



European Identity and Perceived Agency of native Greek and immigrant Adolescents as Potential Explanatory Mechanisms for their Active Citizenship

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Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth: POLICIES, PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS



- Funded by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 Programme (GA number: 649538; 2015-2018; PI: Elvira Cicognani, University of Bologna, Italy)
- An interdisciplinary consortium that aims to identify the factors, located at different levels (psychological, developmental, contextual and macro-social) influencing the different forms of youth active engagement in Europe.
- Collaborating institutions: Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, Italy; Örebro University, Sweden; Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Germany; National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; Universidade do Porto, Portugal; Masaryk University, Czech Republic; London School of Economics and Political Science, UK; Tartu Ülikool, Estonia; Forum Nazionale dei Giovani, Italy.



INTRODUCTION



Terminology and definitions



- **Active citizenship** is conceptualized as civic engagement and political participation, although terminologies vary considerably across disciplines and epistemological approaches.
- **Civic engagement** refers to how an active citizen participates in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future (Adler & Goggin, 2005).
- **Political participation** is a behavioral expression of engagement consisting of political interest, attention, knowledge, opinions and feelings, which focus on political institutions and decision making (Ekman & Amnå, 2012).

Forms of active citizenship



Representational/institutionalized

- Working for a political party
- Contacting a politician or public official
- Donating money to support a political group

Expressive participation online

- Sharing news or music or videos with social or political content
- Discussing social or political issues on the internet

Protest participation

- Signing a petition
- Taking part in a demonstration or strike

Expressive participation offline

- Wearing a badge, ribbon or a t-shirt with a political message

Economic participation

- Boycotting or buying certain products
- Donating money to a social cause

Community-oriented participation

- Volunteering
- Working for a social/community cause

- Normative vs. non-normative (sometimes illegal)

Active citizenship: Why bother?



- Research on active citizenship has yielded some alarming findings:
 - There is widely expressed concern about the decline in youth voting rate and other traditional forms of political action (Putnam, 2000).
 - Critical scientists point to the elitist character of established citizenship leading certain groups –such as immigrants and young people– to political and social exclusion (Cammaerts et al., 2014).
- Modern societies undergo deep changes that challenge the legitimacy of established political institutions. These include, among others, the rise of far right populism, radicalization, immigration, recession and growing inequalities (e.g., Hatton, 2016; Kuhn et al., 2016; Maricut, 2017).

Political interest



- Amnå and Ekman (2014) introduced the conceptual distinction of political interest from participation, which allowed to detect different types of political passivity: standby, unengaged, and disillusioned.
- Political interest is linked differentially to emerging types of participation (e.g., social networks, volunteering) in modern democracies, where the norms are shifting from duty-based to engaged citizenship (Dalton, 2008) and to informal social interactions (McClurg, 2003).
- Political interest may have an indirect effect on participation through its association with a number of mediating variables, such as political efficacy (Kenski & Stroud, 2006) and identity formation (Mannerström, Lönnqvist, & Leikas, 2017).

Political efficacy



- Research shows that there is a decline in political interest among youth due to their lack of political efficacy (Mierina, 2014), i.e., the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, a significant impact upon the political process (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954).
- The direct effect of political efficacy on participation is well-established in cross-national studies (e.g., Karp & Banducci, 2008; Torney-Purta, 2002).
- Political efficacy was found to mediate the association of various forms of political action with personality (Gallego & Oberski, 2011), media use (Jung, Kim, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2011), TV watching (Hoffman & Thomson, 2009), and interpersonal discussions (McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999).

Political identity



- From a social psychological perspective, the more individuals identify with a group, the more probable it is that they will act in a manner defending their group interests (Klandermans, 2014). Indeed, political identity was found to have both direct and indirect effects on political action in meta-analytic studies (Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008).
- From a developmental perspective, civic engagement and political participation were found to have a reciprocal longitudinal association with identity formation during adolescence (Crocetti, Garckija, Gabrielavičiūtė, Vosylis, & Žukauskienė, 2014). The exploration of alternative identities was also found to contribute to increased political participation (Mannerström et al., 2017).

The European dimension



- Given the relevance of political identity in political participation and, ultimately, in the quality of democracy, it comes as a surprise that this is an understudied issue in the context of the EU.
- The shaping of a distinct European political identity is considered a precondition for the legitimization of European institutions (Cerutti, 2003). A large number of youth explain their vote in the European parliament elections with reference to feeling European or citizen of the EU (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2014).
- The gap between naturalized immigrants, non-naturalized immigrants and native populations varies across EU countries (Bauböck et al., 2013), making citizenship both a stake and a means of immigrant integration and social inclusion.

The present study



- We set out to explore the path from political interest to various forms of active citizenship. Once the above association was established, we examined the mediating role of European identity and political efficacy. Finally, we included immigrant status in a series of moderated mediation models.
- The developmental dimension: Civic engagement and the transition to emerging adulthood (Flanagan & Levine, 2010).
- Focus on latent or pre-political (Ekman & Amnå, 2012) forms of participation, including representational, evaluative and expressive components.
- The European dimension as an overarching, yet controversial layer of supra-national identity (Stanley, 2013).
- Active citizenship as a pathway to immigrant integration (Bauböck et al., 2013).

METHOD



Participants



- Total *N* **583** students enrolled in Grade 1 of Senior High School
- Immigrant status **201** (35%) immigrant; **382** (65%) Greek
- Generation status **18** (3%) 1st gen.; **116** (20%) 2nd gen.; **67** (12%) mixed
- Gender **352** (60%) female; **231** (40%) male
- Age *M* = **15.1** years; *SD* = **.36** years; range: **14-16** years
- Parental education $M_{\text{GRE}} = \mathbf{4.02}$; $M_{\text{IMM}} = \mathbf{3.18}$ (on a 7-point Likert scale)
- Parental work status **73%** working; **9%** unemployed; **13%** NEET (GRE > IMM)
- Family income *M* = **3.24**; *SD* = **.67** years (on a 4-point Likert scale)

Measures of dependent variables



REPRESENTATIONS OF EUROPEAN CITIZEN

- **Active** (6 items, 5-point Likert scale, $\alpha = .74$)
[It is important for a good EU citizen] to speak out concerning European topics
- **Normative** (2 items, 5-point Likert scale, $\alpha = .64$)
[It is important for a good EU citizen] to vote in European parliament elections

EXPRESSIVE PARTICIPATION

- **Online** (4 items, Yes/No, $\alpha = .57$)
Discussed social or political issues on the Internet
- **Organization membership** (7 items, Yes/No, $\alpha = .55$)
[Member of] a political party or its youth organization

Measures of dependent variables



CIVIC (COMMUNITY BASED) ENGAGEMENT

- **Volunteering** (3 items, Yes/No, $\alpha = .66$)
Volunteered or worked for a social cause (e.g., children, the elderly, refugees)
- **Civic altruism** (3 items, 5-point Likert scale, $\alpha = .74$)
It is important to help improve the lives of people in my community
- **Social well-being** (4 items, 5-point Likert scale, $\alpha = .65$)
The way our society works makes sense to you

Independent variable and mediators



- **Political interest** (4 items, 5-point Likert scale, $\alpha = .81$)
How interested are you in politics?

EUROPEAN/[NATIONAL] IDENTITY

- **Commitment** (3 items, 5-point Likert scale, $\alpha = .76/.82$)
I am proud to be European/[Greek]
- **Exploration** (3 items, 5-point Likert scale, $\alpha = .70/.75$)
I search for information about Europe/[Greece]

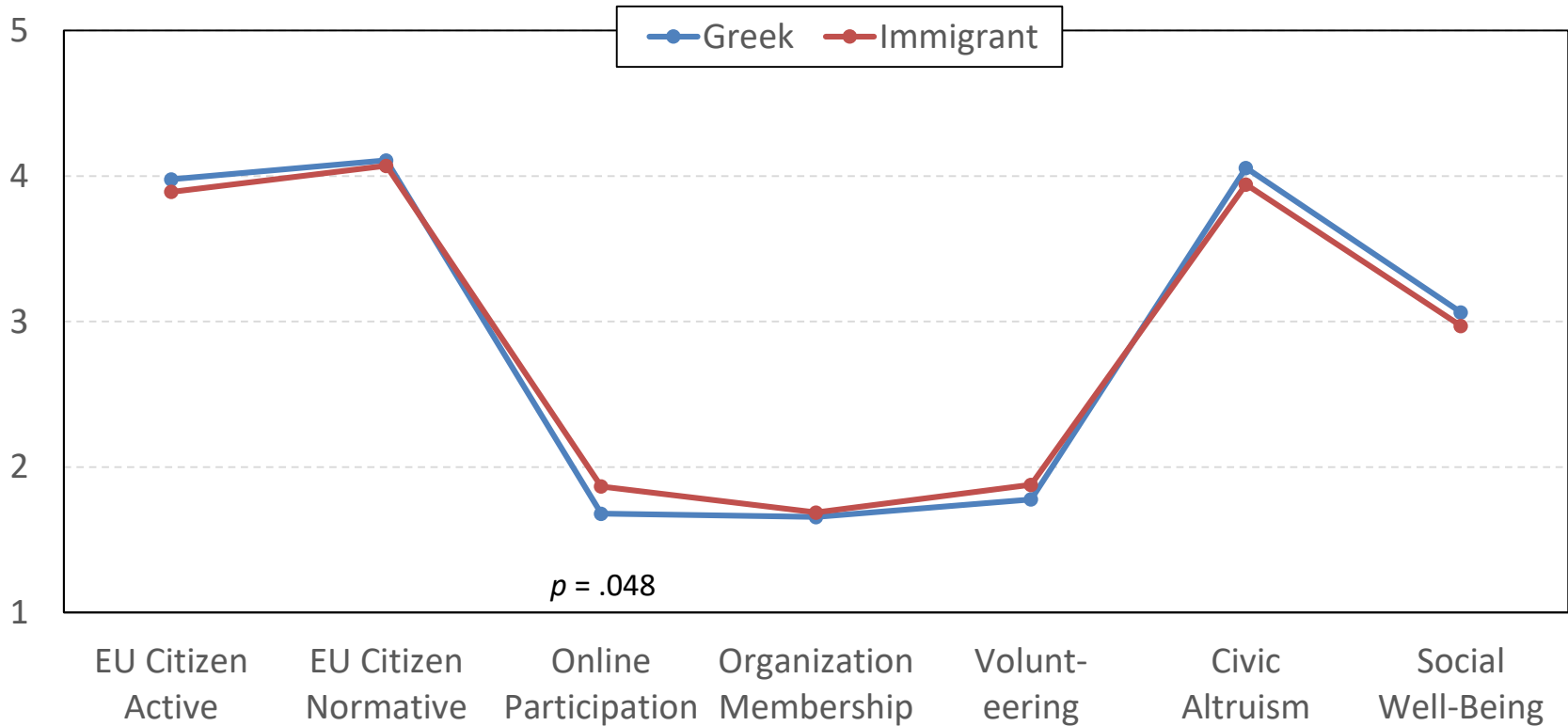
PERCEIVED AGENCY

- **Political efficacy** (7 items, 5-point Likert scale, $\alpha = .79$)
I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of important societal issues.

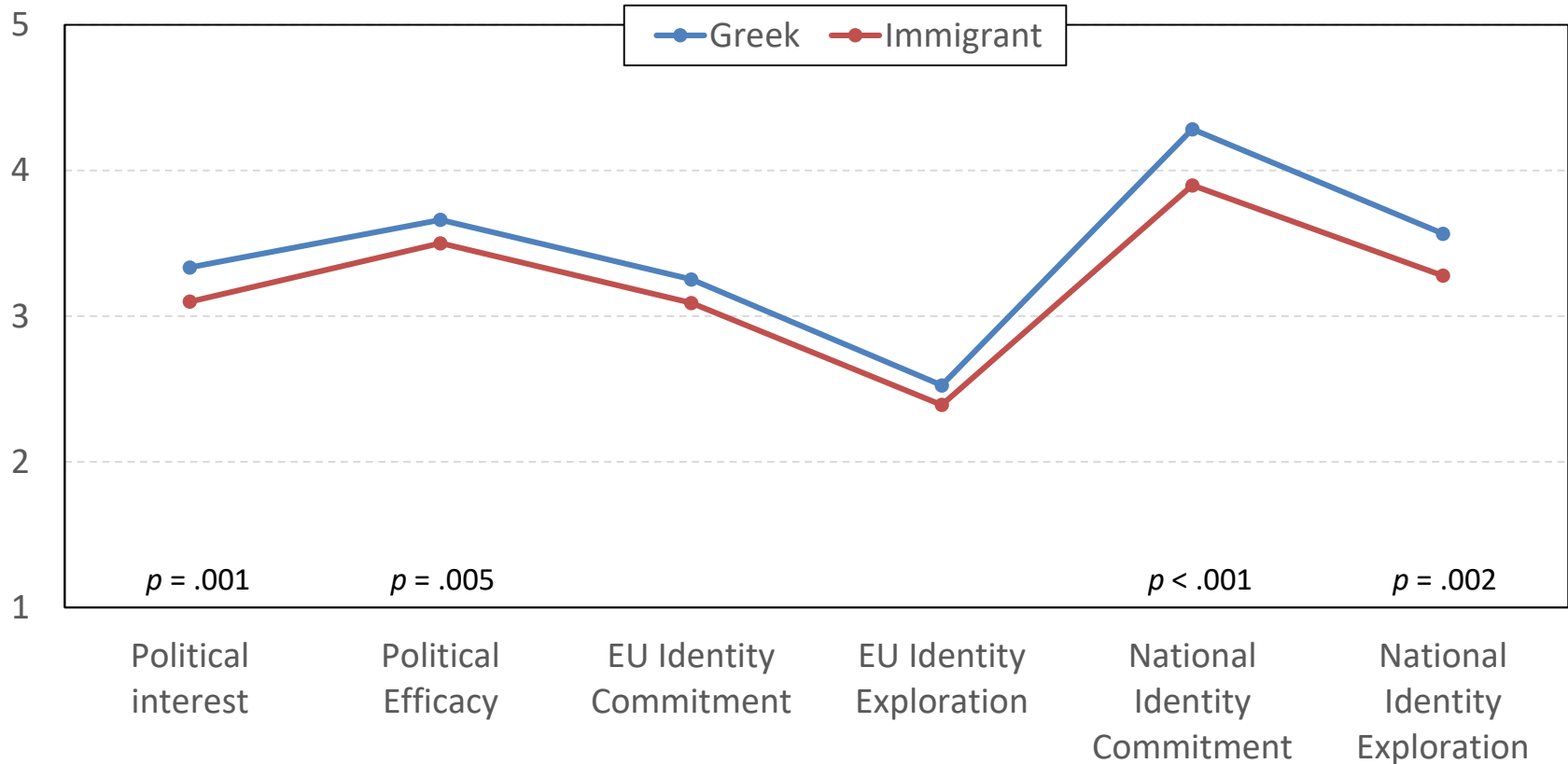
RESULTS



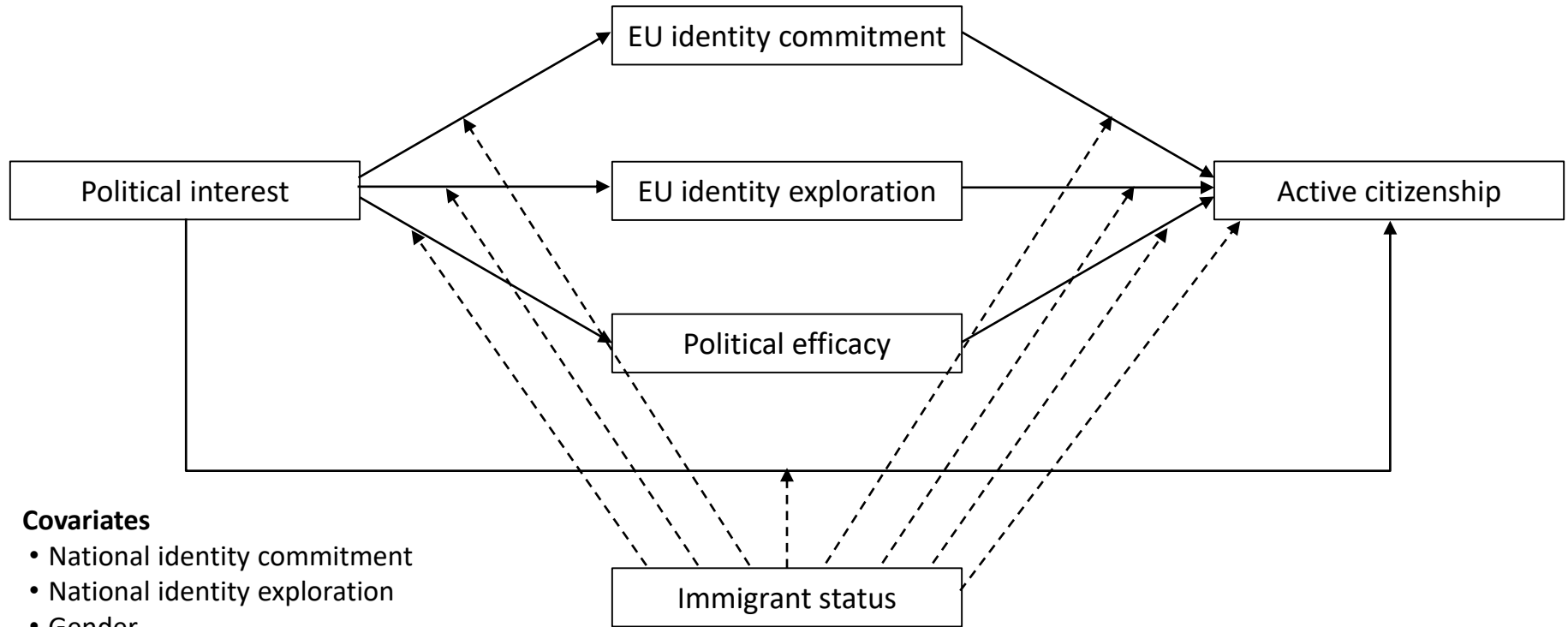
Mean levels of active citizenship



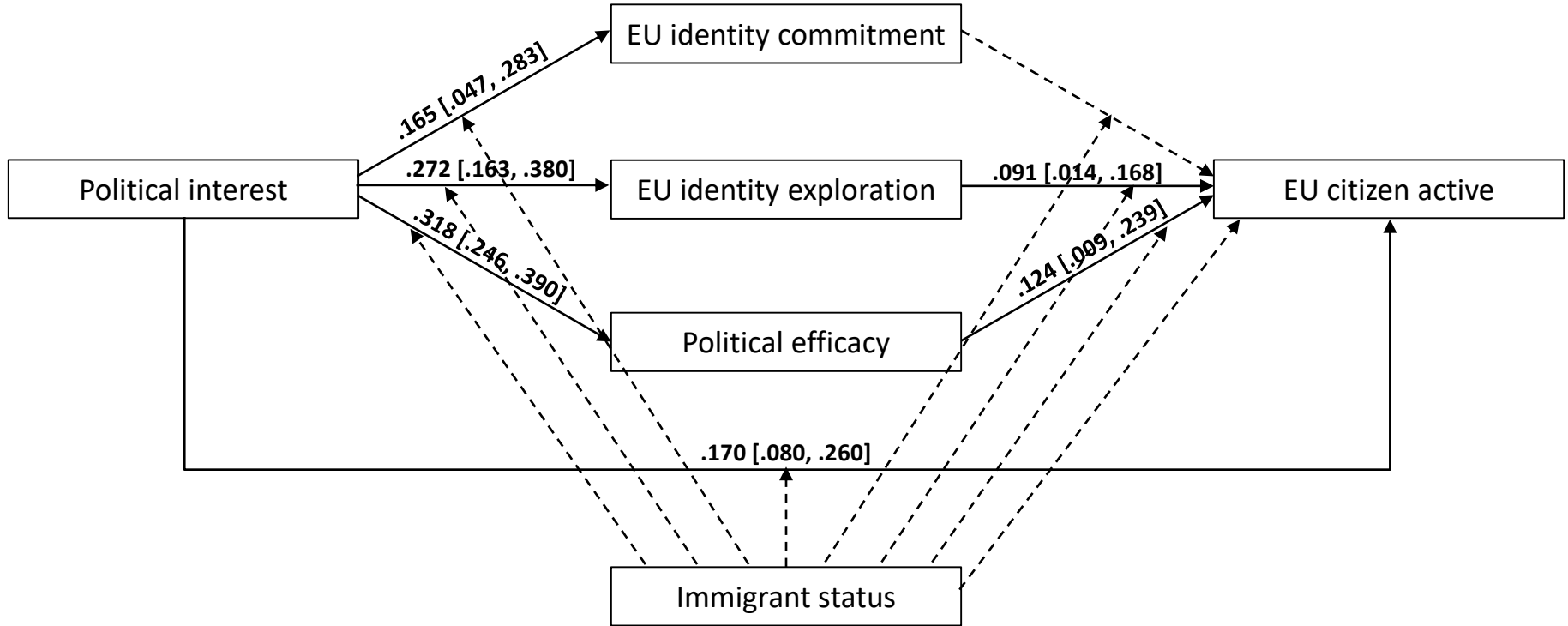
Mean levels of political interest, political efficacy, EU identity and national identity



Moderated mediation analyses (PROCESS model 59; Hayes, 2013)



Direct effects of political interest, European identity, political efficacy, and immigrant status on active EU citizen

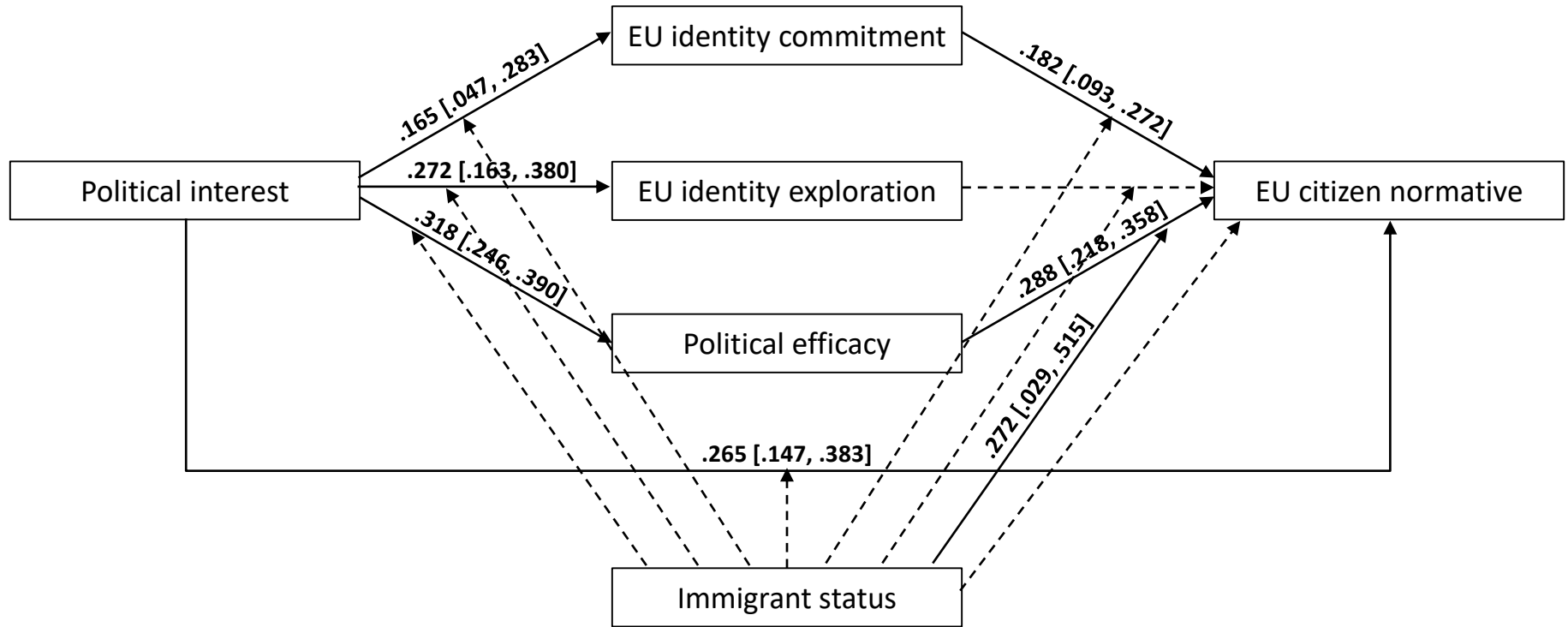


Indirect effects of European identity and political efficacy in the relationship between political interest and active EU citizen

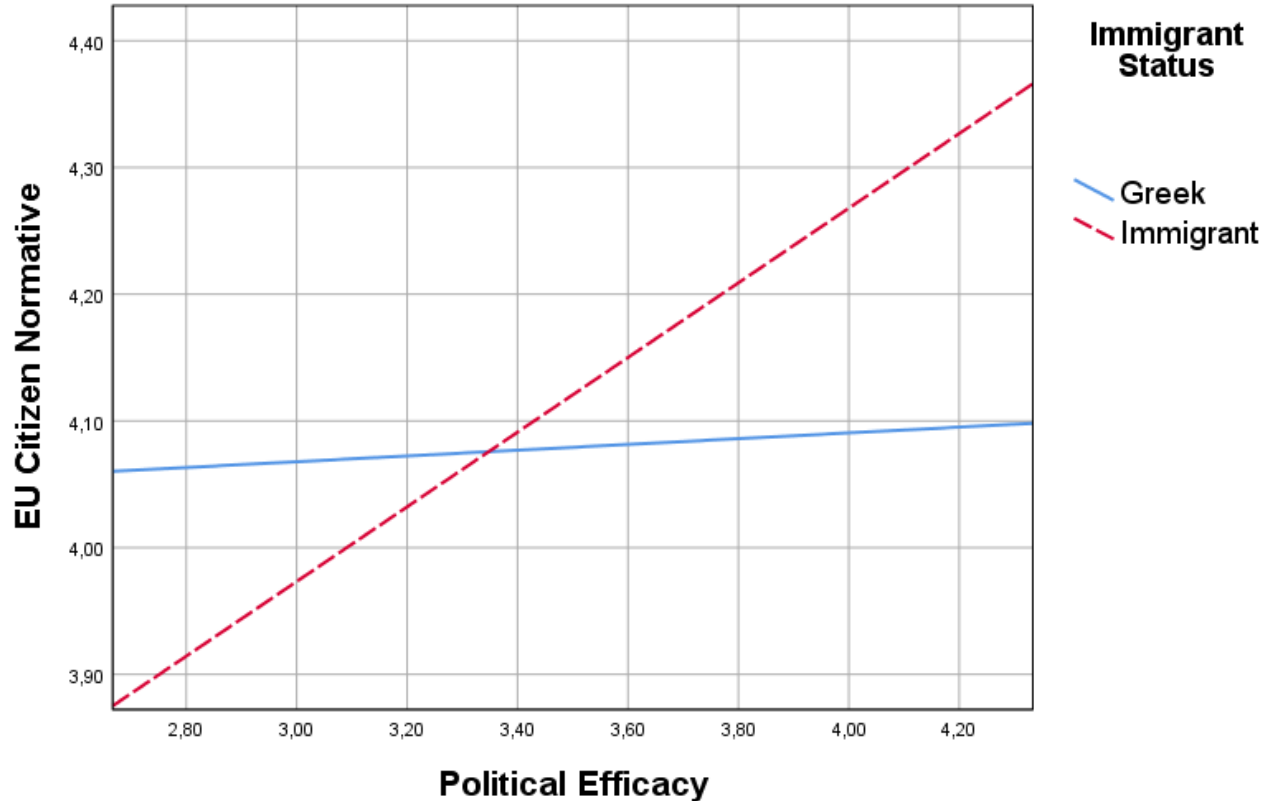


		Coef.	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EU identity commitment	GRE	-0.000	-0.013	.012
	Imm	.004	-0.016	.030
EU identity exploration	GRE	.024	.004	.050
	Imm	-0.004	-0.032	.033
Political efficacy	GRE	.039	.001	.084
	Imm	.082	.016	.159

Direct effects of political interest, European identity, political efficacy, and immigrant status on normative EU citizen



Interaction of political efficacy by immigrant status in predicting normative EU citizen

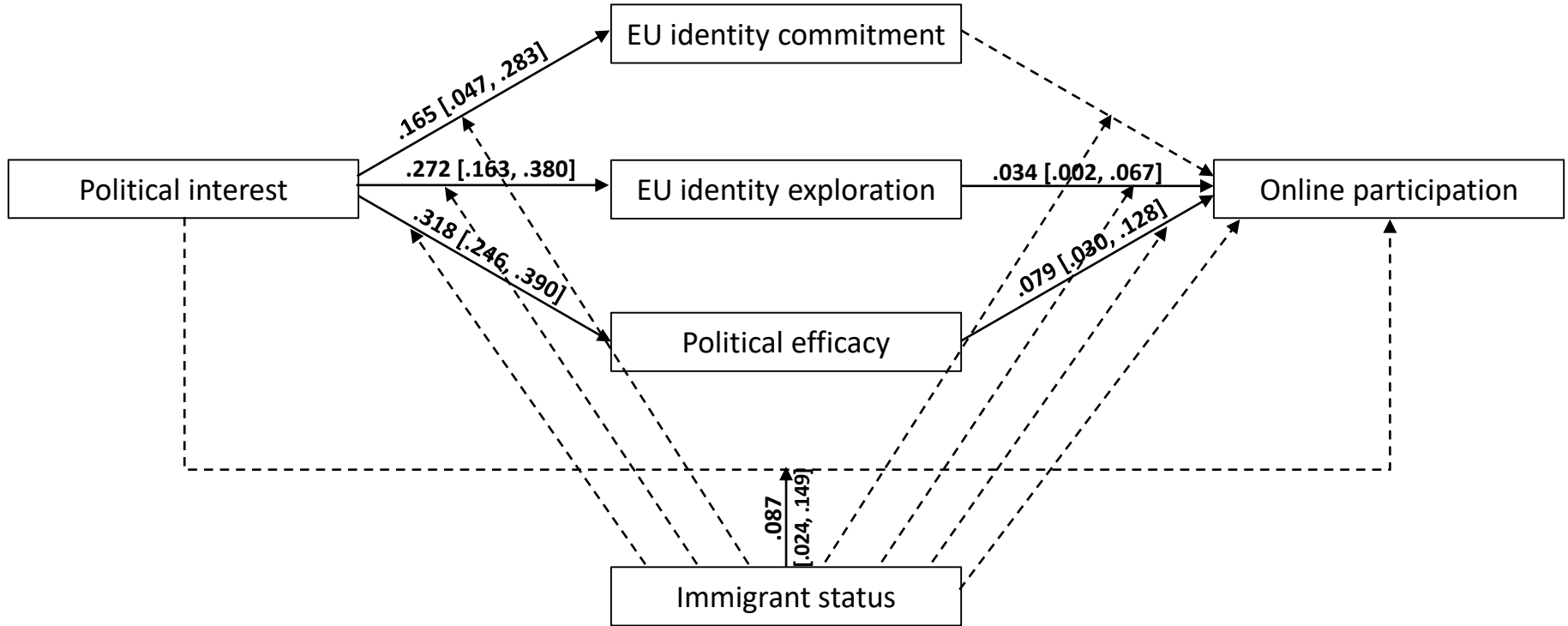


Indirect effects of European identity and political efficacy in the relationship between political interest and normative EU citizen

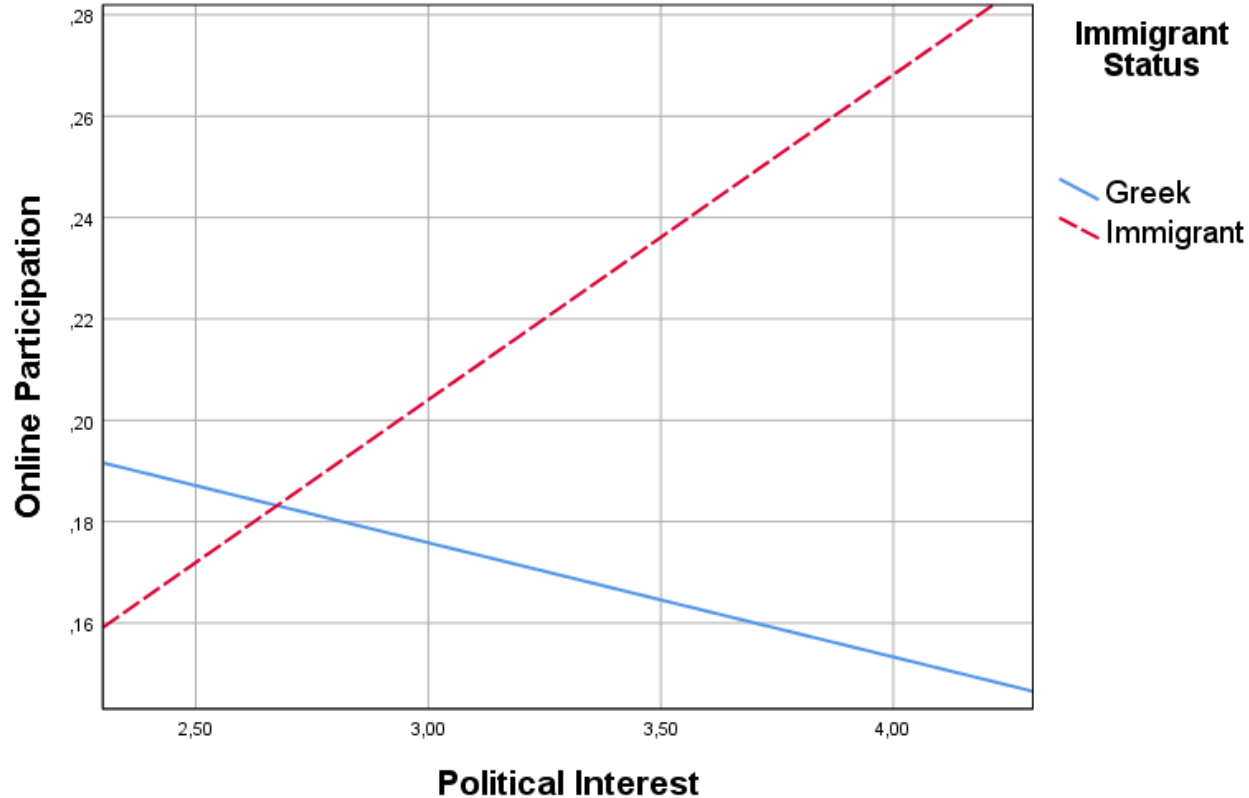


		Coef.	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EU identity commitment	GRE	.030	.006	.062
	Imm	.019	-.008	.065
EU identity exploration	GRE	.000	-.030	.031
	Imm	.013	-.031	.072
Political efficacy	GRE	.007	-.043	.065
	Imm	.112	.020	.211

Direct effects of political interest, European identity, political efficacy, and immigrant status on online participation



Interaction of political interest by immigrant status in predicting online participation

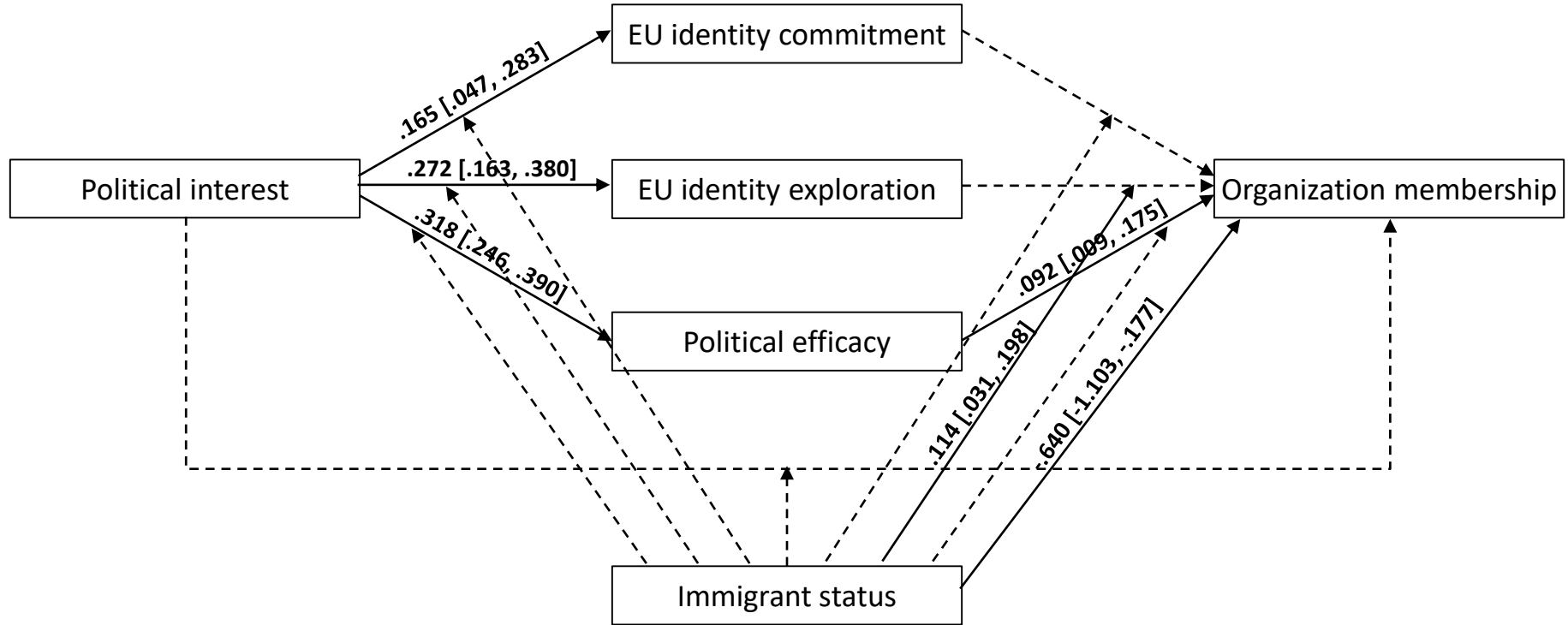


Indirect effects of European identity and political efficacy in the relationship between political interest and online participation

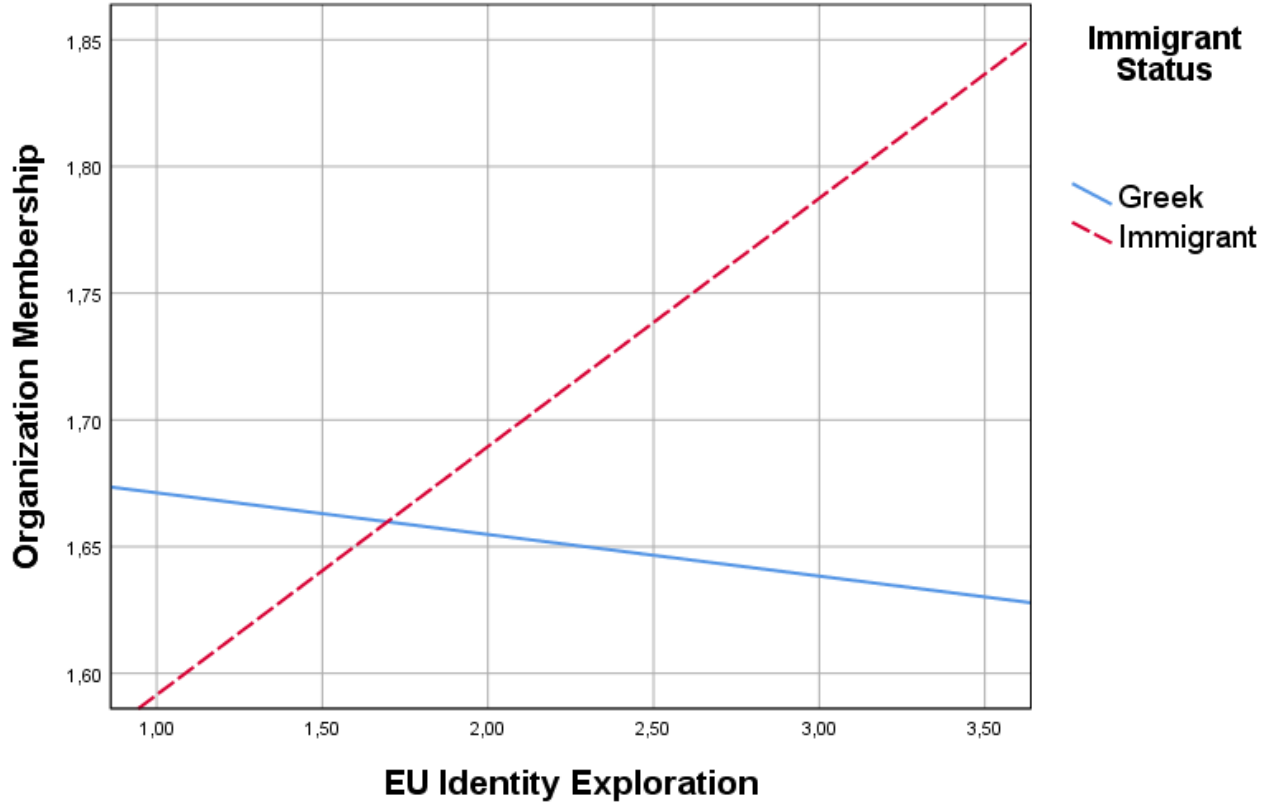


		Coef.	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EU identity commitment	GRE	-.001	-.007	.004
	Imm	-.004	-.016	.004
EU identity exploration	GRE	.009	.001	.020
	Imm	.005	-.008	.022
Political efficacy	GRE	.025	.008	.045
	Imm	.028	.000	.063

Direct effects of political interest, European identity, political efficacy, and immigrant status on organization membership



Interaction of EU identity exploration by immigrant status in predicting organization membership

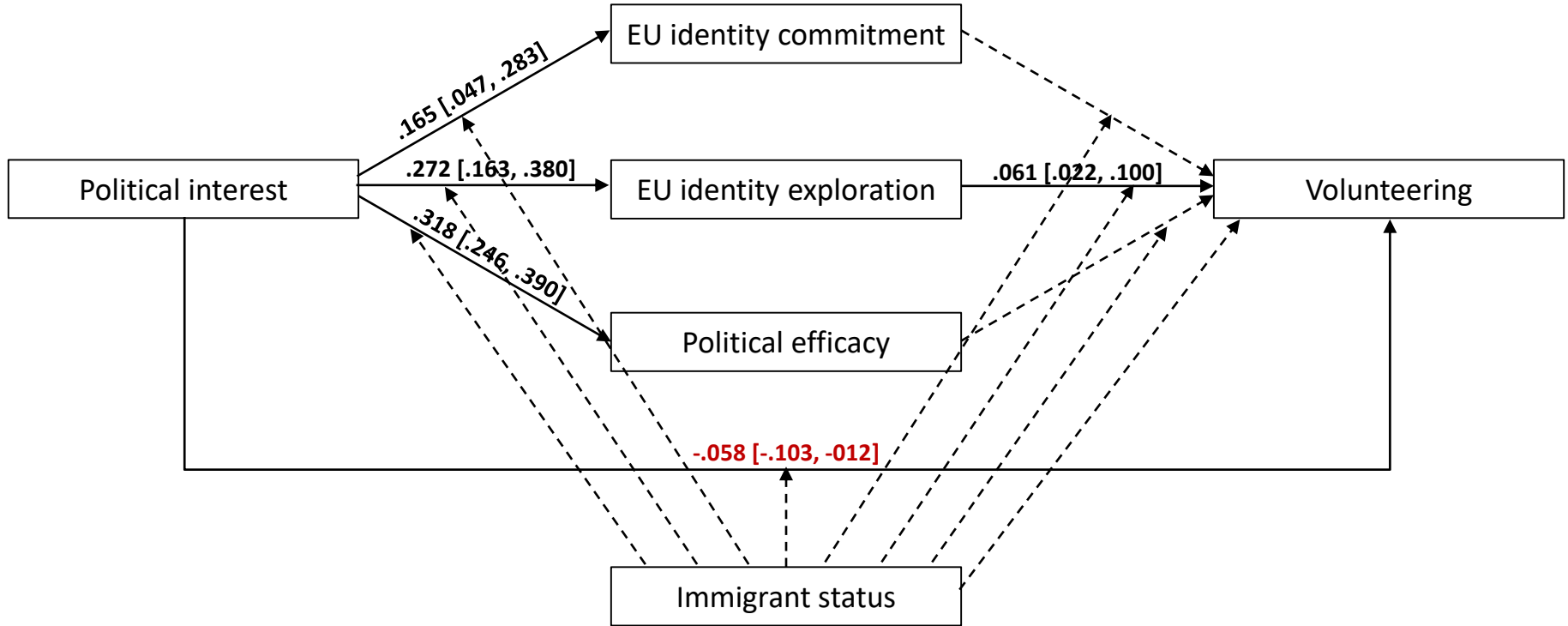


Indirect effects of European identity and political efficacy in the relationship between political interest and organization membership



		Coef.	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EU identity commitment	GRE	-.001	-.011	.008
	Imm	.010	-.003	.032
EU identity exploration	GRE	-.004	-.020	.011
	Imm	.029	.003	.070
Political efficacy	GRE	.029	.002	.060
	Imm	.064	.019	.117

Direct effects of political interest, European identity, political efficacy, and immigrant status on volunteering

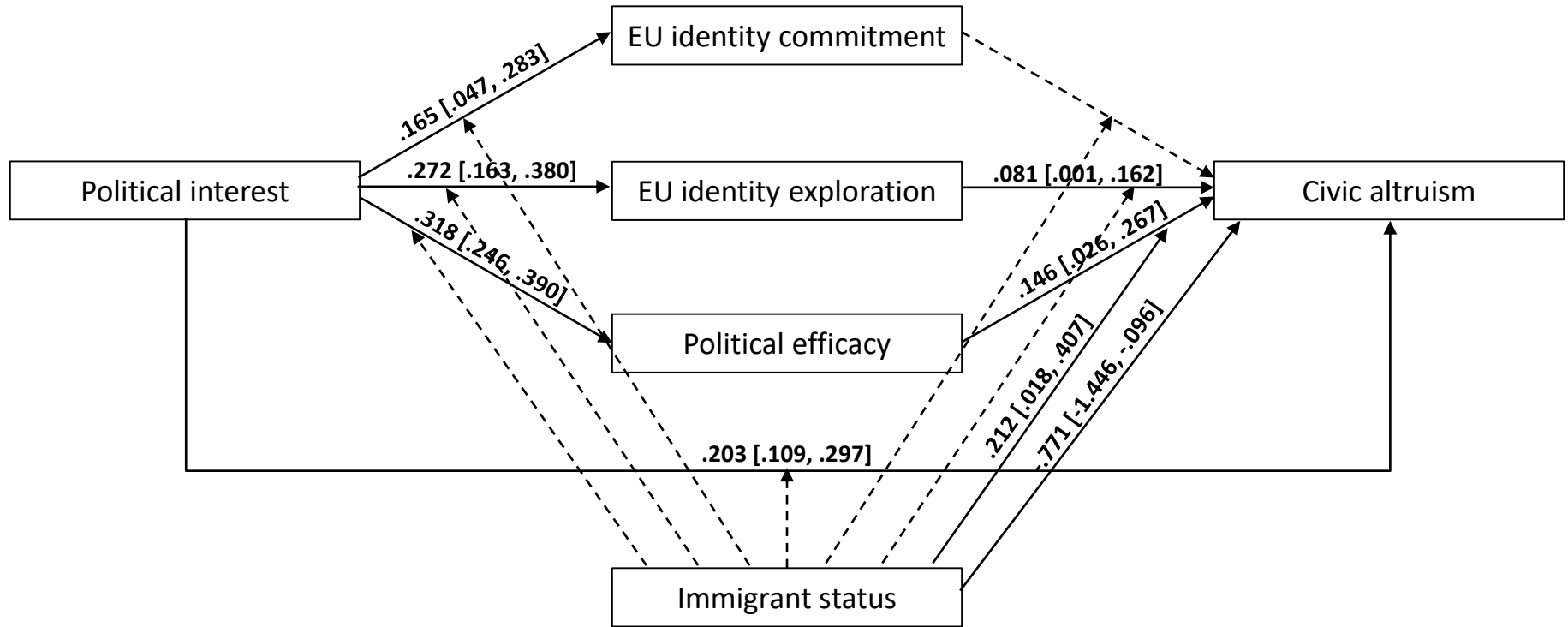


Indirect effects of European identity and political efficacy in the relationship between political interest and volunteering

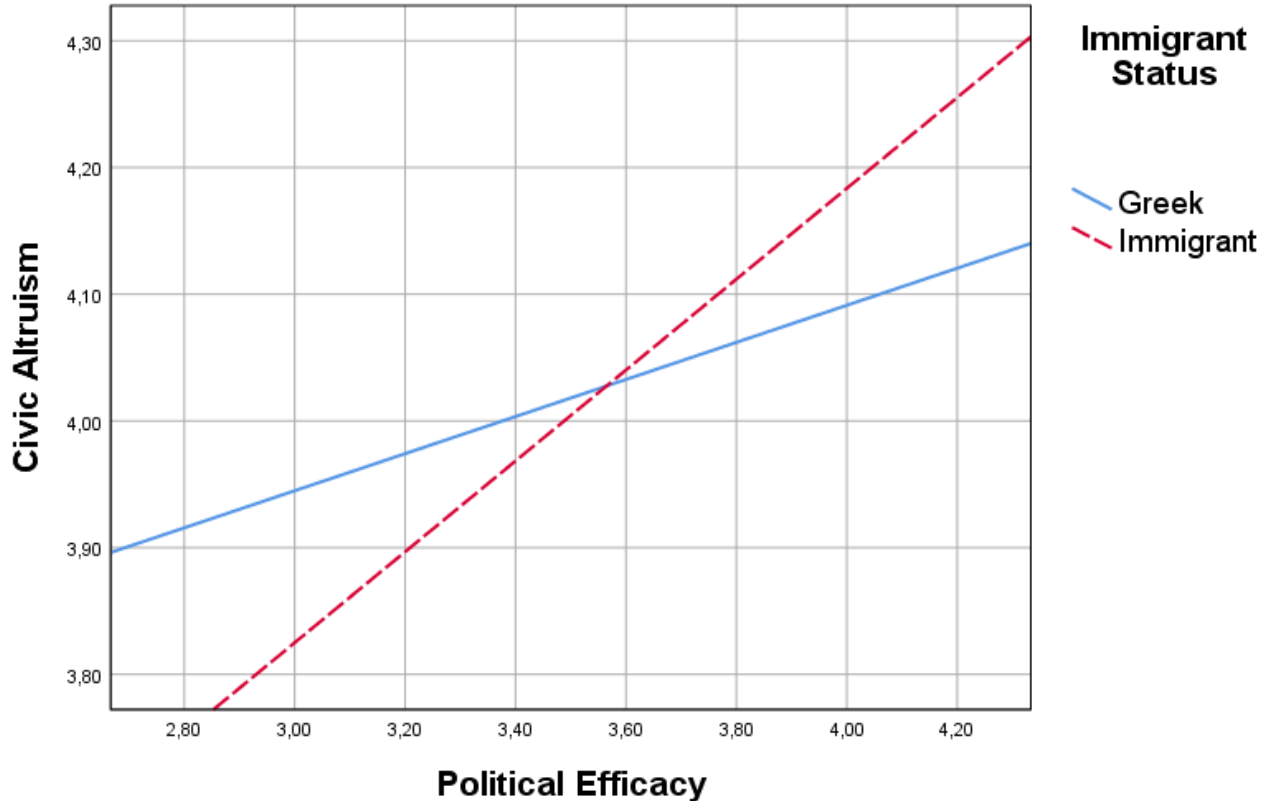


		Coef.	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EU identity commitment	GRE	.004	-.002	.012
	Imm	.003	-.006	.017
EU identity exploration	GRE	.017	.006	.030
	Imm	.008	-.006	.027
Political efficacy	GRE	.009	-.009	.029
	Imm	.008	-.021	.034

Direct effects of political interest, European identity, political efficacy, and immigrant status on civic altruism



Interaction of political efficacy by immigrant status in predicting civic altruism

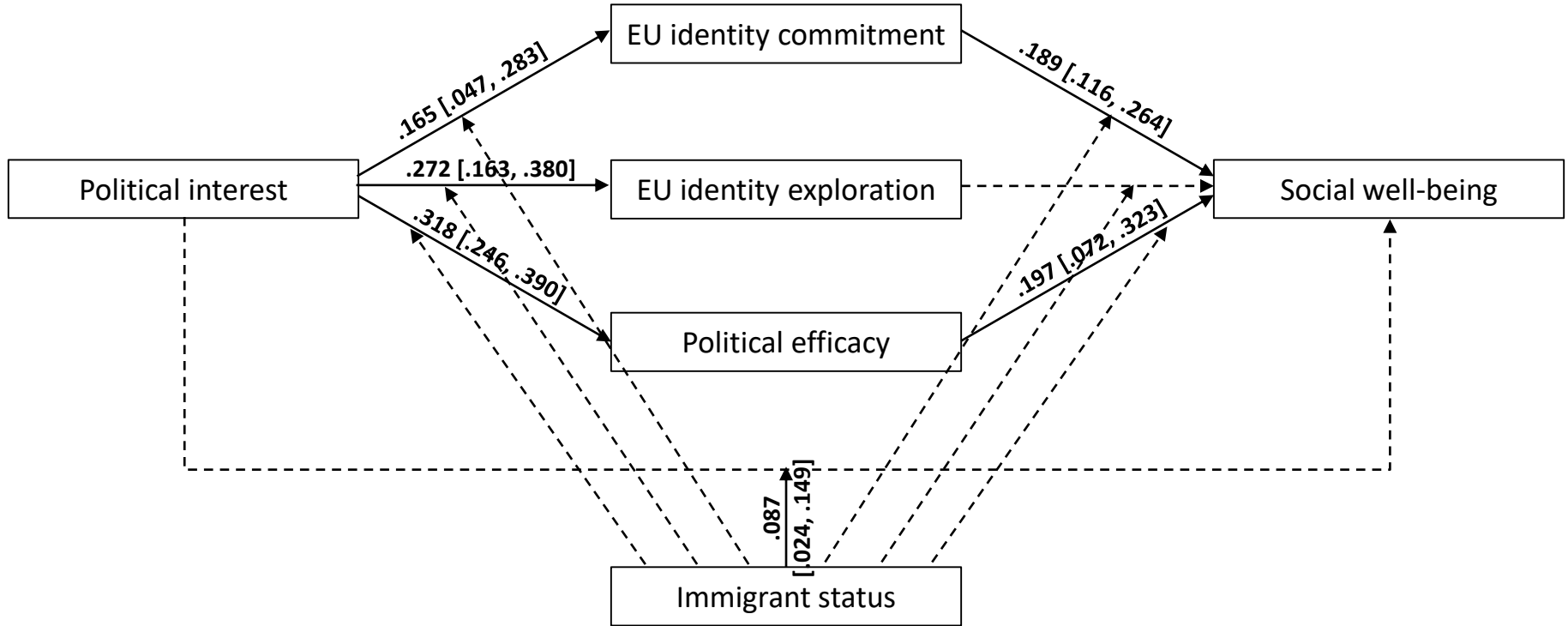


Indirect effects of European identity and political efficacy in the relationship between political interest and civic altruism



		Coef.	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EU identity commitment	GRE	-0.010	-0.029	.002
	Imm	-0.005	-0.031	.016
EU identity exploration	GRE	.022	.001	.048
	Imm	-0.005	-0.034	.039
Political efficacy	GRE	.047	.005	.094
	Imm	.136	.066	.216

Direct effects of political interest, European identity, political efficacy, and immigrant status on social well-being



Indirect effects of European identity and political efficacy in the relationship between political interest and social well-being



		Coef.	BootLLCI	BootULCI
EU identity commitment	GRE	.031	.007	.059
	Imm	.031	.001	.074
EU identity exploration	GRE	-.018	-.041	.004
	Imm	.006	-.023	.053
Political efficacy	GRE	.063	.020	.107
	Imm	.018	-.053	.091

CONCLUSIONS



'Standby' or 'monitorial' citizens?



- Representational and evaluative components of active citizenship reached high scores, while expressive components were extremely low. Political interest, political efficacy and European identity ranged at moderate levels.
- Political interest did show significant associations with active citizenship, even after accounting for mediation effects. However, these paths were consistent only for actions with formal or direct political content, rather than for civic engagement, probably reflecting their socialization in the family and at school (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Keeter, 2003).
- The above findings combined suggest that non-active does not equal with passive. Participants resemble the profile of 'standby citizens' (Amnå & Ekman, 2014) or 'monitorial citizens' (Schudson, 1998), which constitute a critical and observational form of citizenship.

The role of political efficacy



- The direct and indirect effect of political efficacy was significant in all models tested but the one predicting volunteering, probably due to statistical artifacts (very low mean and high SD of volunteering).
- Internal political efficacy (i.e., personal agency) is important in promoting both conventional and unconventional political participation, whereas external political efficacy (i.e., effectiveness of the political system) is related to trust in political institutions (Caprara et al., 2009).
- The importance of measuring constructs at the appropriate level of analysis.

The role of European identity



- At least one of the two dimensions of European identity mediated the effect of political interest on active citizenship.
- European identity exploration was more relevant than European identity commitment (significant in 5 vs. 2 models, respectively).
- European identity exploration is probably a mechanism of identity building through participation, in line with the assumption of Reicher and Drury (2011) that identities develop as a function of evolving social relations.
- Identity exploration is a salient developmental process during adolescence (Erikson, 1968), suggesting the importance of building an informed European identity, as opposed to foreclosure (i.e., handed down commitments).

The role of immigrant status



- Significant moderation of immigrant status was found in all models tested: European identity exploration was more important for Greeks (in 4 domains of active citizenship) than for immigrants (in one domain).
- Active citizenship may have an instrumental role for immigrant adolescents, as a catalyst for social integration (Hainmueller et al., 2017) through participation in the common European space.
- On the other hand, native youth have granted access to civil rights but instead they need to negotiate their European identity in order to make it compatible with their strong national identity (Koumandaraki, 2002).
- Identities are as much a product as a precursor of collective participation (Reicher & Drury, 2011).

Limitations and future directions



- Self-report measures (common method bias).
- Non-random sampling: generalization of findings in caution.
- Analyses on cross-sectional data: direction of effects is inconclusive.
- The end justifies the means? Need to disentangle the drives, content, and forms of political participation. Same types of action do not necessarily suggest similar drives.
- Also, need to indentify components of democratic participation, as opposed to extremism and radicalization.
- Beyond active and passive: Focus on 'standby citizens' (Amnå & Ekman, 2014).



Thank you for your attention!

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