

# Mutual Intercultural Relations in Greece: Implications for Policy

Vassilis Pavlopoulos, Frosso Motti-Stefanidi  
*National & Kapodistrian University of Athens*

✉ [vpavlop@psych.uoa.gr](mailto:vpavlop@psych.uoa.gr)

🌐 <http://users.uoa.gr/~vpavlop>

Paper presented at the *1st International Symposium on Intergroup Communication*,  
21-23 June, 2017, Thessaloniki, Greece

# Abstract

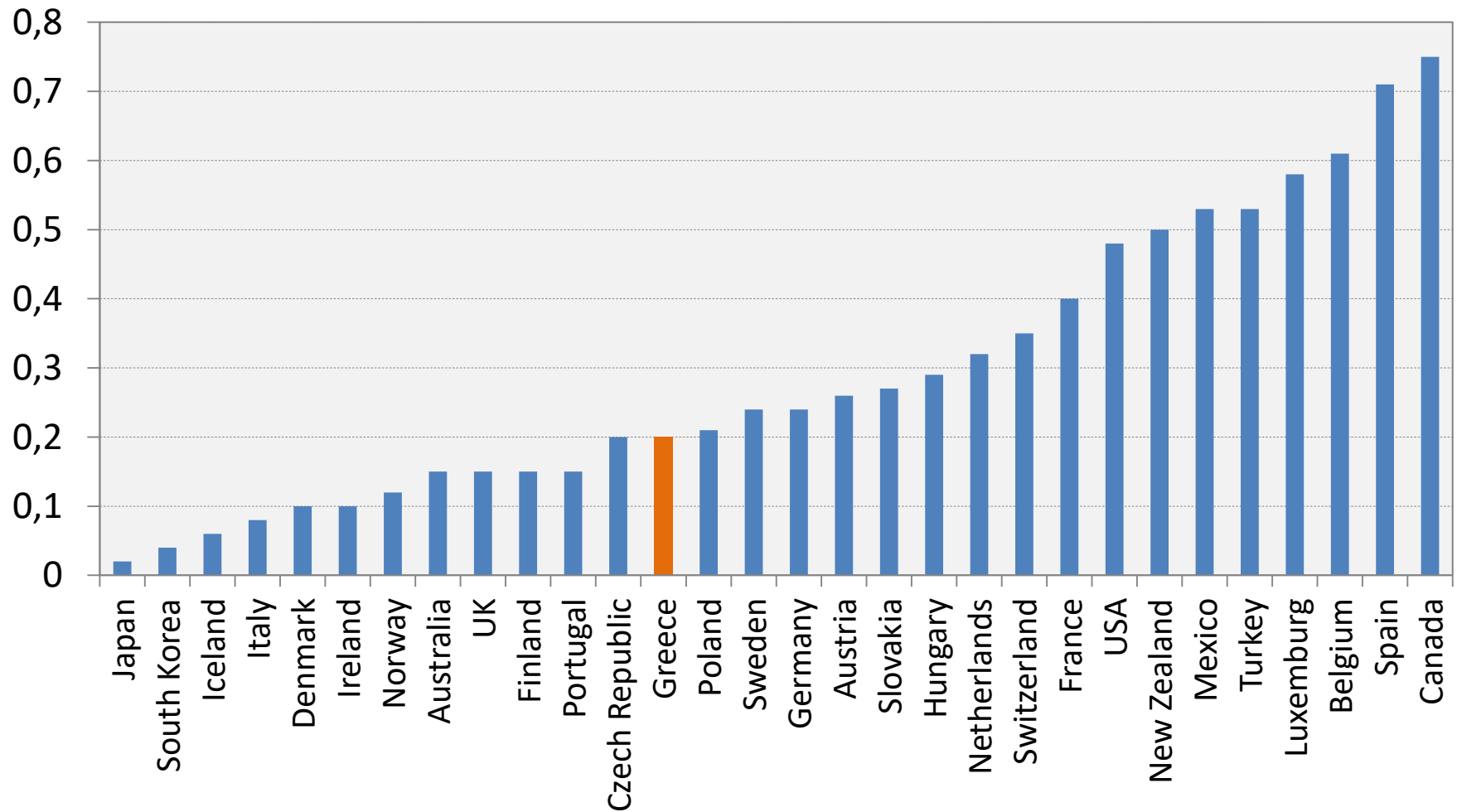
In this paper we will report data from the Greek contribution to an international project aiming to explore three core ideas regarding Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies (MIRIPS; Berry, 2017): (a) The 'multiculturalism hypothesis' suggests that, when individuals feel secure in their place in a society, they will be able to better accept those who are different from themselves; (b) the 'contact hypothesis' proposes that, when individuals interact and engage with others who are culturally different from themselves, they will achieve mutual acceptance; and (c) the 'integration hypothesis' argues that, when individuals identify with, and are socially connected to both their heritage culture and to the larger society in which they live, they will achieve higher levels of wellbeing than if they relate to only one or the other culture, or to neither. Evidence will be provided in full or partial support for the above hypotheses in the Greek context, based on empirical data from national Greek ( $N=449$ ) and immigrant participants ( $N=147$ ). Integrative models of intercultural relations for the two samples were tested, which draw on social psychological intergroup theories. We found that, for Greeks, pathways from national identification and contact to acculturation expectations were mediated by security and intergroup attitudes; while for immigrants the pathway from security to adaptation was mediated by acculturation strategies. Unlike Greeks, for immigrants contact was not associated with security, acculturation strategies or adaptation. Limitations of the study along with suggestions for policy will be discussed.

# Cultural diversity in Greece

- The management of diversity poses one of the most serious challenges to social stability and cohesion for culturally plural countries in the contemporary world.
- Cultural diversity can be measured on the basis of various indicators:
  - ✓ The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development index (OECD)
  - ✓ The Multicultural Policy Index (MPI)
  - ✓ The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)

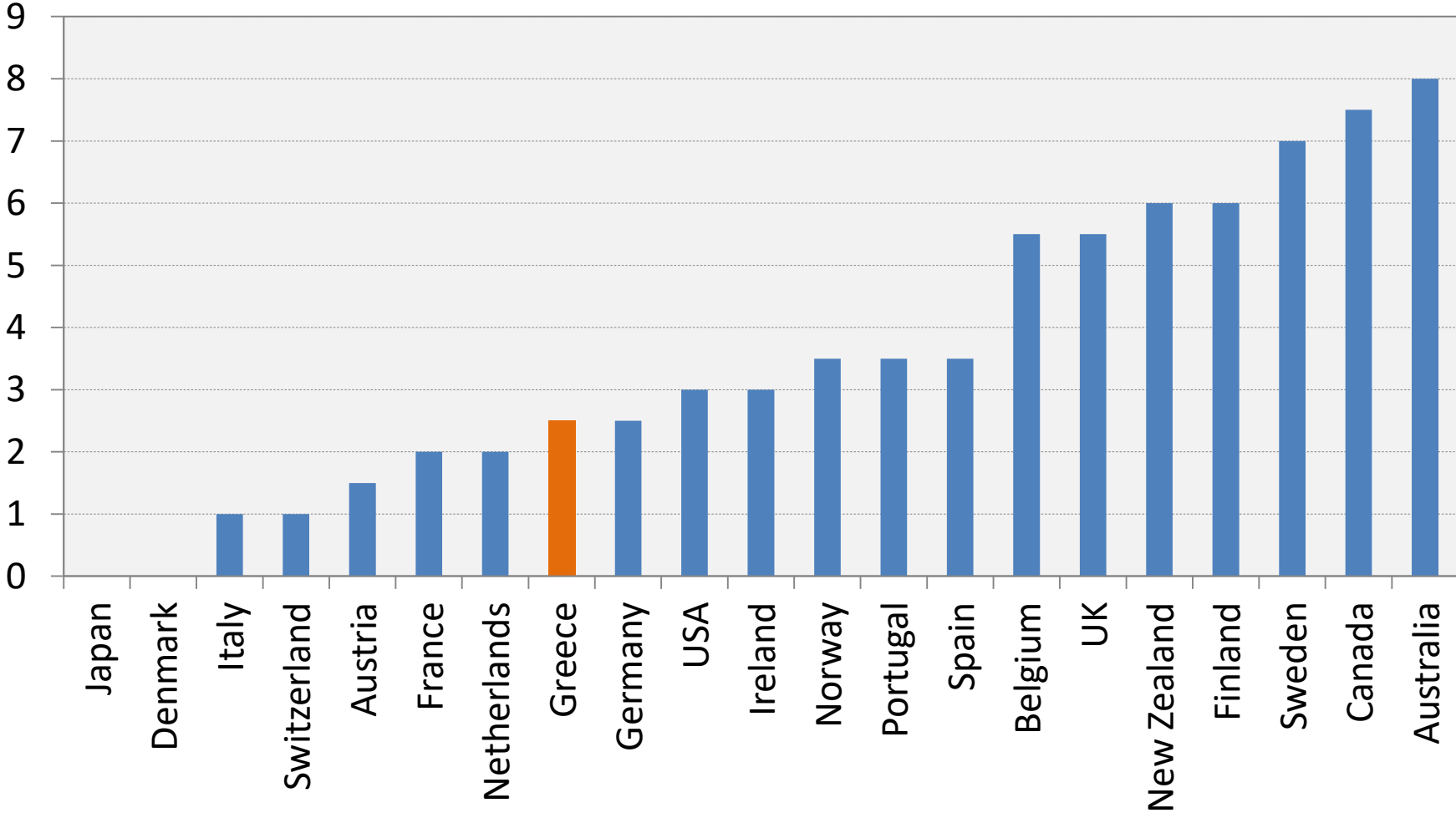
# Cultural diversity in OECD countries

(Patsiurko, Campbell, & Hall, 2012)



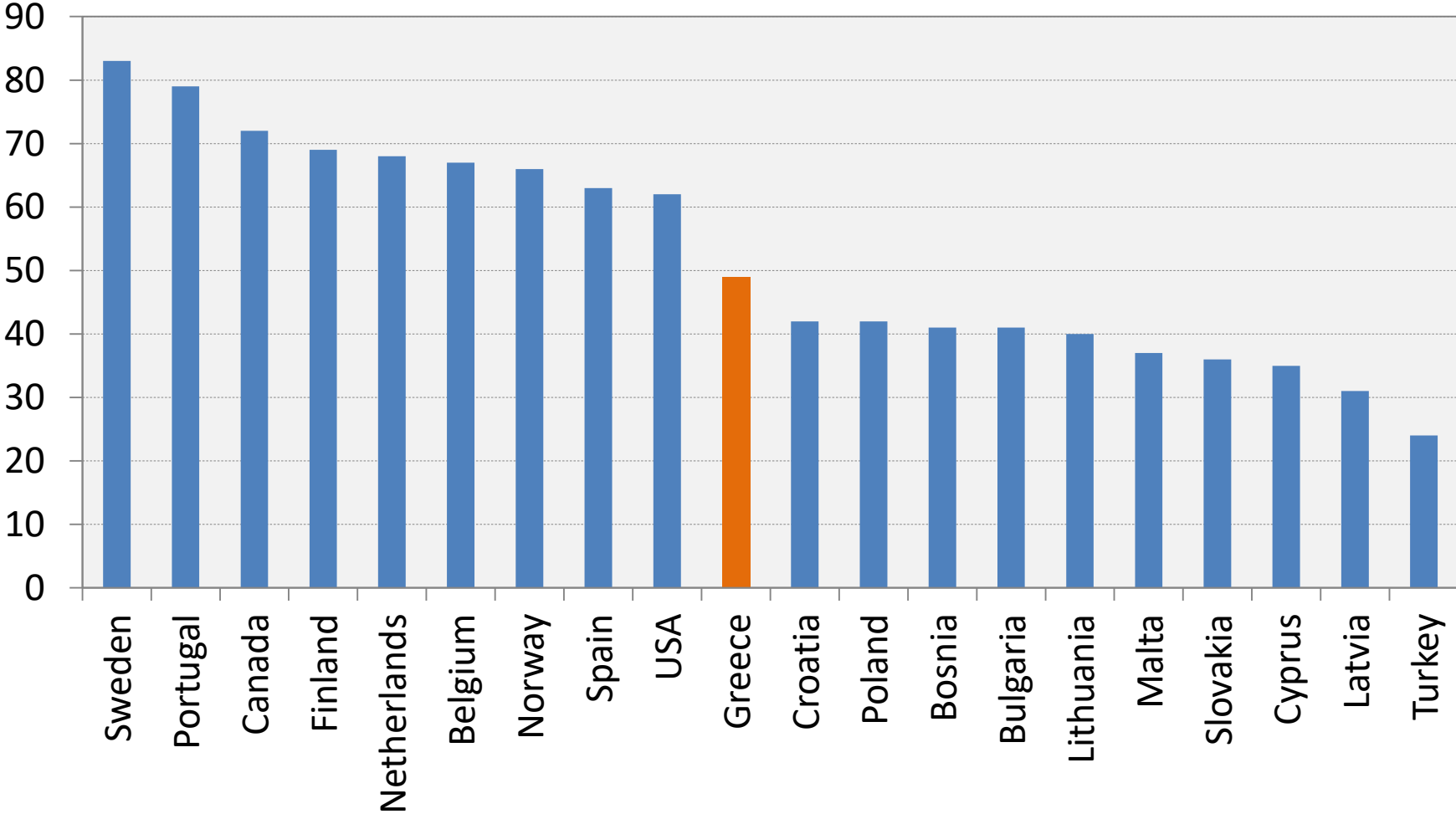
# Multiculturalism Policy Index

(Banting & Kymlicka, 2006-2012; Bloemraad, 2011)



# Migrant Integration Policy Index

(MIPEX, 2010)



# Multiculturalism vs. colour blindness

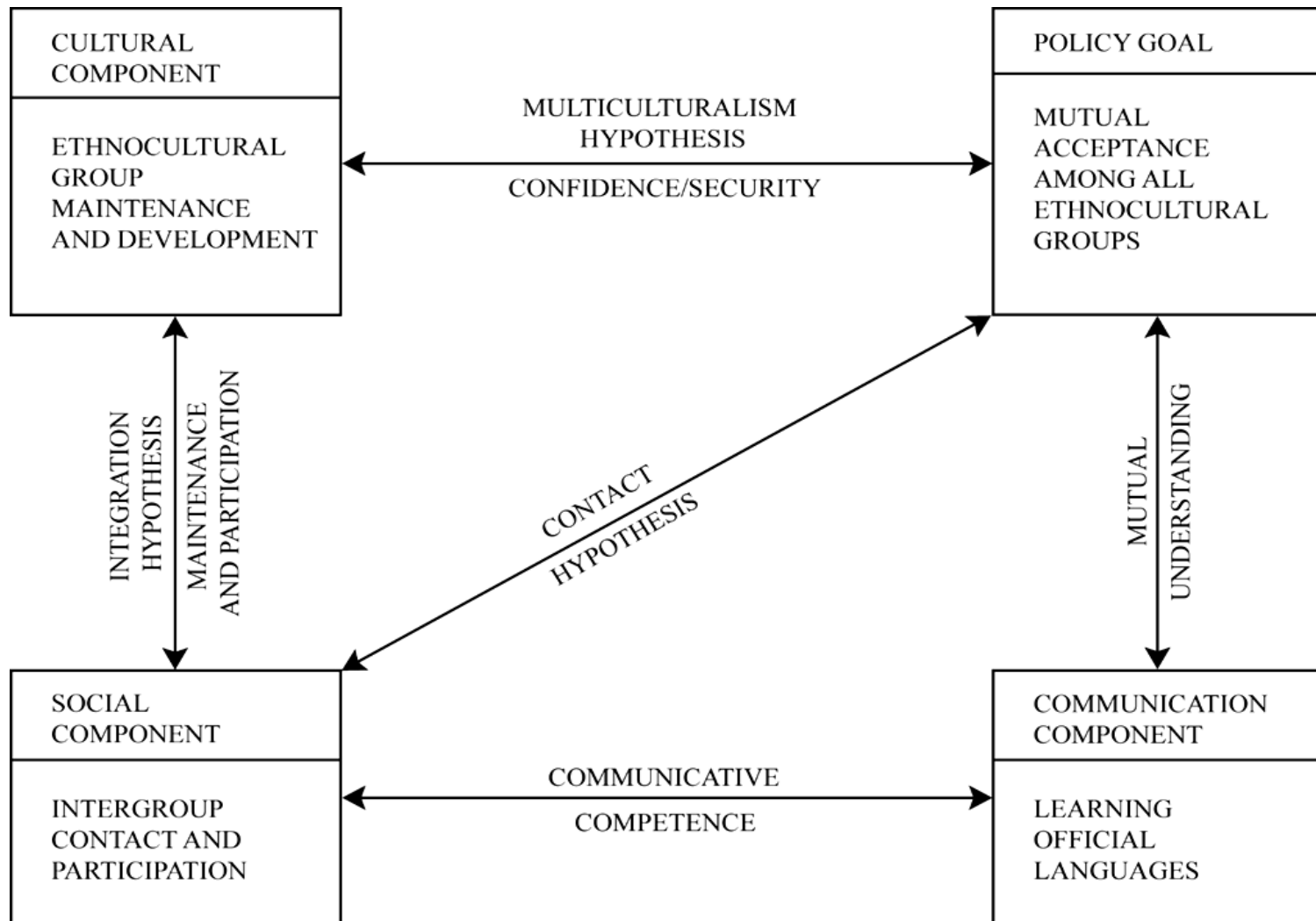
- Multiculturalism implies a positive acceptance of ethnic, cultural and racial diversity. Multicultural models are associated with greater inclusiveness, less bias and more engagement of non-dominant groups (Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009).
- Colour-blinded ('melting-pot') policies intentionally ignore group differences. Although portrayed as a mechanism to decrease discrimination, in practice they justify existing inequality and bring about stronger racial bias (Apfelbaum, Norton, & Sommers, 2012).

# Greek immigration policies

- Greek governments proved slow to respond to the challenges of multiculturalism.
- Immigration policies have been characterized by a reactive approach (Triandafyllidou, 2014).
- The failing asylum system.
- Greek nationality has been based on the *jus sanguinis* principle.
- A series of regularization programmes were implemented in 1998, 2001, 2005, and 2007, plus a naturalization law declared anti-constitutional in 2013.
- The most recent migration law (in 2014) brought about several improvements; however, it remained a management law rather than one inspiring a sense of perspective.



# A framework for examining a multicultural policy: The MIRIPS project (Berry, 2017)



# The MIRIPS core hypotheses

- **The Multiculturalism hypothesis.** When individuals feel secure in their place in a society, they will be able to better accept those who are different from themselves (e.g., ITT; Stephan & Stephan, 2000).
- **The Contact hypothesis.** When individuals interact and engage with others who are culturally different, they will achieve mutual acceptance (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).
- **The Integration hypothesis.** When individuals identify with, and are socially connected to both their heritage culture and to the larger society, they will achieve higher levels of wellbeing (e.g., Berry, 2001).

# The Greek MIRIPS study

(Pavlopoulos & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017)

## Participants

- 450 native Greeks

56% female; mean age: 37 yrs;

56% university graduates; 38% married;

9.4% NEET – not in education, employment or training

- 150 first-generation immigrants

65% female; 43.6% from Albania; mean age: 36 yrs;

53% married; 27% university graduates; 19% NEET

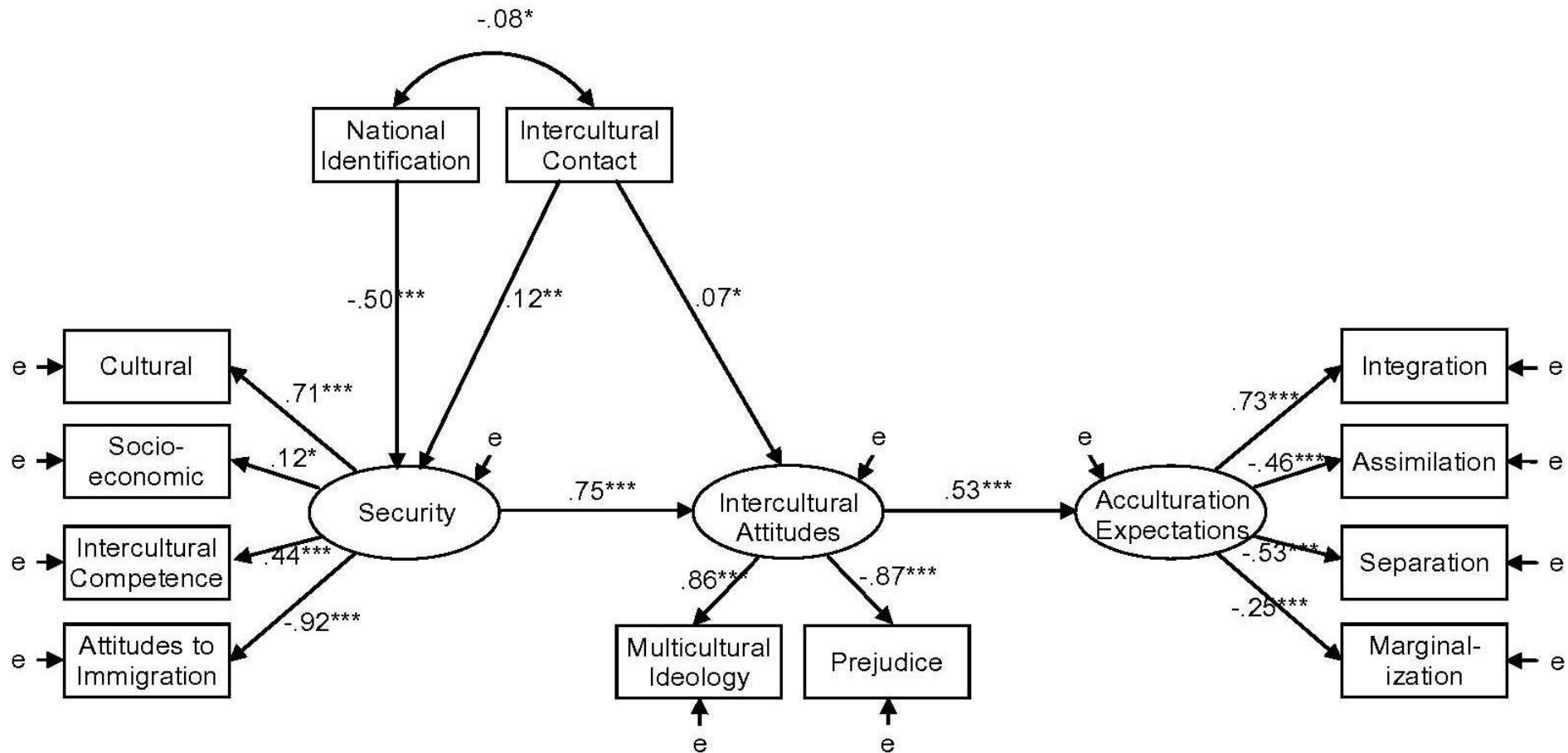
# The Greek MIRIPS study

(Pavlopoulos & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017)

## Measures

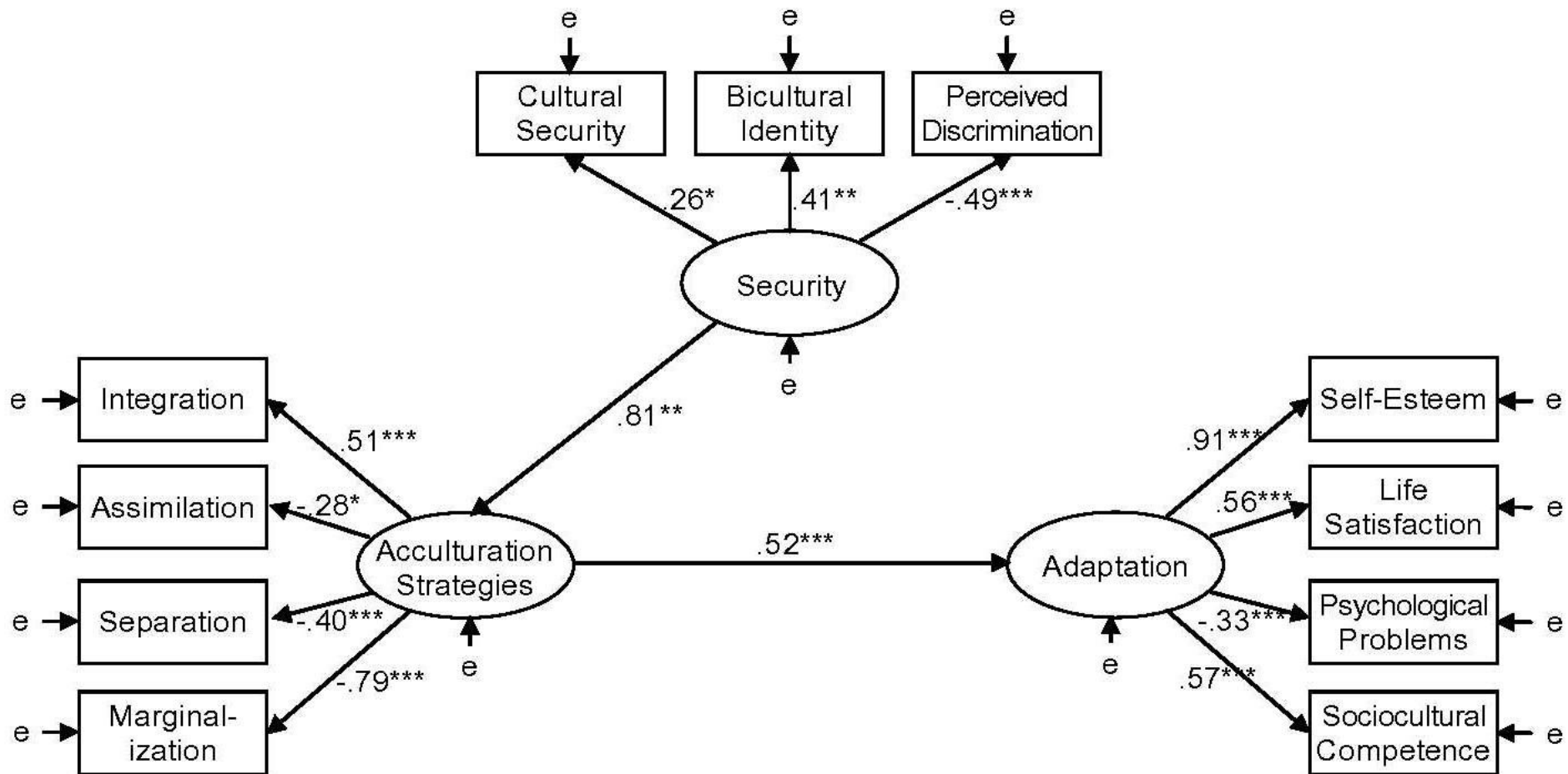
- Cultural Identification: Ethnic ( $\alpha=.83$ ), National ( $\alpha=.82$ )
- Sense of Security: Cultural ( $\alpha=.60$ ), Socioeconomic ( $\alpha=.66$ )
- Perceived Discrimination ( $\alpha=.81$ )
- Acculturation Expectations (Greeks; mean  $\alpha=.67$ ) and Acculturation Strategies (immigrants; mean  $\alpha=.70$ )
- Psychological Adaptation: Self-esteem ( $\alpha=.84$ ), Life Satisfaction ( $\alpha=.75$ ), Psychological Symptoms ( $\alpha=.91$ )
- Sociocultural Adaptation ( $\alpha=.86$ ) and Intrecultural Competence ( $\alpha=.81$ )

# Structural equation model of the combined MIRIPS hypotheses for the **Greek** participants



Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .  $N = 449$ . Values are standardized regression weights. Fit indices for the model: CMIN=132.67, DF=42,  $p < .001$ ; CMIN/DF=3.15; CFI=.95; IFI=.95; TLI=.92; RMSEA=.069 (LO=.056, HI=.083); SRMR=.056

# Structural equation model of the combined MIRIPS hypotheses for the **immigrant** sample



Note. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .  $N = 147$ . Values are standardized regression weights. Fit indices for the model: CMIN=52.19, DF=39,  $p=.077$ ; CMIN/DF=1.30; CFI=.95; IFI=.95; TLI=.93; RMSEA=.054 (LO=.023, HI=.074); SRMR=.064

# Summary of findings

- ✓ **Multiculturalism hypothesis:** Approved, i.e., feeling safe about one's identity and position seems to contribute to more tolerant attitudes and acceptance of diversity.
- ✓ **Contact hypothesis:** Confirmed, but only for the Greek sample; for the immigrant participants, contact was not associated to security, acculturation strategies or adaptation (probably, optimal conditions for contact not met?)
- ✓ **Integration hypothesis:** Reconfirmed, i.e., the most positive outcomes with respect to psychological and sociocultural adaptation were for integration and the most negative for marginalization.

# Summary of findings

- ✓ For **Greeks**, the pathways from national identification and contact to acculturation expectations were mediated by security and intergroup attitudes
- ✓ For **immigrants**, the pathway from security to adaptation was mediated by acculturation strategies.
- ✓ The *direction* of the above associations is not conclusive, which may be due to methodological restrictions or epistemological considerations (i.e., top-down/sociological vs. bottom-up/psychological approach).
- ✓ *Generalizability* of findings demands caution, partly because of the rapidly changing landscape of immigration in Greece.

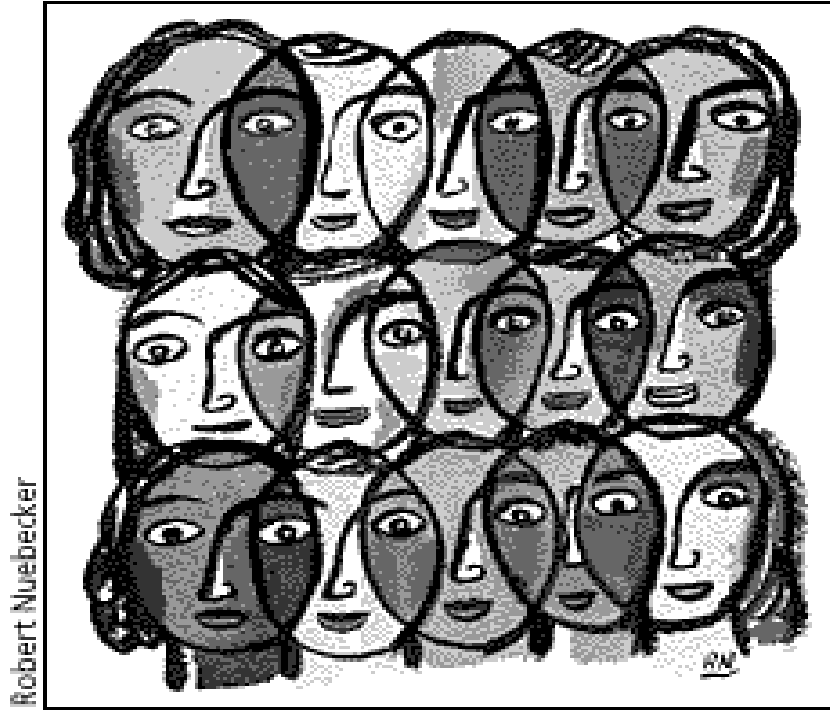


# Suggestions for policy

- ✓ The key role of security for successful outcomes of intercultural contact.
- ✓ Security does not rely solely on economic factors:
  - For the Greek majority, it involves being able to communicate with people of different origin.
  - For the immigrants, it includes building a bicultural identity.
- ✓ Security is framed in the public discourse by active agents (e.g., politicians and the media); therefore, it is subject to change through evidence-based interventions and policy.

# Suggestions for policy

- ✓ Intercultural contact works better at the *interpersonal* (rather than the group) level, so as to avoid stereotypes.
- ✓ *Promoting various aspects of diversity* (e.g., in terms of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, special needs, etc.) and *minimizing inequalities* (in terms of power or social class) go hand-in-hand and should not be treated separately.
- ✓ Combining elements of *both the heritage and host cultures* is more beneficial for immigrant adaptation and for intercultural relations than connecting to either one of the two cultures.



Robert Nuebecker

*Thank you for your attention!*

# References

- ✓ Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- ✓ Apfelbaum, E., Norton, M., & Sommers, S. (2012). Racial color blindness: Emergence, practice, and implications. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 21, 205-209. doi:10.1177/0963721411434980
- ✓ Banting, K., & Kymlicka, W. (2006–2012). *The multicultural policy index*. Retrieved from <http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/>
- ✓ Berry, J. W. (2001). A psychology of immigration. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), 615-631. doi:10.1111/0022-4537.00231
- ✓ Berry, J. W. (Ed.). (2017). *Mutual intercultural relations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- ✓ Bloemraad, I. (2011, September 22). The debate over multiculturalism: Philosophy, politics, and policy. *Migration Information Source*. Retrieved from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=854>
- ✓ Migrant Integration Policy Index (2010). *Key findings. Immigrant integration policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.mipex.eu/countries>
- ✓ Patsiurko, N., Campbell, J. L., & Hall, J. A. (2012). Measuring cultural diversity: Ethnic, linguistic and religious fractionalization in the OECD. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35, 195-217. doi:10.1080/01419870.2011.579136
- ✓ Pavlopoulos, V., & Motti-Stefanidi, F. (2017). Intercultural relations in Greece. In J. W. Berry (Ed.), *Mutual intercultural relations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- ✓ Pettigrew, T., & Tropp, L. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 751-783. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751
- ✓ Plaut, V., Thomas, K., & Goren, M. (2009). Is multiculturalism or color blindness better for minorities? *Psychological Science*, 20(4), 444-446. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02318.x
- ✓ Stephan, W. G., & Stephan, C. W. (2000). An integrated threat theory of prejudice. In S. Oskamp (Ed.), *Reducing prejudice and discrimination* (pp. 23-45). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- ✓ Triandafyllidou, A. (2014). *Migration in Greece: Recent developments in 2014*. Athens: Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy. Retrieved from [http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Migration-in-Greece-Recent-Developments-2014\\_2.pdf](http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Migration-in-Greece-Recent-Developments-2014_2.pdf)