

Intergroup contact and conflict resolution

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Intergroup contact

Positive contact between members of different groups can improve intergroup attitudes (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011)

Such beneficial effects of contact are especially likely when the quality of the contact is cooperative, friendly, close, and equal status in nature (Allport, 1954; Islam & Hewstone, 1993)

What is the impact of contact in post-conflict societies?

In post-conflict societies

Intergroup trust and forgiveness are stepping stones to reconciliation

Trust: psychological means to overcome uncertainty by making benign assumptions about other people's behaviour (Kollock, 1994)

Forgiveness: emotional state that permits the relationship between the conflicting parties to move forward after a transgression (Cairns, Tam, Hewstone, & Niens, 2005)

The impact on health issues

Interpersonal forgiveness is positively associated with better mental health (Allan, Allan, Kaminer, & Stein, 2006; Kaplan, 1992; Witvliet, Ludwig, & Vander Laan, 2001; Witvliet, Phipps, Feldman, & Beckman, 2004).

Forgiveness involves giving up resentment and the desire for revenge which is associated with the transgression (Scobie & Scobie, 1998). This process subsequently reduces related emotions such as *anger, fear, and anxiety*, which are associated with psychological ill health (McCullough et al., 1997).

Guilt is also recognized as an important aspect of the reconciliation process in that it can motivate relationship reparation (Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006).

Higher levels of guilt are associated with poorer mental health (Wivliet et al., 2004). War veterans often express guilt that can be linked to *posttraumatic stress disorder*, and it has been positively associated with psycho-pathology in trauma survivors (Kubany, Abueg, Kilauano, Manke, & Kaplan, 1997).

The role of contact in post-conflict societies

The ethno-political conflict in Northern Ireland, known as “the Troubles”

A division between communities:

- those who would like Northern Ireland to unify with the Republic of Ireland (Catholics/Nationalists/Republicans), who make up about 44% of the population,
- those who would like Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom (Protestants/Unionists/Loyalists), about 53% of the population.

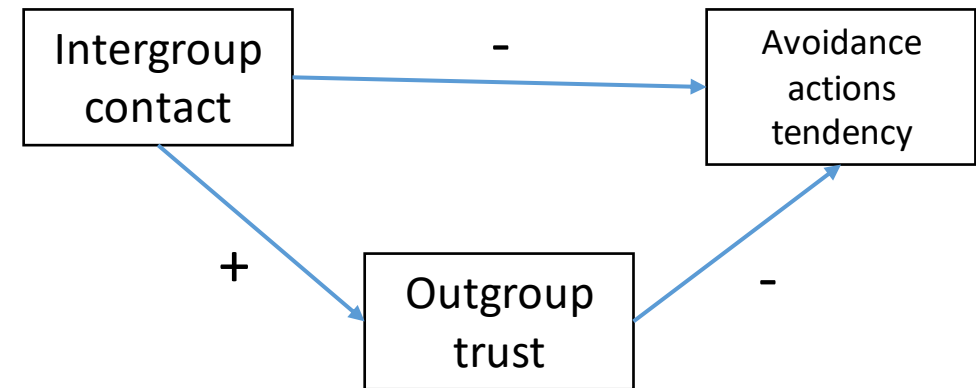
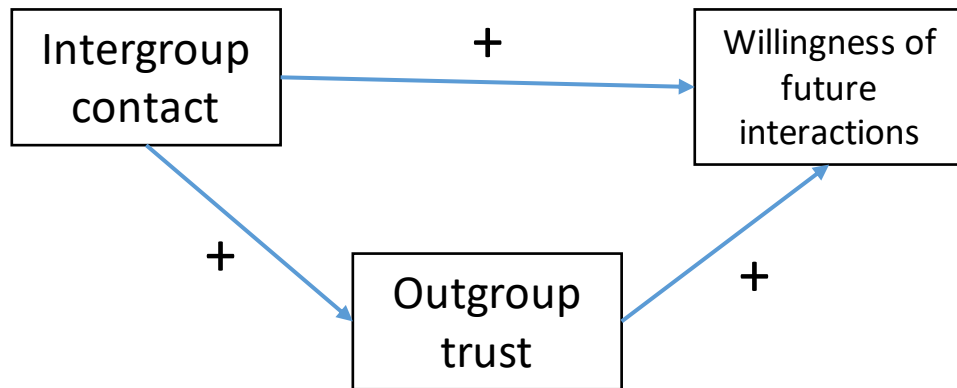
It is estimated that 3,593 people died (Fay, Morrissey, & Smyth, 1998) and over 40,000 were injured (Hayes & McAllister, 2002) in communal violence between 1969 and 1998. Given the size of Northern Ireland’s population (less than two million) this legacy of hate constitutes a national trauma.

On April 10, 1998, a peace agreement (the “Good Friday” or “Belfast Agreement”) was signed. Although the agreement did signify the end of most paramilitary violence, Northern Ireland still remains a highly segregated society.

Which is the role of direct intergroup contact on key factors to promote conflict resolution?

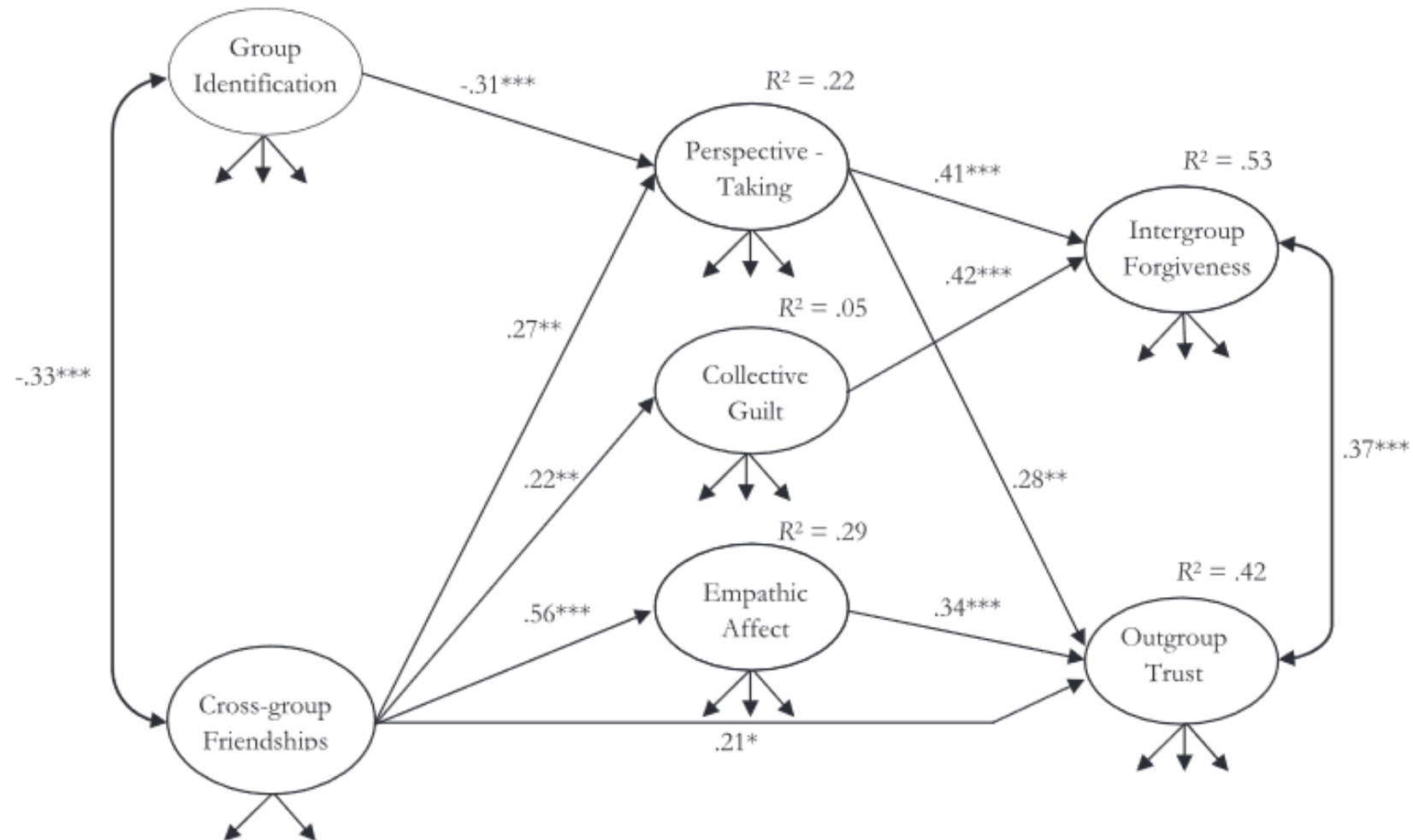
The role of *direct* contact in post-conflict societies

In Northern Ireland, the relationship between Catholics and Protestants

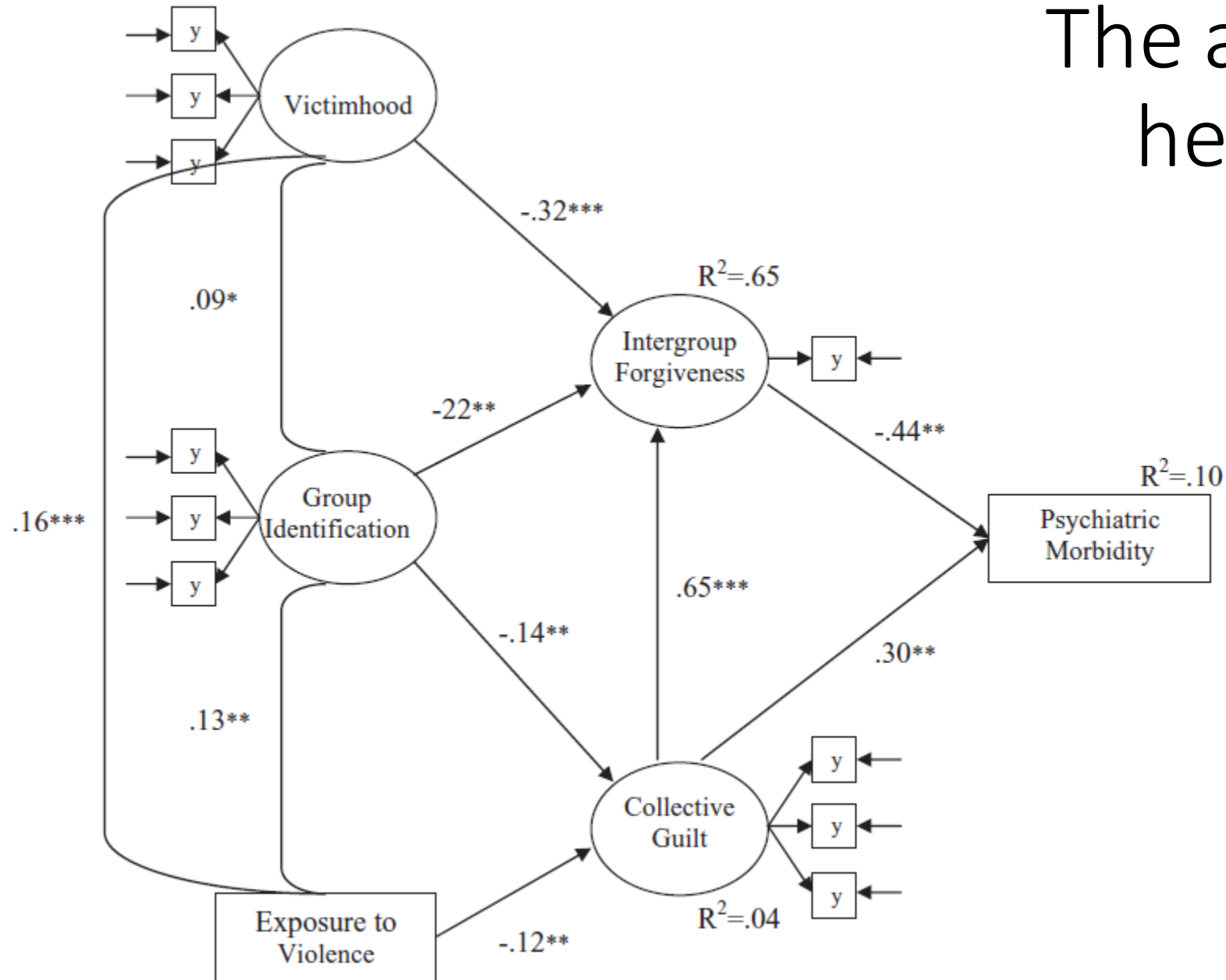


The role of *direct* contact in post-conflict societies

Mediators of the impact of contact on intergroup forgiveness and trust

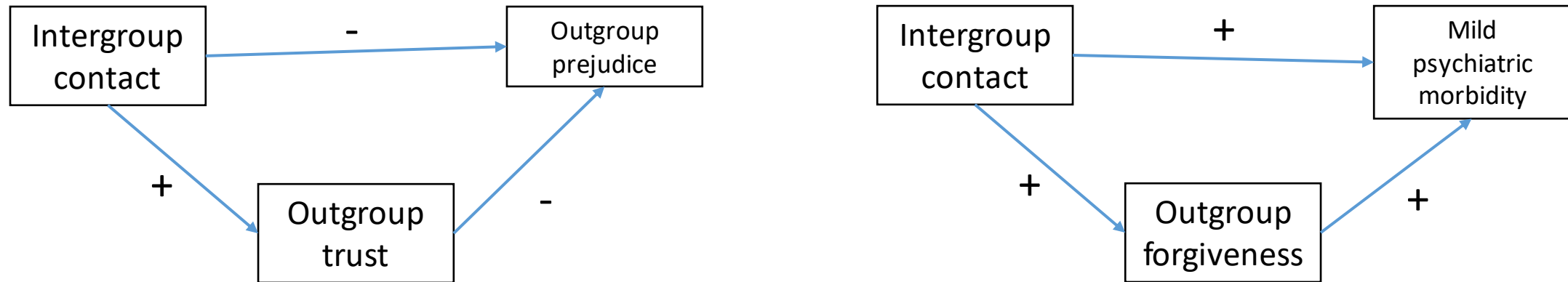


The antecedents of health outcomes



The role of direct contact for those personally affected by intergroup violence

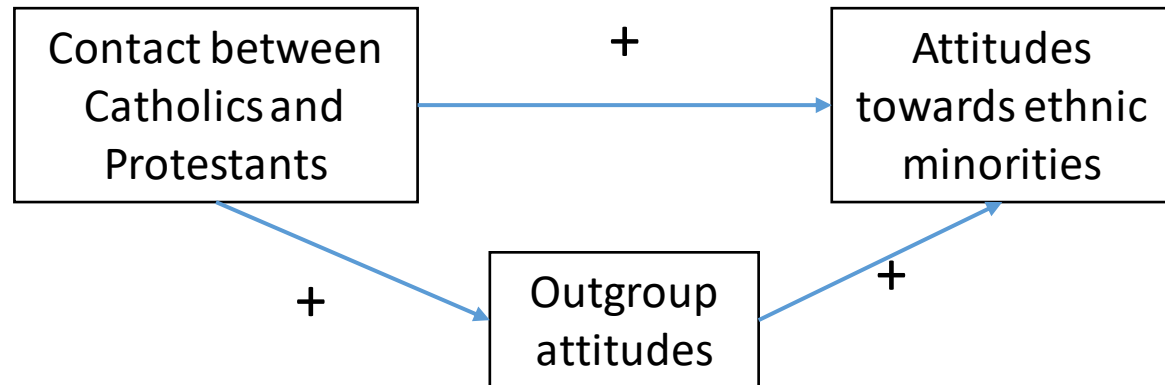
In Northern Ireland, people deeply affected by years of ethno-political violence



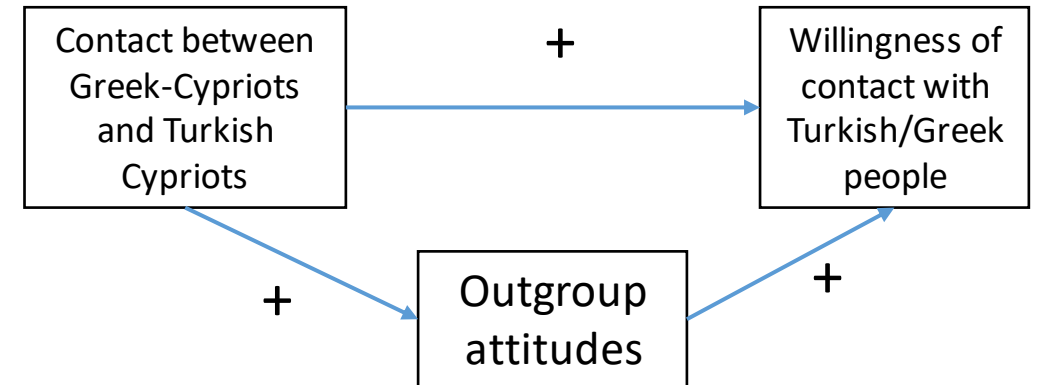
What about the situation in which groups do not directly interact with each other?

The role of *indirect* contact in post-conflict societies (or secondary transfer effect)

In Northern Ireland

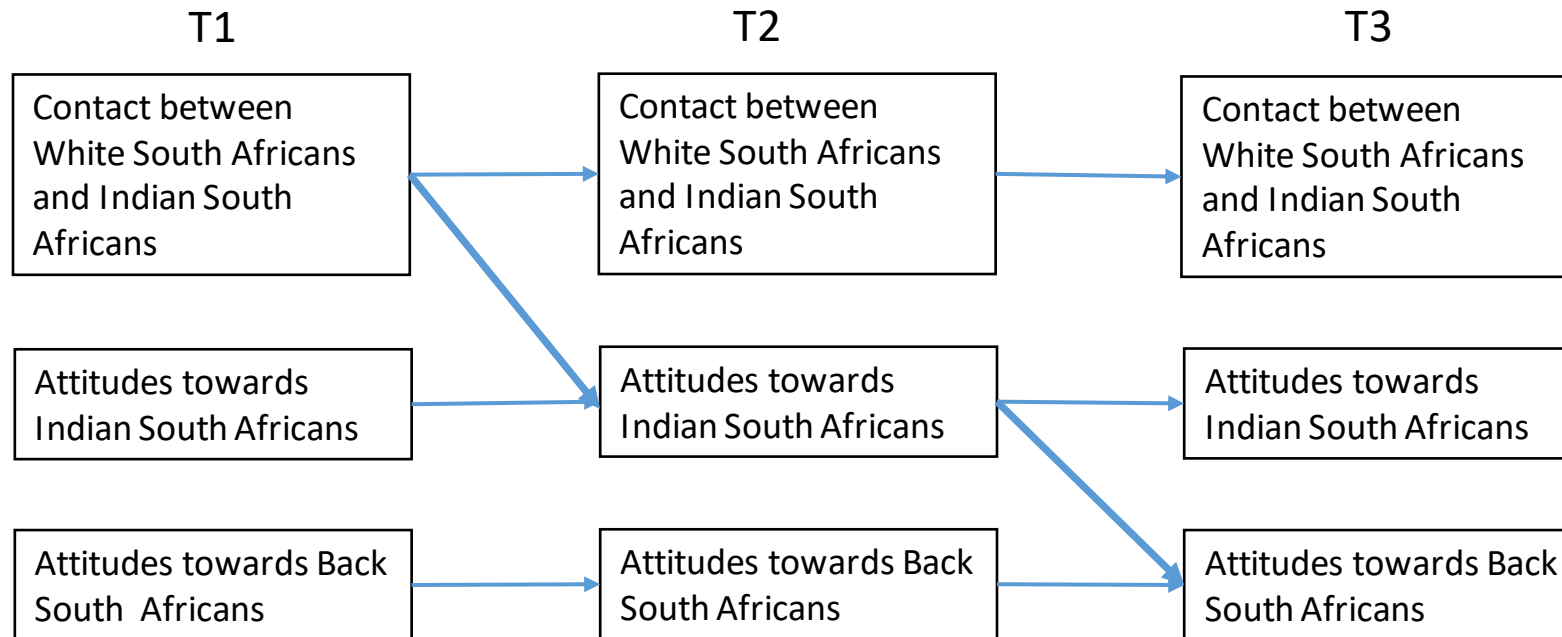


In Cyprus



The role of *indirect* contact in post-conflict societies (or secondary transfer effect)

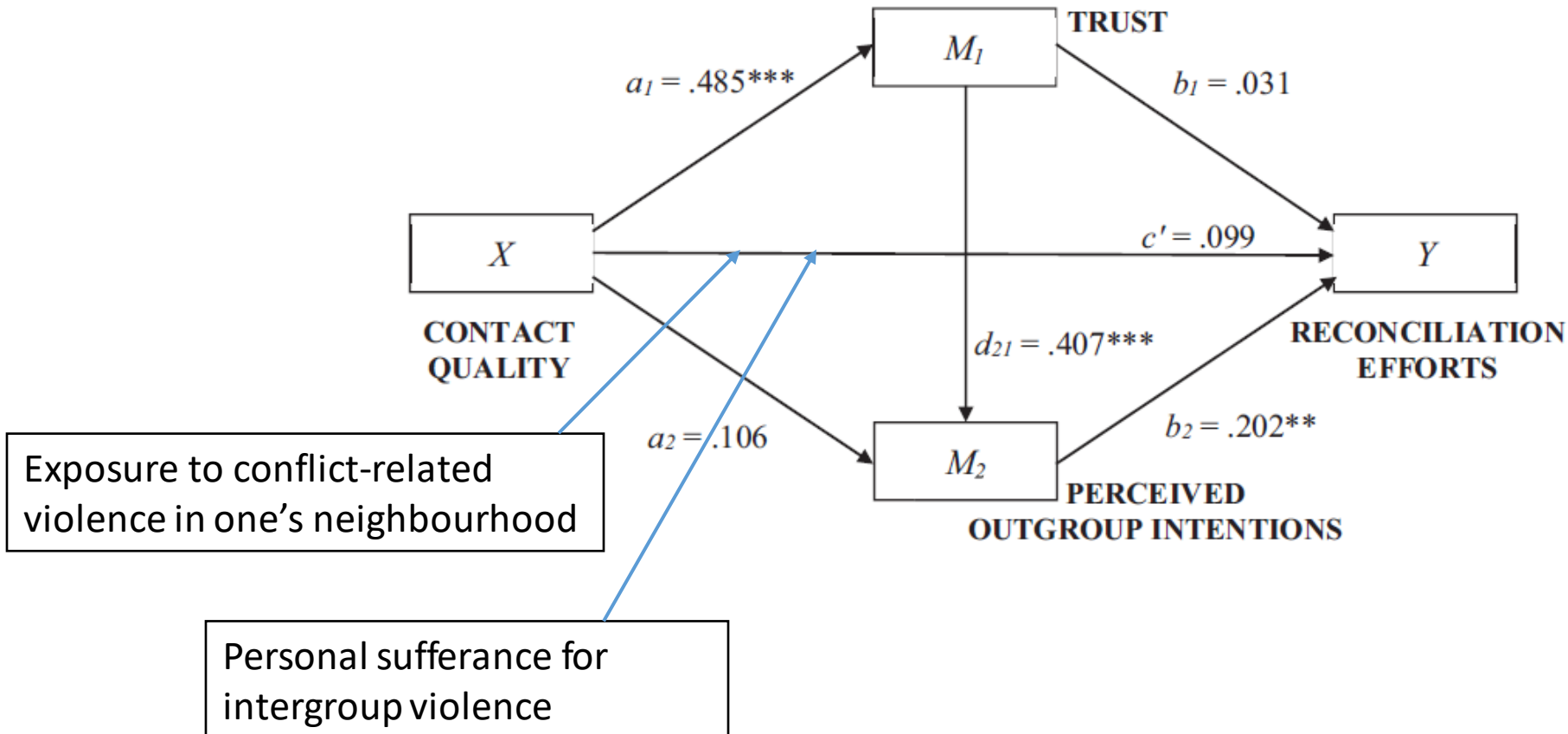
In South Africa



Is it contact only about the quantity of intergroup interactions?

The role of *quality of contact* in post-conflict societies

In South Africa & Northern Ireland



Tropp et al., 2017

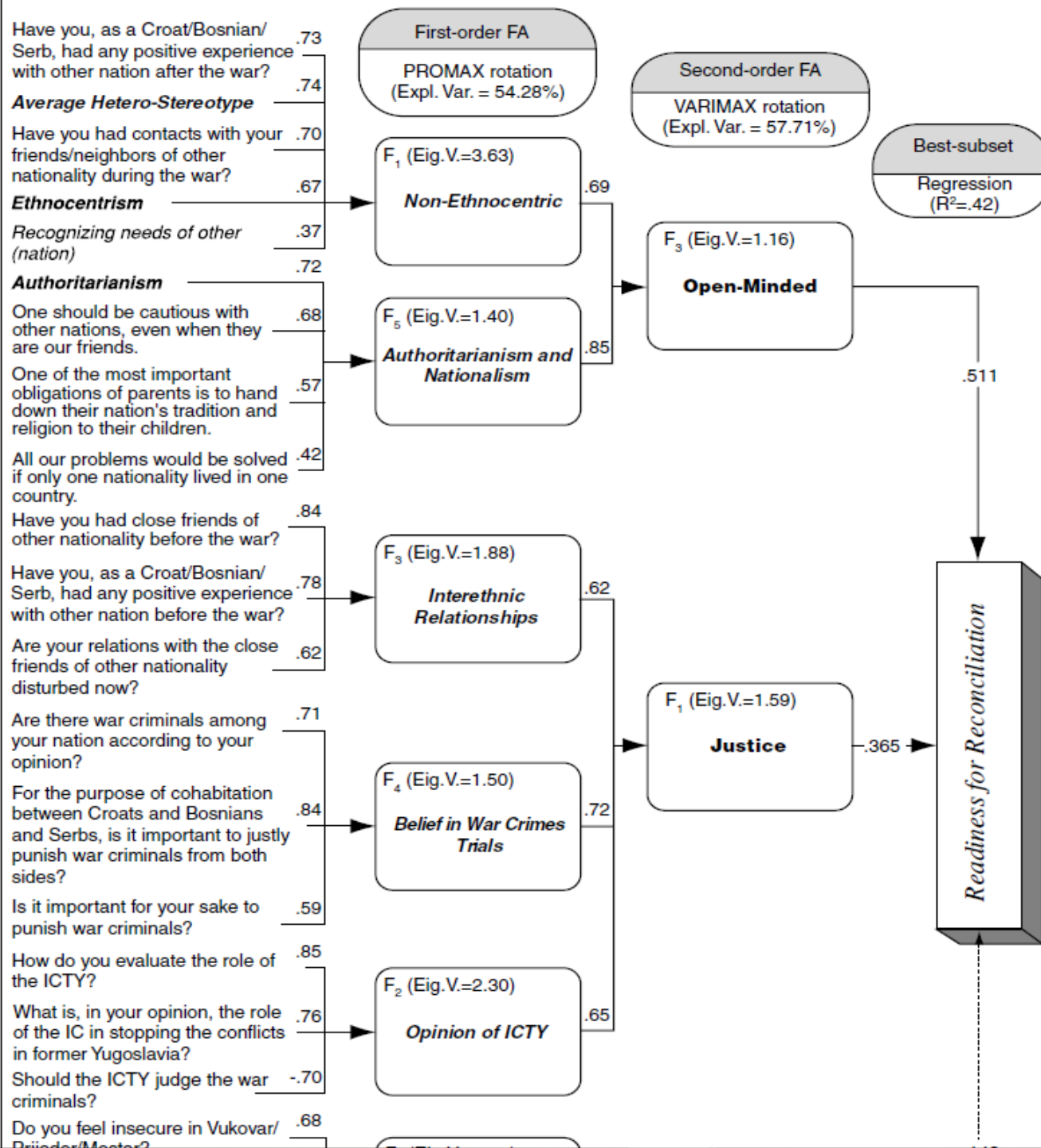
However, contact is not the only factor influencing reconciliation processes.

What can be the other factors that contribute to this process?

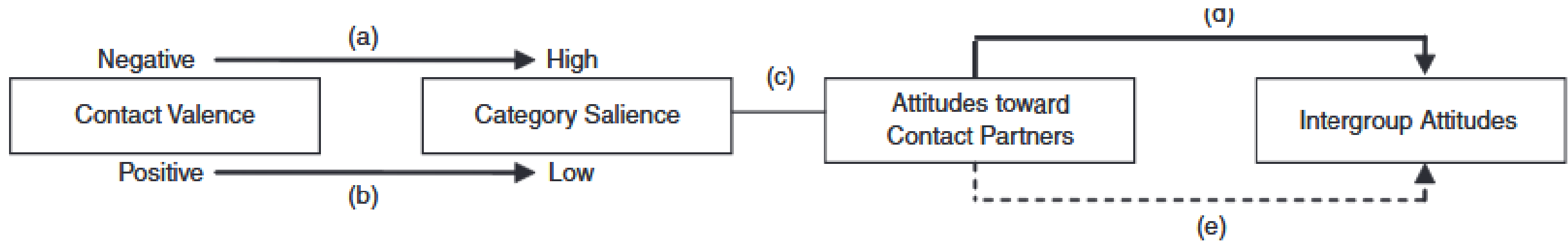
Predictors of Readiness for Reconciliation

in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia

Biro, Ajdukovic, Corkalo, Djipa, Milin, and Weinstein (2004)



Negative contact and the reason why intergroup conflict endures



Negative intergroup contact generalizes more to intergroup attitudes because negative contact causes high category saliency (valence-saliency effect hypothesis; left-hand side) and category saliency moderates the effect of intergroup contact on intergroup attitudes (intergroup model of contact; right-hand side)

CONTACT INTERVENTIONS IN CONFLICTING SITUATIONS

- **Israel:** Jews and Palestinian people who participated in an intervention of intergroup contact showed higher **willingness to find a compromise** together with the outgroup and a more positive attitude towards intergroup peace compared to those who did not take part to the intervention (Biton & Salomon, 2006)
- **Rwanda:** Hutu e Tutsi people who participated to an intervention based on dialogue about both suffered atrocities as well as perpetrated atrocities showed reduced identification with the ingroup, **increased perception of outgroup variety**, and increased positive ingroup stereotypes (Rimè et al., 2011) compared to the control group
- **Sri Lanka:** Tamil and Sinhalese people who participated to an intervention on intergroup direct contact, after 1 year showed increased **empathy** towards outgroup members and willingness to spend money for disadvantaged children of the outgroup (Malhotra & Liyanage, 2005)

OTHER INTERGROUP CONFLICTING SITUATIONS

India: places where there was a higher presence of **inter-ethnic social network** between Hindu and Muslims (es. Clubs, companies, associations etc...) showed increased intergroup contacts and reduced intergroup violence (Varshney, 2002)

Positive contact can not only reduce and resolve hostilities and conflicts but can also **prevent them**.

This is due to social norms in favour of social integration and the institutional support to this goal.

HOW TO PREVENT INTERGROUP CONFLICT

Studies on schools de-segregation in the US

Mixed results: in half of the cases, desegregation leads to *increased prejudice*, mainly from the perspective of the majority group (Stephan, 1978), or in any case to low positive effects (Schofield e Eurich-Fulcer, 2001)

Nevertheless, effects in the long-terms seems to be promising

EFFECTS OF DE-SEGREGATION AT SCHOOL

Brown, Rutland & Watters (2007) – study in UK

Children (of majority and minority) belonging to classess with different level of ethnicity (>20% of minority students) showed:

- increased self-esteem,
- reduced difficulties in peers-social relationships,
- increased pro-social behaviors
- reduced episodes of discriminations

Compared to children who do not have such diversity in their class.

EFFECTS OF DE-SEGREGATION AT SCHOOLS

Ri-segregation?

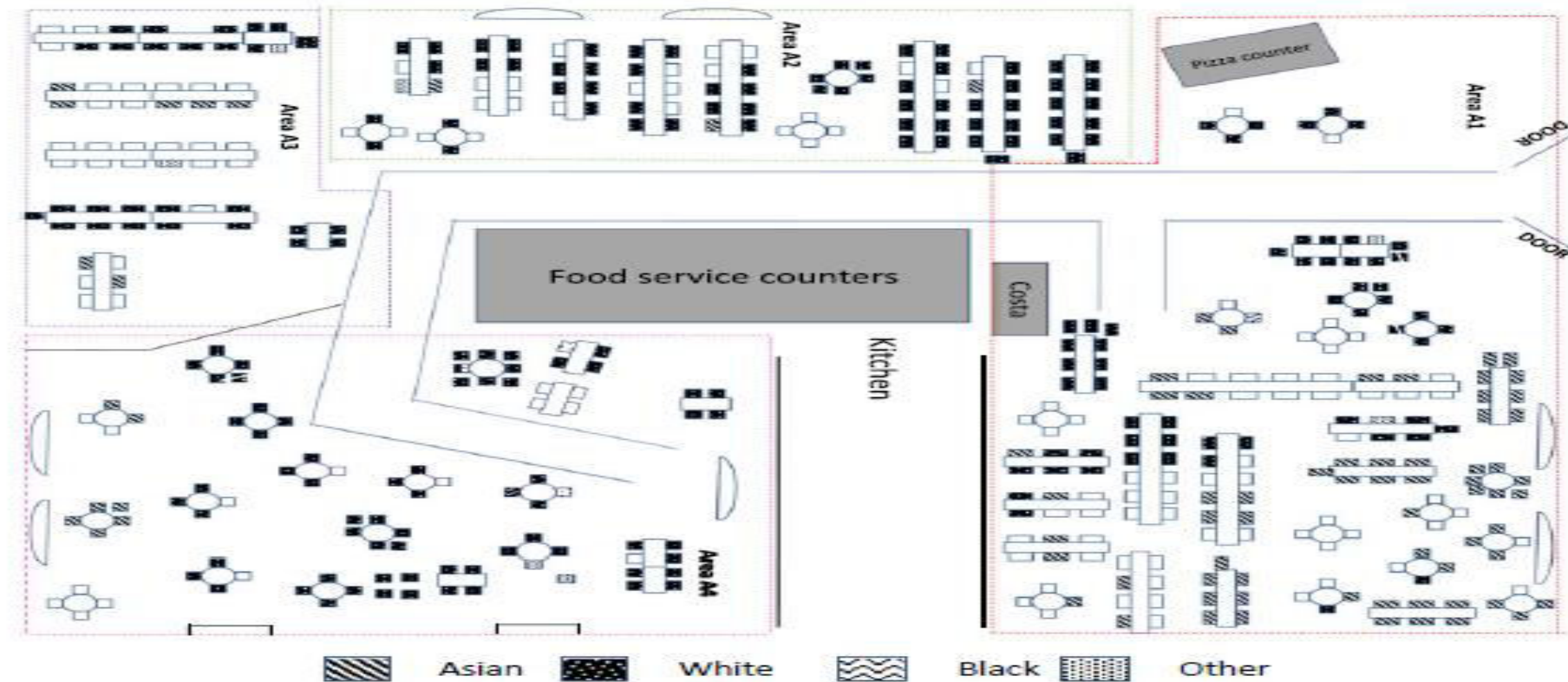


Figure 1. Map of high school cafeteria; snapshot of seating patterns at a particular time interval – on Day 2 at 12.00 to 12.25 p.m. (Study 1).

from Al Ramiah, Schmid, Hewstone, & Floe, 2015

What drives spontaneous ri-segregration?

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for White and Asian participants at Time 1 (Study 3)

Time 1 constructs	White sample	Asian sample	Difference (t value)
Own fear of rejection	2.70 (1.12)	2.59 (1.06)	1.98*
Outgroup's perceived fear of rejection	2.61 (1.14)	2.41 (1.03)	3.50***
Own lack of interest	2.80 (1.13)	2.61 (1.10)	3.33**
Outgroup's perceived lack of interest	2.94 (1.07)	2.75 (1.06)	3.38**
Ingroup norms	2.70 (1.11)	3.06 (1.08)	−6.34***
Outgroup norms	3.39 (1.06)	3.67 (.93)	−5.25***
Number of outgroup friends	1.99 (1.07)	2.76 (1.21)	−13.50***
Outgroup attitude	3.14 (1.02)	3.53 (.87)	−7.65***
Own diversity beliefs	3.19 (1.15)	3.97 (1.00)	−13.57***
Intergroup anxiety	2.69 (1.10)	2.35 (.95)	6.03***
Percentage of outgroup members in school	10.99 (18.05)	38.97 (24.39)	−27.26***
Likelihood of sitting with outgroup members in cafeteria	2.82 (1.08)	3.12 (1.10)	−5.20***

Notes. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses.

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

Ingroup norms (to what extent parents and closed friends are in favour of intergroup relationships) and **number of friends of the outgroup** are the main predictors for choosing to sit with outgroup members

EFFECTS OF DE-SEGREGATION AT SCHOOLS

Is there efficient integration **in other social contexts**?

It is difficult to meet all Allport (1954) conditions

In particular, **there is the issue of the super-ordinate social climate** (de-segregation is viewed as an obligation)

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative learning tasks imply the necessity to divide the work among individuals of the group and requires every member's collaboration



CL may involve a small reward

CL facilitates peers interactions, increased knowledge, avoids competitions

Teacher can be an institutional support for contact

Es. Maras & Brown (1996) showed that cooperative learning groups including children with learning disorder

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CONTACT WITH INGROUP MEMBERS?

Hidraulic effect: increased contact with outgroup members leads to reduced contact with ingroup members and vice versa

There is a negative relationship between the number of ingroup and outgroup friends (Levin et al., 2003) and effects on prejudice

Deprovincialization (Pettigrew, 1997): having more friends and contact with outgroup members leads also to reduce the myth of the ingroup

It is important to understand the influence of contact and friends with ingroup members on intergroup contact relationships

WHEN MULTIPLE GROUPS ARE SIMULTANEOUSLY SALIENT?

In modern multi-cultural societies, there is an increased amount of people belonging to more than one group of the same category (migrants of second generation; biculturals)

Contact with bicultural people challenges behaviors towards one or more of their multiple memberships?

Sandwich effect: bicultural people can more easily meet people belonging to different groups and they find themselves to “mediate” between people belonging to different groups suffering to be perceived as different from both of the groups considered

It is important to understand intergroup contact processes of bicultural people

What can we learn from contact research for conflict resolution?

What are the key psychological factors for conflict resolution?

What strategies can be suggested to policy makers?

Thank you for your attention!