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## ACHIEVING FORGIVENESS AND TRUST IN POSTCONFLICT SOCIETIES: THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-DISCLOSURE AND EMPATHY

HERMANN SWART, RHIANNON TURNER, MILES HEWSTONE,  
AND ALBERTO VOCI

You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.

—Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Outgroups often continue to elicit negative cognitive, affective, and/or behavioral reactions in postconflict societies, long after the conflict has ended. The challenge of achieving positive intergroup relations and reconciliation within postconflict societies is often typified by the need to encourage outgroup forgiveness and build outgroup trust, over and above mere liking, between groups that were previously in conflict. Positive intergroup contact experiences have been consistently associated with reduced prejudice (for reviews, see Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The evidence is encouraging in that it suggests that intergroup contact—specifically, cross-group friendship—is capable of simultaneously reducing the negative factors associated with outgroup prejudice and augmenting the positive factors associated with more positive intergroup relations (Pettigrew, 1997, 1998).

In this chapter, we consider the importance of self-disclosure and empathy for promoting the development of outgroup forgiveness and trust in postconflict societies. This focus on intergroup forgiveness and trust is deliberate,

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acknowledging that each embodies a distinctly more positive orientation between groups in postconflict societies than does mere tolerance. Our emphasis on two positive behaviors and experiences that could be encouraged to promote these positive outcomes deviates from the more traditional preoccupation with specifying what negative intergroup behaviors should be limited, reduced, or inhibited to minimize group-based prejudice. We discuss self-disclosure, empathy, forgiveness, and trust in the context of cross-group friendships, although we do not intend to focus on the role of friendships per se in promoting positive intergroup relations (see Davies, Wright, & Aron; Page-Gould & Mendoza-Denton, this volume).

Most, but not all, of the research that we present in this chapter was undertaken in the postconflict societies of Northern Ireland and South Africa. Notwithstanding some important differences, these two contexts share notable parallels to each other and to other postconflict societies around the world, including persistent segregation, a lack of cross-group friendships, and generally negative outgroup attitudes (e.g., Gibson, 2004; Hofmeyr, 2006; Hughes & Donnelly, 2001; Robinson, 2003; Turner et al., 2010). We use our research in these two postconflict societies to illustrate and discuss the importance of positive intergroup contact and the roles of outgroup forgiveness and trust for fostering positive intergroup relations within postconflict societies in general.

Below, we discuss the importance of reciprocal self-disclosure and empathy for promoting positive intergroup relations in postconflict societies, specifically outgroup forgiveness and trust. In our discussion on empathy, we distinguish between cognitive empathic responding, in the form of perspective taking, and affective empathic responding, in the form of affective empathy (Duan & Hill, 1996). This is followed by a closer look at two particular contact outcomes associated with more positive intergroup relations, namely, outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust. We then discuss some policy implications of our research and conclude with some suggestions for future research. First, we take a brief look at the context within which the operation of reciprocal self-disclosure and empathy will be discussed, namely, that of cross-group friendships (for a detailed discussion of the role of friendships in promoting positive intergroup relations, see Davies et al.; Page-Gould & Mendoza-Denton, this volume).

## CROSS-GROUP FRIENDSHIPS AND POSITIVE INTERGROUP RELATIONS

Although the focus on cross-group friendship as a potent dimension of intergroup contact is relatively recent (e.g., Pettigrew, 1997, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, Paolini, & Christ, 2007), creating contact that is “intimate” or has “acquaintance potential” has long been rec-

ognized as a means of generating positive intergroup relations (e.g., Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969). The efficacy of this form of intergroup contact was confirmed by Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis, which reported a significantly stronger negative mean relationship between intergroup contact and outgroup prejudice in the 154 tests that included cross-group friendships as the measure of contact (mean  $r = -.25$ ) than in the 1,211 tests that did not (mean  $r = -.21$ ). This significant difference in the effects of these two types of contact on prejudice may be largely attributed to the fact that cross-group friendships generally embody greater *quality* of contact than casual, intergroup contact experiences (e.g., Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998). Thus, cross-group friendships provide a powerful context within which the important processes of reciprocal self-disclosure and empathy might operate.

Cross-group friendships are generally considered to involve three of Allport's (1954) optimal contact conditions: equal status, common interests and goals, and cooperation. Such contact generally occurs over an extended period of time, involving frequent high-quality contacts (Pettigrew, 1997, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), serving as a particularly positive form of intergroup contact that by its very nature encourages more positive interactions with members of the outgroup. Pettigrew (1998) suggested four mechanisms that drive the relationship between cross-group friendships and positive intergroup relations: increased learning about the outgroup; reappraisal of ingroup norms relating to intergroup contacts; change in behavior toward other outgroup members in general; and the generation of affective ties within the dyadic relationship, which include both the reduction of negative affect and the augmentation of positive affect.

Meta-analytic evidence suggests that the benefits of positive intergroup contact experiences are capable of extending from the outgroup exemplar to the outgroup as a whole, and also to other outgroups not involved in the original contact setting (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Furthermore, ingroup members who witness or become aware of such positive interactions between a fellow ingroup member and an outgroup friend are likely to develop more positive attitudes toward the outgroup in general and toward ingroup-outgroup relations in particular, an effect known as the *extended contact effect* (e.g., Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). Cross-group friendships, therefore, not only encourage more positive intergroup relations in a direct manner among those ingroup members with outgroup friends but also likely encourage more positive intergroup relations in an indirect manner via the extended contact effect.

An additional benefit of cross-group friendships for positive intergroup relations is that individuals with outgroup friends from one outgroup generally also have outgroup friends from other outgroups (e.g., Levin, Van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003; Pettigrew, 1997). This apparent generalized positive orientation

toward outgroups that is associated with having outgroup friends may be the result of selection bias, whereby less prejudiced individuals are more likely to have outgroup friends from a range of outgroups. And while this causal pathway from low prejudice to cross-group friendships certainly operates in some instances, there is overwhelming evidence in the contact literature in support of the causal pathway from cross-group friendships to reduced prejudice (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). We recently undertook a three-wave longitudinal study within the postconflict society of South Africa (Swart, Hewstone, Christ, & Voci, 2010a), the results of which illustrate the value of cross-group friendships as a context within which to explore the promotion of positive intergroup relations. To appreciate the significance of this study, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of intergroup relations in South Africa.

The South African population has traditionally been divided into four broad (and often contested) categories: White, Black (African), Colored (of mixed racial heritage), and Indian (of Asian descent). The country's history is dominated by accounts of intergroup conflict (no more so than that of the 40 years of legislated racial discrimination and racial segregation—a period known as Apartheid—that ended in 1990). Since the advent of democratic rule in South Africa in 1994, the political power has shifted from White South Africans to Black South Africans, although White South Africans continue to enjoy a socioeconomic advantage over Black and Colored South Africans. The traditionally intermediate, or marginalized, status of Colored South Africans has remained relatively unchanged, and they continue to occupy an arguably lower group status than that of majority-status White South Africans. Despite complete desegregation, intergroup contact remains limited in South Africa, and such contact is often characterized by a sense of discomfort and mistrust (e.g., Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Gibson, 2004).

In our three-wave longitudinal study, we explored the mediators between cross-group friendships and positive outgroup attitudes, perceptions of outgroup variability, and negative behavioral action tendencies—the desire to engage in negative behaviors against the outgroup (Wright et al., 1997)—as affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes of prejudice (Swart et al., 2010a). We considered two potential affective mediators: *intergroup anxiety*, which is the anxiety that may be experienced when anticipating future intergroup encounters (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), and *affective empathy*, which is the affective component of the broad empathic response (Duan & Hill, 1996). We collected three waves of survey data over a 12-month period from Colored South African high school students between 14 and 16 years old ( $N = 465$ ). Cross-group friendships with White South Africans at Time 1 were negatively associated with intergroup anxiety and positively associated with affective empathy at Time 2. Intergroup anxiety at Time 2 was negatively associated with perceived outgroup variability at Time 3.

Affective empathy was positively associated with positive outgroup attitudes and perceived outgroup variability and negatively associated with negative behavioral action tendencies at Time 3. In other words, these findings suggest (among other things) that those participants who had White South African friends were more likely to experience empathy toward White South Africans and were more likely to develop positive outgroup attitudes toward White South Africans in general over time.

In summary, cross-group friendships offer an important context within which to explore the positive processes that promote more constructive, positive intergroup relations in postconflict societies. That said, we recognize that developing cross-group friendships in these societies is particularly challenging. One reason for this is that the pervasive segregation that is a common feature of postconflict societies limits opportunities for the positive intergroup contact experiences that would stimulate friendship development. Opportunity for contact with the outgroup is positively associated with cross-group friendship development and is essentially a prerequisite for it (e.g., Turner et al., 2007; Wagner, van Dick, Pettigrew, & Christ, 2003).

## RECIPROCAL SELF-DISCLOSURE

We now turn our attention toward reciprocal self-disclosure as an important mechanism operating in close, high-quality interpersonal relationships. *Self-disclosure* is the voluntary presentation of intimate or personal information to another person (Miller, 2002). As an important aspect of interpersonal relationships, facilitating mutual trust (Petty & Mirels, 1981), and the development of personalized relationships, self-disclosure is considered a friendship-developing mechanism (Pettigrew, 1997, 1998). Self-disclosures made early on in the development of any interpersonal relationship (be they across groups or not) are generally characterized by content that relates more to the self as an individual. Within cross-group friendships in particular, these predominantly personalized self-disclosures may develop over time as the emotional and psychological bonds between friends strengthen, so that they come to include more group-related content, in which thoughts and attitudes about group differences or intergroup relations are shared. In this way, reciprocal self-disclosure allows for the acquisition of knowledge about the outgroup and the sharing of knowledge about the ingroup. It also facilitates a more in-depth understanding of the outgroup through increased perspective taking and subsequent feelings of empathy for the outgroup, both of which are important for the development of positive intergroup relations.

Self-disclosure provides individuals with the means of controlling how others see them; through self-disclosure they are able to communicate to others how

they see and understand themselves and the world around them. Often, such self-disclosures reveal previously unknown similarities between individuals, heightening interpersonal attraction and increasing the perceived self–other overlap between individuals (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Aron et al., 2004). Aron et al. (1992) showed that individuals spontaneously feel a close self–other overlap with individuals they consider to be close to them, such as friends and family. As the self expands to include the other, thoughts about the other become more selflike (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; see also Davies et al., this volume). Being the recipient of the self-disclosures of another not only increases the interpersonal attraction felt toward the self-discloser, but it also increases the likelihood of reciprocating this self-disclosure (Berg & Wright-Buckley, 1988). Within the context of high-quality intergroup contacts, self-disclosure similarly plays a central role in the development of close, cross-group interpersonal relationships such as friendships (Pettigrew, 1998).

When ingroup and outgroup members interact with one another and engage in reciprocal self-disclosure, it provides an opportunity for increased learning about, and understanding for, the respective outgroup member and the outgroup culture. Thus, in the same way that self-disclosure gives individuals control over how others see them on an interpersonal level, it also gives them control over how others view them as an outgroup member and how others view the outgroup as a whole. With increased interpersonal attraction and self–other overlap between cross-group friends, the outgroup friend becomes viewed as more similar to the self (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001), accompanied by an increase in the affection felt toward the outgroup friend and an increased appreciation for the well-being of the outgroup friend (Batson et al., 1997; Batson, Turk, Shaw, & Klein, 1995; Finlay & Stephan, 2000). The self–other overlap experienced with the outgroup friend eventually extends to include a self–other overlap with the outgroup as a whole (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001). Thus, attitudes held toward the outgroup become more positive, including increased trustworthiness and a greater willingness to cooperate with the outgroup.

Self-disclosure is also able to improve outgroup attitudes by tapping into the affective components that underlie intergroup relations. Meta-analytic evidence suggests that although outgroup knowledge significantly mediates the negative relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice, affective variables such as the empathic response and intergroup anxiety are more prominent mediators of the contact-prejudice relationship than is outgroup knowledge (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Self-disclosure is capable of both inducing positive affect (or what is referred to as *allophilia*; see Pittinsky, Rosenthal, & Montoya, this volume), such as empathy, and reducing negative affect, such as intergroup anxiety (Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, Paolini, & Christ, 2007).

Turner, Hewstone, and Voci (2007, Study 4) undertook a cross-sectional study among White British undergraduate students ( $N = 142$ ), exploring the relationships among cross-group friendships, self-disclosure with outgroup members, empathy toward the outgroup, and outgroup attitudes. Those participants reporting that they had cross-group friendships with South Asians also reported engaging in more reciprocal self-disclosure with South Asians and experiencing greater empathy toward South Asians. These participants were more likely to value positive intergroup relations with South Asians and were more likely to report having positive attitudes toward South Asians, including trust. This positive relationship between self-disclosure and empathy is not at all surprising, given the preceding discussion of how self-disclosure encourages an increased perception of self–other overlap. As described in the following section, experiencing empathy with another, being able to put oneself into the “shoes” of another individual or “climb into another’s skin,” can be considered one particular manifestation of the increased self–other overlap found in close interpersonal relationships (Aron et al., 2004).

In summary, then, reciprocal self-disclosure is an important friendship-developing and trust-building mechanism (Pettigrew, 1998). Though such reciprocal self-disclosure may include either individual-level information (i.e., information relating to the individual, such as hobbies and interests), group-level information (i.e., information relating to group customs or history, such as religious festivals or a group’s history of being victims of oppression), or both, individual-level reciprocal self-disclosure may be more important in encouraging the development of interpersonal attraction and facilitating trust (Miller, 2002) than group-level self-disclosure. The danger of entering into group-level self-disclosure too early in the initial interactions is that it may evoke negative responses, such as intergroup anxiety, that would lower the perceived quality of the contact experience (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). It is important to bear in mind that self-disclosure not only *builds* trust, it also *requires* trust if the self-disclosures are to reach particularly personal depths such as the volunteering of sensitive, personal information or, of particular relevance to postconflict societies, volunteering group-level disclosures. Reciprocal self-disclosure is instrumental in giving ingroup members an “inside view” into the world of their cross-group friend and the outgroup as a whole, partly through increased outgroup knowledge and, more importantly, through the generation of cognitive and affective empathy, to which we now turn.

## EMPATHY

The *empathic response* is one particular positive affective response that typically results from the reciprocal self-disclosure associated with close

interpersonal relationships (e.g., Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007). Davis (1994) described the empathic response in both cognitive and affective terms as “the ability to engage in the cognitive process of adopting another’s psychological point of view, and the capacity to experience affective reactions to the observed experience of others” (p. 45). Duan and Hill (1996) described the cognitive and affective dimensions of the empathic response as perspective taking and affective empathy, respectively. *Perspective taking* concerns the ability to “see,” or cognitively understand, the world from another’s point of view. *Affective empathy*, on the other hand, concerns the ability to experience vicariously the affective reaction of another.

These two forms of empathic responding have both been associated with a host of positive outcomes in interpersonal relationships, including more positive evaluative judgments of others, increased situational attributions for the behaviors of others, increased concern for the well-being of others, increased motivation to engage in altruistic behaviors, a sense of injustice or anger in response to discrimination, a common humanity, less stereotyping, and reduced prejudice (e.g., Batson et al., 1995, 1997; Davis, 1994; Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). These positive outcomes are often capable of lasting well after the initial empathic response has dissipated (Batson et al., 1995) and, important for the prospect of positive intergroup relations, are capable of generalizing from the interpersonal, cross-group friendships to the outgroup as a whole and even to other outgroups not involved in the contact situation (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000).

In one of our earliest studies on the importance of empathy in intergroup relations, Voci and Hewstone (2003) undertook in Italy a series of studies in which they explored Italians’ attitudes toward immigrants. Across all three studies, including independent samples of Italian adults and Italian factory workers, Voci and Hewstone (2003) found intergroup contact with immigrants to be positively associated with empathy for immigrants, which in turn was positively associated with outgroup attitudes toward immigrants and negatively associated with subtle prejudice against immigrants. Empathy has recently emerged as a significant mediator of the contact-prejudice relationship in postconflict societies such as Northern Ireland (e.g., Myers, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2009b) and South Africa (e.g., Swart et al., 2010a; Swart, Hewstone, Christ, & Voci, 2010b).

Batson et al. (1997) suggested that perspective taking and affective empathy can be related to one another in a three-step model describing how empathic responding might improve outgroup attitudes. In the first step, the ingroup friend imagines how the outgroup friend is affected by his or her situation, gaining some perspective on how the outgroup friend experiences the world by putting on the outgroup friend’s “shoes,” so to speak. This first step might be prompted during or after receiving self-disclosed information from



the outgroup friend. This cognitive empathic response, or perspective taking, then results in an affective empathic response (Batson et al., 1997).

In the second step, this affective empathic response is followed by an increased valuing of the well-being of the outgroup friend. This may be due to an increase in perceived self–other overlap (Aron et al., 1992, 2004; Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001). The increased sense of similarity or overlap between the in- and outgroup friend encourages the thoughts related to the outgroup friend to become more self-like, increasing perspective taking (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). In the process, a greater number of attributes used to describe the self or the ingroup are attributed to the outgroup friend (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Thus, the benefits usually reserved for the ingroup and the self are now extended to the outgroup friend. These benefits include an increased complexity with which the outgroup friend is viewed as an individual, given that the self is generally considered to be multifaceted and complex (Davis, 1994; Miller, 2002), increased trust of the outgroup friend (e.g., Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007), and a greater concern for the well-being of the outgroup friend (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Batson et al., 1997).

In the third step of Batson et al.'s (1997) model, the heightened valuing of the well-being of the outgroup friend generalizes to the entire outgroup. Furthermore, the ingroup friend develops a more complex view of the outgroup as a whole, perceiving the outgroup in a more complex manner, such as comprising many varied and complex individuals. This inhibits the reliance on stereotypes for processing group-related information (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; see also Aberson & Haag, 2007). As the outgroup is viewed and understood in more empathic, human terms, it should generate a greater willingness among the ingroup to forgive the outgroup for the wrongs of the past (see Hewstone et al., *in press*).

#### TOWARD POSITIVE INTERGROUP RELATIONS: FORGIVENESS AND TRUST

In the preceding sections, we have discussed the importance of two positive processes, reciprocal self-disclosure and empathy, that operate within the context of cross-group friendships and are capable of improving intergroup relations. We now turn to two particular outcomes of positive intergroup contact associated with more positive intergroup relations: outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust. We also highlight some of our most recent research undertaken in Northern Ireland and South Africa, exploring how intergroup contact might encourage both outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust in postconflict societies.

## Forgiveness

Memories of past events and conflicts often endure into the present in the collective memory of both victims and perpetrators living in postconflict societies, and such memories play an important role in fueling existing conflicts or rekindling old conflicts (Cairns & Roe, 2003). Cycles of aggression and revenge play a central role in the enduring nature of intergroup conflict (Nadler & Saguy, 2004), partly because the experience of victimization limits the willingness of individuals to forgive the perceived perpetrators for past wrongs (see Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006; Hewstone et al., 2004). Forgiveness offers one means through which these cycles may be broken (Nadler & Saguy, 2004) in that it allows victims and perpetrators to assimilate the past in a manner that does not provoke further violence (Boleyn-Fitzgerald, 2002; Hewstone et al., in press; see also Nadler & Shnabel, this volume).

Conceptualizations of forgiveness in the psychological literature include the release of anger (Boleyn-Fitzgerald, 2002) and the giving up of the right to revenge (Cloke, 1993). Definitions such as these have been corroborated in exploratory research using focus groups in conflict settings such as Northern Ireland (McLernon, Cairns, & Hewstone, 2002). The concept of intergroup forgiveness is gaining momentum as an essential psychological aspect of intergroup reconciliation in postconflict societies, stimulating the recent research on intergroup forgiveness in Northern Ireland (e.g., Hewstone et al., 2006; McLernon et al., 2002) and South Africa (e.g., Gibson & Gouws, 1999; Swart, Dixon, & Kagee, 2009). While forgiveness will not solve intergroup conflict in and of itself, at the very least it provides an opportunity for postconflict reconciliation (Hewstone et al., in press). It offers postconflict societies hope for the future as it orients groups toward a shared future, as opposed to continuously recycling the past in the form of reprisals and counterreprisals. This, in turn, holds distinct benefits in the form of improved mental health within postconflict societies. Recent evidence from Northern Ireland suggests that group-level forgiveness is negatively associated with the development of mild psychiatric conditions (Myers, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2009a). Unfortunately, forgiveness, as a complex prosocial transformation that can be powerfully healing, reconciling, and future-oriented, is volitional and cannot be prescribed or forced (Hewstone et al., in press). To do so would in all likelihood add to the cycle of violence rather than diminish it. One intervention that is considered capable of encouraging an increased willingness to forgive the outgroup is positive intergroup contact.

Positive intergroup contact experiences, particularly those that encourage the development of cross-group friendships (Pettigrew, 1997, 1998), have been shown to predict a greater willingness to forgive the outgroup (e.g., Swart et al., 2009; Tam et al., 2007). From our most recent survey research

with college students, representative national samples, and opportunity community samples among Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland (e.g., Myers, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2009b) and among Black South Africans (Swart et al., 2009), the relationship between intergroup contact and outgroup forgiveness appears to be mediated by an increase in perspective taking (Myers et al., 2009b) and affective empathy (Swart et al., 2009) toward the outgroup. Myers et al. (2009b) explored the simultaneous effects of perspective taking and affective empathy as mediators of the relationship between cross-group friendships and outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust. Cross-group friendships were positively associated with both perspective taking and affective empathy, which in turn were positively associated with outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust.

A number of other important findings related to the relationship between intergroup contact and outgroup forgiveness have also emerged from our research program. Space limitations permit mention of only some of these, briefly, but for more details see Hewstone et al. (2004, 2006, in press), Myers et al. (2009a), and Tam et al. (2007). Important correlates of outgroup forgiveness include (a) reduced anger-related emotions, (b) collective guilt, and (c) outgroup trust. Thus, a willingness to forgive the outgroup is an important step in overcoming some of the psychological barriers toward positive intergroup relations discussed in Butz and Plant (this volume). Conversely, greater ingroup identification and inhumanization of the outgroup (see Leyens et al., 2000) discourage outgroup forgiveness.

Together, these studies highlight the mechanisms that discourage outgroup forgiveness, namely, negative emotions, strong ingroup identification, and inhumanizing the outgroup. However, they also support the importance of positive intergroup contact experiences as a means of mitigating these limiting factors and augmenting those positive mechanisms that encourage outgroup forgiveness and reconciliation, such as perspective taking and affective empathy. Outgroup forgiveness has also been associated with another indicator of positive intergroup relations, namely, outgroup trust (Hewstone et al., 2004, 2006), to which we now turn.

## Trust

Mutual trust is an essential ingredient of any interpersonal relationship. Such mutual trust is often gradually established as the intimacy and self–other overlap between individuals increases (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Davies et al., this volume). As proposed by self-expansion theory, ingroup members who exhibit strong ingroup identification share a close self–other overlap with fellow ingroup members, often resulting in ingroup bias (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001). One of the ways in which this ingroup bias is

expressed is the perception of fellow ingroup members as trustworthy and outgroup members as untrustworthy.

Distrust often plays a central role in maintaining intergroup conflict (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002). Establishing outgroup trust therefore forms an essential part of strategies and policies aimed not only at deescalating intergroup conflict but also at developing positive intergroup relations once the conflict has passed. Outgroup trust can be defined as a positive expectation about the intentions and behavior of an outgroup toward the ingroup (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998) and is accompanied by the implicit expectation that this vulnerability to the intentions of the outgroup will not be abused or exploited by the outgroup (Dovidio et al., 2002). Given that outgroup trust requires ingroup members to make themselves vulnerable to the intentions of the outgroup, while outgroup attitudes do not, outgroup trust might be regarded as distinct from one's outgroup attitudes (Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009) and far more difficult to achieve than outgroup liking (Hewstone et al., 2008).

One particular reason why outgroup trust may be more difficult to achieve than outgroup liking is that more effort is often required to establish trust than is required to destroy it. Where it may require multiple positive encounters, or "trustworthy" behaviors, to build trust, it often requires only one "untrustworthy" act or betrayal to arouse distrust that is very resistant to change (Rothbart & Park, 1986). For this reason, the outgroup distrust stemming from a history of intergroup conflict often remains evident in postconflict societies long after the conflict itself has ended (e.g., Gibson, 2004).

Successfully establishing outgroup trust holds numerous benefits for intergroup relations. Trust is generally associated with the facilitation of a number of mutually beneficial outcomes (see Kramer & Carnevale, 2001). Creating and maintaining mutual trust is essential for the establishment of positive intergroup relations because, as a process, trust building is capable of replacing suspicion, fear, and anger with benevolence and cooperation (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000). It might be appropriate here to distinguish briefly between two forms of trust described by Lewicki and Wiethoff, namely, *calculus-based trust* and *identification-based trust*. Calculus-based trust is generally nonintimate and task-oriented, whereas identification-based trust is often more intimate in nature, relying on a greater understanding and appreciation of the two parties' needs. Calculus-based trust is often witnessed in the early stages of intimate, personal relationships, whereas identification-based trust comes to the fore in relationships characterized by greater closeness.

Promoting mutual trust within postconflict societies requires that the parties involved engage in the psychological process of reconciliation (Tam et al., 2008). Intergroup contact may provide a means for achieving this (Hewstone et al., 2008; see also Tropp, 2008). As discussed earlier, the development

of cross-group friendships is facilitated by reciprocal self-disclosure, perspective taking, and affective empathy. Self-disclosure, as the voluntary sharing of personal information, by its very nature requires a certain degree of trust in the person with whom this personal information is being shared (Petty & Mirels, 1981). While initial self-disclosures between individuals who are only beginning to get to know one another are bound to be relatively superficial, requiring minimal trust, these self-disclosures will become more intimate as the interpersonal relationship develops, requiring increasingly more trust. These self-disclosures allow group members to predict the future behavior of others, which is an important ingredient for the building of trust (Kerr, Stattin, & Trost, 1999)—specifically, identification-based trust (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000)—and encourages more positive outgroup attitudes. As will be recalled from our earlier discussion on self-disclosure, Turner, Hewstone, and Voci, (2007, Study 4) found that outgroup trust played an important role in mediating the relationship between self-disclosure in cross-group friendships and positive outgroup attitudes among White British undergraduate students and their interactions with South Asians in Britain.

In Northern Ireland, our recent research on outgroup trust among Protestants and Catholics has provided strong evidence that (a) both direct and indirect intergroup contact are positively associated with outgroup trust (e.g., Myers et al., 2009b; Tam et al., 2009), (b) affective empathy and perspective taking are important mediators of the relationship between cross-group friendships and outgroup trust (e.g., Myers et al., 2009b), and (c) outgroup trust is positively associated with positive behavioral action tendencies toward the outgroup (e.g., Tam et al., 2009). Furthermore, Tam et al. (2009) found that outgroup trust mediated the relationship between direct and extended intergroup contact and behavioral action tendencies toward the outgroup, while outgroup attitudes only marginally mediated direct contact effects and failed to mediate extended contact effects. These results suggest that building outgroup trust may be more important for the achievement of positive intergroup relations than simply pursuing outgroup liking.

Factors that discourage outgroup trust include strong ingroup identification (Myers et al., 2009b) and intergroup anxiety. Swart and Hewstone (2009) undertook a cross-sectional study among White and Colored South African high school students, exploring the relationship between cross-group friendships, intergroup anxiety, and outgroup trust. Cross-group friendships were positively associated with outgroup trust, and this relationship was mediated by a reduction in intergroup anxiety. Thus, cross-group friendships were associated with reduced intergroup anxiety, which in turn was associated with outgroup trust.

Moving from calculus-based trust toward identification-based trust in postconflict societies is important for encouraging positive intergroup relations. It allows suspicion and distrust of the outgroup, which is often characterized by

self-imposed segregation or negative behaviors toward the outgroup, to be replaced with a greater willingness to engage with the outgroup in a cooperative, constructive manner (Kramer & Carnevale, 2001; Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000). Frequent high-quality intergroup contacts have the potential to encourage outgroup trust through both self-disclosure and cognitive and affective empathy for the outgroup. It is, however, important to acknowledge that at this stage of our research program, the cross-sectional nature of most of the data we have presented here prevents us from drawing unequivocal causal conclusions about the nature of the various interrelationships we have described. So, for example, while the data support our hypothesis that positive intergroup contact promotes outgroup trust, it is also likely that greater outgroup trust will encourage greater intergroup contact. Longitudinal data are needed to better explore these causal relationships.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

As we have described, positive intergroup contact experiences are capable of bringing about more than just prejudice reduction; such experiences often encourage greater outgroup forgiveness and assist in building outgroup trust. Here, cross-group friendships may play a particularly important role, especially as they have been shown to encourage greater reciprocal self-disclosure, perspective taking, and affective empathy. Unfortunately, however, it is often the case that postconflict societies remain characterized by continued segregation, where cross-group friendships are the exception rather than the rule.

Initiatives and policies aimed at fostering more positive intergroup relations should pay particular attention to creating more opportunities for regular, high-quality contacts that possess acquaintance potential. In time such high-quality contacts will encourage the development of cross-group friendships (Davies et al., this volume). These contact-driven intergroup initiatives should be structured so as to encourage reciprocal self-disclosure, as this has been associated with increased perspective taking and affective empathy. Together, high-quality intergroup contact experiences that encourage the development of cross-group acquaintances and friendships, reciprocal self-disclosure, and increased empathic responding to the outgroup member and the outgroup as a whole should encourage greater outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust. This is suggested by our research findings reported above. It is important to emphasize that these benefits are unlikely to result from single, isolated contact experiences. Instead, multiple, varied opportunities for positive contact experiences should be created that will encourage outgroup forgiveness and build outgroup trust.

## CONCLUSION

The absence of outgroup forgiveness and the presence of outgroup distrust often characterize intergroup relations in postconflict societies. Achieving forgiveness and trust within postconflict societies is made all the more challenging in the face of continued segregation and a lack of cross-group relationships common in these societies. Intergroup contact serves as one means of encouraging positive intergroup relations. Positive intergroup contact experiences have consistently been associated with a reduction in outgroup prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Furthermore, our recent survey research in real-world postconflict settings provides strong support for the efficacy of intergroup contact in increasing outgroup forgiveness and building outgroup trust.

We have found that both direct intergroup contact and extended intergroup contact are associated with indicators of positive intergroup relations (e.g., Swart et al., 2010a, 2010b; Tam et al., 2009; Tausch, Hewstone, Schmid, Cairns, & Hughes, 2009). We have also identified reciprocal self-disclosure, perspective taking, and affective empathy as positive mediators of the relationship between intergroup contact, on the one hand, and outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust, on the other hand (e.g., Hewstone et al., 2004, 2006; Myers et al., 2009b; Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007).

The identification of these (and other) positive processes that promote the kind of positive intergroup relations that go beyond mere tolerance marks an important shift in the focus of social psychological research in intergroup relations. Findings such as those reported earlier in this chapter could be incorporated within reconciliation initiatives in postconflict societies. So, for example, such initiatives could be built around multiple, varied opportunities for positive intergroup contact experiences that give members of different groups the opportunity to learn and socialize together. These opportunities are essential for encouraging outgroup forgiveness and building outgroup trust. Specifically, such interventions should encourage reciprocal self-disclosure, affective empathy, and perspective taking, while also reducing anxiety about interacting with the outgroup. With this focus, reconciliation initiatives can strive to go beyond achieving tolerance between groups previously in conflict, toward promoting the kind of positive intergroup relations that are characterized by constructive intergroup interactions.

Further research on the positive processes that could encourage more positive intergroup relations in postconflict societies is needed. Although our recent research in Northern Ireland and South Africa has broadened our understanding of the processes underlying the relationship between positive intergroup contact and both outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust, it comprises mostly cross-sectional survey data. Despite numerous replications and

the fact that the findings we presented in this chapter were derived from the best-fitting model that was in each case superior to theoretically plausible alternatives, we recommend that future research explore the causal relationship between intergroup contact, affective and cognitive mediators, and outgroup forgiveness and outgroup trust using both experimental and longitudinal research. Such studies will deepen our understanding of the causal processes that drive the relationship between intergroup contact, outgroup forgiveness, and outgroup trust, and they will increase our confidence in the mediating processes highlighted in this chapter.

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