguignon, D., Seron, E., Yzerbyt, V., & Herman, G. (2006). Perceived group and personal discrimination: Differential effects on personal self-esteem. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *36*, 773–789. doi:10.1002/ejsp.326
- Bourhis, R. Y., Moïse, L. C., Perreault, S., & Sénécal, S. (1997). Towards an interactive acculturation model: A social psychological approach. *International Journal of Psychology*, *32*, 369–386. doi:10.1080/002075997400629
- Branscombe, N. R., Schmitt, M. T., & Harvey, R. D. (1999). Perceiving pervasive discrimination among African Americans: Implications for group identification and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *77*, 135–149. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.77.1.135
- Cronin, T. J., Levin, S., Branscombe, N., van Laar, C., & Tropp, L. R. (2012). Ethnic identification in response to perceived discrimination protects well-being and promotes activism: A longitudinal study of Latino college students. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *15*, 393–407. doi:10.1177/1368430211427171
- Goodman, R. (1997). The strengths and difficulties questionnaire: A research note. *Journal of Child Psychology, Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, *38*, 581–586. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.1997.tb01545.x
- Hayes, A. F. (2012). *PROCESS: A versatile computational tool for observed variable mediation, moderation, and conditional process modeling* [White paper]. Retrieved from <http://www.afhayes.com/public/process2012.pdf>
- Jasinskaja-Lahti, I., Liebkind, K., & Solheim, E. (2009). To identify or not to identify? National disidentification as an alternative reaction to perceived ethnic discrimination. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *58*, 105–128. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2008.00384.x
- Motti-Stefanidi, F., & Asendorpf, J. (2012). Perceived discrimination of immigrant adolescents in Greece: How does group discrimination translate into personal discrimination? *European Psychologist*, *17*, 93–104. doi:10.1027/1016-9040/a000116

References

- Motti-Stefanidi, F., Pavlopoulos, V., Obradović, J., & Masten, A. (2006, May). *Perceived discrimination and academic resilience: A study of Albanian immigrant adolescents in Greece*. Paper presented at the 10th Conference of the European Association for Research on Adolescence, Antalya, Turkey.
- Nguyen, H., & Von Eye, A. (2002). The acculturation scale for Vietnamese adolescents: A bidimensional perspective. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 26*, 202–213. doi:10.1080/01650250042000672.
- Pascoe, E. A., & Richman, L. S. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin, 135*, 531–554. doi:10.1037/a0016059
- Pavlopoulos, V., Dalla, M., Georganti, K., & Besevegis, E. (2011, July). *Building integration indices of immigrants in Greece: Definition, measurement and relations with sociodemographic factors*. Paper presented at the IACCP Regional Conference, Istanbul, Turkey.
- Phinney, J., & Ong, A. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*, 271–281. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.271
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Schmitt, M., Branscombe, N. R., Postmes, T., & Garcia, A. (2014). The consequences of perceived discrimination for psychological well-being: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin, 140*, 921–948. doi:10.1037/a0035754
- Sidanius, J., & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Stephan, W. G., Ybarra, O., & Bachman, G. (1999). Prejudice toward immigrants: An integrated threat theory. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 29*, 2221–2237. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.1999.tb00107.x
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 7–24). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.
- Taylor, D. M., Ruggiero, K. M., & Louis, W. R. (1996). Personal/group discrimination discrepancy: Towards a two-factor explanation. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 28*, 193–202. doi:10.1037/0008-400X.28.3.193