

Perceived Discrimination of Immigrant Adolescents in Greece

How Does Group Discrimination Translate Into Personal Discrimination?

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine whether and how individual differences contribute to the translation of perceived group discrimination into perceived personal discrimination. One hundred forty-five Pontic Greek and 269 Albanian students (mean age 12.9 years) enrolled in Greek urban public schools were assessed in Grade 1 of high school. Albanians reported higher discrimination against their ethnic group, but not higher discrimination against themselves, personally, than Pontic Greeks. Personal discrimination could be predicted by perceived group discrimination as well as from individual characteristics of immigrant students, independently of their ethnicity. Furthermore, when students reported high, but not low, group discrimination, many of their individual characteristics were shown to buffer against translating perceived group discrimination into experiences of personal discrimination. These results highlight the importance of individual differences, in addition to perceptions of group discrimination, for feelings of being discriminated against as an individual and suggest that high group discrimination of immigrants, independently of ethnic background, does not necessarily result in high personal discrimination, if individual protective factors are present.

Keywords: immigration, adolescents, group and personal discrimination discrepancy, individual differences, prediction

Throughout the history of mankind, staggering numbers of people have left their home country for a new land. Immigrants have to deal with the challenges of adapting to a new culture in a context often replete with prejudice and discrimination. However, the immigrant experience, including the discrimination experience, varies significantly according to different parameters related to the immigrant group and to the host society (Sam & Berry, 2010). As a result, different immigrant groups, living in the same host country, may have some similar, but also some quite unique, experiences. This study explores the discrimination experience, as well as its predictors, of immigrant adolescents enrolled in Greek urban schools.

The adolescents who took part in the study represent the two largest immigrant groups in the country. The first was a group of immigrants of the Diaspora from former USSR countries, the Pontic Greeks, and the second was a group of immigrants from Albania. These two immigrant groups differ significantly in terms of their status in Greek society and, relatedly, in terms of their discrimination experience. Pontic Greek immigrants are of the same ethnic descent as nonimmigrant Greeks. The Greek government viewed

Pontic Greeks as returning natives, even though they were not born in Greece, and accorded them full citizenship status. However, native Greeks refer to them as the “Russians” and do not view them as “real Greeks” (Gotovos, 2005). In contrast, immigrants from Albania, who at first entered the country as undocumented economic immigrants, are considered guest workers (Fakiolas, 1999). Both immigrant groups experience significant, although not the same degree of, discrimination (Triandafyllidou, 2000). Due to the differences between the two immigrant groups, the role of ethnicity was examined both in the description of their discrimination experience and in the study of its predictors.

Perceived Discrimination Against One's Ethnic Group and Against the Self

Even though discrimination is a very real experience for minority group members, it is difficult to determine objectively its occurrence in the real world (Taylor, Ruggiero, & Louis, 1996). The reason is that discrimination is, at least partly, defined by the attribution of one's negative outcomes

to prejudice and discrimination. However, the intention behind such social acts is rarely very clear. Therefore, a distinction has been drawn between objective discrimination and perceived discrimination.

Within perceived discrimination, another important distinction is drawn in the social psychological literature between perceived discrimination against one's ethnic group and perceived discrimination against the self (e.g., Bourguignon, Seron, Yzerbyt, & Herman, 2006; Taylor et al., 1996; Verkuyten, 1998). Research findings have consistently revealed a robust phenomenon, called the personal/group discrimination discrepancy (PGDD), whereby members of minorities tend to perceive a higher level of discrimination directed at their group as a whole than at themselves as individual members (Taylor et al., 1996).

It has been argued that two different processes underlie perceptions of group and personal discrimination and can explain this discrepancy (see Taylor et al., 1996). On the one hand, it has been shown that minority members tend to minimize their personal experiences with discrimination. Minimization of personal discrimination can be explained by the "better-than-average" phenomenon, whereby people tend to evaluate themselves as better off than others, or in any case better than an objective shared point. Not perceiving oneself as a target of discrimination is consistent with this interpretative bias and plays a self-protective role. On the other hand, when minority members report on discrimination against their group, they are unlikely to rely on their personal experiences, and instead they tend to evoke stereotypes regarding the way their group is treated (Taylor et al., 1996). These auto-stereotypes, as they have been called, are formed to a large extent through repeated exposure to dramatic media presentations of discrimination directed at their group. Whereas minority members tend to base their perceptions of group discrimination on such stereotypes, which may be based on extreme cases, they tend to view their own personal experiences with discrimination as being in comparison less extreme (Ruggiero, 1999).

Perceived discrimination has been shown to have deleterious consequences on minorities' adaptation, psychological well-being, and mental health. However, most studies that have included measures of both perceived group and personal discrimination converge on the finding that perceived discrimination against the self has a stronger effect than perceived discrimination against the group on these outcomes (e.g., Shorey, Cowan, & Sullivan, 2002; Verkuyten, 1998). In the case of immigrant youth, it has been shown, for example, that perceived discrimination against the self is related to higher levels of depression, stress, and behavioral problems (e.g., Brody et al., 2006; Szalacha et al., 2003), and to lower self-esteem (e.g., Verkuyten, 1998), academic achievement and, generally, school adjustment (e.g., Liebkind, Jasinskaya-Lathi, & Solheim, 2004; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Perceived personal discrimination has also been shown to be associated with stronger ethnic identity, weaker national identity, and lower commitment to the new culture (Berry et al., 2006; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Therefore, understanding how such immigrant groups experience and interpret their social reality is paramount in supporting and promoting their

successful adaptation (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, Chryssochoou, Sam, & Phinney, in press).

Individual Differences and Perceived Personal Discrimination

The PGDD leads, in light of the deleterious consequences of perceived personal discrimination described previously, to the question, who among immigrant youth will translate perceived discrimination against one's ethnic group into perceived discrimination against the self? Who, on the contrary, is protected from doing such translation? Even though two different processes were argued to underlie the PGDD, group and personal discrimination have been shown to correlate in the range between .36 and .52 (Taylor et al., 1996). It would be expected then that perceived group discrimination would predict perceived discrimination against the self. However, the fact that these correlations are modest, explaining at best about 25% of the variance, suggests that other factors and processes contribute to the variance in personal discrimination. Since perceived discrimination, in contrast to objective discrimination, refers to the interpretation of the intentions of others, individual differences in the perceiver would also be expected to predict who perceives being the target of personal discrimination (Phinney, Madden, & Santos, 1998).

Relatively few studies have examined individual differences as predictors of perceived discrimination. Shorey et al. (2002), focusing on adult participants, found that Latinos who reported lower self-esteem and less personal and interpersonal control also reported higher perceived personal discrimination. Individual differences in these variables were not related to perceived group discrimination. Phinney et al. (1998), focusing on minority and immigrant Armenian, Mexican-American, and Vietnamese adolescents, found that higher depression/anxiety and lower intergroup competence, referring to the ease with which the young person socializes with people who are not of the same ethnic background, predicted higher perceived personal discrimination. The former were in turn predicted by self-esteem and mastery, respectively. Parents' socioeconomic status (SES) had an indirect effect on perceived personal discrimination via intergroup competence. They did not study perceived group discrimination. However, illuminating in this respect are also studies on immigrant youth's experiences of victimization. Racial victimization, which is considered to be a subtype of general victimization, involves the attribution by immigrant youth of aggressive acts, such as racist remarks and social exclusion, to discrimination due to their immigrant status (Spiel & Strohmeier, in press). Strohmeier, Kärnä, and Salmivalli (2010), who examined predictors of self and peer-reported racial victimization directed at immigrant youth, found, first, that immigrant youth were more often the targets of different types of victimization, including racial victimization, and second, that peer rejection helped explain the heightened risk for their victimization.

Finally, researchers, focusing on the consequences of perceived discrimination on mental health and adaptation,

point out, based mostly on results from cross-sectional data, that its relationship with individual differences might be bidirectional (e.g., Verkuyten, 1998). Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, and Solheim (2009) actually found evidence in a longitudinal study that the relationship between perceived personal discrimination, on the one hand, and symptoms of anxiety and depression, on the other, is in fact reciprocal. However, the questions, whether and how individual differences in immigrant youth contribute to the translation of perceived group discrimination into personal discrimination, and, relatedly, what is the relative contribution of perceived group discrimination and of individual differences in the prediction of perceived personal discrimination, do not seem to have been previously addressed.

The Present Study

The present study is part of the ongoing Athena Studies of Resilient Adaptation (AStRA), a collaborative longitudinal project¹ focusing on the quality of adaptation of immigrant youth living in Greece (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, & Masten, in press; Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, Obradović, & Masten, 2008; Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, & Tantaros, 2011). The AStRA project focuses on Pontic Greeks, who are immigrants of the Diaspora, and on immigrants from Albania, as well as on their native Greek classmates.

The sample consisted of early adolescents, aged 12–13 years, in their first year of high school, which is part of compulsory education. This age group was chosen because early adolescents begin to explore their personal and cultural identities (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., in press; Sirin & Fine, 2008). The demeaning messages inherent in discriminatory experiences threaten the formation of a secure identity and are likely to undermine their mental health. Furthermore, early adolescents are old enough to be able to reflect and articulate on their experiences in the host country.

Greece used to be the source of immigrants and turned into an immigrant receiving country in the early 1990s. Today, more than 10% of the students enrolled in Greek public schools are of immigrant origin. A comparative examination of the quality of immigrants' and nonimmigrants' school adjustment and psychological well-being revealed that the former, independently of ethnicity, had significantly worse school adjustment, but not psychological well-being, than the latter (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2008). The "immigrant paradox," widely described in the literature (e.g., Sam et al., 2008), is not confirmed in immigrant adolescents living in Greece. These findings may be possibly related to a virtual lack of educational support of these students from the schools and to discrimination (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2008).

Pontic Greeks are descendants of the ancient Hellenic communities of the southern coast of the Black Sea. During the Stalinist era the Pontic Greeks were persecuted and deported to different areas of the Soviet Union (Georgas & Papastylianou, 1996). These immigrants are of Greek ethnicity and members of the Greek Orthodox Church. They retained their Greek culture, language, religion, and customs

for about 20 centuries, but never lived in Greece (Georgas & Papastylianou, 1996). Therefore, their language is incomprehensible to native Greeks, as it is a Greek dialect rooted in Ancient Greek. Most Pontic Greeks do not speak Modern Greek well (Triandafyllidou, 2000).

In contrast, all immigrants from Albania, a neighboring country to Greece, entered the country as undocumented economic immigrants. After more than 40 years of Communist rule (1945–1989), a large proportion of the Albanian workforce, together with their families, immigrated to neighboring Greece and Italy.

The group from Albania included both ethnic Albanians and Albanians of Greek heritage. However, as Triandafyllidou (2000) has reported, the status of Albanians of Greek origin in Greece, unlike that of Pontic Greeks, has been insecure and ambivalent since their "Greekness" was not officially recognized until recently for political reasons. It was not feasible to reliably differentiate between the two Albanian groups, a problem also reported by government officials (Triandafyllidou & Veikou, 2002). On the one hand, ethnic Albanians have been observed to change their names to Greek names and to baptize their children in the Greek Orthodox Church, in order to be better accepted by the Greek community (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004). Since they are not required to provide legal documentation to register their children in school, many declare themselves to be of Greek origin. On the other hand, ethnic Greeks from Albania, in spite of the fact that they have common historic and ethnic ties with native Greeks, also share some important commonalities with ethnic Albanians. They were both born in the same country and neither lived in Greece before immigrating. Initially they both came to Greece as undocumented economic immigrants and were treated as guest workers. Both faced significant discrimination from native Greeks (Dalla & Motti-Stefanidi, 2010; Fakiolas, 1999), which was more pronounced against ethnic Albanians, but was also significant against ethnic Greeks from Albania (Triandafyllidou, 2000). High-school principals also seemed unable to reliably differentiate between ethnic Albanian students and Albanian students of Greek heritage. Therefore, we decided to treat all immigrant students, who were born in Albania, or whose parents were born in Albania, as one group.

Based on data compiled from Eurobarometer surveys, negative attitudes toward foreigners were significantly more pronounced in Greece, Belgium, Germany, and France than in other European countries (Semyonov, Raijman, & Gorodzeisky, 2006). However, in regard to discrimination, Triandafyllidou (2000) has argued that there is a hierarchy of "Greekness," which creates multiple levels of inclusion-exclusion: Native Greeks have priority, Pontic Greeks are next, Albanians of Greek origin, but whose Greekness is contested, are third, and ethnic Albanians are fourth.

Pontic Greek immigrants and immigrants from Albania also share a number of commonalities. First, in both cases either they or their parents were not born in Greece; that is, both are immigrant groups. Second, they both came from countries with unstable and poor economic situations to a country that is more affluent (Georgas & Papastylianou, 1996). Third, they both have to face similar economic and

social difficulties in their adaptation to the same host country (e.g., Fakiolas, 1999).

Aims and Hypotheses

The primary purpose of this study is to examine whether and how individual differences in immigrant youth predict who will translate perceived group discrimination into perceived personal discrimination. Cross-sectional data, mainly from wave 1 of the AStRA project, are used. We wanted to make a first test of this research question before we introduce in a future study a longitudinal perspective. As has been shown in studies focusing on the psychological consequences of perceived discrimination, the relationship between these variables over time is very complex (e.g., Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009). The results of the present study allow us to identify the role of individual differences in the perception of personal discrimination, but do not allow us to establish the direction of the effects and to make causal inferences.

To address the primary goal of the study, two main research questions are examined. First, what is the relative level of group and personal discrimination in these two immigrant groups? We expected that the group/personal discrimination discrepancy phenomenon would be replicated in this study (Taylor et al., 1996), that is, that both immigrant groups would report more discrimination against their group than against themselves.

In addition, we expected that Pontic Greek immigrants would report less group discrimination than Albanian immigrants because the former are the target of less discrimination in Greek society than immigrants from Albania (e.g., Dalla & Motti-Stefanidi, 2010; Triandafyllidou, 2000). We also expected this fact to be reflected in the everyday interactions of immigrant youth that take place in the school context with their teachers and their peers (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., in press), thereby also resulting in a lower personal discrimination of Pontic Greeks.

Second, to what extent (a) the perception of group discrimination, (b) students' individual differences, and (c) their interaction predict who among Pontic Greek immigrant adolescents, and immigrant adolescents from Albania, will report being personally discriminated against? We expected that group discrimination would predict personal discrimination. Students' individual differences were also expected to be associated, over and above their perception of group discrimination, with their perception of being personally the target of discrimination (e.g., Phinney et al., 1998; Shorey et al., 2002). More precisely, immigrant students with higher self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997; Verkuyten, 1998), as well as higher grade point average (GPA) and peer popularity, which are core developmental tasks of this period of life (Masten, Burt, & Coatsworth, 2006), were expected to minimize perceived discrimination against the self more than students who do not have such characteristics.

We expect this on the basis of two arguments. First, individuals who deal successfully with major developmental tasks, such as those related to school and peer competence,

would be expected to have higher feelings of self-worth (Harter, 2006) and higher self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997) than less competent individuals. Such individuals would also be expected to be less likely to attribute ambiguous social situations to discrimination against them, because in doing so they lose control over their outcomes (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997). Second, individuals with such positive characteristics may elicit more positive responses from their environment and therefore may have to face less personal discrimination (e.g., Shorey et al., 2002; Verkuyten, 1998).

We also examined two family adversity measures, social adversity and negative life events, as possible predictors of perceived personal discrimination. However, these analyses were exploratory. SES has been examined by a number of studies in relation to perceived discrimination, but with contradictory results. For example, as was mentioned earlier, Phinney et al. (1998) found that the higher the parents' SES the higher their adolescent children's intergroup competence, which in turn was related to lower perceived personal discrimination. Similarly, Brody et al. (2006) found that during late childhood African American youth of higher SES reported less perceived personal discrimination; however, this finding was reversed as these children grew into early adolescence, when they became more likely to perceive such discrimination. Negative life events in the family do not seem to have been empirically studied as possible predictors of perceived personal discrimination. Perceiving discrimination addressed at oneself is considered itself to be a stressful event. The question arises whether youth with a high additional number of negative life events in their family's life are equally likely as youth with fewer other negative life events to interpret ambiguous social events as discriminatory.

We examined the Big Five personality factors as possible predictors of perceived personal discrimination. These analyses were preliminary since we had to use data from wave 3 of the study, assuming stability between waves 1 and 3. Thus, significant effects are interpretable but underestimated in this design, and no causal inferences can be drawn. No hypotheses can be formulated on the basis of the literature since individual differences in personality attributes, and more specifically in the Big Five factors, apparently have not been studied as predictors of perceived personal discrimination.

No specific predictions could be made regarding the interaction of group discrimination by students' individual differences in the perception of personal discrimination. This issue does not seem to have been addressed in previous studies. Therefore, these analyses were also exploratory.

A final step was to determine whether the effect of perceived group discrimination and individual differences on perceived personal discrimination was similar or different in the Greek Pontics and in the Albanian immigrant adolescents. We did not expect to find ethnicity effects in this regard. Instead, we expected similar factors and processes to account for the variance in perceived personal discrimination. A similarity in the quality of adaptation, and in the processes accounting for these outcomes, has been shown in other studies of immigrant of the Diaspora (Silbereisen, 2008). We did not examine the effect of gender, since this is the topic for another study.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of $N = 414$ first- or second-generation immigrant students (mean age 12.9 years, $SD = 0.79$ years; 54% males; 62% first-generation immigrants) and their 525 Greek classmates who attended 48 high-school Grade 1 classes in 12 schools in Athens, Greece, that were characterized by a relatively high proportion of students from immigrant families. Depending on the area of town, these students were predominantly either of Albanian origin (Albanians, 19% born in Greece, attending nine schools, henceforward called Albanian schools) or expatriates from Russia (Pontians, 74% born in Greece, attending three schools, henceforward called Pontian schools). Albanians in Pontian schools and Pontians in Albanian schools ($n = 38$) as well as immigrants who were neither Albanians nor Pontians ($n = 112$) were ignored in this study; Greeks are included only as providers of sociometric nominations of immigrants. The 269 Albanian students and their 448 Greek classmates attended 36 classes in nine Albanian schools, and the 145 Pontian students and their 77 Greek classmates attended 12 classes in three Pontian schools. Thus, the proportion of Greeks was lower in Pontian schools than in Albanian schools.

Measures

This study draws data from wave 1 of the AStRA project, when adolescents were in Grade 1 of the Gymnasium. All questionnaires were translated from Greek into Albanian and Russian and were then back-translated into Greek by four bilingual speakers. Immigrant students could choose the language in which they preferred to respond to the questionnaires. The vast majority (90%) of both Albanian and Pontic Greek students chose to respond to the questionnaires presented in the Greek language.

Group discrimination was self-rated by each immigrant student on two items (based on Phinney et al., 1998; Verkuyten, 1998) rated on a 5-point frequency scale (1 = almost never to 5 = very often): “How often do you feel that children from Albania/Pontic Greek children are treated unfairly or negatively because of their ethnic background?”; “How often do you feel that your classmates tease or hassle children from Albania/Pontic Greek children”. Each student was asked to rate the first two items separately for Albanian and Pontic Greek children. The 2-item scale showed an internal consistency of $\alpha = .68$, which is acceptable for this brief scale.

Personal discrimination was self-rated by each immigrant student on two items parallel to the group discrimination items (also based on Phinney et al., 1998; Verkuyten, 1998), rated on the 5-point frequency scale used for group discrimination: “How often do you feel that Greeks reject you because of your ethnic background?”; “How often do you feel that you are treated unfairly or negatively because

of your ethnic background by your classmates?” The 2-item scale showed an acceptable internal consistency of $\alpha = .75$.

Social adversity was assessed by two indices, the frequency of negative life events and an index of sociodemographic risk. Concerning *negative life events* students checked 25 negative life events in terms of whether they had experienced them over the past 2 years. These items referred to financial challenges for the family (e.g., “my father has been looking for a job but cannot find one”; “I work to help my family financially”), problems within the family (e.g., “my parents are separated”), a family member in trouble with the law, substance-dependence of a family member (e.g., “a member of my family had a serious problem with drugs or alcohol”), exposure to violence (e.g., “a member of my family has been threatened or hit by a stranger”), health issues, and/or death of family member. The sum of checked life events provided a cumulative risk index, with a possible range of 0–25.

Sociodemographic risk was the sum of student-reported single-parent household, low professional status (e.g., unskilled worker, farmer, unemployed) of either parent, and high residential density (i.e., the quotient of the number of people living in the house to the number of rooms in the house being higher than one). The sum of risk factors provided a cumulative risk index, with a possible range of 0–4.

Percentage of life spent in Greece was computed as time spent in Greece since arrival or birth, divided by age.

Academic performance was assessed in terms of a student’s GPA in Grade 1 retrieved from school records. Grade points in Greek high schools are rated by teachers on a 20-point scale, with higher points indicating better performance. The GPA of each student was based on the judgments of at least four different teachers and five different subjects (mathematics, ancient Greek, modern Greek, science, history).

Peer popularity was measured using a sociometric test. All students in each classroom were asked to list three classmates whom they “like the most,” and three whom they “like the least” (Coie, Dodge, & Coppotelli, 1982). An individual’s popularity among peers was measured by the total number of received positive nominations in Grade 1. These popularity scores ranged from 0 to 9. We did not adjust this measure for class size because what counts for an individual at the psychological level is the frequency of being nominated rather than the adjusted frequency of being nominated. We ran additional analyses of z -transformed nominations within classes; the results were highly similar.

Self-efficacy was self-rated in Grade 1 on an adapted 44-item version of the Self-Efficacy Scales by Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1996) with satisfactory overall internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha .93$); items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 7. We used only the total score.

Self-esteem was self-rated in Grade 1 on a translated version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) with satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha .75$); items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

Personality. The Big Five factors of personality description were self-rated by the students 2 years after the Grade 1

assessment on translated versions of five 8-item scales developed by Asendorpf and van Aken (1999). Each item consisted of two bipolar adjectives that were rated on a 5-point scale. We chose these scales because they were originally developed for 12-year-olds, trying to make sure that the immigrant students who were approximately 15 years old at the assessment would not have serious problems in understanding the items. Also, the scales were sufficiently broad as reflected by a moderately high internal consistency in the original German sample (α s ranged from .52 to .65).

Because personality was studied 2 years after the other assessments in Grade 1, we had to use these assessments as proxies for personality in Grade 1 based on the reasonable assumption that personality is already pretty stable between 13 and 15 years of age (see, e.g., Pullmann, Raudsepp, & Allik, 2006). Note that instability would very likely result in an underestimation of the concurrent personality effects at age 13 because predictions most likely become weaker with increasing time difference between predictor and criterion; therefore, our design tends to underestimate rather than overestimate the Big Five effects.

Results

Nested Structure of the Data

Because immigrants were nested in school classes, and school classes in Pontic versus Albanian schools, differences between Pontic Greeks and Albanians were at the level of classes and schools rather than individual students, and personal and group discrimination might systematically vary between classes and schools. Therefore, we explored effects of the nested structure of the data by applying multilevel regression

analysis (hierarchical linear modeling; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002), using the HLM 6.0.8 software (Raudenbush, Bryk, & Congdon, 2009). Because the number of schools was too small for applying multilevel analyses (12 schools), we considered only the nesting of individuals (Level 1) in school classes (Level 2, 48 classes).

An unconditional model predicting personal or group discrimination without any predictors at Levels 1 and 2 yielded an intraclass correlation of .072 for personal discrimination and .051 for group discrimination. Thus, only 7.2% of the overall variance in personal discrimination and even less variance in group discrimination was due to differences between classrooms. Therefore, it is not surprising that for all analyses reported in the following sections, the results of two-level regressions without predictor at level 2 were highly similar to the results of ordinary regression models that disregard the nested structure of the data. Another reason for the high similarity of the results of the two types of analyses seems to be that many classes contained only few immigrants such that the class mean was not reliably measured, questioning the quality of the level 2 data. Therefore, we report here only the results of ordinary regression analyses.

Perceived Group and Personal Discrimination in the Two Immigrant Groups

To examine the relative level of group and personal discrimination in these two immigrant groups, we computed a mixed ANOVA with type of discrimination (group vs. personal) as within-participant factor and type of immigrant (Albanian vs. Pontic Greek) as between-participant factor. Overall, group

Table 1. Differences between Albanian and Pontic immigrants

Measure (range of scores)	Pontic Greeks		Albanians		<i>t</i> -test for difference		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Group discrimination (1–5)	2.45	1.16	3.01	1.05	4.72	.001	0.49
Personal discrimination (1–5)	1.68	1.05	1.91	1.09	1.82	–	
Percentage of life spent in Greece	0.97	0.10	0.72	0.21	–13.36	.001	1.35
Negative life events (0–25)	5.97	3.06	5.56	3.33	–1.18	–	
Sociodemographic risk (0–4)	1.04	0.82	1.17	0.87	1.40	–	
Grade point average (1–20)	12.30	2.64	12.11	2.70	< 1	–	
Self-efficacy (1–7)	5.17	1.01	5.35	0.86	1.84	–	
Self-esteem (1–5)	3.72	0.63	3.75	0.69	< 1	–	
Peer popularity	2.76	1.88	2.33	1.77	–2.30	.03	0.23
– control for % immigrants in class	2.54	2.19	2.45	2.02	< 1	–	
Big Five personality scales (1–5)							
Open to new experiences	3.54	0.62	3.59	0.72	< 1	–	
Conscientious	3.37	0.56	3.47	0.62	1.33	–	
Extraverted	3.28	0.59	3.27	0.60	< 1	–	
Agreeable	3.31	0.65	3.49	0.53	2.30	.03	0.30
Emotionally stable	3.27	0.71	3.32	0.69	< 1	–	

Notes. *N* = 145 Pontic, 269 Albanian students. *ps* and effect sizes *d* are only reported for significant group differences.

discrimination was much higher ($M = 2.70$) than personal discrimination ($M = 1.80$; $F(1, 354) = 242.6, p < .001$, Cohen's effect size for dependent samples $d = 1.31$). A significant interaction discrimination type by immigrant type, $F(1, 348) = 4.61, p < .003$, suggested that Albanians and Pontic Greeks did not show the same differences between group and personal discrimination. Subsequent t -tests comparing Albanians and Pontic Greeks confirmed higher group discrimination for Albanians than for Pontic Greeks, but only a marginal difference for personal discrimination (see Table 1). Thus, our assumptions that group discrimination would be higher than personal discrimination, and that Albanians would score higher in group discrimination than Pontic Greeks, were confirmed but the higher group discrimination of the Albanian group did not seem to translate into a higher personal discrimination.

Gender differences were explored by adding gender as a between-participant factor to the ANOVA described above. The gender main effect, the gender by immigrant type interaction, and the gender by immigrant type by discrimination type interaction were nonsignificant ($F < 1$), but a significant interaction between gender and discrimination was found, $F(1, 354) = 5.31, p < .03$. Post hoc t -tests failed however to reveal significant gender differences for personal or group discrimination. Thus, gender differences were very small.

Table 1 also presents the differences between Albanian and Pontic Greek immigrants in the other variables. A large difference in the percentage of life spent in Greece showed that Albanians had spent less of their lifetime in Greece than Pontic Greeks, which can be readily attributed to the fact that only 19% of the Albanians were born in Greece as compared to 74% of the Pontic Greeks. Apart from this difference, the group differences were nonsignificant except for small differences in agreeableness (Albanians rated themselves as more agreeable) and peer popularity. The finding that Pontic Greeks received more positive sociometric nominations from classmates than Albanians can be readily explained by the fact that there were more immigrants in class in Pontic schools, such that it was easier for Pontic Greeks to be nominated by their ethnic group; after controlling for this effect by analysis of covariance, Pontic Greeks were not more popular than Albanians (see Table 1). All in all, only lifetime spent in Greece and peer popularity differentiated the two groups, and no other individual characteristics that could explain the higher group discrimination of the Albanians (higher agreeableness is not expected to increase group discrimination).

In order to check, whether the group or personal discrimination differences between Pontic Greeks and Albanians were due to differences in lifetime spent in Greece and peer popularity, we controlled for these differences by analysis of covariance. The group difference in group discrimination did not become smaller ($M = 2.34$ for Pontic Greeks, $M = 3.06$ for Albanians; $F(1, 346) = 23.84, p < .001, d = 0.52$) and the group difference in personal discrimination continued to be nonsignificant ($F < 1$). Thus, the higher group discrimination reported among the Albanian students could not be explained by individual characteristics.

Table 2. Intercorrelations of the measures^a

Measure	Intercorrelations ^a												
	GDI	PLG	NLE	SDR	GPA	EFF	EST	POP	OPE	CON	EXT	AGR	STA
Group discrimination	.55***	-.07	.13	.03	-.10	.01	-.15**	-.13*	-.10	.03	-.07	.01	-.06
Personal discrimination		-.07	.18***	.00	-.28***	-.20***	-.31***	-.17**	-.28***	-.11	-.20**	-.11	-.06
- control for group discrimination		-.03	.15*	-.02	-.31***	-.27***	-.30***	-.14*	-.32***	-.20*	-.23**	-.17*	-.03
Percentage of life spent in Greece			.01	-.15**	.16**	.09	.03	.10	.04	-.01	.16*	.05	-.02
Negative life events				.03	-.18***	-.14**	-.23***	-.10	.03	.03	-.01	.04	-.12
Sociodemographic risk					-.17**	-.13*	.06	-.06	.03	.02	-.03	.01	.02
Grade point average						.30***	.20***	.33***	.36***	.20**	.16*	-.01	.03
Self-efficacy							.44***	.10	.18**	.13	.24***	.06	.14*
Self-esteem								.11*	.32***	.16*	.20**	.03	.24***
Peer popularity									.15*	.09	.19**	.02	.04
Open to new experiences										.50***	.44***	.38***	.43***
Conscientious											.17*	.49***	.41***
Extraverted												.26***	.29***
Agreeable													.39***
Emotionally stable													

Notes. $N = 414$ (231 for the correlations with the Big Five scales) or somewhat lower due to measure-specific missing values.

^aFor predictions of personal discrimination controlled for group discrimination, standardized beta coefficients are reported.

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

Prediction of Perceived Personal Discrimination by Perceived Group Discrimination and Individual Characteristics

To examine to what extent group discrimination and students' individual characteristics predict personal discrimination, we first computed intercorrelations between all measures (see Table 2). Group discrimination correlated .55 with personal discrimination, leaving sufficient room for additional predictors. The remaining intercorrelations were below .36 except for moderate correlations between self-efficacy and self-esteem and among the Big Five scales, which are expected on the basis of the literature for this age group (e.g., Pullmann et al., 2006).

Personal discrimination tended to correlate more strongly with other individual variables than group discrimination, which suggests a stronger influence of those variables. When we regressed personal discrimination on group discrimination and the other measures in Table 2, one at a time, nine measures, in addition to group discrimination, continued to significantly predict personal discrimination: frequent negative life events, and low GPA, self-efficacy, self-esteem, peer popularity, openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness predicted lower personal discrimination (see Table 2).

Potential moderating effects of ethnicity and gender were studied by moderated regressions, additionally entering the product of the predictor and dummy-coded ethnicity (Albanian vs. Pontic Greek immigrant), or gender, into each of the nine multiple regressions. All $2 \times 9 = 18$ moderation effects were nonsignificant. Thus, the predictions did not vary between Albanian and Pontic Greek immigrants, or between males and females.

Table 3. Moderation of the effects of group discrimination on personal discrimination by protective individual factors

Protective factor	β
Percentage of life spent in Greece	-.07
Few negative life events	-.12*
Low sociodemographic risk	-.02
Grade point average	-.21***
Self-efficacy	-.07
Self-esteem	-.14**
Peer popularity	-.11*
Open to new experiences	-.20***
Conscientious	-.09
Extraverted	-.11
Agreeable	-.12*
Emotionally stable	-.13*

Notes. $N = 414$ (231 for the moderation by the Big Five scales) or somewhat lower due to measure-specific missing values. Reported are standardized effects β for moderated regressions (group discrimination and all moderators were standardized before computing their product).

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

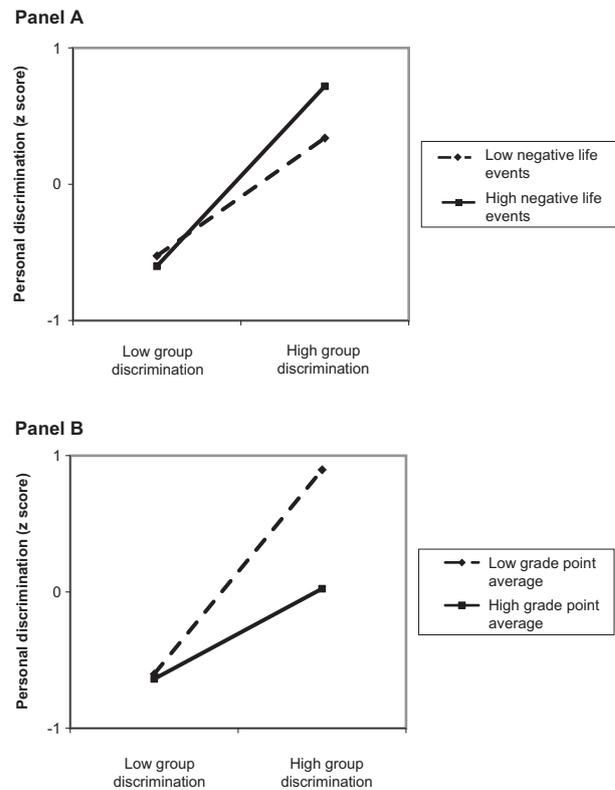


Figure 1. Moderation plots illustrating the protecting effect of few negative life events (Panel A) and high grade point average (Panel B) on the effect of group discrimination on personal discrimination. High/low refer to ± 1 SD.

To test how students' individual characteristics predicted personal discrimination under low and high group discrimination, moderated regressions that predicted personal discrimination from group discrimination, a potential moderator, and their product, were computed separately for each potential moderator. Apart from the two discrimination variables, all measures in Table 2 were considered as a potential moderator. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 indicates that seven of the 12 considered measures (by and large the same as the nine significant predictors of personal discrimination) showed a significant moderation effect. For an illustration, moderation plots, as proposed by Aiken and West (1991), are presented in Figure 1 for the frequency of negative life events and GPA. In both cases, the moderator did not have a significant effect for low group discrimination, but partially suppressed the effect of high group discrimination on personal discrimination (see Figure 1). The plots of the other five moderation effects looked highly similar.

The seven significant moderation effects were completely consistent with one another regarding the desirability of high scores in the moderator: Desirable scores (few negative life events, high GPA, etc.) partially suppressed the

translation of high perceived group discrimination into high perceived personal discrimination. These results cannot be attributed to social desirability response biases because some moderators were assessed by school authorities (GPA), peers (peer popularity), or referred to reports of rather objective life events. Also, the consistency of the moderator effects cannot be attributed to redundant moderators because the correlations between them were not high (see Table 2).

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to determine whether and how individual differences contribute to the translation of perceived group into perceived personal discrimination. Adolescents from two immigrant groups with distinct status in Greek society took part in the study. These were Pontic Greeks, who are immigrants of the Diaspora, and immigrants from Albania, who are economic immigrants. Two research questions were studied. First, we examined whether the PGDD is confirmed in these immigrant groups. Second, we examined the relative contribution of perceived group discrimination, of individual differences, and of their interaction in accounting for perceived personal discrimination. It was found that the two immigrant groups differed with respect to perceived discrimination against their ethnic group, but did not differ either in perceived personal discrimination or in its predictors. When youth, independently of ethnicity, reported high perceived group discrimination, individual differences contributed to whether they would translate it into personal discrimination. Individual differences did not make a difference when youth reported low perceived group discrimination. In this case, they also tended to report low perceived personal discrimination. The similarity in outcomes, and in the processes accounting for these outcomes, in Pontic Greeks and in Albanian immigrants, is congruent with findings from studies of other immigrant groups of the Diaspora (Silbereisen, 2008).

Perceived Group and Personal Discrimination: Pontic Greek Versus Albanian Adolescents

The PGDD phenomenon was replicated in this study. Both Pontic Greek and Albanian immigrant adolescents reported significantly more discrimination against their ethnic group than against themselves. These results are in agreement with the extensive social psychological literature examining the phenomenon in a vast array of minority groups (e.g., Bourguignon et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 1996; Verkuyten, 1998).

Furthermore, Pontic Greek adolescents reported, as expected, less discrimination against their ethnic group than Albanian adolescents did. Perceived group discrimination has been argued to be a reflection of objective reality (e.g., Taylor et al., 1996). In a hierarchy of "Greekness," which creates multiple levels of inclusion-exclusion, Pontic

Greeks rank higher than Albanians of Greek descent, whose Greekness has been contested for a long time, and ethnic Albanians are last (Triandafyllidou, 2000). These immigrant adolescents' perceptions of discrimination against their ethnic group seem to reflect this social reality.

However, unexpectedly, Pontic Greek adolescents did not differ from Albanian adolescents in perceived personal discrimination. Assuming that discrimination at the societal level filters through contexts in the individual's proximal environment, such as is the school (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., in press), we were expecting that since Pontic Greeks are the targets of less discrimination than Albanian adolescents at the societal level, they would also report less discrimination directed at themselves personally in the school context.

First, it is possible that Albanian students' perceptions of personal discrimination reflect their actual experiences in their classrooms. Immigrant adolescents from Albania in the sample were a mixture of ethnic Albanians and Albanians of Greek ethnic origin, which, at the time data were collected, seemed impossible to differentiate. Albanians of Greek ethnic origin would possibly be the target of less discrimination than ethnic Albanians, pushing down the mean reported personal discrimination of this immigrant group. However, as discussed in the Introduction, according to school principals' reports both the school authorities and teachers had no basis of knowing who was really who. In addition, even though discrimination against Albanians of Greek descent is lower than that against ethnic Albanians, it is still significantly higher than discrimination against Pontic Greeks (Dalla & Motti-Stefanidi, 2010; Triandafyllidou, 2000). For these reasons, one would still have expected the group of students from Albania to report more personal discrimination than Pontic Greeks.

Who Will Translate Group Discrimination Into Personal?

Another possible explanation for the unexpected finding that Pontic Greek and Albanian students did not differ in perceived personal discrimination, as well as for the expected finding that both groups reported higher group than personal discrimination, focuses on the translation of group into personal discrimination. Even though group discrimination was shown to be a predictor of personal discrimination, the correlation between the two discrimination variables was .55, which explains only 30% of the variance between them. Our findings suggest that a lot of the remaining variance may be due to individual differences between students and their interactions with group discrimination.

First, students' individual characteristics have been argued to be directly associated with the perception of being personally the target of discrimination (e.g., Phinney et al., 1998; Shorey et al., 2002). We found that immigrant students who have positive personal attributes and fewer stressors in their lives, independently of their ethnicity, and over and above their reports of group discrimination, tend to report less perceived discrimination against the self than students who do not have such characteristics. These results

were expected with respect to self-esteem and self-efficacy (e.g., Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997; Verkuyten, 1998), as well as GPA and peer popularity, but were generalized to all positive characteristics included in the study.

Second, a large number of interactions between these individual characteristics and group discrimination suggested an additional minimization of personal discrimination among students with positive characteristics. Whereas low group discrimination was associated with low personal discrimination, and individual attributes did not differentiate in any way this relationship, in the cases where students reported high group discrimination, those with high positive attributes tended to minimize personal discrimination more than those who did not possess such positive attributes. Positive personal characteristics played then a protective role under conditions of perceived high group discrimination.

Which may be the processes responsible for these buffering effects of positive individual characteristics? On the one hand, it could be argued that students' personal attributes influence how they construe and make sense of their social reality (Caspi & Shiner, 2006). Immigrant students who are dealing effectively with core developmental tasks, such as school achievement, and who have positive intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics, such as high self-esteem and high agreeableness, may differ from students, who do not possess these positive characteristics, in the cues they notice in an ambiguous social event, and in the way they interpret them. For example, it has been shown that children high on negative emotionality, which includes neuroticism and irritability, are more likely to appraise negative life events as threatening (Lengua & Long, 2002). It is then possible that immigrant youth possessing positive individual characteristics attribute a different meaning to experience than youth who do not possess these positive characteristics (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., in press).

Negative life events, but not family social adversity, predicted who perceives being personally discriminated. One possible route for this effect is via students' internalizing problems. Negative life events are significant risk factors for the mental health of all youth (e.g., Obradović, Shaffer, & Masten, in press). Furthermore, a strong connection between depression and anxiety has been shown in studies focusing on both the antecedents and the consequences of perceived personal discrimination (e.g., Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2009; Phinney et al., 1998).

On the other hand, it is also possible that these positive characteristics have an evocative effect on significant people in students' proximal environment, influencing how they react to them (Caspi & Shiner, 2006). For example, youth who are doing well academically have been shown to evoke more positive expectations and treatment from teachers (see Eccles, 2004). It is conceivable then that individual differences between immigrant students elicit different responses from the environment, and that those students who possess positive characteristics actually experience lower discrimination against the self.

These results touch at the heart of a significant difference between a social psychological and an individual differences approach to the issue of personal discrimination, which has significant social implications. From an individual

differences perspective, one could argue that minimizing personal discrimination may have a positive effect for individuals, in that it allows them to feel they are in control of their lives and to believe that others like them for who they are. Furthermore, the meaning people attribute to experience functions as a mediator between the "actual" context and their behavior and adaptation in that context (Magnusson & Stattin, 2006). The perception of high personal discrimination has been actually repeatedly shown to have a negative effect on immigrant youth's adaptation and psychological well-being (e.g., Liebkind et al., 2004; Szalacha et al., 2003; Verkuyten, 1998). Our finding that minimizing personal discrimination, while perceiving high discrimination against one's ethnic group, is related to positive individual attributes is in that same line, independent of the direction of causality between these variables.

However, from a social psychological perspective, minimizing personal discrimination may also be argued to have a significant negative, disquieting effect (e.g., Ruggiero & Taylor, 1997). By blaming themselves for any negative outcome, these immigrant adolescents may not be motivated to take the necessary steps toward improving their own personal status and the status of their group. Furthermore, by attributing negative events and outcomes to individual factors, majority members may underestimate the need to take measures to eliminate discrimination against immigrants.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study is that it used cross-sectional data. However, this question has not been addressed before, and this study is a preliminary attempt to establish that individual differences do play a role in the translation of perceived group into personal discrimination. The next step will be to introduce the dimension of time and to examine the interplay between individual differences and perceived discrimination.

Another limitation is that the Big Five personality traits were assessed 2 years after the other variables, which required stability assumptions in order to explain the reason for including them in the study. However, the consistency of the results on immigrant adolescents' personality traits with the remaining individual characteristics suggests that this was a valid approach. Furthermore, the Big Five effects are very likely underestimated, not overestimated, if the stability of the Big Five is not high; therefore, they may be actually stronger if assessments concurrent with the discrimination measures are used. Nevertheless, the findings related to individual differences in personality should be interpreted with caution, and should be considered a first step toward the examination of their role concurrently and longitudinally in accounting for who perceives being personally discriminated.

Finally, our study is limited mainly because it is based on self-reported group and personal discrimination. Future studies including measures of observed actual discrimination by classmates and other important interaction partners are

needed to decide whether the buffering effect of positive individual characteristics on group discrimination is due to lower objective discrimination in youth's proximal context, or to the attribution of actual discrimination to one's ethnicity but not to one's person.

In spite of these limitations, the study showed that individual differences do play a role in which immigrant youth will translate perceived group discrimination into perceived personal discrimination. Together with Phinney et al. (1998), we can argue that a generally positive outlook on oneself and on the world, and, we would add, a positive adaptation with respect to core developmental tasks, appear to decrease the likelihood that young immigrants will attribute a negative social event to discrimination due to their immigrant status.

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