Deprovincialization: Its Importance for Plural Societies

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Deprovincialization is a set of attitudes characterized by two sides: a nuanced and fresh perspective on the in-group culture and an open and accepting attitude toward other groups. After reviewing early research and indirect tests of the construct, we focused our attention on research investigating these two sides of deprovincialization. Studies conducted in various countries demonstrate that deprovincialization as in-group cultural nuance is a strong and reliable correlate of reduced prejudice and improved intergroup relations; moreover, it is distinct from both national identification and cultural relativism. Studies conducted in Italy show that deprovincialization as openness toward other groups is related to positive intergroup contact and intergroup harmony and has longitudinal negative effects on prejudice. Importantly, in both lines of research the beneficial role of deprovincialization goes beyond the effects of constructs such as social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, nationalism, and demographic variables. We conclude by proposing suggestions for future research

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and highlighting relevant issues to be considered in policy development and implementation.

"We believe that the potential power of deprovincialization is remarkably understudied and underappreciated, particularly when considering related constructs, such as openness to experience" (Hodson et al., 2018, p. 531).

Research demonstrates that diversifying experiences enhance cognitive flexibility (Ritter et al., 2012), that living abroad (not simply traveling abroad) consistently relates to greater creativity (Leung et al., 2008; Maddux & Galinsky, 2009; Maddux et al., 2010), and that periods of immigration in Japan have been followed by sharp rises in cultural achievement in Japanese society (Simonton, 1997).

There are many forms of diverse experiences—from changing jobs to moving residence. Virtually all of them, however, involve being thrust out of old patterns of thought and life into new patterns. When these new experiences involve other groups and cultures, people are aroused out of their narrow provincialism or cultural ignorance—a process that leads to *deprovincialism* (Pettigrew, 2010).

The potential power of deprovincialization is underestimated in the existing literature (see quote) and in this article we discuss the nature of deprovincialism and its importance for intergroup relations in our increasingly diverse societies. First, it focuses on deprovincialization as a psychological construct and how it differs from related concepts. Second, it discusses early, indirect tests of the deprovincialization construct. Subsequently, we focus on two direct operationalizations of deprovincialization that tap into two interconnected facets of deprovincialization. Empirically, supporting evidence is presented from studies conducted in such countries as Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States. After identifying possible directions for future research, our analysis culminates in a discussion of policy recommendations and implications, and possible limitations or barriers that policy makers might face when trying to stimulate deprovincialization.

Deprovincialization

Provincialism refers to being centered in one's own small world. The term developed to describe those who live in the provinces and view the world from the perspective of their community and are largely oblivious to the ways of the broader, outside world. Deprovincialization, then, means diminished provincialism and removing provincial blinders. Deprovincialized individuals have two interconnected sets of attitudes, as two sides of the same coin (Pettigrew, 2010). They have developed a more nuanced and fresh perspective on their in-group culture by recognizing that their group's norms, customs, and lifestyles are not the only ways to manage the social world successfully. And they have developed a

broader perspective on other cultures that individualizes and "humanizes" out-group members.

Deprovincialization allows one to respect, even admire, other peoples and cultures while looking at your own group in a new and more complex way. The late U.S. Supreme Court's Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg provides a pertinent example (Pettigrew, 2021). While a law student, she became especially interested in civil procedure—which, among other functions, determines which cases get heard in court. Then she had the opportunity to study in Sweden and learn about that country's civil procedure. "Reading and observing another system," she later commented, "made me understand my own system so much better" (Biskupic, 2020).

Research has shown that Ginsberg's experience is not exceptional. We have noted that living abroad has been found to be positively related to creativity generally (Leung et al., 2008; Maddox & Galinsky, 2009; Maddox, et al., 2010). Other studies show that multicultural experience effects on reducing out-group stereotypes and prejudice can be fully mediated by a reduction in the need for cognitive closure—so-called "epistemic unfreezing" (Tadmore et al., 2012). These effects can be fully mediated by increases in openness to new experiences (Sparkman et al., 2017). Thus, similar to cultural humility (Hook et al., 2013) and intellectual humility (Hook et al., 2017), deprovincialization implies an openness to see things from different perspectives that have been found to be associated with social tolerance (Eller & Abrams, 2004; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013; Tausch et al., 2010).

Early Research and Indirect Tests

Provincialism develops from group separation, from insular life in highly segregated communities; and provincial people are more easily threatened by new and strange experiences. Thus, a major means of weakening provincialism is by breaking out from the in-group cocoon, as with intergroup contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011). Indeed, the term deprovincialization was coined to help to explain an interesting and unexpected finding in research on intergroup contact and prejudice. A series of surveys conducted in 1988 analyzed the self-reports of respondents in seven national probability samples of France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and then-West Germany (Pettigrew, 1997). They revealed that having out-group friends related to higher favorability ratings for out-groups in general—even groups that barely exist in the nation (e.g., Turks in France, West Indians in Germany). So, the possibility that these Europeans had had prior contact with these out-groups was remote. In other words, increased acceptance of one immigrant group through cross-group friendship generalized to increased acceptance of other out-groups with whom there had been no contact—the so-called *secondary transfer effect* (Pettigrew, 2009). These results emerged even after the

application of such pertinent control variables as political conservatism, national pride, urbanism, education, and age. Later studies have repeatedly replicated this surprising result (Pettigrew, 2021).

Intergroup contact not only reduces out-group prejudice (both explicit and implicit), but it can also lead to many other effects that appear to undergird deprovincialization (Pettigrew, 2021). For example, using multilevel regression analyses with 136 Swiss districts, Green et al. (2018) showed that at the personal level encounters with immigrants related to a reappraisal of national in-group boundaries by attenuating ethnic exclusionary views of nationhood. Further, optimal cross-group contact can induce enhanced intergroup trust and can even lead to forgiveness for past out-group transgressions in Northern Ireland (Hewstone et al., 2006). Intergroup contact also has the power to reduce intergroup anxiety and both individual and collective intergroup threat. This lessened threat in turn leads to greater intergroup contact in the future. All these effects—reappraisal of group boundaries, greater trust, forgiveness, future intergroup contact, and less anxiety and threat—suggest a deprovincialized worldview.

In another line of support, both American and British research provide further indirect evidence for the role of provincialism in right-wing voting. Trump's White supporters in 2016 experienced far less contact with minorities than other White Americans. Rothwell and Diego-Rosell (2016, p. 14) discovered that "…the racial and ethnic isolation of Whites at the [postal] zip-code level is one of the strongest predictors of Trump's (2016) support." This finding remains true for both non-Hispanic Whites in general and the subset of White Republicans. This lack of intergroup contact among Trump voters emerges while controlling for dozens of other variables. Consistent with this finding, these researchers also found that Trump's (2016) support *increased* as an area's distance from the Mexican border increased. In short, the less the opportunity to meet Mexicans, the *greater* the Trump support.

Similar findings emerged in research on the U.K. Brexit vote. The limited extent of voters' social networks and their propensity not to travel beyond their hometown had stronger effects than income in shaping their nationalistic, anti-immigrant support for leaving the European Union. If they had no intergroup friends and rarely traveled—in other words, remained provincial—British voters were far more likely to vote for Brexit. And those who had spent time with a foreigner were 15% less likely to have voted to leave the E.U. (Maguire, 2016), and positive intergroup contact predicted voting against leaving (Meleady et al., 2017).

Early indirect evidence for deprovincialization also comes from research on national identification and work on cross-cutting categories. First, some studies have inferred the deprovincialization process by (reverse-scored) in-group identification, whereby lower identification is taken to indicate higher deprovincialization. However, this provides "at best a crude test" (Pettigrew, 2009, p. 59)

because deprovincialization does not have to imply emotional distancing from the in-group (that follows). Further, low in-group identification can have different reasons and meanings and does not necessarily imply a deprovincial widening of social perceptions and in-group reappraisal (Verkuyten, 2018).

Second, Brewer (2008) has argued that the deprovincialization process necessarily involves greater cognitive complexity in how we view groups and identities. Expanding on an insight made years ago by the German sociologist Georg Simmel (1955), she emphasizes that modern societies produce cross-cutting categories. Two people may be both college graduates and Roman Catholics, but one is a young female and the other an elderly male. So, they share two group memberships (education and religion) but not the other two (age and gender). Consequently, some people come to exhibit deprovincialization by recognizing their cross-cutting memberships and begin to think differently about any one category they feel to belong to.

However, similar to low in-group identification, high identity complexity can have different reasons and meanings and can take different forms (Verkuyten, 2018).

The various strands of early research on the construct of deprovincialization were promising but also yielded mixed results (Lolliot et al., 2013) and obscured the subtle nuances of the concept. What was needed were survey tests with scales designed to measure the concept directly. Recent research has developed two different types of survey questions each tapping into one of the key aspects of deprovincialization: in-group reappraisal and out-group openness. Thus, one test focuses on a culturally nuanced perspective that regards the in-group's traditions, norms, and values as just one particular way to deal with the social world and is measured with the *Group Deprovincialization Scale* (GDS; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013). The other one considers views held of other peoples and cultures and is measured with the *Cultural Deprovincialization Scale* (CDS; Boin et al., 2021).

Deprovincialization as in-Group Cultural Nuance

The anthropological concept of ethnocentrism indicates that people consider their own way of life as natural and correct, and employ their own culture as the standard frame of reference in order to view the world and judge other cultures (Schulz & Lavenda, 2009). The opposite of ethnocentrism is a less parochial, or in-group centric, worldview in which one's taken-for-granted cultural standards are put into perspective. Deprovincialization as in-group nuance denotes a constructive reappraisal of the in-group and its cultural traditions and ways of life. It involves a focus on how "we" understand ourselves whereby in-group traditions, norms and values are not considered to be the only way to deal with the world.

This reappraisal need not cause people to view their own group and culture less positively—just differently.

In the Netherlands, Germany and the United States, a short and reliable 4-item (GDS) measure of this understanding of deprovincialization has been used in various large-scale survey studies with national probability samples (e.g., Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013), for example, "One should always try to adopt a broader cultural perspective than only the perspective of one's own culture" (7-point disagree–agree response scale).

The construct validity of this measure has been demonstrated with positive correlations with cognitive flexibility and openness to new experience and to see things from various perspectives (Cardenas & Verkuyten, 2021; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013; Mepham & Martinovic, 2018) as well as less ethnic boundary drawing and a more inclusive and civic understanding of the national community (Green et al., 2018; Verkuyten, et al., 2014, 2016), a stronger supraordinate European identification (Cardenas & Verkuyten, 2021), and negative associations with social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, dogmatism, ethnic nationhood, the belief that the own society is superior to others, and primo-occupancy beliefs[1] (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013; Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2016; Verkuyten et al., 2016).

Further construct validity is demonstrated by this measure of deprovincialization being *positively* associated with multilingualism (Mepham & Martinovic, 2018), second language usage (Cardenas & Verkuyten, 2021), educational level and left-wing political orientation (Verkuyten et al., 2016). Additionally, having lived abroad for at least a month is associated with higher deprovincialization among Dutch and German participants. Living abroad is also associated with higher out-group tolerance and mediation analysis suggests that this association is due to higher deprovincialization (Verkuyten, 2021).

These multiple findings indicate that deprovincialization as cultural in-group nuance is a meaningful construct that can be reliably measured among both majority and minority group members (Verkuyten et al., 2016). The construct's importance is further shown by its *negative* independent association with out-group prejudice after controls for various psychological constructs, political orientation, level of education, gender, age, and religion. Additionally, people with higher levels of deprovincialization more often recognize the discrimination of immigrants and protest against it (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2015).

Furthermore, because deprovincialization implies a nuanced perspective on one's own culture, it should be associated with stronger endorsement of cultural diversity beliefs and higher acceptance of the cultural rights of immigrants and minorities. In various Dutch national surveys, deprovincialization is

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[1] "Primo-occupancy beliefs" hold that a given area or nation belongs to the original inhabitants who are therefore entitled to cultural dominance to which newcomers must adjust.

indeed associated with the endorsement of multiculturalism and interculturalism (e.g., Verkuyten et al., 2020; Verkuyten, et al., 2010) and a relatively strong predictor of support for immigrant rights even after multiple controls (e.g., Verkuyten, Martinovic, & Smeekes, 2014). A small meta-analysis establishes these robust associations with immigrant rights (Velthuis, et al., 2020; Verkuyten et al., 2016).

Additionally, in large national surveys in the Netherlands and Germany, deprovincialization was found to be a relatively strong independent predictor of tolerance of Muslim minority practices (Verkuyten, 2021). Majority members who had a more nuanced perspective on their in-group culture were more tolerant of, for example, the building of Mosques, Islamic primary schools, and religious clothing (headscarf), even if they were not positive about these practices per se.

Distinct from National Identification

Deprovincialization as in-group cultural nuance does not have to imply emotional distancing from the in-group. People can adopt a less provincial perspective and reappraise the in-group culture without having to have lower in-group identification. For example, national identification can consist of constructive or critical patriotism that implies a sense of in-group belonging and commitment. Different studies have found that national identification and out-group acceptance do not have to be incompatible and that their association becomes more positive if the statistical analysis controls for nationalism or for collective narcissist beliefs about the exceptionality of the national in-group that is not sufficiently recognized by others (Golec de Zavala et al., 2020).

In a large-scale Dutch and German study (Verkuyten, 2021), national identification was not associated with deprovincialization, but this association became significantly positive once collective narcissism was controlled. Hence, national identification goes together with deprovincialization after statistically removing the positive overlap between identification and collective narcissism—thus taking concerns about the external recognition of in-group exceptionality into account.

National identification minus its overlap with collective narcissism can be interpreted as a secure and positive sense of national belonging that does not depend on external recognition and forms a confident basis for being constructively critical toward one's own culture (Phinney et al., 2007). Psychologically, national identification can either be more defensive and contingent upon external approval, or be more stable and secure due to identity exploration and thereby forming a confident basis for a nuanced in-group perspective and greater openness to other groups (Phinney et al., 2007; Spiegler et al., 2021). In his classic book on *The Nature of Prejudice*, Allport (1954) foresaw that positive in-group attachment can be beneficial for out-group tolerance. A secure sense of in-group belonging can

form the psychological basis for being more critical about one's own culture and developing a more open attitude toward others.

Controlling for collective narcissism, research has found a positive association between national identification and out-group tolerance (Verkuyten et al., 2021), and this association is partly mediated by deprovincialization (Verkuyten, 2021). Further, experimental research in Germany has found that engaging in national identity exploration leads high identifiers to endorse deprovincialization more strongly, which in turn is associated with more positive attitudes toward immigrants (Spiegler et al., 2021, Study 3).

Distinctive of Cultural Relativism

Adopting a broader cultural horizon and not taking the in-group values and beliefs as the self-evident, absolute standards for evaluating the world does not imply a completely relativistic view on one's own culture (Kim & Wreen, 2003) and that people do not value the cultural continuity of one's in-group. Recall the famous quote of Mahatma Gandhi: "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any" (Gandhi, 2008, p. 241). Thus, deprovincialization as constructive in-group reappraisal is not the same as a cultural relativist "anything goes approach" with its inability to evaluate different cultural practices and to condemn conduct that is considered morally intolerable (e.g., child marriage, gender inequality, human sacrifice).

Two large-scale studies in Germany and the Netherlands examined the distinctiveness between deprovincialization and cultural relativism (e.g., "You can only properly assess the norms and values of another culture from that culture itself"; "You cannot say that one culture is better than another"; Estrada & Verkuyten, 2021). Confirmatory factor analysis found both constructs to be positively correlated but empirically distinct: a two-factor measurement model fitted the data significantly better than a one-factor model that included all items.

Further, in a multiple regression analysis deprovincialization was a significantly positive predictor of out-group acceptance while cultural relativism was not independently associated with acceptance. Additionally, deprovincialization was found to be positively associated with deontological morality as the belief that there are nonrelativist, absolute standards of right and wrong that apply to all people equally, no matter who they are or what their cultural background is. And while stronger endorsement of deprovincialization was associated with more positive feelings toward Muslim minorities and stronger endorsement of Muslim minority rights, it was not (the Netherlands) or negatively (Germany) associated with the acceptance of perceived illiberal practices of gender inequality and authoritarian child raising within some Muslim minorities.

These perceived illiberal practices challenge and undermine the continuity of the liberal in-group culture. Even for more deprovincialized individuals, who hold positive attitudes toward minority groups, it is challenging to accept minority cultural practices when these go against the in-group's moral beliefs and thereby the cultural continuity of one's group. Accepting these practices can be considered to subvert core liberal values and therefore are more difficult to accept, even for individuals who endorse deprovincialization. For example, in Germany and the Netherlands deprovincialization is negatively associated with tolerating that Muslim minority organizations refuse women on their governing boards. And higher deprovincialization does not go together with higher acceptance of some Muslims refusing to shake hands with people of the opposite gender or with higher acceptance of ritual slaughtering of animals by Muslims (Verkuyten, 2021).

Concerns about the continuity of the in-group identity and culture might also affect the positive association between deprovincialization and support for Muslim minority and immigrants' cultural rights. It becomes more difficult to support minority cultural rights when the in-group's cultural continuity is thought to be at stake. In two Dutch studies, it was found that in-group continuity concern weakens, but does not reverse, the positive association between deprovincialization and support for minority cultural rights (Velthuis et al., 2020). The deprovincialized do defend to a greater degree the rights of immigrants *more* than other respondents even when they are concerned about the continuity of the cultural identity of their in-group.

Thus, deprovincialized people who have a more nuanced perspective on their in-group culture do not have to be cultural relativists. They can consider certain minority practices as intolerable and also do not want their in-group culture to disappear. Cultural beliefs have propositional content in expressing what one holds to be true and right and is committed to, which makes it very unlikely, if not psychologically and logically impossible, that people truly consider all cultural beliefs to have equal value and are tolerant of everything (Crane, 2017; Kim & Wreen, 2003).

A less in-group centric worldview does not mean nonjudgmental indifference in which no distinctions between true and false and right and wrong are made and difficult moral questions are avoided. The value of informed and critical judgment with the willingness to make moral distinctions is required for intercultural dialogue and positive change in plural societies. In the large-scale survey research in the Netherlands, it was found that deprovincialization was positively associated with a balanced thinking style as a general tendency to base judgments and decisions on considering different arguments for issues that one feel strong about (e.g., "Usually, I try to delve into beliefs and behaviors that I find wrong and disapprove of"; "If there is a difference of opinion I listen carefully to the arguments of both sides before making a judgment"), while deprovincialization was negatively associated with a dogmatic thinking style (e.g., "I have no patience with

arguments that I do not agree with"; "I never doubt the things that I really believe in"; Verkuyten, 2021).

Deprovincialization as Openness Toward Other Groups and Cultures

The other, out-group-oriented side of deprovincialization concerns the acceptance of other people and cultures following intergroup encounters (Boin, et al., 2021). The rationale underlying this facet and the related operationalization is that deprovincialization not only implies a nuanced perspective on one's in-group, but also involves a process of cultural change. Intergroup encounters allow individuals to gather information about the traditions, norms, and customs of other groups, thus reducing cultural ignorance and expanding openness to other worldviews. This facet derives from the hypothesis that deprovincialization not only represents an abandonment of ethnocentrism, but also involves a widening of social perceptions and evaluations (Pettigrew, 2010, 2021).

This aspect of deprovincialization is specifically assessed by the CDS (Boin et al., 2021). The CDS contains six items specifically designed to assess the acceptance of other groups' cultures and customs and the widening of social perceptions and appraisals in intergroup encounters, for example, "Knowing customs and traditions of different cultures helps me feel closer to other people" (7-point disagree–agree response scale).

The initial validation of this scale (Boin et al., 2021, Study 1) showed that the CDS was significantly related to, but clearly distinct from, a wide range of variables encompassing the big-five personality traits, need for cognitive closure, other-oriented basic values such as universalism and benevolence, social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, nationalism, as well as intergroup variables such as contact with out-group members, out-group attitudes, and prejudice. Overall, this nomological net corroborated the conceptualization of cultural deprovincialization as an accepting, flexible, and open attitude toward other individuals and groups.

A further study conducted in Italy (Boin et al., 2021, Study 2) used a three-wave longitudinal survey (4 weeks interval) to examine the associations of cultural deprovincialization with intergroup contact and different prejudice indices, controlling for respondents' age, gender, and levels of social dominance orientation. Data were analyzed with linear mixed models, with waves nested within individuals. This procedure allowed to separate within and between effects, respectively, related to temporal variations of a construct for a participant and to individual differences in the levels of the construct between participants.

The results showed that individuals who had relatively more positive contact, and who experienced across time more positive contact than usual for them, were characterized by higher levels of cultural deprovincialization. Conversely, when individuals experienced relatively more negative contact, and when

they experienced across time more negative contact than usual for them, their score of deprovincialization was lower. Concerning variations of deprovincialization between and within individuals, participants with relatively higher levels of deprovincialization, and participants who felt across time more deprovincialized than usual for them, reported more positive attitudes and less prejudice toward immigrants.

These findings are consistent with a dual role of deprovincialization. On the one hand, it can be a consequence, across time, of positive interactions with out-group members. On the other hand, it can represent a consistent predictor of prejudice-related variables, possibly akin to more stable individual differences. Further statistical analysis (Intraclass Correlation Coefficient) indicated that in the relatively short 8-week time span, cultural deprovincialization changed mostly between participants and less within participants. This finding suggests that deprovincialization might involve both a relatively stable core and a fluctuating component following life experiences—although the former seems to be stronger than the latter, at least in the study's 8-week interval.

With the aim of further examining the mutual direction of influence, we re-analyzed the data used in Boin et al. (2021; Study 2). We adopted a cross-lagged approach, assessing the associations between the same variables measured in wave 1 and in wave 3. We decided to exclude wave 2 as we wished to limit, as much as possible, the possibility to confound proper time invariance of the constructs with limited variations due to the short time interval between single waves. We assumed that an interval of 8 weeks would allow more changes across time in the levels of the constructs within individuals. To simplify these new analyses, we tested two longitudinal models separately: one focused on the relations between deprovincialization and intergroup contact, while the other considered the associations between deprovincialization and prejudice indices.

The findings of these secondary analyses are the following. In the first model, alongside strong autoregressive paths involving the same variables across time, positive contact at time 1 had a positive, although weak, effect on cultural deprovincialization at time 3 ($\beta = .06$, $p = .05$). Moreover, cultural deprovincialization at time 1 was related positively with positive contact ($\beta = .17$, $p < .001$), and negatively with negative contact ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .001$), assessed at time 3. In the second model, beyond autoregressive paths, the effects were almost totally symmetrical: cultural deprovincialization at time 1 had a positive effect on out-group attitude ($\beta = .23$, $p < .001$) and negative effects on direct prejudice ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .001$) and subtle prejudice ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .003$), all measured at time 3. Vice versa, out-group attitudes at time 1 were positively related to cultural deprovincialization at time 3 ($\beta = .11$, $p = .007$), while prejudice at time 1 reduced the levels of cultural deprovincialization at time 3 ($\beta = -.13$, $p = .002$).

Overall, these new longitudinal analyses suggest the presence of mutual influences between cultural deprovincialization, on the one hand, and positive contact, out-group attitudes, and prejudice toward immigrants, on the other hand.

The beneficial role of deprovincialization also emerged in a study conducted in Italy during the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Fuochi et al., 2021). In a context characterized by high levels of threat experienced in relation to the pandemic, and controlling for its aversive role, individuals with higher scores of cultural deprovincialization perceived that they shared to a greater degree a common group identity with other national out-groups (i.e., Germans, Spanish, French, Dutch, British, Americans, and Chinese). Furthermore, cultural deprovincialization buffered the association between COVID-19 threat and the perception of a common destiny with these same national out-groups: COVID-19 threat was negatively associated with perceived common destiny only for low levels of cultural deprovincialization. When cultural deprovincialization was high, the association between threat and common destiny was not significant. These findings show that deprovincialization may play a beneficial role for intergroup relations even over the course of a threatening global health emergency.

The Two Facets of Deprovincialization

The research on the two facets of deprovincialization confirms the construct validity of deprovincialization as a distinct predictor of intergroup prejudice. In both sets of studies, the variable is clearly a solid component of the prejudice syndrome. Its nomological net consists not only of prejudice but many other related variables—from right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation to openness to new experience, need for closure, universalistic values, and positive contact with out-groups.

A recent study conducted in the Italian context (Voci et al., 2021) used both the GDS (Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013) and the CDS (Boin et al., 2021), with the aim of testing simultaneously their relations with individual traits, social experiences, and prejudice-related variables. A first notable finding is that the two scales were highly correlated (the zero-order correlation was $r = .70$, $p < .001$). Yet, confirmative factor analyses showed that a model with two correlated but distinct latent factors—respectively, group and cultural deprovincialization—fitted the data well, whereas a one-factor model representing a single deprovincialization latent construct had inadequate fit. This indicates that the two sides of deprovincialization are intercorrelated, but empirically distinct constructs.

A further analysis concerned the experience of having lived abroad for at least 1 month. Participants who lived abroad reported higher levels of both cultural and group deprovincialization than respondents who did not have such an experience. The fact of having lived abroad was also associated with more positive attitudes and less prejudice toward immigrants, more frequent positive

contact with immigrants, and lower levels of intergroup anxiety. But it did not make a significant difference for the levels of attitude toward Italians and national identification. Furthermore, respondents who lived abroad reported lower levels of right-wing authoritarianism and higher levels of stress tolerance, a dimension of the Five-Dimensional Curiosity Scale that assesses the ability to manage the distress that arises with unfamiliar stimuli (Kashdan et al., 2018). However, having lived abroad was unrelated to levels of social dominance orientation and of joyful exploration, another dimension of the curiosity scale assessing the pure enjoyment of novel stimuli.

These findings cannot clarify the direction of influence between having lived abroad and deprovincialization—both directions are plausible. Yet these contrasting results suggest that deprovincialization, positive contact, out-group appraisals, stress tolerance, and reduced right-wing authoritarianism relate in a similar way for international experience. But they behave differently from in-group attitudes and social dominance orientation, which were unrelated to such experiences.

We then performed a network analysis, with the aim of exploring the topology of the two deprovincialization scales. The outcome of a network analysis concerns the simultaneous associations (edges) between a set of variables (nodes). Edges represent the regularized partial correlations connecting two nodes that are conditionally dependent, given all other nodes in the network (Epskamp et al., 2018). Despite the strong relation between the two scales, their place in the network was partially different. Cultural deprovincialization presented positive associations with positive contact and joyful exploration, and negative relations with intergroup anxiety and prejudice toward immigrants. Group deprovincialization presented negative associations with prejudice, right-wing authoritarianism, and social dominance orientation, and a positive, although weak, association with joyful exploration.

Keeping in mind that in network analyses an edge between two nodes represents a partial correlation controlling for all the remaining variables in the model, and thus should not be interpreted as a zero-order correlation, these findings suggest that the two deprovincialization scales tap into two related but different aspects of the construct: the CDS seems to catch the facet of deprovincialization more related to social experiences, while the GDS seems more related to individual traits. Importantly, however, they are both negatively related to prejudice.

Future Directions

The results discussed are summarized in Table 1 and clearly portray the importance of a deprovincialized attitude for ameliorating intergroup relations. From this reassuring starting point, there are at least three aspects of the construct that need to be further analyzed in future research.

Table 1. Correlates of Deprovincialization: Summary of Empirical Findings

Positive correlates	Negative correlates
Experiential variables	
Positive contact with out-groups	Negative out-group contacts
Time spend in foreign country	
Multicultural experiences	
Multilingualism, second language usage	
Personality traits and individual differences	
Cognitive flexibility	Social dominance orientation
Openness to new experience	Right-wing authoritarianism
Perspective taking	Need for cognitive closure
Balanced thinking style	Dogmatic thinking style
Universalistic values	
Benevolence values	
Social identifications	
Secure in-group identification	Insecure in-group identification
Civic nationhood	Nationalism and ethnic nationhood
Pro-multicultural and intercultural	Primo-occupancy beliefs
Superordinate group identification	Collective narcissism
Out-group attitudes	
Out-group competence and warmth	Direct out-group prejudice
Tolerance of minority practices	Subtle out-group prejudice
Recognizes immigrant discrimination	Perceived illiberal practices
Support for immigrant rights	

A first point concerns the measurement of deprovincialization. The two existing scales are reliable and valid, relatively highly intercorrelated, but refer to different aspects of the construct, one more related to a nuanced view of the in-group (GDS; Martinovic & Verkuyten, 2013), the other more linked to an open attitude toward other groups (CDS; Boin et al., 2021). Future research could employ both measures to assess these different facets of deprovincialization. Preliminary analyses (Voci et al., 2021) concerning their underlying structure indicate that both instruments can be used separately but also in combination for assessing the two different, though correlated, aspects of the construct. Further analyses concerning this point are needed, preferably involving samples from different countries and from different cultural groups within societies.

A second important issue regards the temporal variations of deprovincialization. The longitudinal analyses presented in this review suggest the presence of reciprocal influences between deprovincialization, positive contact, out-group attitudes, and prejudice toward immigrants. This implies that positive interventions on any of these variables may produce a virtuous circle over time. However, further longitudinal data with longer time spans between multiple waves are needed to support this possibility. In doing so, it is important to recognize that not all variables will change at a similar rate, and that a theoretical understanding of the

nature of these variables is needed for examining the appropriate time span for observing change. For example, a behavioral change in the number of positive contacts might be easier (e.g., move to a new local setting) than the related gradual psychological changes in underlying attitudes and beliefs (e.g., prejudice).

A related third point is that the research conducted so far indicates a further topic of interest: deprovincialization seems to involve a stable aspect, assimilable to an individual disposition or trait, and a varying component, developable after positive intergroup experiences. This points at the possibility to design future empirical studies in at least two ways.

A first possibility is to adopt a person by situation approach (Mischel & Shoda, 1995) and examine when and why individual trait-like differences in deprovincialization matter for people's evaluations and judgments. For example, it might be that these individual differences are less important in situations in which people feel threatened by out-groups. Threats with the related fear and anxiety draws attention to the threatening source making a negative response more likely, irrespective of the deprovincialized attitude that individuals have. In contrast, in situations in which people feel safe and secure, having a stronger deprovincialized orientation might matter more for individual differences in reactions toward minorities and immigrants.

A second possibility for future experimental research is to examine the causal impact of deprovincialization on out-group prejudice. For example, priming and framing research (Price & Tewksbury, 1997; Scheufele, 2000) can try to make people's underlying deprovincialized attitudes situationally salient for examining the impact on out-group evaluations. Furthermore, the varying component of deprovincialization implies that it should be possible to examine whether deprovincialization increases, for example, with trainings and interventions specifically aimed at nourishing in participants a deprovincialized stance. This brings us to discussing possible policy implications of the research on deprovincialization.

Policy Implications

The findings (Table 1), together with the possible directions for future research, clearly support the belief that the power of deprovincialization is underappreciated (Hodson et al., 2018). Fortunately, the number of empirical studies has increased over the years and the results of these studies indicate that deprovincialization might have important policy implications, for example, in developing public support of cultural practices and rights of minorities and immigrants. To encourage positive intergroup relations, successful policies need to set norms and stimulate the willingness and ability to look beyond one's own "province." Based on the theoretical and empirical literature discussed, we want to highlight several issues that could be considered in policy development and implementation.

First, deprovincialization implies reduced cultural ignorance, which typically results from having experienced other cultures in depth. Such an experience will make people feel that their own way of life is not the only or most natural way of living. Thus, the focus should be on stimulating forms of contact that provide new experiences and the possibility to reflect on the social and cultural world outside of people's own community, and thereby on their in-group. For example, student exchange programs and other forms of international contact could be stimulated and facilitated. However, to be effective these programs and forms of contact should involve real engagement with cultural others rather than staying relatively cordoned off from local people and culture.

Second, not everyone is able to travel or have international contacts and there can be exceptional circumstances such as a pandemic that makes this impossible, but there are other possibilities for stimulating a more deprovincialized orientation. For example, it might be possible to broaden people's perspective and address forms of cultural ignorance with, for example, cultural awareness training (but see Shepherd, 2018), global citizenship education (e.g., UNESCO's MGIEPs), and by forms of virtual contact, such as computer-mediated communications and interactions through social media (Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). Further, many societies are increasingly culturally diverse, which means that policies can try to stimulate and offer opportunities for intercultural encounters within society, such as in educational settings, at workplaces, and in neighborhoods. Examples are forms of intercultural education (Gurin et al., 2004; Stephan & Stephan, 2013), mutual school visits with interactions between students of culturally diverse schools ("Welcome to my neighborhood"), forms of organizational and institutional diversity programs (Brannon et al., 2018), and programs such as "intercultural cities" (Wood, 2004). Forms of intercultural interactions can stimulate, for example, perspective taking by promoting a better understanding of the specific reasons behind other cultural practices and beliefs.

Third, intercultural contacts can contribute to develop a more nuanced view on the in-group culture that, as discussed, helps in improving intergroup relations in culturally diverse societies. Out-group attitudes do not only depend on how people perceive and evaluate out-groups, but also on how they perceive and evaluate their in-group culture and the extent to which they have a (de)provincial view of their in-group. People who have not experienced other cultures in depth might feel that their own way of life is natural and correct, which makes it difficult to recognize the value of other ways of thinking and doing. Hence, trying to develop among people a sense that their own culture is not the only way to understand the world is likely to make them more open to out-groups. Programs that try to increase cultural sensitivity and that discuss the historical and contemporary interconnectedness of people's in-group culture with others might be one important way for developing a more nuanced, less in-group-centric perspective on one's culture (e.g., Rosenthal & Levy, 2013).

Deprovincialization might be especially useful for greater openness toward others because it does not have to imply a distancing from the in-group and a reduced sense of in-group belonging and commitment. In fact, it is important for policies to recognize the psychological importance that in-group belonging has for people and that this belonging can form a secure basis for openness to out-groups (Spiegler et al., 2021). Deprovincialization involves developing a broader perspective that might actually stimulate those who have a strong sense of in-group belonging to be critical in a constructive way and to think about positive changes within their community.

Furthermore, deprovincialization does not require that people compromise on their own cultural commitments and beliefs which for many people might be threatening and lead to defensive reactions (Brandt & Crawford, 2020). Not everything should change or is of equal value and policy makers should emphasize that deprovincialization does not have to imply a lack of commitment to one's own beliefs. Deprovincialization is not a cultural relativist "anything goes approach" and should not lead to letting things slide by. There are basic values and principles that define a cultural or religious community and which provide a sense of (intergenerational) continuity. In plural societies, these values and principles should constitute the confident basis for new experiences and being open toward others, rather than the impermeable symbolic walls behind which people live their parochial lives. For the public debate, this implies that people should be able to critically question each other and set standards together for which a deprovincialized orientation is important. A less provincial, culturally more open worldview is a key ingredient for moving toward more harmonious plural societies. These societies tend to face complex moral questions that require judgment based on reflection and careful consideration of competing reasons as a basis for dialogue (Verkuyten et al., 2019).

Conclusion

We have discussed the importance of the underappreciated and understudied construct of deprovincialization for intergroup relations in plural societies. Deprovincialization is not the sovereign formula or panacea for improving intergroup relations, but it does offer an important orientation that goes against prejudice, discrimination, hostility, and conflict. A less parochial view on the social world is a unique and robust predictor of more positive out-group attitudes, independent of such demographic characteristics as level of education, political orientation, religious affiliation, gender and age and such relevant social psychological constructs as social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, nationalism, and cultural relativism. Furthermore, longitudinal research indicates that deprovincialization can drive more positive out-group attitudes. These findings indicate that a further focus on deprovincialization and its development and

change would be particularly beneficial for complex modern societies, in which an open and accepting attitude is a necessary condition for the creation and maintenance of a harmonious climate.

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