Preliminary evidence of the impact of integration policy on citizens’ and immigrants’ perceived ethnic threats

Abstract
Scholars of migration-related studies investigate levels of perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition as indexes of how host populations evaluate inter-group relations. However, such relations and the potential conflict characterizing them are not formed through a unilateral process but a dialectical one; hence evaluation indexes of inter-group relations should take into account both groups’ migrant-related attitudes. Divergences in perceived threats and migrant-opposition between the in-group and out-group signify intense inter-group relations and the potential of an inter-group conflict; on the contrary, convergences imply moderate inter-group relations and greater integration of the out-group in the host country. The rationale of the paper is to investigate divergences and/or convergences in perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition attitudes with data from the European Social Survey Round 4 (2008/2009) within and across Greece and Sweden which represent national contexts with different integration policies (based on MIPEX) and actual competitive macro-economic conditions as developed in ethnic competition theory. Two-way ANOVAs indicate moderate inter-group relations in Sweden and intense ones in Greece implying a potential inter-group conflict in the latter. The cross-national results indicate significant divergences in perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition among the Greek in-group compared to the rest groups. Furthermore, the Greek out-group reports higher mean levels of migrant-opposition and perceived cultural and general threats than the Swedish out-group and in-group. It is recommended that whilst the results should be treated more as preliminary findings than final conclusions, the investigation of divergences and/or convergences in perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition attitudes across a greater number of countries may provide fresh insights on the evaluation of inter-group relations.

1. Introduction
Data on migrant flows in Europe has increased from 49,400,661 in 1990 to 69,819,282 in 2010 accounting for 9.5% of the European population (UN, 2009) validating that whilst the European Union has attempted to regulate migration and harmonize policies (Papagianni, 2006) an increasing number of economic or labor migrants, political asylum seekers or migrants who reunify with their family members continue to settle down in European countries. The rapid grow of migrant population in Europe has reinforced the perceptions that out-groups constitute an ethnic threat to the social, political and economic order as well as to the cultural homogeneity and the national identity of the host countries (Schlueter & Wagner, 2008; Semyonov et al., 2008; Meuleman et al., 2009). Majority populations’ (in-group) perceptions of ethnic threat are the crucial explanation of anti-immigrant sentiments that involve anti-
immigrant prejudice, migrant-opposition and ethnic exclusionism (Gijsberts et al., 2004; Coenders et al., 2005) and have been primarily investigated in the theoretical framework of ethnic competition theory which advocates that “competition, at the individual level as well as at the contextual level, may reinforce the mechanisms of social (contra-) identification, the eventual outcome of which is referred to as ethnic exclusionism” (Scheepers et al., 2002: 18).

At the individual level, the intensity of the competition for the maintenance of the dominant group’s status position, resources, prerogatives but also its culture in terms of identity and values is specified by socio-economic characteristics such as low income, low education and unemployment status (Wilkes et al., 2008; Mayda, 2006; O’Rourke & Sinnott, 2006). Socio-economically disadvantaged in-groups are more vulnerable to the competition with out-groups as they occupy similar socio-economic positions (Blalock, 1967); consequently they are more prone to higher levels of perceived ethnic threats and anti-immigrant sentiments. At the contextual level, macro components including sizable out-group populations, unfavourable economic conditions and high unemployment rates foster greater levels of perceived ethnic threats due to the fiercer competition over rare resources (Coenders et al., 2004; Semyonov et al. 2008; Schneider, 2008).

Either at an individual or a contextual level, increased inter-group competition for scarce resources gives raise to high levels of perceived ethnic threats which result in intense inter-group relations (Sherif & Sherif, 1953, 1979). Perceived ethnic threats are the subjective feelings that the in-group’s prerogatives are threatened by out-groups and hence are used as an index of how the host population evaluates inter-group relations (Meuleman, 2009). Among the most consistent findings in migrant-related studies is that ethnic threat perceptions are the core explanation of a wide set of anti-immigrant attitudes involving among others out-group opposition (Scheepers et al., 2002; Coenders et al., 2004; 2005). As past research identifies the determinant role of perceived ethnic threats on migrant-opposition attitudes, it can be assumed that both indicators act as evaluators of inter-group relations.

The formation of inter-group relations and the potential conflict that characterizes such relation is not a unilateral process but a dialectical one defined both by the in-group and the out-group. Under this perspective, whilst perceived threats and migrant-opposition attitudes have been exclusively investigated in migrant-related studies from the point of in-group’s view, they could be simultaneously investigated among
the out-group providing an evaluation of inter-group relation that takes into account both groups’ migrant-related attitudes.

Such an investigation may provide fruitful research outcomes as divergences in perceived threats and migrant-opposition between the in-group and out-group signify intense inter-group relations and the potential of an inter-group conflict in the host country. On the contrary, convergences in migrant-related attitudes imply moderate inter-group relations and greater integration of the out-group that is not perceived as a major ethnic threat to the majority population.

The levels of perceived ethnic threats and consequently the attitudes associated with migrant-opposition are directly or indirectly influenced by the integration policies adopted in different host countries (Castles 1995; Weldon 2006; Meuleman & Reeskens, 2008). Scholars examining the linkage between integration policies and perceived ethnic threats provide contradicting theses. Realistic group conflict theorists advocate that generous integration policies increase the competition between the in-group and out-group and hence enhance perceived ethnic threats by intensifying inter-group conflict (Blalock, 1967; Quillian, 1995). On the contrary, others provide evidence that inclusive policy measures that embrace migrants’ integration may have a positive impact on inter-group relations and migration-related attitudes (Castles, 1995; Castles & Davidson, 2000; Castles & Miller, 2003). For instance, Meuleman and Reeskens (2008, p.23) advocate

…that countries with more inclusive integration policies are precisely characterized by lower levels of perceived ethnic threat. More open policies thus do not necessarily have to lead to a so-called white backlash.

As past research identifies the significant role of integration policies in the formation of perceived ethnic threats, the paper’s rationale is to go one step further by examining cross-sectional and cross-national differences in divergences and/or convergences in perceptions of ethnic threats and migrant-opposition attitudes between in-groups and out-groups, as evaluation indexes of inter-group relations, in countries with inclusive and exclusive integration policies and specific macro-level economic components as developed in ethnic competition theory. At a cross-sectional level, divergences and/or convergences in perceived threats and migrant-opposition attitudes may shed light in the level of intensity of inter-group relation in each country separately; at a cross-national level they are likely to reveal differences in inter-group
relations across countries with different integration policies and actual competitive economic conditions.

This preliminary research inquiry involves the investigation of convergences and/or divergences in perceived threats and migrant-opposition attitudes in two countries, i.e., Greece and Sweden that according to the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) (Niessen, Huddleston & Citron, 2007) have adopted almost diametrically different integration policies. Furthermore, these countries appear differentiated actual macro-economic competitive conditions (such as economic conditions, unemployment rates) that, according to ethnic competition theory, are expected to have an impact on perceived ethnic threats and consequently on inter-group relations. Convergences and/or divergences in the levels of perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition attitudes derive from the fourth round (2008/2009) of the European Social Survey (ESS).

2. Ethnic competition theory, integration policies and perceived ethnic threats

Ethnic competition theory derives from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1981; 1982) and realistic group conflict theory. The former explains the unfavorable attitudes as a general disposition where in-group individuals perceive themselves as superior to out-groups. More specifically, the in-group through the mental process of social identification applies positive attributes to its members and negative ones to the individuals of different ethnic groups. Whilst the above processes may take place even when out-groups are absent, social identity theory works complementary to realistic group conflict theory in the ethnic competition framework (Scheepers et al., 2002; Coenders et al., 2004).

The main assumption developed in realistic group conflict theory is that in-group’s negative perceptions are essentially rooted in the perceived inter-group competition for scarce resources including material interests as well as issues associated with status and power (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958; Sherif, 1967; Campbell, 1965; Sherif & Sherif 1979; Quillian, 1995). There are two analytical components of inter-group competition; the actual and the perceived one (Blalock, 1967; LeVine & Campbell, 1972). The former refers to the objective conditions of competition in which inter-group relations are taking shape and are associated with the availability of scarce goods and the distribution of such goods through market mechanisms. The actual competitive conditions have an impact on in-group’s perceptions of competition,
forming subjective perceived socio-economic threats, which may in turn induce negative sentiments toward out-groups. Under this scope, actual competition has an indirect effect on anti-immigrant sentiments, via perceived competition and threat (Bobo, 1983).

Actual competitive conditions are conceptualized as contextual characteristics and have been primarily operationalized by the prevailing economic conditions of the host country and the size of the out-group population (Blalock, 1967). The former has a significant impact on the intensity of inter-group competition in cases of downward economic trend where the resources are becoming scarcer; therefore the actual competition becomes more intensified, increasing the levels of perceived ethnic threats. The contextual factor of the size of the out-group population has an impact on the intensity of inter-group competition, as the in-group feels economically and culturally threatened by sizeable out-groups (Quillian, 1995).

Actual competition may also occur at a micro level when individuals that belong to certain socio-economic groups feel that their group’s social status and privileges are threatened by out-groups holding similar positions, hence the former perceive higher levels of ethnic threats and develop hostile attitudes (Coenders, 2001; Coenders et al., 2005). More specifically, individuals of disadvantaged social groups (i.e., low income, low education and unemployment status) perceive higher levels of perceived ethnic threats as they are likely to compete for similar scarce resources, e.g., similar niches of the labour market with out-group members (Olzak, 1992).

Whilst various scholars highlight ethnic competition theory’s thesis (Scheepers et al., 2002; Coenders et al., 2004; 2005; Semyonov et al., 2008; Schneider, 2008) in the formation of perceived ethnic threats and anti-immigrant sentiments others emphasize the importance of migration-related policies (Castles, 1995; Castles & Davidson, 2000; Geddes, 2003; Weldon, 2006; Meuleman & Reeskens, 2008). The causal pathway between integration policies and migrant-related attitudes is not a unilateral process but may run in different directions (Weldon, 2006; Meuleman & Reeskens, 2008). One of these pathways advocates that policymakers take public opinion into account as they formulate migration-related policies; hence the latter become responsive to majority’s attitudes (Brooks & Manza 2006; Facchini & Mayda, 2008).

In this sense, it is likely that in countries where anti-immigrant sentiments are widespread and extreme-right wing parties are popular, policy makers are forced into
introducing more exclusionary integration policies out of the fear of losing the political support of their voters that reject more generous policies. Meanwhile, the causality pathway may run in the opposite direction, i.e., integration policies directly or indirectly shape the public opinion with respect to migration. Integration policy measures directly impact on migration-related attitudes as individuals through socialization processes internalize values and norms associated with out-group’s rights and obligations that are institutionalized in migrant-related laws (Weldon, 2006). Furthermore, the government’s policies serve as a starting point for the public discourse on integration which is mainly carried out by political parties and elites and enforced through media forming the public opinion with respect to migration (Weldon, 2006). Integration policy measures may indirectly shape migrant-related sentiments as they outline the social environment in which inter-group relations take place and hence impact on the relations and consequently on the attitudes formed between the in-group and the out-group (Castles, 1995; Castles & Davidson, 2000).

The paper adopts the later causal path, i.e., integration policies directly or indirectly shape migration-related attitudes by advocating that in countries with more inclusive integration policies and less intensified actual competitive macro-economic conditions, the levels of perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition attitudes between the in-group and the out-group, as indicators of inter-group relations, are likely to converge. On the contrary, in countries with more exclusionist integration policies and more intensified actual macro-economic competition divergences in migrant-related attitudes reflect an intense inter-group relation and a potential conflict. Furthermore, through cross-national analysis it will be investigated whether divergences and/or convergences in migration-related attitudes occur between in-groups and out-groups in contexts with different integration policies and actual competitive macro-economic conditions.

In order to examine the above hypotheses two countries were selected that according to Migrant Integration Policy Index -MIPEX (Niessen, Huddleston & Citron, 2007) have adopted almost diametrically different integration policies, i.e., Greece and Sweden. MIPEX is a cross-country index of six main policy areas of immigrants’ integration in 27 European countries plus Canada, involving “anti-discrimination”, “access to nationality”, “family reunion”, “political participation”, “labour market access”, and “long-term residence”. In the overall ranking, Sweden's integration
policies score the highest of all 28 countries, whilst Greece\(^2\) is ranked 24\(^{th}\) as none of the six areas of integration policy is favourable for promoting integration in the country. Furthermore, these countries are differentiated in actual competitive macro-economic conditions as conceptualized in ethnic competition theory. Data from Eurostat (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat) validate that the contextual economic components in Greece are less favourable than in Sweden. More specifically, during 2008 the GDP per capita expressed in purchasing power standards (PPS)\(^3\) with respect to EU-27=100 was much lower in Greece (94) than in Sweden (123). During the same year, the Greek gross debt (110.3\%) as a percentage of the GDP was much higher than in Sweden (38.2\%) and among the highest in the euro area (European Commission, 2010) indicating a downward economic trend in the former. In addition, during 2008 the harmonized unemployment rate was higher in Greece (12.9\%) than in Sweden (8.2\%).

3. Data, measurements and methods
To detect divergences and/or convergence in perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition attitudes within and across Greek and Swedish in-groups and out-groups data from the fourth round (2008/2009) of the European Social Survey (ESS) was used. ESS round 4 covers 31 countries and is designed for optimal international comparability of the data using state-of-the-art methodology that involves strict random probability sampling, a minimum target response rate of 70\% and rigorous translation protocols. The sample size in Greece is \(n=2072\). The 46.1\% of respondents are male and 53.9\% female, with a mean age of 42.8 years old. Out-group (as defined later in this section) accounted for 5.1\% (106) of the total sample (53.2\% male, 46.8\% female, mean age:35.4). The 22.3\% (24) of migrants have acquired the Greek citizenship, the rest have non-EU (79.2\%, mainly Albanian) and EU citizenships (20.8\%). The sample size in Sweden is \(n=1830\). The 50.2\% of respondents are male and 49.8\% female, with a mean age of 47.6 years old. Out-group accounted for 10.4\% (190) of the total sample (51.1\% male, 48.9\% female, mean age:48). The 66.8\% (127) of migrants have acquired the Swedish citizenship, the rest have non-EU (23.8\%) and EU citizenships (76.2\%).

The core module of the ESS contains items associated with various aspects of migration-related attitudes and perceptions of ethnic threat. The former involve attitudes expressing acceptance/opposition to migrants measured with three items
asking whether respondents prefer the host country to grant access to many/few migrants from different/same race (ethnic groups) like the host country and from poorer countries outside Europe (Table 1, questions 1,2,3). Respondents indicate their responses on four-point scales ranging from 1 (allow many) to 4 (allow none).

Table 1. ESS selected questions

1. Now, using this card, to what extent do you think [country] should allow people of the same race or ethnic group as most [country]’s people to come and live here?

2. How about people of a different race or ethnic group from most [country] people?

3. How about people from the poorer countries outside Europe?

4. Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]’s economy that people come to live here from other countries?

5. And, using this card, would you say that [country]’s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?

6. Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?

7. A lot of people who come to live in [country] from other countries pay taxes and make use of social benefits and services. On balance, do you think people who come to live in [country] receive more than they contribute or contribute more than they receive?


In order to construct an indicator conceptualizing the level of migrant acceptance/opposition, factor analysis is applied to items 1, 2 and 3 (Table 1). Because the rationale of the study is to examine differences in the level of migrant acceptance/opposition between the out-group and in-group in each country separately, as well as cross-nationally, three factor analysis are conducted, i.e., for the Greek, the Swedish and the merged dataset including data from both countries. Each factor analysis indicate a single factor accounting for 73.8% (Eigenvalue=2.2) of the total variance in the Greek dataset, 87% (Eigenvalue=2.6) of the total variance in the Swedish dataset and 84.5% (Eigenvalue=2.5) of the total variance in the merged dataset (Table 2). Reliability analysis indicate that the above factors are reliable [Cronbach $\alpha_{\text{Greek dataset}}=.91$, Cronbach $\alpha_{\text{Swedish dataset}}=.96$, Cronbach $\alpha_{\text{Merged dataset}}=.95$]. As higher scores in the factors correspond to higher opposition to out-group members, they are labeled as migrant-opposition indexes.
Table 2. Factor loadings derived from factor analysis with quartimax rotation of the Greek, Swedish and merged dataset for 3 items measuring migrant-opposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Factor 1 Greece*</th>
<th>Factor 1 Sweden*</th>
<th>Factor 1 Merged**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allow many/few immigrants of same race/ethnic group as majority</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance explained</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: * Design weight, ** Design and population weight combined.

In addition, the core ESS module contains four items asking how respondents evaluate the economic, cultural, generally ethnic (i.e., immigrants make country a worse place to live) and social benefits consequences of the out-group in the host country. These items are used as indicators of perceived ethnic threats and respondents answered on a scale from 0 to 10 with lower values indicating higher levels of perceived threats (Table 1, questions 4, 5, 6 and 7). In the analysis the values were inversed so as higher values to indicate higher levels of perceived threats.

The ESS questionnaire contains a question asking the respondents to describe their feelings about their household’s income nowadays providing a 4-item scale (1=Living comfortably on present income, 2= Coping on present income, 3=Finding it difficult on present income, 4=Finding it very difficult on present income) which was recoded into two broader categories (1=Living comfortably or coping on present income, 2= Finding it difficult or very difficult on present income). Reliability analysis show that the recoded variable is reliable for each of the datasets applied [Cronbach $\alpha_{\text{Greek dataset}}=.85$, Cronbach $\alpha_{\text{Swedish dataset}}=.70$, Cronbach $\alpha_{\text{Merged dataset}}=.80$]. The variable is labelled “respondent’s subjective financial condition” and is used to detect whether more economically vulnerable individuals, as developed in ethnic competition theory, are more likely to express higher levels of perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition.

The conceptualization and operationalization of the out-group, namely immigrants, is not a straightforward issue. In the bulk of migrant-related studies the out-group
population is equated with the foreign-citizens; however immigrants in the strict sense of first generation immigrants are foreign-born individuals who at some stage in their lives have migrated into a host country (Schneider, 2008). There are substantial differences between the conceptualization and operationalization of immigrants as foreign-citizens and as foreign-born individuals, since the latter may acquire through naturalization processes the citizenship and nationality\textsuperscript{4} of the host country (Dumont & Lemaître, 2005).

The different naturalization processes adopted in countries has a significant impact on the number of foreign-citizens, hence cross-national studies employing such definitions are likely to result in inaccuracies and lack of comparability with respect to migration-related attitudes and threats. As Schneider (2008, p. 56) emphasizes “This problem is even worse for using non-EU citizenship as a criterion, as people from non-EU countries gain the most from naturalization”. According to MIPEX\textsuperscript{5} (Niessen, Huddleston & Citron, 2007) but also Dumont and Lemaître’s (2005) study, Greece and Sweden have adopted different naturalization processes, as in the latter citizenship acquisition is easier and more common than in Greece. This is also verified from ESS round 4 data as 66.8% (127) of foreign-born individuals in Sweden have acquired the country’s citizenship compared to 22.3% (24) in Greece. In order to avoid inconsistencies associated with differences in the naturalization procedures adopted in the countries under study, out-group members are not defined with the commonly applied definition of foreign (non-EU) citizens but as foreign-born ones.

4. Statistics

Factor Analyses have been applied to construct the indicators conceptualizing migrant-opposition in each country separately and the two countries together (merged dataset). Two-way ANOVAs are conducted to examine the effects of respondents’ status (i.e., in-group/out-group member), subjective financial condition and their interaction effect in migrant-opposition, perceived threats in economic, cultural, ethnic and social benefits issues in Greece, Sweden and cross-nationally. Multiple comparisons in cross-national analysis are conducted with Tukey’s HSD post hoc test when the homogeneity of variances assumption is confirmed and with Games Howell post hoc test when the specific assumption is violated. In the cross-sectional analysis the design weight (provided with the ESS round 4) is applied to account for different selection probabilities of individuals in Greece and Sweden. In the cross-national
analysis the design weight is combined with the population weight, so that the results
do not depend on the population or sample sizes of the two countries under study.
Statistically significant levels are reported for p values less than or equal to .05. The
analyses are performed with SPSS 18.0.

5. Results
Differences in migrant-opposition between the Greek in-group and out-group and
respondents living in more and less favourable financial conditions are detected with
two-way ANOVA providing evidence of a non-significant interaction effect of the
two independent variables [F(1,2035)=.038, p>.05)] and a non-significant main effect
of respondents’ subjective financial conditions [F(1,2035)=.437,p>.05)] (Table 3).
However, the analysis shows a significant main effect of respondents’ status (i.e., in-
group/out-group member) [F(1,2035)=45.97,p≤.001)] indicating that controlling for
respondents’ subjective financial conditions, migrant-opposition is significantly
higher among the Greek in-group members (M=.06,SE=.02) than out-group ones
(M=-.85,SE=.13).

Using as dependent variables the economic, cultural, generally ethnic and social
benefits threats the main effects of Greek respondents’ subjective financial conditions
are non-significant, meanwhile the main effects of respondents’ status and their
interaction with respondents’ subjective financial conditions are significant ones
(Table 3). Main effects indicate that the Greek in-group reports significantly higher
mean levels of the above perceived threats than the out-group (p≤.001). In order to
detect differences in economic, cultural, generally ethnic and social benefits threats in
different levels of subjective financial conditions in the Greek in-group and out-group
simple effects analysis are conducted. The results indicate that Greek in-group
members living in comfortable financial conditions report significantly (p≤.001)
lower mean scores (M=6.42,SE=.07) of perceived economic threats than the ones in
less favourable ones (M=6.85,SE=.07). On the contrary, higher levels (p≤.05) of
perceived economic threat are reported among out-group members living more
conformably (M=4.63,SE=.5) than those in more stringent financial conditions
(M=3.40,SE=.2). Moreover, Greek in-group members living financially comfortable
report significantly (p≤.001) lower mean scores (M=6.54,SE=.07) of perceived
cultural threats than those living in less favourable economic conditions
(M=6.96,SE=.07). Non-significant differences are detected among out-group
members living in different levels of financial situation with respect to perceived cultural threats.

Furthermore, Greek in-group members living in favourable financial conditions report significantly (p≤.001) lower mean scores (M=6.7,SE=.07) in the perception that “immigrants make a worse place to live” (“general threats”) than those living in more stringent economic conditions (M=7.18,SE=.07). Non-significant differences are detected among out-group members living in different levels of financial conditions with respect to the specific threat. Finally, non-significant differences are detected among the Greek in-group members living in different financial conditions with respect to their perceptions of threats to social benefits; on the contrary out-group

Table 3. Respondents’ status and subjective financial condition differences in migrant-opposition and perceived ethnic threats in Sweden, Greece and the two countries together

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greece¹</th>
<th>Sweden¹</th>
<th>Merged dataset of Sweden and Greece²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Square</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mean Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant-opposition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS * SFS</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of economic threats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
<td>411.71</td>
<td>8.08*</td>
<td>633.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS</td>
<td>9.49</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS * SFS</td>
<td>41.33</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>16.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of cultural threats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IO</td>
<td>495.78</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>1835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>3.045E-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS * SFS</td>
<td>21.15</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>8.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of general threats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
<td>293.59</td>
<td>8.54*</td>
<td>1322.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS * SFS</td>
<td>28.87</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>10.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of benefits threats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS</td>
<td>427.23</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>177.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS</td>
<td>14.26</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>7.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS * SFS</td>
<td>24.90</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>8.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: RS: Respondents’ status: in-group/out-group for cross-sectional analysis, Greek/Swedish in-group/out-group for cross-national analysis, SFS: Respondents’ Subjective Financial Condition. 1: Data weighted by design weight, 2:Data weighted by design and population weight. *p≤.05, **p≤.01, ***p≤.001.
members living comfortably report significantly higher mean scores (M=4.00, SE=.49) in perceived threats to social benefits than those living less comfortably (M=2.86, SE=.23).

With respect to the Swedish dataset, the two-way ANOVA analysis indicate that using as dependent variables migrant-opposition, economic, cultural, generally ethnic and social benefits threats the main effects of Swedish respondents’ subjective financial conditions and their interaction with respondents’ status are non-significant, meanwhile some of the main effects of respondents’ status are found to be significant (Table 3). The results indicate that controlling for Swedish respondents’ subjective financial conditions, perceived economic threats \([F(1, 1754)= 8.09, p \leq .05]\) and general ethnic threats \([F(1,1754)=8.54,p\leq .05]\) are significantly higher among the Swedish in-group members than the out-group ones. On the contrary, non-significant differences are found between the Swedish in-group and out-group with respect to migrant-opposition \([F(1,1780)=.036,p>.05]\), to perceived cultural threats \([F(1,1783)=.97,p>.05]\) and social benefits threats \([F(1,1685)=3.1,p>.05]\).

The cross-national comparisons in migrant-opposition and the perceived threats under study across the Greek and the Swedish in-groups and out-groups show that using as dependent variable the perceived economic threats the main effect of respondents’ financial position is non-significant \([F(1,3819)=.25,p>.05]\). Meanwhile, the main effect of respondents’ status (i.e., Greek in-group/out-group, Swedish in-group/out-group) \([F(3,3819)=124.32,p\leq.001]\) and the interaction of the independent variables are significant for the level of perceived economic threat \([F(3, 3819)=3.19, p\leq.05]\) (Table 3). The simple effects analysis shows that Greek in-group living either in unfavourable \((p\leq.01)\) or favourable \((p\leq.01)\) economic conditions report significantly higher mean scores of economic threat than the rest groups. Non-significant differences in perceived economic threats are reported between the Swedish in-group living in comfortable economic conditions compared to the Greek \((p>.05)\) and Swedish out-groups \((p>.05)\) living in similar financial conditions. Furthermore, Greek and Swedish out-groups living either in unfavourable \((p>.05)\) or favourable \((p>.05)\) economic conditions appear similar mean levels of perceived economic threat. Finally perceived economic threat is significantly higher among the Swedish in-group stating that they live difficult or very difficult on the present income \((p\leq.001)\) compared to the Greek out-group living in similar financial conditions (Graph 1).
The results of the two-way ANOVAs analyses show that using as dependent variables migrant-opposition, cultural, generally ethnic and social benefits threats the main effects of respondents’ subjective financial conditions and the interaction effects of the independent variables are non-significant, whilst the main effects of respondents’ status are significant (Table 3). Independently from respondents’ subjective financial conditions significant differences are detected in the mean scores of migrant-opposition between Greek and Swedish in-groups and out-groups \([F(3,3810)=417.28, p \leq .001]\). As the homogeneity of variances assumption is confirmed ([\(F(7,3810)=1.64, p > .05\)]) Tukey’s HSD multiple comparison post hoc test is applied indicating that the mean score of migrant-opposition is significantly \((p \leq .001)\) higher among the Greek in-group (M= .63,SE=.02) compared to the Swedish in-group (M= .66,SE=.03) and the Greek (M= -.09,SE=.09) and Swedish out-groups (M= -.68,SE=.08). Furthermore, significant differences \((p \leq .001)\) are detected in the mean score of migrant-opposition between the Swedish in-group and out-group and the Greek out-group with the latter reporting higher levels of migrant-opposition. However, non-significant differences \((p > .05)\) are detected between the Swedish in-group and out-group with respect to the mean score of immigrant-opposition.

In addition, controlling for respondents’ subjective financial conditions significant differences \([F(3,3840)=352.42, p \leq .001]\) are detected in the mean scores of perceived cultural threat between Greek and Swedish in-groups and out-groups. Since the
The homogeneity of variances assumption is violated ([F(7,3840)=11.20,p≤.001] the Games Howell post hoc test is used providing evidence that the Greek in-group (M=6.7, SE=.05) reports significantly higher mean scores (p≤.001) of perceived cultural threats than the Swedish in-group (M=3.00,SE=.06) and the Greek (M=3.75, SE=.23) and Swedish out-groups (M=2.95,SE=.16). Non-significant differences are detected for perceived cultural threats between Swedish out-groups and in-groups (p>.05), however the latter report significantly lower mean scores than the Greek in-group (p≤.001) and out-group (p≤.05). It should be noted that perceived cultural threat is significantly higher (p≤.05) among the Greek out-group than the Swedish one.

Furthermore, independently from respondents’ subjective financial conditions significant differences [F(3,3836)=281.40,p≤.001)] are found in the mean scores of perceived general threat (i.e., immigrants make a worse place to live) between Greek and Swedish in-groups and out-groups. As the homogeneity assumption is violated ([F (7,3836)=7.20,p≤.001)] the Games Howell post hoc test indicate that the Greek in-group (M=6.9,SE=.05) reports significantly higher mean scores (p≤.001) of perceived general ethnic threats than the Swedish in-group (M=3.85,SE=.05) the Greek (M=4.44,SE=.22) and Swedish out-groups (M=3.31,SE=.16). Swedish in-group reports significantly higher mean scores of perceived general ethnic threat than the Swedish out-group (p≤.001) but lower than the Greek out-group (p≤.05). Once more, Greek immigrants report significantly (p≤.001) higher mean scores of perceived cultural threat than the Swedish ones.

Finally, significant differences [F(3,3700)=45.43,p≤.001)] are detected in the mean scores of social benefits and services threats between Greek and Swedish in-groups and out-groups. Since, the homogeneity assumption is violated ([F(7,3700)=14.5,p≤.001)] the Games Howell post hoc test show that the Greek in-group (M=6.05,SE=.04) reports significantly higher mean scores (p≤.001) of perceived threat associated with social benefits than the Swedish in-group (M=5.45,SE=.05) and the Greek (M=3.19, SE=.19) and Swedish out-groups (M=5.25,SE=.15). Non-significant differences are detected between the Swedish in-group and out-group (p>.05), however the latter reports significantly higher mean scores in perceived threats associated with social benefits than the Greek out-group (p≤.001).
6. Discussion

The findings of the study provide some evidence that integration policies applied in contexts with specific actual competitive macro-economic conditions are likely to have an impact on inter-group relations as captured through divergences and/or convergences in perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition attitudes between in-groups and out-groups. The inclusive integration policies adopted in Sweden in combination with the less intensified actual competitive macro-economic conditions in the country result in the convergence of the levels of migrant-opposition, perceived cultural and social benefits threats between the Swedish in-group and out-group independently from respondents’ subjective financial living conditions. Meanwhile, the former reports significantly higher mean scores in perceived economic and general ethnic threats (i.e., perceptions that immigrants make country a worse place to live) than the latter. Whilst, not all the perceived threats under study significantly converge among the majority and minority group, these findings signify moderate inter-group relations as structured through inclusive integration policies and macro-level economic conditions. The impact of the Swedish generous integration policy on majority population’s perceived ethnic threats has been verified in previous studies reporting that in contrast to what realistic group conflict theory advocates, inclusive integration policies result in lower levels of perceived threats (Meuleman & Reeskens, 2008). Furthermore, macro-level actual competitive economic indicators verify that whilst Sweden experienced a sharp recession during 2008-2009, is among with other countries (Germany and Norway) the least affected from the economic crisis that has severely hit most of the member states (Collett, 2011). Despite experiencing economic slowdown during 2008-2009, the Swedish Government’s main goal has been an integration policy characterized by equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all regardless of ethnic or cultural background. This goal has been accomplished through an increase in integration policy investment targeting mainly to improve access to the labor market for new immigrants (Collett, 2011). Such an increase in integration policy investment in Sweden during a period of general austerity in Europe reflects the centralized collectivist corporatist attributes (corporatist welfare state) of the country associated with the policies programs and legislations enacted by the welfare state to promote out-group integration (Soysal, 1994). It seems that the institutional environment in Sweden involving inclusive integration policies either enacted by its own or through the welfare state set the stage of moderate inter-group
relations (Escandell & Ceobanu, 2009) as captured through convergences in migrant-opposition attitudes or perceived cultural and social benefits threats. In contrast to the findings associated with less intensified Swedish inter-group relations, migrant-opposition and all the perceived ethnic threats under study significantly diverge between the Greek in-group and out-group. Mean levels of migrant-opposition is higher among the former regardless of micro-level economic living conditions. Furthermore, all perceived ethnic threats are significantly higher among the Greek in-group than out-group, whilst these are differentiated for levels of respondents’ subjective economic living conditions. Providing support to ethnic competition theory, Greek in-group members living in more stringent financial conditions report significantly higher mean levels of perceived economic, cultural and general ethnic (i.e., immigrants make a worse place to live) threats than those in more favourable financial conditions. The reported divergences in perceived threats between the Greek in-group and out-group imply an intense inter-group relation and a potential conflict that is formed, in line with ethnic competition theory’s assumptions, through individual-level actual competitive conditions over scarce resources between individuals belonging to socio-economically disadvantaged social groups.

Some scholars advocate that migration inevitably causes inter-group conflict as group contact is intrinsically associated with inter-group competition (Park, 1937), whilst others suggest that only under certain conditions (such as competition to limited goods, unequal distribution of resources, ethnic and cultural policy based on ethnic/cultural superiority or inferiority) will migration result in intensive inter-group relations (Yang et al., 2004). It seems that in Greece the bulk of these macro and micro-level actual competitive and policy conditions are taking place resulting in intense inter-group relations. The economic crisis during the last years in Europe has severely hit Greece that has resorted to bailouts to rescue its economy (Collett, 2011). The austerity on government’s budgets and the rising unemployment rates has increased the macro and micro-level actual competitive conditions and consequently the perceived ethnic threats among the host population by intensifying inter-group relations. The unfavourable financial situation of the Greek economy is combined with an exclusionist integration policy as verified by MIPEX (Niessen, Huddleston & Citron, 2007). Detailed reports support that out-group’s rights and integration in the Greek society become marginal, as their legal status remains insecure even after 5 or
10 years of residence in the country, depending on their employment status proven by their welfare contributions (Triandafyllidou & Maroufof, 2009).

The cross-national comparisons between the in-groups and out-groups in the two countries under study provide evidence that the Greek out-group members independently from their subjective financial living conditions report higher mean levels of migrant-opposition and perceived economic, cultural, general ethnic and social benefits threats than the rest groups. Perceived ethnic threats are widespread both among the Greek in-group and out-group whilst the latter reports higher mean levels of migrant-opposition and perceived cultural and general threats not only than the Swedish out-group but also than the in-group.

It seems that the exclusionist integration policy in combination with the stringent macro-level economic conditions in Greece not only intensify inter-group relations but also increase the level of out-group’s opposition and perceived threats. These findings reflect out-group’s fears that new comers may become competitors in the labour market and ethnic niches (Zimmermann et al., 2007) and hence intensify even further the conflict with the Greek in-group. Furthermore, out-group’s migrant-opposition and increased perceived threats are not only associated with the increase in competition in the labour market per se but with their stay in Greece which is renewed through their employment status proven by their welfare contributions (Triandafyllidou & Maroufof, 2009).

Whilst the Greek out-group reports significantly higher mean levels of migrant-opposition, cultural and generally ethnic perceived threats than the Swedish out-group; the latter perceive greater threats with respect to social benefits. It is likely that the Swedish out-group members feel threatened by the fact that an increasing number of immigrants may negatively affect the generosity of the Swedish public spending programs enacted by the welfare state to promote migrants’ integration (Escandell & Ceobanu, 2009; Collett, 2011).

The main rationale of the paper was to provide evidence of inter-group relations and potential conflicts as captured through divergences and convergences in perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition attitudes between out-groups and in-groups within and across diverse socio-economic and integration policy settings. Whilst ESS data provide a unique opportunity to examine such a preliminary research enquiry, this approach methodologically suffers from lack of representativeness and appropriateness of the out-groups’ sample sizes within and across the countries under
study; however such datasets are not available on a cross-national level. Furthermore, the study employs two diametrically different countries in terms of actual competitive macro-economic conditions and integration policies to investigate inter-group relations; though it is not very clear whether cross-national comparisons between countries with less distinct macro-level characteristics will result in similar conclusions.

Nevertheless, the results should be treated more as preliminary findings than final conclusions and divergences/convergences in perceived ethnic threats and migrant-opposition should be further investigated across a greater number of countries providing fresh insights on the evaluation of inter-group relations.

Notes
1. For instance, Tajfel (1981) explained the prevalence of anti-Semitism even when the Jewish out-group was absent in the social environment of the in-group.
2. Greece does not systematically collect data on its third-country nationals or flows of irregular migrants. Questions have been raised over whether integration efforts on paper are matched by implementation (Niessen, Huddleston & Citron, 2007).
3. Gross domestic product (GDP) is a measure for the economic activity. It is defined as the value of all goods and services produced less the value of any goods or services used in their creation. The volume index of GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) is expressed in relation to the European Union (EU-27) average set to equal 100. If the index of a country is higher than 100, this country's level of GDP per head is higher than the EU average and vice versa. Basic figures are expressed in PPS, i.e. a common currency that eliminates the differences in price levels between countries allowing meaningful volume comparisons of GDP between countries. Please note that the index, calculated from PPS figures and expressed with respect to EU27=100, is intended for cross-country comparisons rather than for temporal comparisons.
4. Although “nationality” and “citizenship” are similar concepts there are some distinctive differences between them, as the former is used in countries where citizenship at birth is based on that of the parents (jus sanguinis), whereas the latter is applied in countries where citizenship is granted to persons born in the country (jus soli). Both the Greek and the Swedish nationality laws are based on the principle of jus sanguinis, i.e., the automatic acquisition of parents’ citizenship at birth, irrespective of where a child is born.
5. Sweden’s MIPEX II score in the policy area of “access to nationality” is the highest of the 28 participating countries, on the contrary Greece scores second worst. Specifically the eligibility for citizenship acquisition score for Sweden is 50% and for Greece 25%. In the latter, citizenship acquisition is more difficult as migrants must have lived in Greece for ten of the previous twelve years and their descendants face additional requirements to naturalise. On the contrary, in Sweden first-generation immigrants must wait five years until they apply for citizenship; however Nordic citizens can apply after only two years (Niessen, Huddleston & Citron, 2007).
6. However, Park (1937) also suggested that the conflict will lead to some degree of accommodation and eventual assimilation.
References


