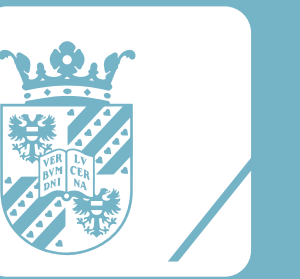


Psychological Needs in Intergroup Contacts

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? Why do perceptions change in intergroup contacts?

Background

Dealing with cultural diversity is one of the greatest societal challenges. The daily interpersonal interactions an immigrant has with people of the majority group (their outgroup) are essential to the cultural adaptation process (Maxwell & House, 2017). According to 'Intergroup Contact Theory', frequent and **positive** contacts with outgroup members will result in more positive outgroup attitudes. However, the key concept of interaction quality (i.e., how positive an interaction is) has for the past 60 years been described as a static and abstract evaluation. In this study, **we propose that the fulfillment of psychological needs might offer a more inclusive, flexible, and idiosyncratic understanding of what constitutes a positive interaction and thereby offers a psychological explanation of changes in outgroup attitudes.**

A month of an immigrant: A daily diary study

We used an extensive longitudinal sampling procedure to collect ecologically valid data on daily intergroup contacts of first-generation migrants in the Netherlands.

DESIGN



23 participants



32 days



2 daily measurements



1225 measurements

MEASURES



intergroup contacts



psychological needs

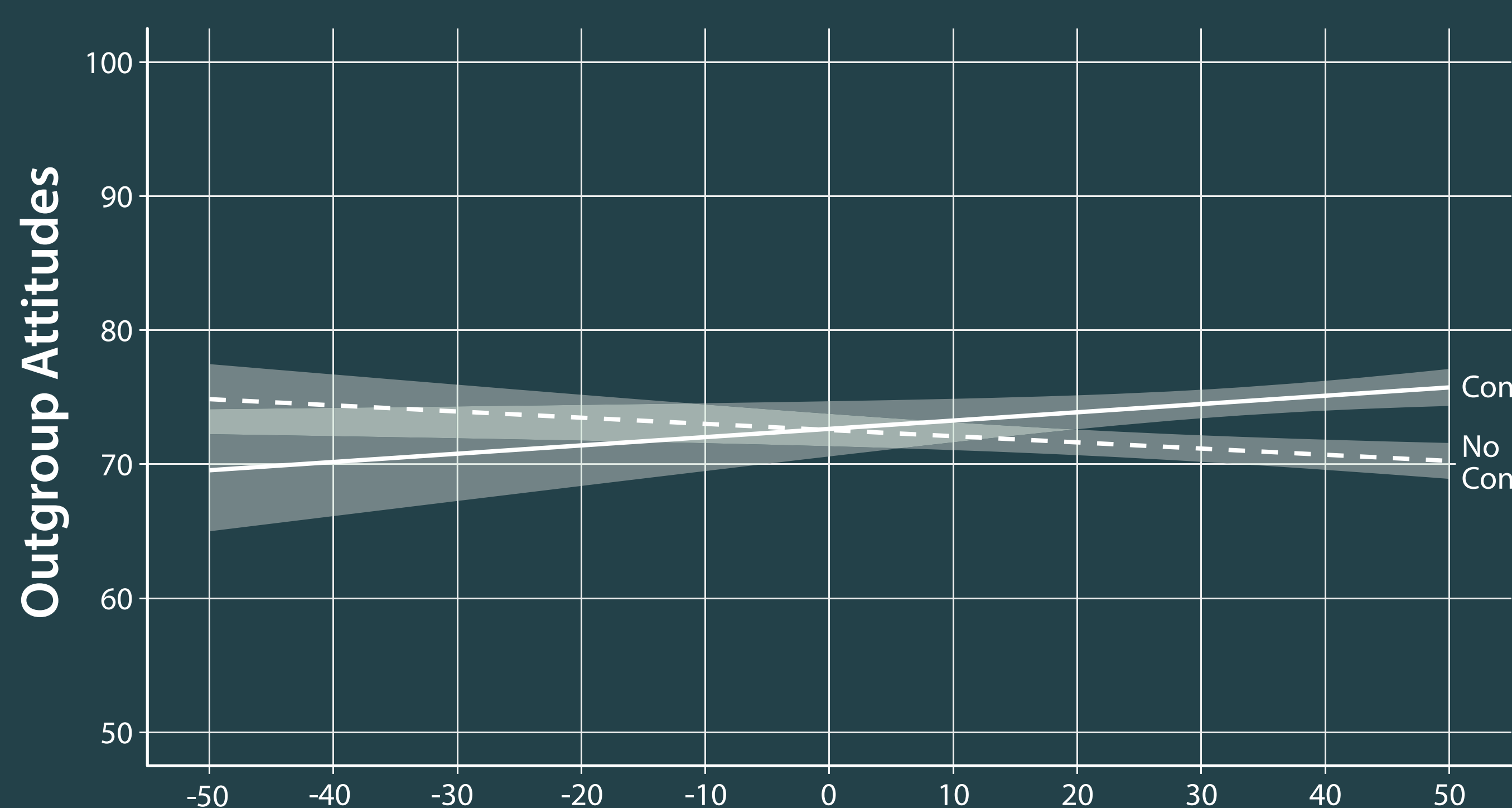


interaction quality



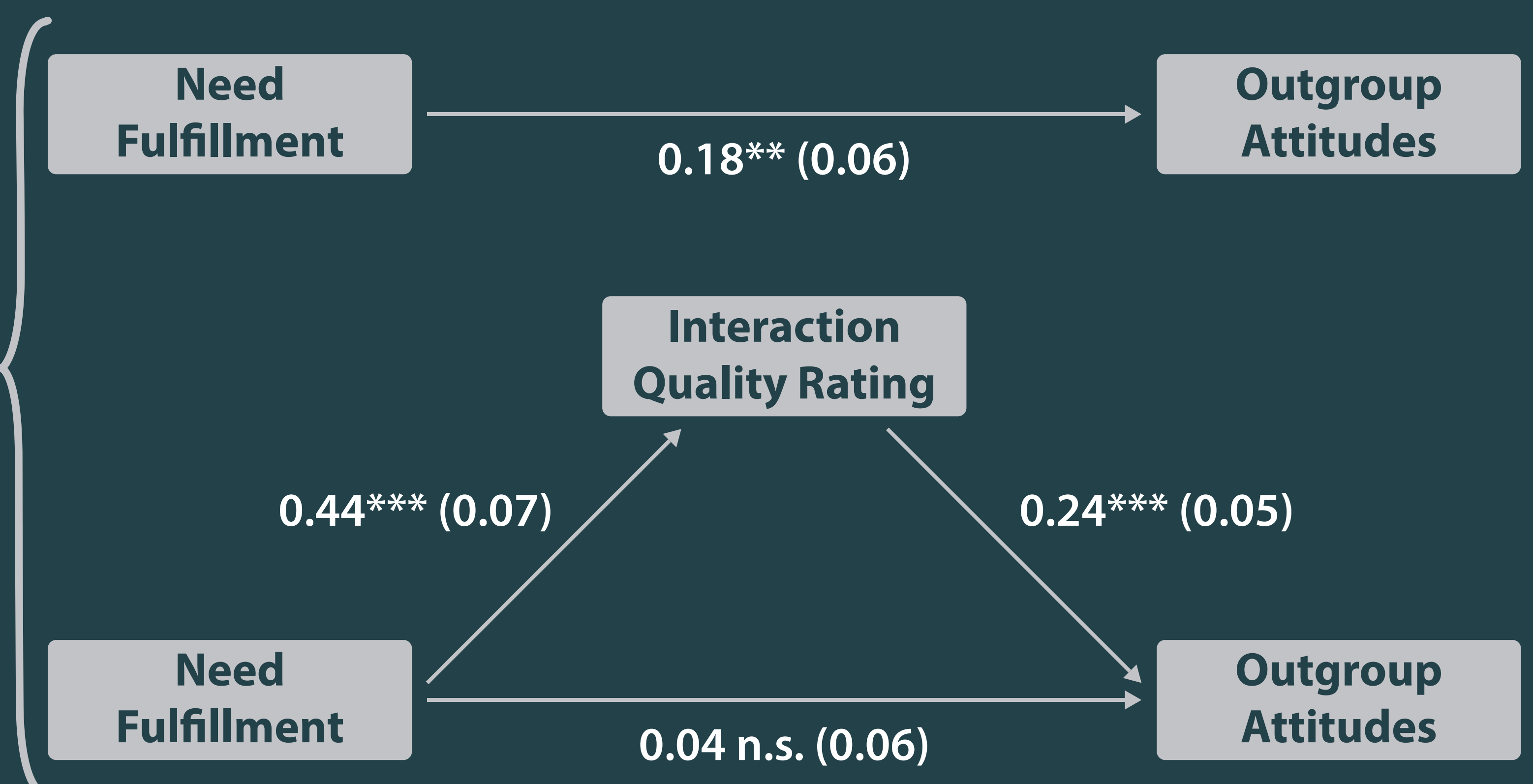
outgroup attitudes

! Situational needs predict attitudes via quality!



Fulfillment Key Situation Need

"What was your most important goal [during the interaction / this morning / this afternoon]?"



Path values indicate unstandardized multilevel regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

In the daily diary study we found that **participants had more favorable evaluations of the Dutch majority outgroup after they had an interaction that fulfilled their key momentary psychological need** ($b = 0.08$, $t(1193.26) = 2.85$, $p = .004$, 95% boot CI [0.03, 0.13]). We additionally found an indirect (mediation) **effect of need fulfillment on outgroup attitudes through a higher perceived interaction quality for the individual interactions** ($b = 0.09$, $z = 3.46$, $p < .001$, 95% MC CI [0.05, 0.15]) – providing further evidence for need fulfillment as an important psychological explanation of when and why intergroup contacts lead to positive outgroup evaluations.