

# Perceived discrimination and school resilience: A study of Albanian and Pontic adolescents in Greece

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ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΕΘΝΙΚΗΣ ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΘΡΗΣΚΕΥΜΑΤΩΝ  
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ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ ΜΠΡΟΣΤΑ  
2<sup>ο</sup> Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
Εκπαίδευσης και Αρχικής  
Επαγγελματικής Κατάρτισης

# Resilience: Risk and protective factors

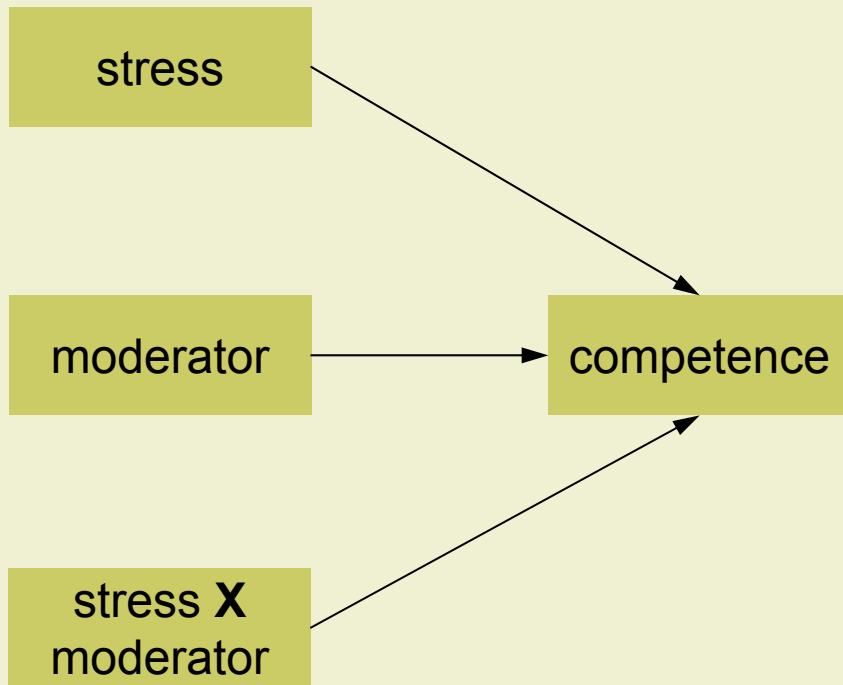
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Resilience (i.e., successful adaptation under high adversity) is **not** viewed as a personality trait but rather as a dynamic process where resources and/or assets are organized on the basis of multi-level, ecological models (e.g., Bronferbrenner, 1977; Garmezy, 1985):

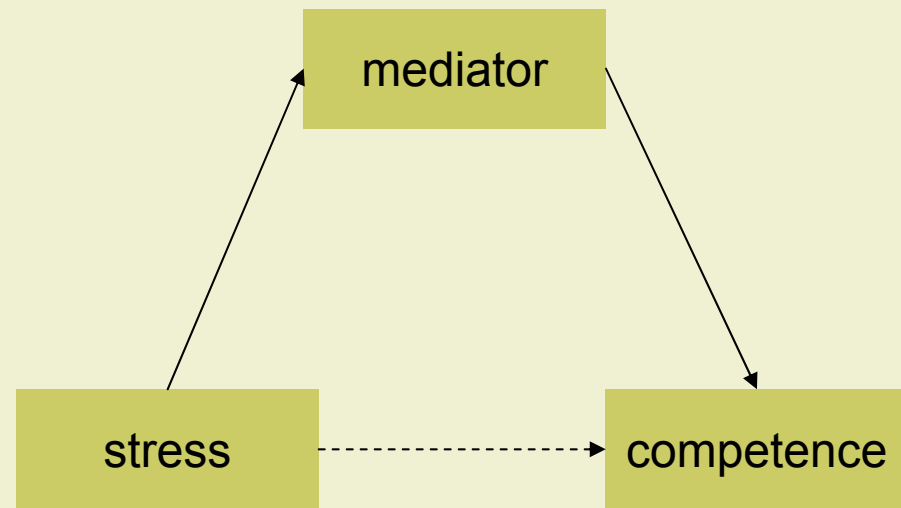
<b>Personal</b>	locus of control, self-efficacy beliefs, intelligence, social skills
<b>Family</b>	social-economic status of parents, quality of parent-child relationship
<b>Community</b>	supportive networks, state policies, minority status, perceived discrimination

# The moderator-mediator variable distinction (Baron & Kenny, 1986) in the research on resilience

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Moderator model



Mediator model

# Perceived discrimination as a possible mediator for adaptation of immigrants

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- ❑ **Stereotype threat.** The awareness of being judged in terms of a stereotype poses a self-threat that affects performance (Steele & Aronson, 1995).
- ❑ **Coping strategies.** Downward social comparisons (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) or psychological disengagement (Shih, 2004) may undermine intrinsic motivation.
- ❑ **Acculturation.** Perceived discrimination is associated with increased stress and less willingness to adopt host culture identity (Ward et al., 2001).

# Two dimensions of perceived discrimination

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- ❑ **Perceived personal discrimination** is attributed directly to the self.
- ❑ **Group discrimination** is attributed to social groups to which the perceiver belongs, e.g., ethnic group, race, gender.
- ☞ The tendency to recognize greater discrimination against group, rather than against self, is protective for self-esteem (Crocker et al., 1998).

# Research hypotheses

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- ❑ Immigrant adolescents will perceive higher level of discrimination against their ethnic group rather than against self, although this is expected to vary across immigrants of different cultural background.
- ❑ Perceived personal and –to a lesser extent– group discrimination will mediate the effect of stress on school competence of immigrant adolescents.
- ❑ Possible moderation effects of perceived discrimination on school competence (depending on the level of stress and ethnicity) will also be explored.

# Characteristics of the sample

(*N* = 332 immigrant adolescents)

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Ethnicity	186 Albanian 146 former Soviet Union (Pontic Greek)
Generation status	192 first generation (74% Albanian) 140 second generation (69% Pontic)
Gender	179 boys 153 girls
Age (years)	Mean = 13.0, Std.Dev. = .8 min = 12.0, max = 14.6



# Measures

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- Stress** Negative life events (25 items)  
(adapted from Fthenakis & Minsel, 2002)
- Competence** School grades (Mean of 5 subjects)  
Social preference (sociometric; Coie et al., 1982)
- Perceived discrimination** Group discrimination (4 items,  $\alpha = .87$ )  
Personal discrimination (4 items,  $\alpha = .76$ )  
(based on Phinney et al., 1998; Verkuyten, 1998)

# Exploratory data analyses: Mean differences

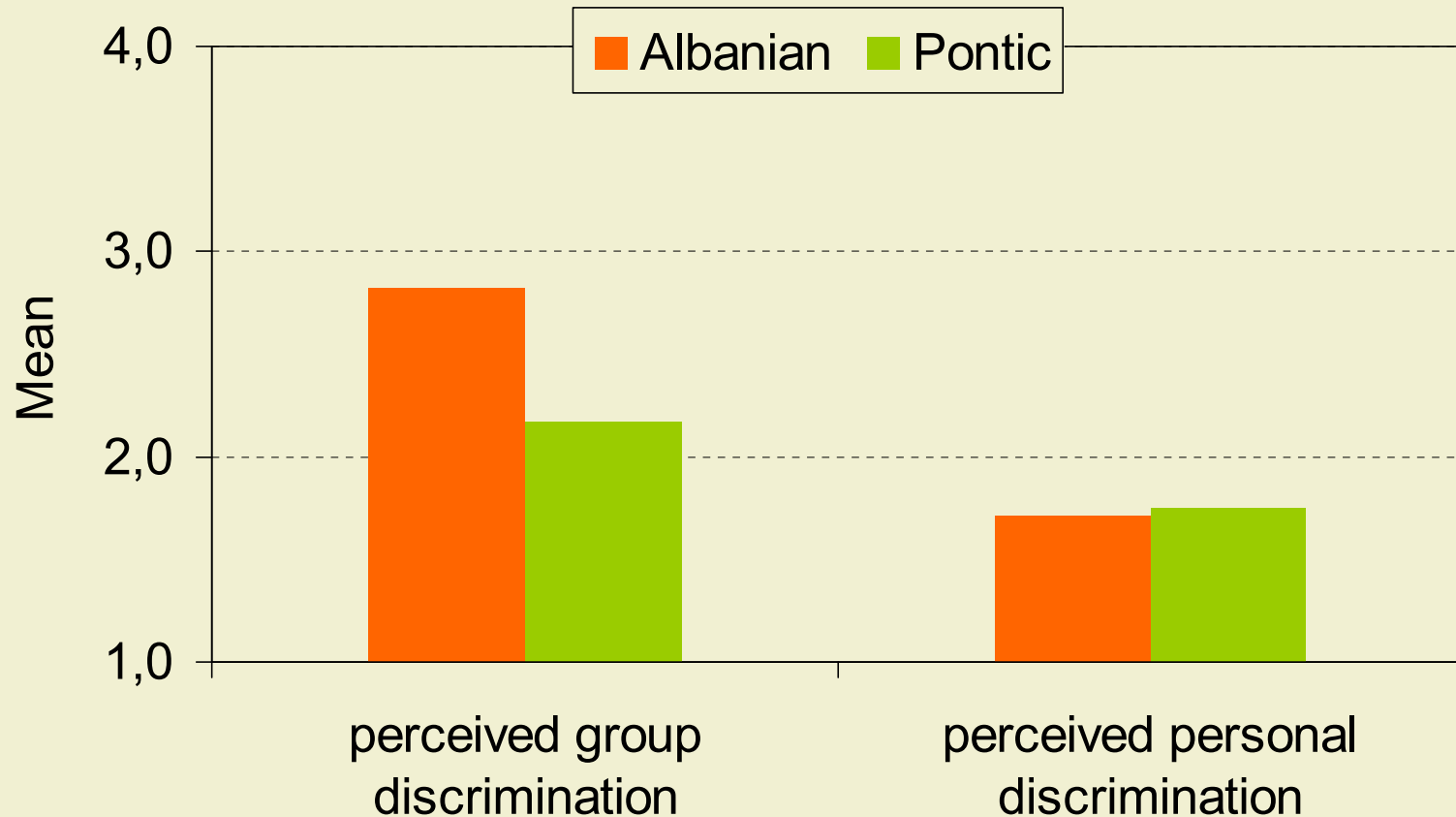
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3-way (ethnicity X generation status X gender) ANOVAs

DV's: negative life events, perceived discrimination, school grades, and social preferences

- Gender → school grades (F > M)
- Ethnicity → group discrimination
- Generation status → school grades, social preference
- Ethnicity  
X  
generation status → school grades

# Means of perceived group and personal discrimination as a function of ethnicity

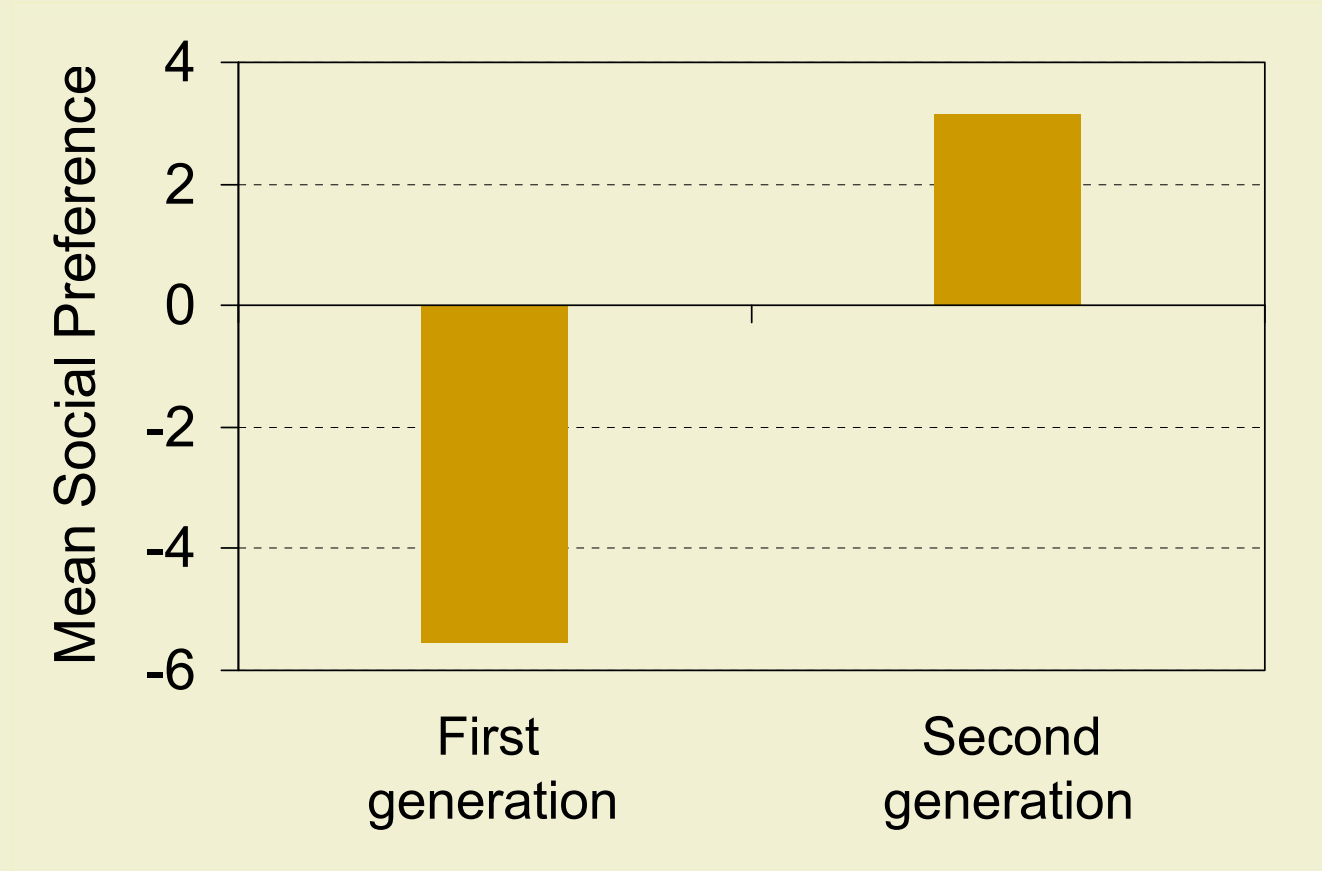


Perceived group discrimination:  $F(1, 287) = 24.86, p < .001$

Perceived personal discrimination:  $F(1, 287) = .11, n.s.$

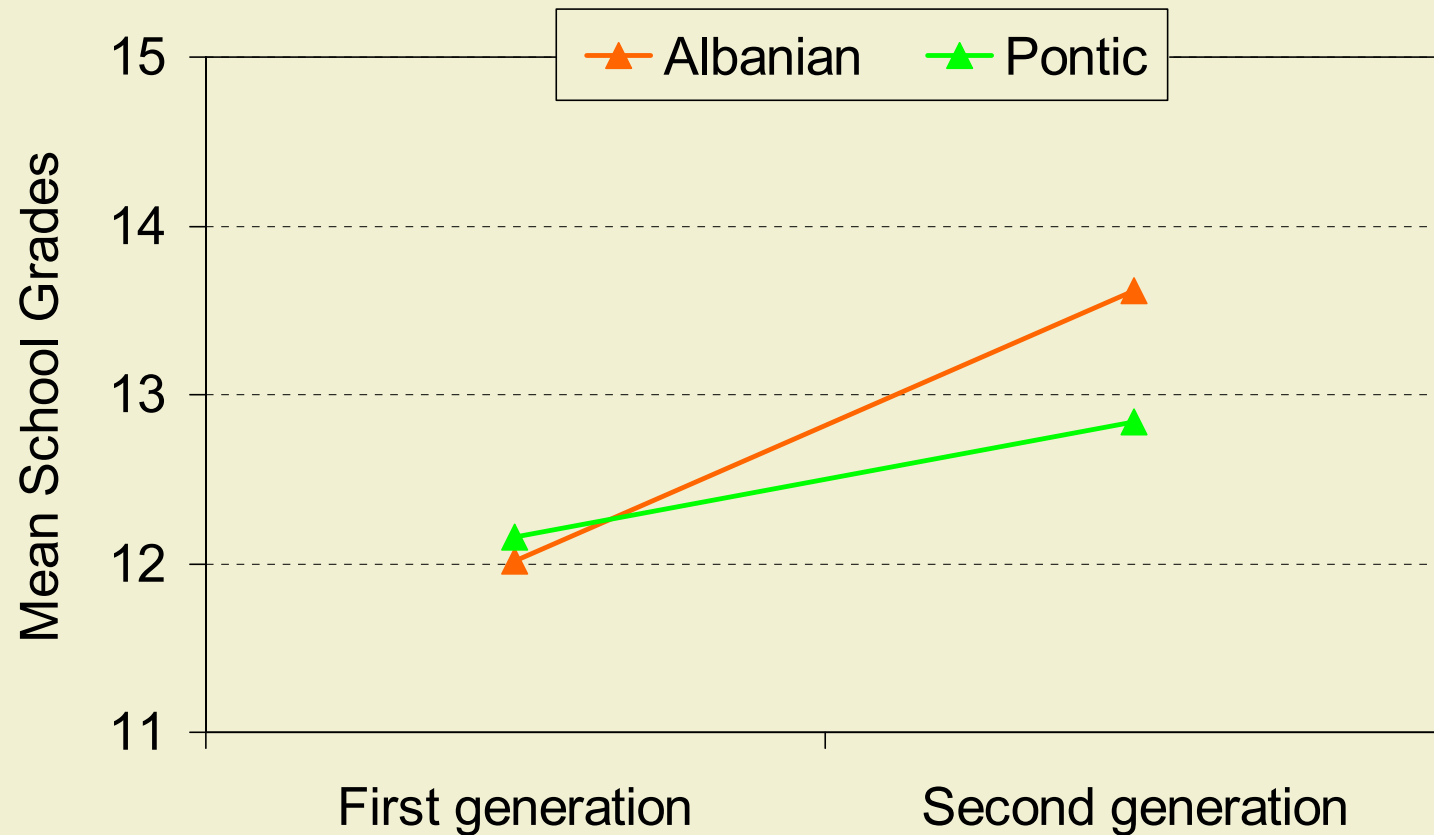
# Means of social preference as a function of generation status

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Social preference:  $F(1, 287) = 11.46, p < .001$

# Interaction of ethnicity and generation status on school grades



Ethnicity X Generation status:  $F(1, 287) = 3.92, p < .049$

## Exploratory data analyses: Correlations

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	Life Events	Group Discrim.	Personal Discrim.	School Grades	Social Prefer.
Life Events	1.00				
Group Discrimination	.16**	1.00			
Personal Discrimination	.20***	.54***	1.00		
School Grades	-.18**	-.10	-.33***	1.00	
Social Preference	-.12*	-.13*	-.24***	.29***	1.00

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

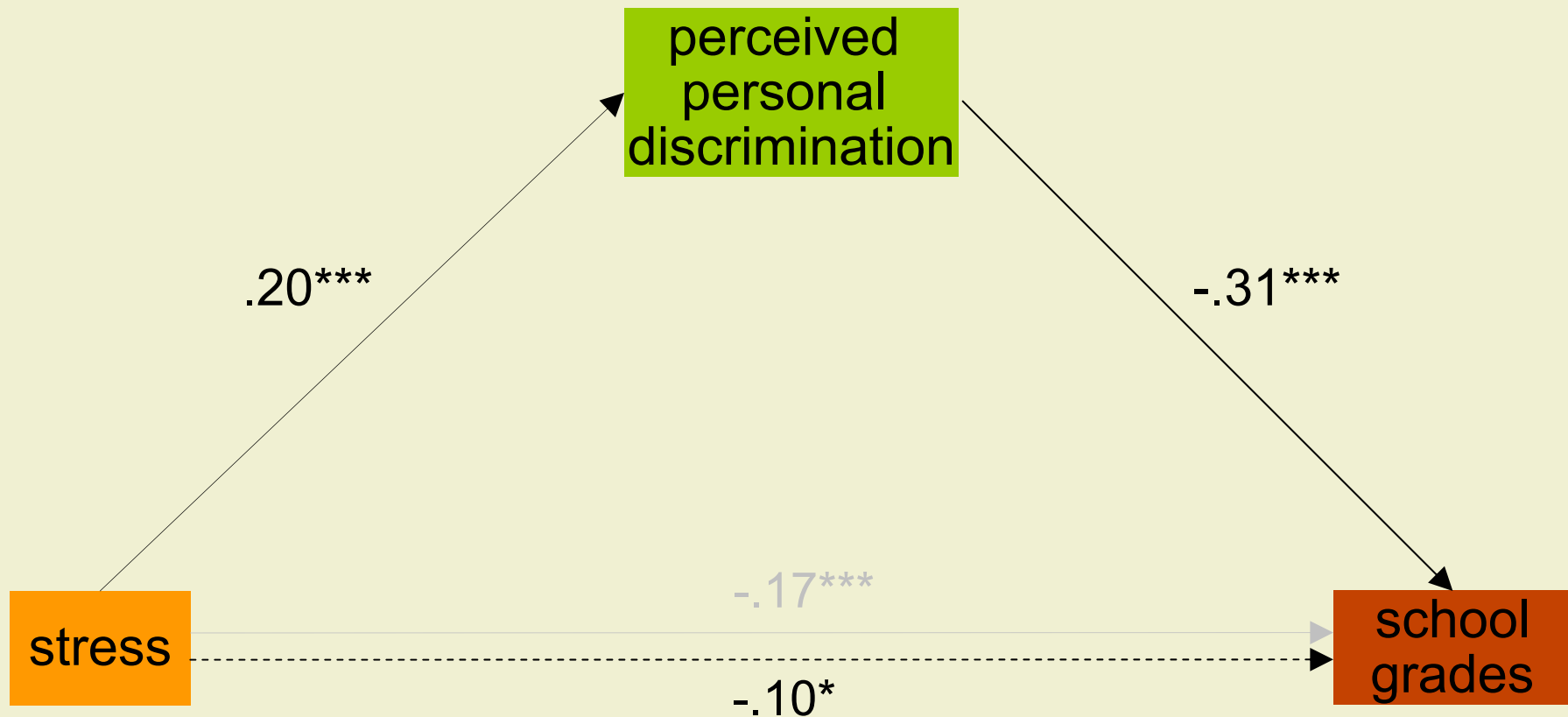
# Testing for mediating and moderating effects of perceived discrimination in the resilience of Albanian and Pontic adolescents

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- Hierarchical regressions based on Barron & Kenny (1986):
  - ⇒ Independent variable: Stress (negative life events)
  - ⇒ Dependent variables: Measures of competence (school grades, social preference)
  - ⇒ Mediators: perceived personal and group discrimination
  - ⇒ Moderators (included in the last steps): PD X stress, PD X ethnicity
  - ⇒ Covariates (entered in the first steps): gender, ethnicity, generation status

# Testing the mediation of perceived personal discrimination on school grades

## 4. Regression of school grades on personal discrimination and stress



Block 1 gender:  $\Delta R^2 = .07, p < .001$

Block 2 ethnicity:  $\Delta R^2 = .00, n.s.$

Block 3 generation status:  $\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .01$

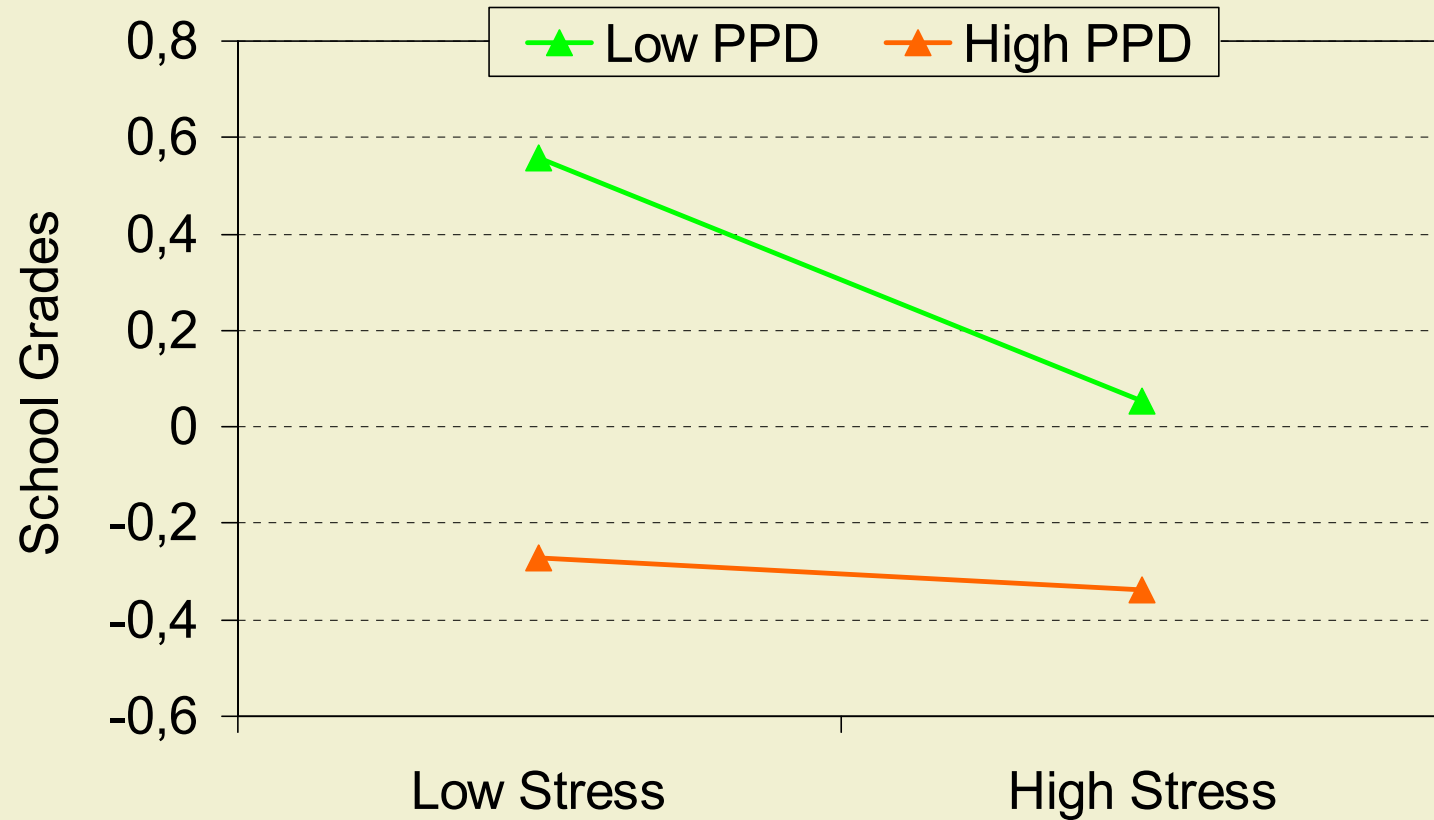
Block 4 PPD:  $\Delta R^2 = .10, p < .001$

Block 5 stress:  $\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .046$

Block 6 PPD by stress:  $\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .019$

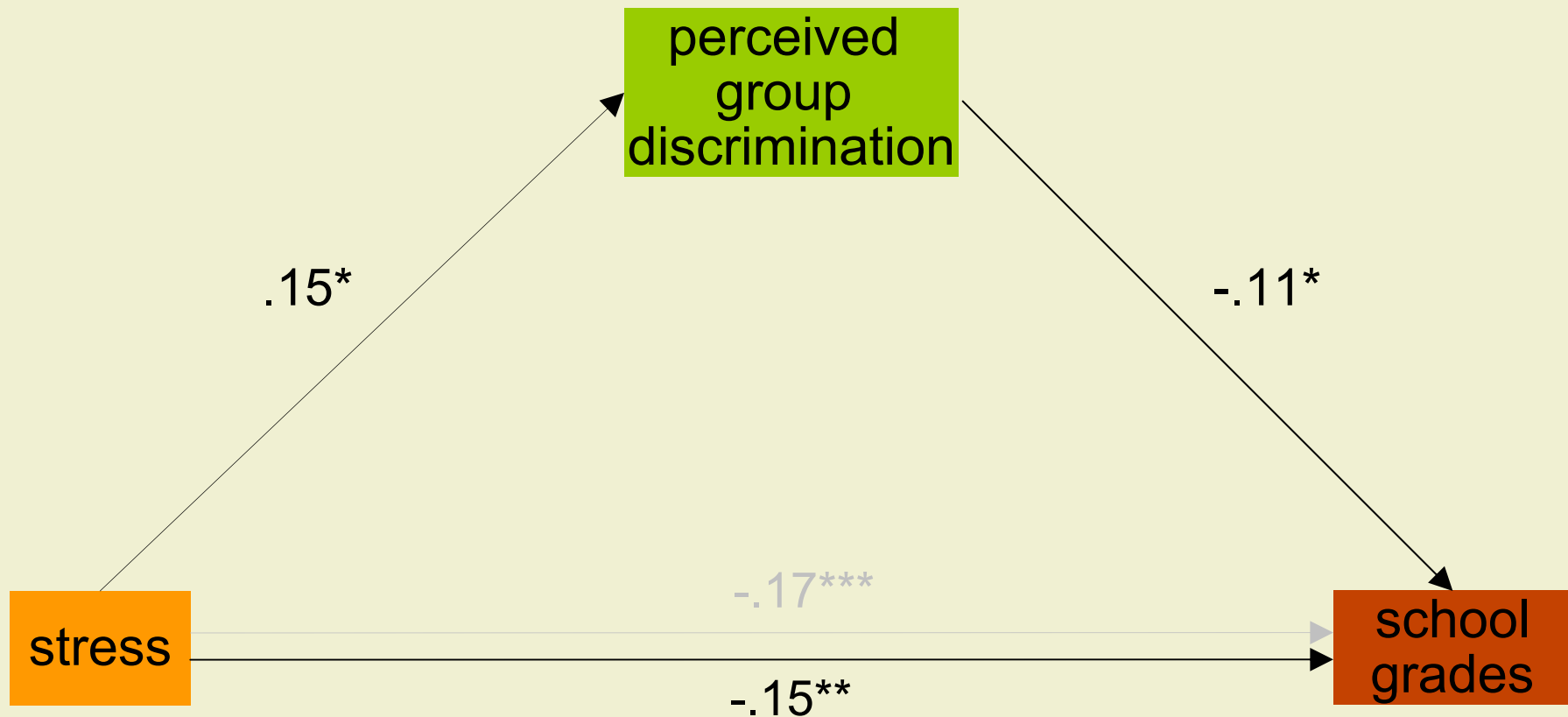


# Moderation of perceived personal discrimination on the effect of stress on school grades



# Testing the mediation of perceived group discrimination on school grades

## 4. Regression of school grades on group discrimination and stress



Block 1 gender:  $\Delta R^2 = .07, p < .001$

Block 2 ethnicity:  $\Delta R^2 = .00, n.s.$

Block 3 generation status:  $\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .01$

Block 4 PGD:  $\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .052$

Block 5 stress:  $\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .009$

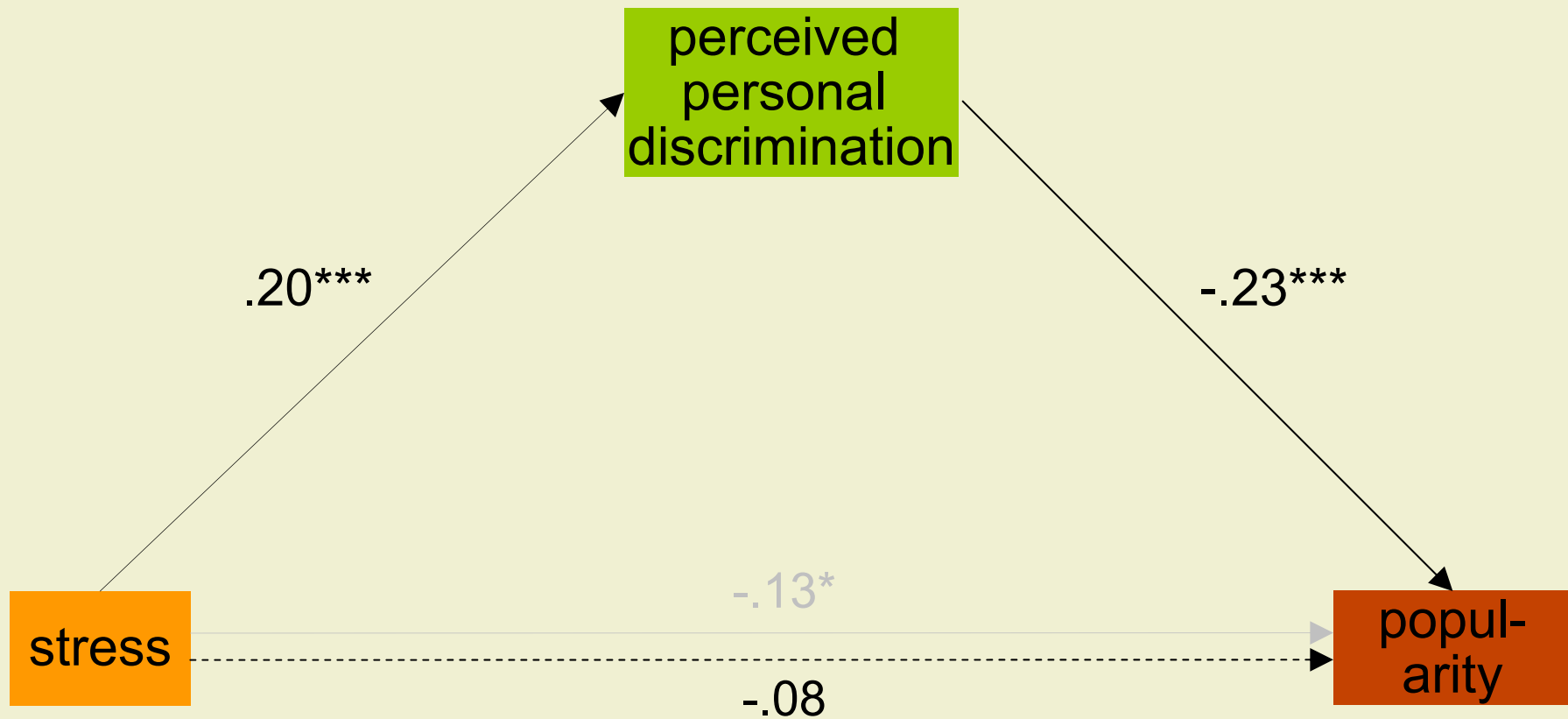
Block 6 PGD by stress:  $\Delta R^2 = .00, n.s.$

## Summary of findings for the effect of perceived discrimination on school grades

	Perceived Discrimination	
	Personal	Group
Direct effect	Yes	Yes (weak)
Mediation effect	Yes, partially	No
Moderation effect	Yes	No

# Testing the mediation of perceived personal discrimination on popularity

## 4. Regression of popularity on personal discrimination and stress



Block 1 gender:  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ , n.s.

Block 2 ethnicity:  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ , n.s.

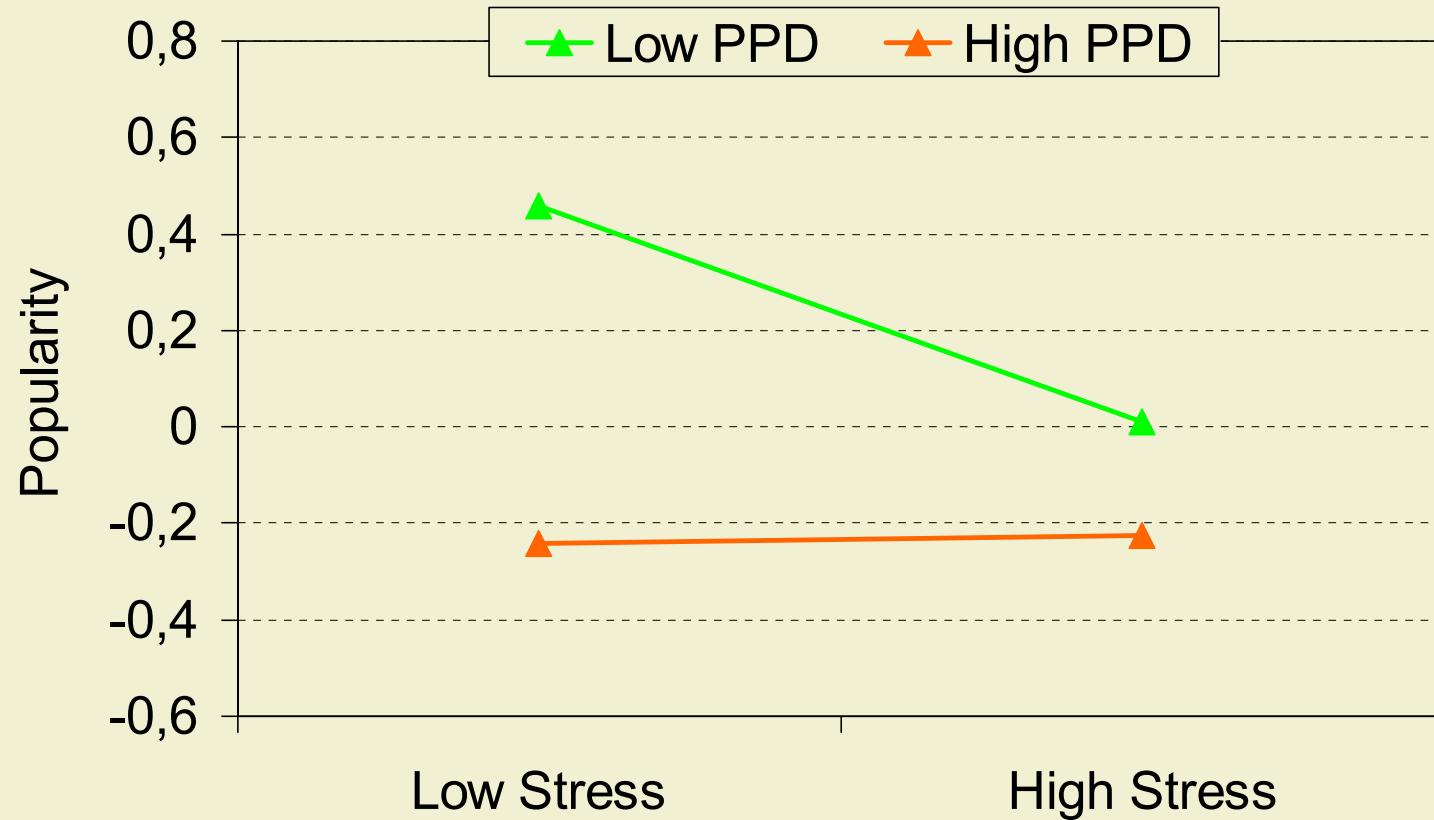
Block 3 generation status:  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p = .013$

Block 4 PPD:  $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ,  $p < .001$

Block 5 stress:  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ , n.s.

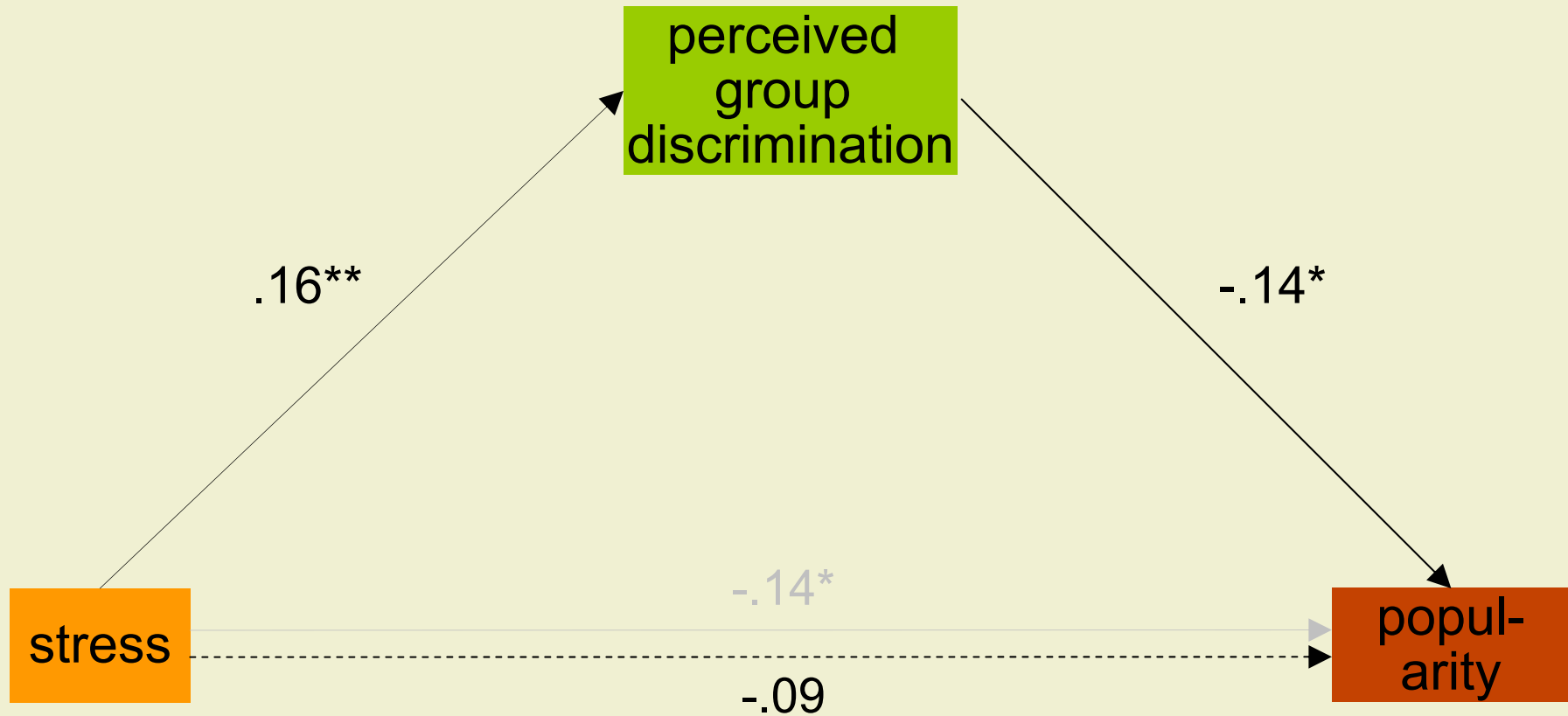
Block 6 stress X PPD:  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p = .030$

# Moderation of perceived personal discrimination on the effect of stress on popularity



# Testing the mediation of perceived group discrimination on popularity

## 4. Regression of popularity on group discrimination and stress



Block 1 gender:  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ , n.s.

Block 2 ethnicity:  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ , n.s.

Block 3 generation status:  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p = .012$

Block 4 PGD:  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ,  $p = .024$

Block 5 stress:  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ , n.s.

Block 6 stress X PGD:  $\Delta R^2 = .00$ , n.s.

## Summary of findings for the effect of perceived discrimination on popularity

	Perceived Discrimination	
	Personal	Group
Direct effect	Yes	Yes (weak)
Mediation effect	Yes, fully	Yes, fully
Moderation effect	Yes	No

## General summary and conclusions

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- ❑ Perceived *personal* discrimination **mediated fully or partially** the effect of stress on school grades and popularity, over and above gender, ethnicity, and generation status...
- ❑ ...therefore, perceived *personal* discrimination can be considered as a **risk factor** for school competence of Albanian and Pontic adolescents in Greece.
- ❑ In comparison, both the direct and indirect effects of perceived *group* discrimination were less important, though significant in the case of popularity.



## General summary and conclusions

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- The findings suggest that the predicament of social discrimination is considerably more important if it is perceived as a self-threat.
- Further research is needed in order to study the prerequisites for differentiating between personal and group attributions.

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