

CONFLICT RESOLUTION APPROACHES

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Campus Network: Fostering Positive Attitudes between
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What is Conflict?

- Perception of mutual interference (e.g., incompatible goals, scarce resources, conflict ideas/beliefs).
- It pertains to the opposing ideas and actions of different entities thus resulting in an antagonistic state.
- It can elicit very negative intergroup relations
→ it is crucial to manage it

Sources of conflict (Katz, 1965)

- Economic conflict
- Value conflict
- Power conflict

Functions of conflict between (and within)

The Functions of Conflict (adapted from Coser, 1956)		
function	among groups	within groups
1. Connection	Asserts relationship to other group	Maintains relations by releasing tension
2. Definition	Sharpens exterior boundaries	Sharpens internal boundaries
3. Revitalization	Revitalizes mores And traditions	Strengthens underlying values of membership
4. Reconnaissance	Gets information for peace-making or war	Gets information for cooptation or per-secution of deviants
5. Replication	Given a balance of power, generates similarity of structure	Generates a similarity of behavior

The cognitive bases of intergroup conflict

- **Social categorization:** the distinction between «us» and «them» (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)
- Social categorization leads to **intergroup bias** (i.e., more favorable views of the ingroup than the outgroup)

What about the intergroup domain?

It is important to understand the basic process underlying intergroup conflict, so it is possible to maximize beneficial outcomes and reduce detrimental ones.

Definition of **intergroup conflict**:

Intergroup conflict is a process of social interaction involving a struggle over claims to resources, power and status, beliefs, and other preferences and desires (Bisno, 1988)

Intergroup Conflict: Some factors involved

A social psychological account of conflict: The role of **negative interdependence** (cf. Sherif & Sherif, 1966) → intergroup discrimination



Intergroup Conflict: Some factors involved₁

Intergroup conflict is a type of behaviour which occurs when two or more parties are in opposition or in battle of perceived relative deprivation (Litterer, 1966)

→ **Relative deprivation** is a factor aggravating the outcomes of social interactions (cf. Runciman, 1966; see also Grant & Brown, 1995; Moscatelli, Albarello, Prati, & Rubini, 2014)

The factors involved: Relative Deprivation₁

“A group experiences relative deprivation when it perceives that it is deprived in comparison to some relevant outgroup” (Stephan & Stephan, 1996, p. 145).

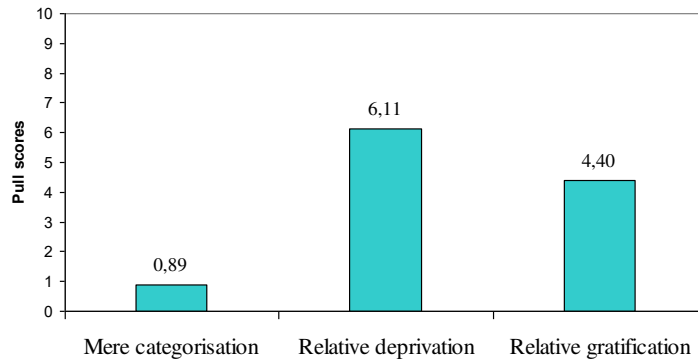
e.g., women being payed less the males for the same job experience relative deprivation

The factors involved: Relative Deprivation₁

- Relative deprivation is the perceived difference between “attainments” and “expectations” (Gurr, 1970).
- Relative deprivation is a predictor of identity management strategies such as collective action (Gurr, 1970; Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999).

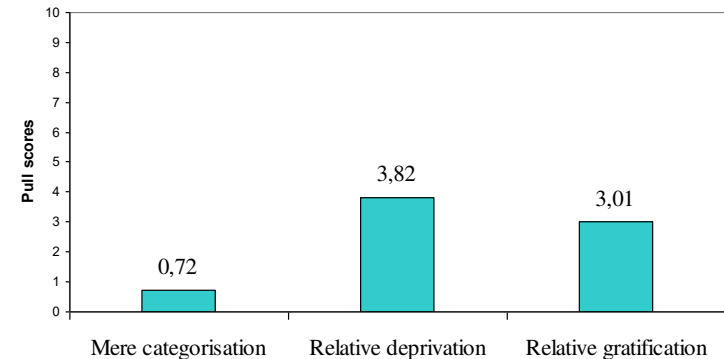
Relative deprivation and perceived interdependence as factors predicting intergroup discrimination (Moscatelli et al., 2014)

FAV on MJP



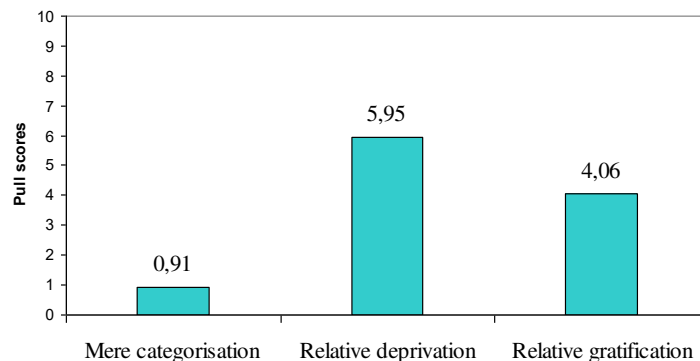
$F(2, 120) = 17.89, p < .001, \eta^2 = .230$

MD on MIP+MJP



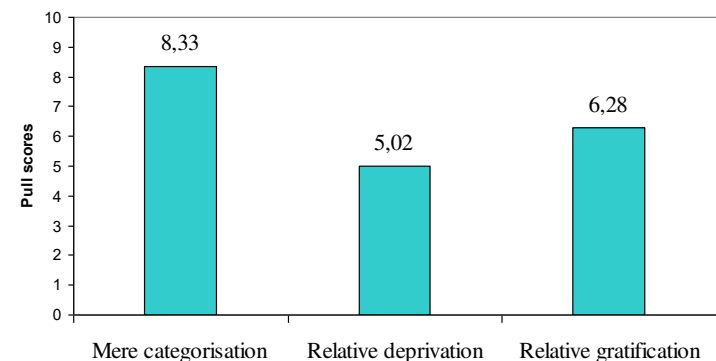
$F(2, 120) = 9.94, p < .001, \eta^2 = .142$

FAV on P



$F(2, 120) = 16.09, p < .001, \eta^2 = .211$

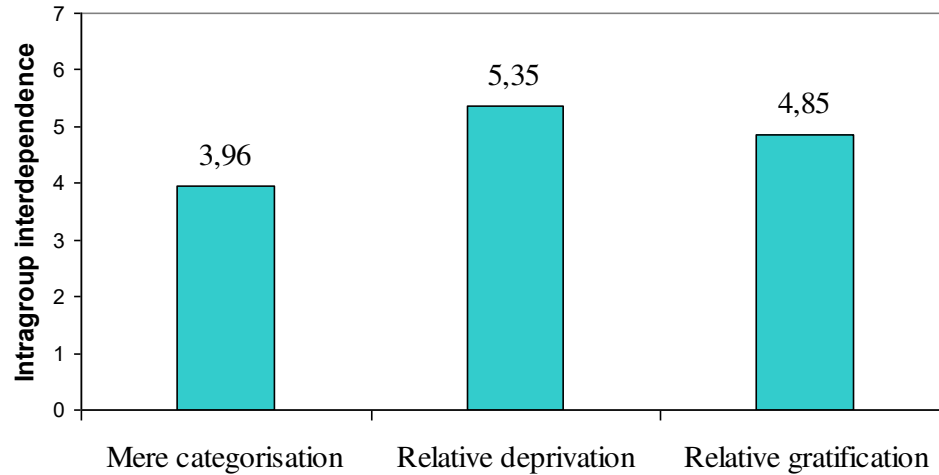
P on FAV



$F(2, 120) = 5.39, p = .006, \eta^2 = .082$

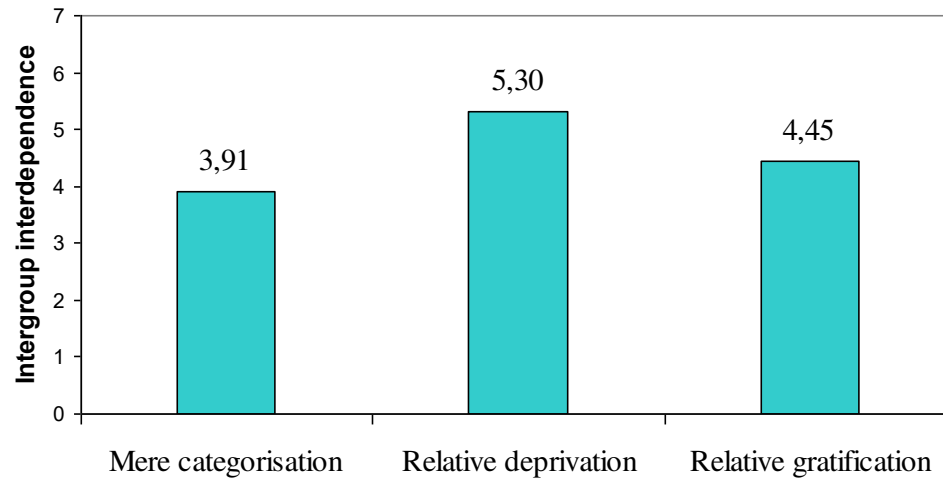
Relative deprivation and perceived interdependence as factors predicting intergroup discrimination (Moscatelli et al., 2014)

Intragroup Interdependence



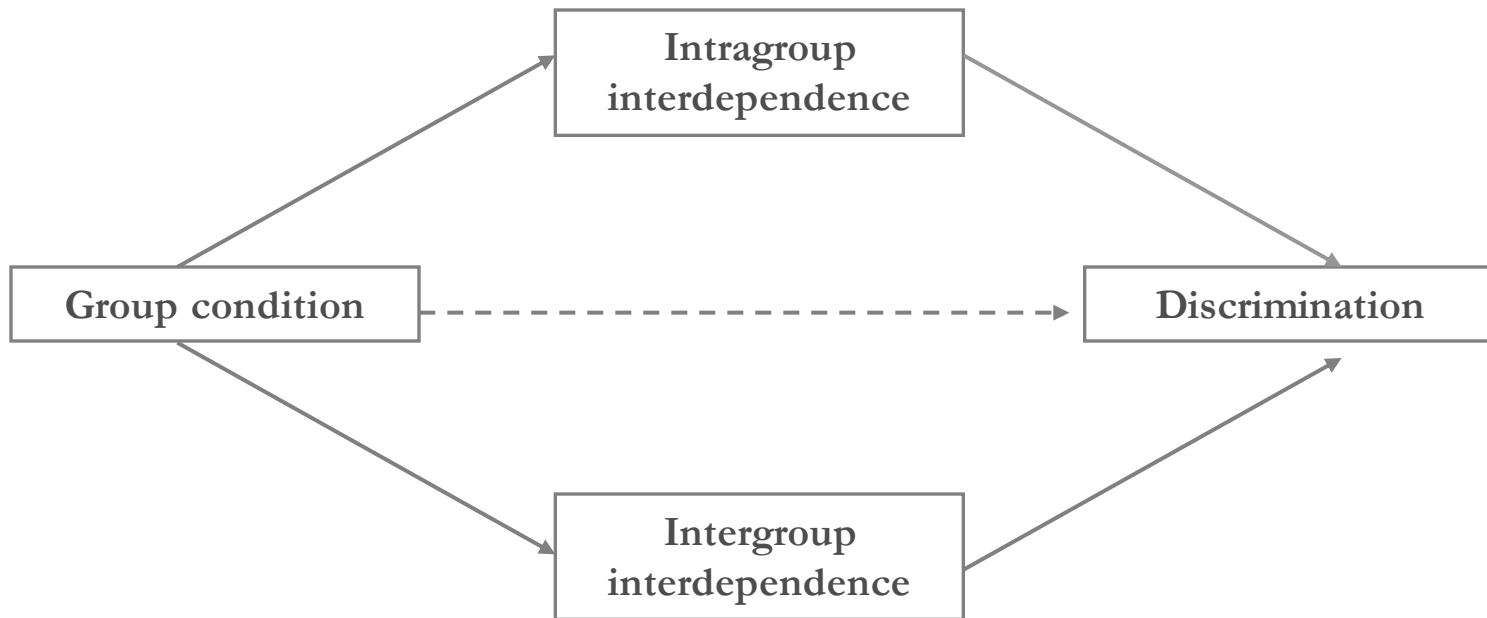
$F(2, 120) = 12.44, p < .001, \eta^2 = .172$

Intergroup Interdependence



$F(2, 120) = 13.35, p < .001, \eta^2 = .182$

Relative deprivation and perceived interdependence as factors predicting intergroup discrimination (Moscatelli et al., 2014)



Intergroup Conflict: Some factors involved ₂

- Intergroup conflict is a process; it develops out of existing relationships between individuals or groups and reflects their past interactions and the context in which these took place
- the role of intergroup mutual stereotypes and perceptions: e.g., **delegitimization** (Bar-Tal, 1990)

Intergroup Conflict: Some factors involved₂

Delegitimization (Bar-Tal, 1990)

- Intergroup conflict and perception of outgroup goals as immoral or dangerous have a causal role on delegitimization of the outgroup;
- Delegitimization appears through delegitimizing (negative) labels attributed to the outgroup (i.e., devils, ...) which help decoding intergroup situation;
- Such delegitimizing labels threaten ingroup safety and well-being, leading to a vicious circle of threatening perceptions and delegitimization which feed one another;

Intergroup Conflict: Some factors involved₂

- In low conflict situations, delegitimization might arise to justify the damaging action by the ingroup towards the outgroup.
- Ethnocentrism might elicit delegitimization.
- When feelings of fear and contempt towards the outgroup are at stake, delegitimization might lead to outgroup aggression as a preventive action to avoid the risks of ingroup damage nby the inhuman (i.e., dehumanized) outgroup.

Intergroup Conflict: Some factors involved₃

Struch & Schwartz (1989)

- **Different group values** (inhuman values by the outgroup) lead to approval of outgroup aggression.
- This happens in situations in which intergroup situations are conflictual (e.g., Israelis vs. Palestinians)

Functional and Disfunctional Conflicts

- Within group benefits: promotes group cohesiveness, identification, etc...
- Disfunctional outcomes of intergroup conflict: increased discrimination, intergroup aggression, delegitimization beliefs, outgroup dehumanization , etc...

Intractable Conflicts Resolution (Bar-Tal, 2000)

«Intractable conflicts are characterized by **being protracted, irreconcilable**, violent, of a zero-sum nature, total with parties involved having an interest in their continuation» (p. 353)

All conflicts require cognitive activity to comprehend them.

Societal beliefs (i.e., society members' shared cognitions on topics and issues that are of special concern for society) represent society members' view of the conflict and motivate them to act.

Societal beliefs are a motivational basis for societal act.

-> they **have to change** in order to achieve **reconciliation**

Intractable Conflicts Resolution

(Bar-Tal, 2000)

Societal beliefs

- SB about **security**
- SB about **self-image** (promoting the ingroup)
- SB about own **victimization** (self-representation as victims)
- SB of **patriotism** (generating attachment to own country)
- SB **delegitimizing the opponent** (i.e., dehumanizing beliefs)
- SB of **peace** (i.e., concerning peace as an ultimate desire for society)

Intractable Conflicts Resolution

(Bar-Tal, 2000)

- CONFLICT RESOLUTION

is a political process through which the parties in conflict **eliminate the perceived incompatibility** between their goals and interests and establish a new situation of perceived compatibility

Intractable Conflicts Resolution

(Bar-Tal, 2000)

RECONCILIATION consists of:

- a) truth** (requiring open expression of the past);
- b) mercy** (requiring forgiveness for building new relations;
- c) justice** (requiring restitution and new social restructuring;
- d) peace** (which underscore common future, well-being and security for all parties in a society)

Intractable Conflicts Resolution

(Bar-Tal, 2000)

RECONCILIATION requires **changes in beliefs**

a) on *societal goals* (about rightness of own goals (e.g., changes in beliefs on justifications and myths, symbols, rituals to justify ingroup goals;

b) about the *adversary outgroup* (i.e., changes in delegitimizing beliefs/stereotypes on the outgroup);

c) about peace (i.e., beliefs describing realistically how to live in peace specifying practical ways to achieve peace)

Resolving intractable conflicts

(Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011)

- **Emotion and emotion regulation** in intergroup conflict: An appraisal-based framework
- Short-term emotions involved in the outbreak/escalation of conflict:
 - **Anger** → attribution of blame
 - Support of military actions
 - **Fear** arising in conditions of perceived threat → it may tone down the response tendencies due to anger eliciting adaptive responses (Gray, 1989)

Resolving intractable conflicts

(Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011)

Emotion regulation and outbreak/escalation of conflict:

- Up-regulate levels of reactive fear and down regulate anger
- Framing of events and assessment of possible responses should highlight the high risks of starting military actions
- Perspective reappraisal emphasising **humanness of outgroupers** and **heterogeneity**

Resolving intractable conflicts

(Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011)

Emotions and De-escalation

- Long-term emotional sentiments play a pivotal role:
 - a) **fear** (enhances conservatism, prejudice and intolerance)
 - b) **hope** (facilitates goal-setting, planning, use of imagery – (e.g., imagine a future different from the past), creativity, cognitive flexibility, mental exploration of alternatives, risk taking and compromising)

Resolving intractable conflicts

(Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011)

Emotions and De-escalation

- **anger** (tends to be associated to rejection of positive information about the opponent)
- Moral emotions by the ingroup:
 - **group-based guilt** (related to the appraisal that the ingroups violated moral norms) → victim compensation (Doosje et al., 1998);
 - **group-based shame** (its contribution is less clearly positive; most evidence suggests that it leads to distancing from the ingroup; Brown & Cehajic, 2008)

Resolving intractable conflicts

(Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011)

De-escalation and emotion regulation

- To facilitate de-escalation, efforts should be made to:
 - **upregulate** group-based **guilt** and **down regulate** group-based **shame**
(e.g., disseminating knowledge on ingroup wrong-doing)
 - downregulate long-term **fear**
 - foster sentiments of **hope** about the future of the conflict by highlighting realistic and concrete goals and allow generation of pragmatic means of achieving these goals (since in long-term conflicts, people have not witnessed peaceful interactions before)

Resolving intractable conflicts

(Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011)

Reconciliation and emotions

- The role of **forgiveness** and **empathy**
 - **FORGIVENESS** (letting go of past anger and resentment; cf. Tam et al., 2007)
 - to obtain forgiveness is important to
 - involve acknowledgement of mutual responsibility for atrocities;
 - increase the understanding of outgroups' motives

Resolving intractable conflicts

(Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011)

Reconciliation and emotions

- The role of **empathy** (i.e., other-oriented state stemming from the perceived affective state of others)
 - positive relation between empathy and willingness to forgive the perpetrator (Cehajic et al., 2008) or to reconcile;
 - negative relation between empathy and support for violence

Resolving intractable conflicts

(Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011)

Emotion regulation and reconciliation

- Reconciliation as a process of regulation of intergroup emotions implying:
 - De-regulation of long-term fear, anger, hatred through re-appraisal of past events
 - Fostering long-term empathy towards the outgroup adopting the other-perspective
 - Examples of strategies: Reminding ingroup responsibility in past wrong-doing + re-humanizing the outgroup → enhanced empathy

SOCIAL COGNITIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES: Sherif's Robber's cave studies

- Involvement in **pleasant situations** (e.g., watching a movie together)
- Establishment of a **common enemy**
- Establishment of **superordinate common goals** (competing goals that one group cannot achieve alone)

Other Social Cognitive Strategies to Reduce Intergroup Conflict

If social categorization is at the roots of intergroup conflict, Some cognitive strategies can reduce prejudice and salience of categories:

- Decategorization
- Recategorization and Common ingroup identity (i.e., making shared categories relevant)
- Contact and promotion of intergroup friendships
- Trust development

Decategorization

Shift to the personal identity level of self-categorization (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987):

e.g., we are all unique individuals, with similarities and differences, group memberships do not matter in the interaction



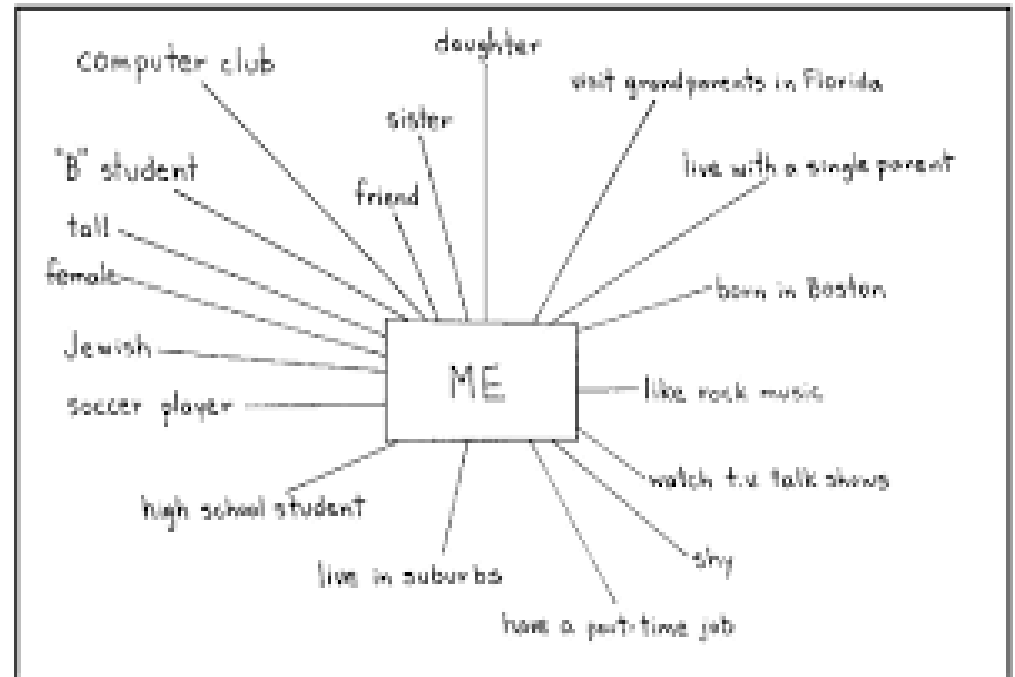
Multiple categorization

- Providing multiple categories to define others (cf. Crisp & Hewstone, 2007) might reduce intergroup differentiation leading to decategorization

e.g., «Giuseppe is a Black, Christian, male, young person, who was born in Italy from immigrant parents” (Albarello & Rubini, 2012)

Development of complex identities

Acknowledging that the multiple group membership each person has are not fully overlapping (i.e., having a complex social identity) enhance intergroup tolerance (Roccas & Brewer, 2002)



Recategorization

- Defining others in terms of other categories:
 - **Common ingroup** (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000) including both the ingroup and the outgroup (e.g., Italians and German as all Europeans) → this shifts the cognitive roots of intergroup differentiation and leads to enhanced intragroup similarities (Deschamps & Doise, 1988)
 - **Human identity** (Albarello, Crisp, & Rubini, 2018; Albarello & Rubini, 2012): salience of human identity can hinder intergroup discrimination due to social categorization

Human Identity Salience

- Making salience common human identity increase forgiveness for the harm perpetrated by the outgroup and reduce attribution of collective guilt to them (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005)



Suggested Readings

- Albarello, F., Crisp, R. J., & Rubini, M. (2018). Promoting beliefs in the inalienability of human rights by attributing uniquely human emotions. *Journal of Social Psychology, 158*, 309-321. doi: 10.1080/00224545.2017.1346581
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- Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987). *Rediscovering the social group: A self-categorization theory*. New York: Basil Blackwell.