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Reducing Turkish Cypriot children's prejudice toward Greek Cypriots: Vicarious and extended intergroup contact through storytelling

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Abstract

Two studies investigated the effectiveness of intergroup contact in Turkish Cypriot children with the aim of improving attitudes, intentions, and trust toward Greek Cypriots. In the first study, we found that positive contact and positive family storytelling were associated with more positive outgroup attitudes and intended outgroup behavior in a group of 6- to 12-year-old Turkish Cypriots. We followed this up in Study 2 by using a vicarious intergroup contact intervention technique. Turkish Cypriot children aged 6–11 years took part in a 3-week intervention involving reading stories of solidarity between Turkish and Greek Cypriot children. Results showed that the intervention worked to improve outgroup attitudes, intended behavior, and outgroup trust. These findings suggest that indirect contact techniques such as extended contact and vicarious intergroup contact can be used as prejudice-reduction tools in intractable conflict zones, most in need of such interventions.

Keywords

conflict, Cyprus, extended contact, prejudice, prejudice reduction, Turkish Cypriots, vicarious intergroup contact

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Intergroup bias can be seen in children of early and middle childhood (e.g., Aboud, 1988; Brown, 1995; Nesdale, 2001). Recent evidence shows that school interventions aimed at reducing negative attitudes toward stigmatized groups can be effective, particularly those based on social and developmental theoretical frameworks (e.g., Cameron, Rutland, & Brown, 2007; Vezzali, Capozza, Stathi, & Giovannini, 2012). Two studies are presented in this paper that aim to investigate the effectiveness of intergroup contact in improving attitudes, intentions, and trust in the outgroup in the context of the interethnically divided island of Cyprus.

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Indirect Contact

Positive intergroup contact is one of the most effective ways to reduce prejudice and intergroup discrimination in adults (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) as well as children (Aboud & Levy, 2000; Aboud, Medelson, & Purdy, 2003; Maras & Brown, 1996). Research has also established that indirect forms of contact are similarly effective means of reducing prejudice. One such indirect approach is "extended contact" (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). This is the idea that more favorable attitudes will develop when ingroup members have knowledge of other ingroup members' friendship with an outgroup member. Such vicarious experiences of friendship have been found to improve attitudes in adults (Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2004; Wright et al., 1997); adolescents (Liebkind & McAlister, 1999; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008; Turner, Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2013); and children (Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006; Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, & Trifiletti, 2014).

It is important that research considers children since they can express intergroup bias and negative intergroup attitudes from a young age, by attributing more positivity to their own group members compared with other groups whether they are ethnic and national groups or even minimal groups (e.g., Abrams, Rutland, & Cameron, 2003; Brown, 1995; Cameron et al., 2006; Nesdale, Durkin, Maass, Kiesner, & Griffiths, 2008; Rutland et al., 2007). For instance, children are more likely to prefer playing with members of their own group (Hayden-Thompson, Rubin, & Hymel, 1987; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987) and show more general positive affect for their own groups as compared to others, a process which can also lead to prejudice (Nesdale, Durkin, Maass, & Griffiths, 2005; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001).

It is for this reason that prejudice reduction techniques aimed at children are vital in tackling such attitudes. In a series of studies, Cameron and colleagues (Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Cameron et al., 2007; Cameron et al., 2006; Cameron, Rutland, Hossain, & Petley, 2011) developed an "extended contact" prejudice-reduction intervention which they implemented in schools with British children. The interventions exposed children to illustrated stories portraying ingroup and outgroup children in friendship contexts, such as nondisabled and disabled children, or, White English children and non-White refugee children. Cameron and colleagues have repeatedly shown this technique to be effective, such that those children who receive the extended contact intervention report more improved outgroup attitudes compared to those children in the control conditions.

Similarly, Vezzali and colleagues (Vezzali, Stathi, & Giovannini, 2012; Vezzali et al., 2014) provided evidence for the effectiveness of books that include intercultural themes in improving outgroup attitudes. They found that 11- to 13-year-old Italian children displayed improved attitudes and behavioral intentions, and decreased stereotyping toward immigrants as a result of reading books where characters from different cultures had positive interactions with characters from a culture similar to that of participants. Furthermore, they found evidence that the popular best-selling *Harry Potter* books helped to improve attitudes toward stigmatized groups such as immigrants and gay people via perspective-taking.

More recent conceptualizations of extended contact include distinguishing between "classic" extended contact research (i.e., knowledge about an intergroup relationship; Wright et al., 1997) and vicarious intergroup contact (Gómez & Huici, 2008; Ortiz & Harwood, 2007; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, Paolini, & Christ, 2007). Consistent with Bandura's (1986) "vicarious learning" and social-cognitive theory, vicarious intergroup contact offers an opportunity to observe ingroup members engaging successfully in cross-group contact in which an ingroup role model shows how successful cross-group contact is possible. In a study by Mazziotta, Mummendey, and Wright (2011) two video-based experiments showed that vicarious contact improved attitudes towards the outgroup and increased German participants' willingness to engage in direct cross-group contact with a Chinese outgroup.

Though very informative, none of the studies reported here have conducted their research in contexts defined by real-life conflict. Showing that contact interventions work, even in cultures defined by an "ethos" of intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin, & Zafran, 2012) would be a most worthy testament to the effectiveness of such an approach. Cyprus, with its sociopolitical status is therefore an ideal and unique context in which to study the promises of contact interventions.

The Case of Cyprus

We carried out our study in a context of prolonged conflict between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. The "Cyprus problem," as it is known today, arose from communal differences between Greek and Turkish Cypriots that were politicized by foreign interests. Specifically, a rise in nationalism led to Greek Cypriots' aspirations for Enosis, or union with Greece, which was countered by Turkish Cypriots' desire for Taksim, or partition of the island between Greece and Turkey (Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis & Trigeorgis, 1993). This culminated in intergroup violence and the eventual intervention of Turkey in 1974, regarded as an illegal invasion by Greek Cypriots but as a peace operation by Turkish Cypriots. The result was a ceasefire line that left Turkish Cypriots in the northern one third of the island and Greek Cypriots in the south. Today, a UN mediation effort continues with UN soldiers remaining on the "Green Line," which separates the two ethnicities. Despite several attempts at settlement, no agreement has yet prevailed and Nicosia is still widely regarded as the last divided capital in the world.

Although the generation of Turkish Cypriot children taken in this study did not directly experience war and conflict themselves, they still experience remnants of the war via school curriculum and textbooks, parental and teacher discourse, and practices and mass media representation which include Greek Cypriots as the traditional "enemy" (Kizilyurek, 1999; Spyrou, 2002, 2006). It is therefore not surprising that research by Mertan (2011) found that Turkish Cypriot children show ingroup favoritism and negativity toward the outgroup Greek Cypriots. Across the Green Line, it has been found that internalization of national pride is positively correlated with ingroup bias in Greek Cypriot children (Stavrinides & Georgiou, 2011). The researchers found that Greek Cypriot children reported more positive attitudes toward the Turkish Cypriot outgroup when they were younger. Older children were more likely to perceive Turkish Cypriots negatively. It is likely that as children grow older they are more exposed to stories, myths, and legends of how Greek Cypriots were victimized at the hands of Turks. The Hellenocentric structure of the education system promotes nontolerance for anything Turkish including Turkey, Turkish people, as well as Turkish Cypriots (Stavrinides & Georgiou, 2011). Children on both sides of the divide are taught to sing the Greek and Turkish national anthem by age 5 and often perform plays and songs with patriotic and/or nationalistic references. Due to such factors it is therefore critical that interventions aimed at reducing children's prejudice are developed and implemented in Cyprus.

Intergroup Contact in Cyprus

Cyprus represents one example where the benefits of contact have remained unrealized due to its extreme low levels of actual contact. Results from the first-wave of longitudinal research on crossing the Green Line by Psaltis and Lytras (2012) show that despite the partial lifting of travel restrictions in 2003, there is still a substantial percentage of the population from both communities who have not yet crossed to the other side of the divide (22.81% of Turkish Cypriots and 32.87% of Greek Cypriots). In fact, one study found that 57% of Greek Cypriots considered it "inappropriate" for Greek Cypriots to cross the Green Line, stating that travelling to the North would pose an implicit recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, a political entity recognized by Turkey alone and considered

by most Greek Cypriots to be an illegal occupation regime, and the spending of money would serve to fuel the economy of the illegal state (Webster & Timothy, 2006).

There are also only a handful of studies that have been conducted in Cyprus on intergroup contact. In one such study, Tausch et al. (2010) found that contact between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots was associated with more positive attitudes to the respective Cypriot outgroup in addition to attitudes toward the mainland outgroup (e.g., Greeks in Greece or Turks in Turkey) showing evidence of secondary transfer effects of contact.

Another relevant study was conducted by Husnu and Crisp (2010) who implemented an imagined contact intervention in Cyprus. In their study, Turkish Cypriots were asked to imagine contact with a Greek Cypriot in order to enhance intentions to engage in future contact. Those participants who repeatedly imagined positive contact with Greek Cypriots subsequently reported greater intentions to engage in future contact.

One final study was conducted with Greek Cypriots aimed at comparing direct and vicarious contact effect on attitudes toward Turkish Cypriots (Ioannou, 2009). In a pre- posttest experimental design, Greek Cypriot students either interacted with a Turkish Cypriot confederate in a laboratory setting (direct contact condition) or watched as a friend interacted with the Turkish Cypriot confederate (vicarious contact condition). It was found that in both conditions, attitudes changed for the positive with direct contact having a greater impact on attitudes compared to vicarious contact.

Based on the literature reviewed here, findings in Cyprus are few and quite disconnected from one another. Consequently, it is vital to conduct further studies examining the effectiveness of different contact strategies (e.g., direct, extended, and vicarious) in this postconflict setting. Importantly, research with children samples have not yet been conducted in Cyprus, despite childhood being critical in the development of intergroup attitudes (Aboud, 1988). Therefore, in Study 1 the aim was to establish the role of contact measures (direct and extended) in determining outgroup attitudes and enhanced intentions toward future contact in Turkish Cypriot children. Having determined the role of direct and indirect contact, the aim of the second study was to use a vicarious intergroup contact intervention in children to improve their attitudes, intentions, and trust toward Greek Cypriots.

Study 1

The aim of the first study was to assess the role of contact measures in predicting positive outgroup attitudes and enhanced intentions toward future contact in Turkish Cypriot children. More specifically, we examined positive and negative direct contact as well as positive and negative extended contact in the form of family storytelling. Including various forms (direct vs. indirect) and valences (positive vs. negative) of contact, will allow us to better decipher the varying roles contact might play in influencing attitudes and intentions in a postconflict context.

The role of extended contact via family storytelling is of particular significance in younger age groups in postconflict settings such as Cyprus. Given the young age of the participant pool, we assumed an important source of information regarding the outgroup would be provided within the home environment. Due to the segregation between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, gaining first-hand knowledge for children via direct contact is a less viable option and older family members (parents, grandparents) who experienced life with the outgroup before the war (and hence desegregation) will play a significant role in determining attitudes and intentions toward future contact. Relatedly, in their research into the effects of extended contact Tausch, Hewstone, Schmid, Hughes, and Cairns (2011) found that extended contacts via more intimate ingroup relationships (i.e., friends and family) were overall more strongly related to outcome measures (i.e., trust) than extended contacts via less intimate ingroup relations (i.e., neighbors and work colleagues) signaling the critical role closer ingroup members (such as family) might play.

Similarly, in the postconflict setting of Kosovo, authors Andrighetto, Mari, Volpato, and Behluli (2012) found evidence that extended contact was the primary (if not only) source of contact for Kosovar Albanian students who had reported minimal contact with the Serbian outgroup. Furthermore, participants reported older family members to be the main source of extended contact as they were the only groups to have experienced positive intergroup relations and less segregation between the communities. It is worth noting that the outlined studies only used positive family storytelling as extended contact sources and did not include extended contact in the form of negative family storytelling. The current study also aims to fill this gap.

Recent studies have been conducted to compare the effects of positive and negative contact. For instance, both experimental and longitudinal evidence by Paolini and colleagues (Barlow et al., 2012; Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010; Paolini et al., 2014) have pointed toward negative contact as being more influential on prejudice compared to positive contact experiences. However, findings by Stark, Flache, and Veenstra (2013) found that in the classroom context, not only negative (disliking) interpersonal attitudes but positive (liking) ones towards particular outgroup students were also effective in generalizing to the outgroup as a whole. Similarly, other studies have shown a relative prominence of positive contact (Pettigrew, 2008; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), hence, suggesting that the picture might be complex. The current study therefore included both positive and negative contact in order to shed light on which might be more prominent in postconflict settings such as Cyprus.

Method

Participants

Eighty-six native Turkish Cypriot children (40 male, 46 female) aged between 6 and 12 years (M = 9.09, SD = 1.61) participated in this study. After receiving parental consent, children were recruited from two local schools and tested either in their school or home environments.

Procedure

After receiving parental consent, children were tested in their home or school environment in a quiet room. Children were individually interviewed for approximately 20–30 minutes by a research assistant. The research assistant was trained to control his/her reactions to the responses of the children, to make sure not to provide any positive or negative feedback, to reduce the likelihood of socially desirable answers, and to reduce the likelihood of demand characteristics. Answers to the questions of the scales were printed on flash cards to enhance readability and children were asked to point to the flash card that best reflected their opinion.

Materials

Direct and indirect contact. Participants indicated the *quantity of positive and negative past contact* (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; e.g., "In everyday life, how frequently do you have positive/negative interactions with Greek Cypriots?" 1 = *never/not at all*, 4 = *very frequently/a lot*). In order to measure extended contact, items measuring storytelling about the outgroup followed; we measured *positive/negative family stories* (Paolini et al., 2014; e.g., "Do/did any of your family members tell you pleasant/unpleasant stories about Greek Cypriots?" 1 = *none*; 2 = *1*; 3 = *2–5*; 4 = *5–10*, numbers represent number of individuals telling such stories). Response options were presented pictorially on flash cards using different number of stick people figures to illustrate the different proportion of people (Cameron et al., 2007).

Intergroup Attitude Measure

This measure was based on a modified version of the Multiple-Response Racial Attitude Scale (Aboud, 2003; Doyle & Aboud, 1995). Children were presented with six positive and six negative attributes. Positive words included *clean, friendly, clever, happy, honest*, and *hardworking* and negative words were *dirty, hostile, stupid, lazy, unhappy*, and *dishonest*. These traits were randomized when presented to each participant. They were

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables in Study 1.

	M (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Positive direct contact	1.68 (0.94)	–						
2. Negative direct contact	1.81 (1.02)	.27*	–					
3. Positive storytelling	1.84 (1.22)	.19†	−.02	–				
4. Negative storytelling	2.23 (1.19)	−.06	.18	−.29**	–			
5. Ingroup attitudes	3.24 (2.14)	.09	.03	.41**	−.32**	–		
6. Outgroup attitudes	0.72 (2.9)	.32**	.02	.47**	−.28*	.32**	–	
7. Outgroup intended behavior	2.35 (1.0)	. 18	−.19	.30**	−.12	.07	.39**	–

Note. Contact measures all may range from 1 to 4; ingroup and outgroup attitudes may range from −6 to +6; outgroup intended behavior may range from 1 to 5.
*p < .05 level. **p < .01 level. † = .09.

instructed to pick out those words which they thought best described Turkish Cypriots and then Greek Cypriots. Children were given the opportunity to allocate each attribute to both groups. An ingroup attitude score was calculated by subtracting the negative trait score from the positive trait score for the Turkish Cypriot group. An outgroup attitude score was also obtained by subtracting the negative trait score from the positive trait score for the Greek Cypriot group. Ingroup and outgroup attitude scores had a minimum value of −6 and maximum value of +6, with a higher score indicating positive attitudes toward the group in question.

Intended Behavior Measure

The children were asked to state how they intended to behave in a hypothetical situation toward outgroup members (Cameron et al., 2006). Children were presented with a hypothetical scenario in which they imagined going to a park and meeting a Greek Cypriot (for outgroup intended behavior). Participants were asked to rate how much they would like to play with the target, how much they would like the target, how much they would like to meet them again to go to the cinema or invite them to stay overnight. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*really would not want to*) to 5 (*would really like to*). Reliability scores were examined and found to be reliable (Cronbach's alpha was .82). Since the aim of the study was to find out the role of contact on outgroup attitudes and intended behavior, ingroup intended behavior was not measured.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary Analysis

Data were subjected to a one-way repeated subjects ANOVA. A significant effect of group on attitudes was obtained, $F(1, 85) = 60.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .42$. Ingroup attitudes ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.23$) were significantly more positive than outgroup attitudes ($M = 0.72$, $SD = 0.31$). In line with previous research, Turkish Cypriot children showed clear ingroup bias (Bennett, Lyons, Sani, & Barrett, 1998; Mertan, 2011; Rutland, 1999).

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among variables are shown in Table 1. Turkish Cypriot children reported a low amount of intergroup contact. Despite the partial opening of the crossing points, intergroup contact still remains low (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus [UNFICYP], 2007), however, findings show that out of both communities, frequent crossers (i.e., those who report crossing the Green Line more than seven times) are more likely to be found in the TC community (46.13%) compared to GCs (7.72%) which might account for the (albeit low) amount of contact reported by the children. Positive and negative direct contact were also positively correlated, suggesting that those more exposed to the outgroup have both positive

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analysis for outgroup attitudes in Study 1.

	B	*SEb*	β
Step 1			
Positive direct contact	.65	.32	.23*
Step 1 statistics:	R^2 = .052*		
Step 2			
Positive direct contact	.72	.34	.25*
Negative direct contact	−.24	.32	−.09
Step 2 statistics:	R^2 = .06	⊿ R^2 = .007	
Step 3			
Positive direct contact	.45	.30	.16
Negative direct contact	−.18	.29	−.07
Positive storytelling	1.03	.22	.47***
Step 3 statistics:	R^2 = .28	⊿ R^2 = .22***	
Step 4			
Positive direct contact	.44	.30	.16
Negative direct contact	−.12	.29	−.04
Positive storytelling	.92	.23	.43***
Negative storytelling	−.39	.24	−.17
Step 4 statistics:	R^2 = .30	⊿ R^2 = .03	

Note. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001 level.

and negative experiences. On the other hand, the correlation between positive and negative storytelling was negative, suggesting a selection process within families, such that those who choose to tell positive stories were less likely to tell negative stories (and vice versa). Positive outgroup contact was significantly positively correlated with outgroup attitudes. Positive family storytelling about Greek Cypriots was positively related to outgroup attitudes and intended behavior. Additionally, negative family storytelling about Greek Cypriots was negatively related to outgroup attitudes.

Outgroup Attitudes

To examine the relations between each type of contact (positive direct, negative direct, positive extended, negative extended) and our dependent variable (outgroup attitudes), over and above direct contact and extended contact, we performed a hierarchical regression analysis. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. Examination of the data revealed no significant multicollinearity among variables as no values approached or exceeded the limits in any of the regression models (highest variance inflation factor [VIF] = 1.14; lowest tolerance levels = .88).

Positive direct contact was entered in Step 1 to assess its role on outgroup attitudes and to control for its positive correlation with negative direct contact which was entered in the second step. Thirdly, positive storytelling was entered to the regression analysis and finally negative storytelling was entered. As can be seen in Table 2, a significant amount of variance in outgroup attitudes was explained in the first step of our regression analysis: R^2 = .052, $F(1, 74)$ = 4.04, p = .048. Positive direct contact was related to more positive outgroup attitudes (β = .23, p = .048). Adding negative direct contact in Step 2 did not lead to a significant improvement in the regression model: Δ R^2 = .007, $F(2, 73)$ = 2.28, p = .10. However, in Step 3, with the addition of positive storytelling, a significant improvement in the regression model was observed, Δ R^2 = .22, $F(3, 72)$ = 9.16, p = < .001, whereby positive storytelling (β = .47,

$p < .001$) was found to be a significant predictor, explaining an additional 22% of additional variance in outgroup attitudes. In the final model, with the addition of negative storytelling, a significant improvement in the regression model was not found: $\Delta R^2 = .03$, although the model was significant $F(4, 71) = 7.64$, $p < .001$. Positive storytelling alone significantly predicted outgroup attitudes, $\beta = .43$, $p < .001$. These results show that both forms of positive contact (direct and indirect experiences) were more influential. It might be the case that in contexts defined by intractable conflict, the baseline is already negative, which leaves little room for any marginal effect of limited direct and indirect negative contact. However, there is considerable room for significant effects of limited positive contact (Bar-Tal et al., 2012).

Study 2

In Study 1, we found evidence of low intergroup contact which warrants the need for alternative indirect contact interventions in contexts of conflict. Additionally, we found extended contact in the form of family storytelling in Turkish Cypriot children was predictive of positive attitudes toward Greek Cypriots. Building on these findings, we tested an alternative extended contact intervention, namely vicarious intergroup contact to see whether it would be effective for enhancing positive attitudes, intended behaviors, and trust toward Greek Cypriots. Once again, we measured direct contact and extended contact (via storytelling) at the pretest phase to assess the role of prior contact experiences (see Cameron et al., 2011). To our knowledge, this is the first attempt to incorporate all three contact forms: direct, extended, and vicarious intergroup contact and will therefore make a novel contribution to the literature. The intervention was based on a pre- and posttest design without a control group.

Method

Participants

Seventy-five Turkish Cypriot children (39 boys; 36 girls) aged between 6 and 11 years ($M = 8.20$, $SD = 1.44$) participated in the study. After receiving parental consent, children were recruited from four local schools (different to those in Study 1) and tested in their school environments.

Design

The study used a repeated and mixed design depending on the dependent variables being tested. The dependent variables were attitudes, intended behavior, and outgroup trust. The independent variables were gender and interview phase (pre vs. post). Similarly to Study 1, amount of direct and indirect positive contact was also assessed.

Procedure

The study aimed to assess the effects of a storytelling intervention. All children took part in a 3-week intervention session, each lasting about 30 minutes. The intervention took place in small groups (5–6 children) and was implemented once a week for 3 consecutive weeks in the presence of a research assistant. The vicarious intergroup contact intervention entailed reading stories to children, which involved Turkish Cypriot ingroup members who had close friendships with Greek Cypriot outgroup members. These stories were based on previous research using extended contact techniques (e.g., Cameron & Rutland, 2006). The stories involved Turkish and Greek Cypriot children in friendship situations and adventures, for example saving a lost puppy and retrieving it to its owner or making their own kite. After reading the story, children took part in a group discussion with the researcher in order to reinforce the content of the story. In line with the intergroup model of contact (Brown & Hewstone, 2005), typicality of the Greek Cypriot character was emphasized throughout the stories.

Dependent Measures

There were two phases of the interview: pre- and postintervention. Participants were interviewed

individually 1 week before the intervention began and approximately one week after the intervention ended. The preintervention took approximately 25 minutes and postintervention took about 20 minutes. Measures of attitudes, intended behavior, and trust were obtained at both sessions. Direct and extended contact measures however were obtained only at the preinterview session.

Direct and Extended Contact Measures

In the preintervention phase, similarly to Study 1, we assessed direct contact, however this time focusing purely on positive contact experiences. Therefore, participants were asked to indicate the *quantity of positive past contact* (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; e.g., "In everyday life, how frequently do you have positive interactions with Greek Cypriots?" 1 = *never/not at all*, 4 = *very frequently/a lot*). Once again, to measure extended contact, items measuring storytelling about the outgroup followed; we measured *positive family stories* (Paolini et al., 2014; e.g., "Do/did any of your family members tell you pleasant stories about Greek Cypriots?" 1 = *none*; 2 = *1*; 3 = *2–5*; 4 = *5–10*). Finally, in order to encompass all types of indirect contact, participants completed measures of *indirect cross-group friendship* (Paolini et al., 2004; e.g., "How many of your very best Turkish Cypriot friends have friends who are Greek Cypriot?"; 1 = *0*; 4 = *more than 10*).

Intergroup Attitude Measure

The same Multiple-Response Racial Attitude measure (MRA; Aboud, 2003; Doyle & Aboud, 1995) was utilized as in Study 1. Children were presented with the same 12 (six positive and six negative) attributes and were instructed to pick out those words which they thought best described Turkish Cypriots and then Greek Cypriots. Once again, the ratings were collapsed to form single indices by calculating a composite score for each group. Ingroup and outgroup attitude scores were calculated by subtracting the negative trait score from the positive trait score, with a minimum value of −6 and maximum value of +6. Higher scores indicated positive attitudes toward the group in question.

Intended Behavior Measure

The same intended behavior measure was used as in Study 1. Children were presented with a hypothetical scenario in which they imagined going to a park and meeting a Turkish Cypriot or a Greek Cypriot (for both ingroup and outgroup intended behavior, respectively). Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*really would not want to*) to 5 (*would really like to*). Reliability scores were examined for both groups and interview phase and were all reliable (Cronbach's alpha for preintervention ingroup and outgroup was .78 and .82, respectively, and Cronbach's alpha for postintervention ingroup and outgroup was .81 and .80, respectively).

Outgroup Trust

A single item was used to assess outgroup trust (Vezzali, Capozza, et al., 2012; e.g. "How much would you trust a Greek Cypriot child to borrow your favorite toy?"). Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*really would not want*) to 5 (*would really like*).

Results and Discussion

Preliminary Analysis

Similar to Study 1, descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among variables at pretest are shown in Table 3. As can be seen, once again there are significant effects of positive storytelling on the outcome measures, replicating results from Study 1.

Main Analyses

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, the analysis was first conducted with gender as an independent variable. Due to nonsignificant findings,[1] the analysis was conducted with the main independent variables group and phase of interview alone.

Table 3. Means, standard deviations for direct and indirect contact measures, and correlations between contact measures and ingroup/outgroup attitudes, ingroup/outgroup intended behavior, and outgroup trust in Study 2 at pretest phase.

	M (*SD*)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Positive direct contact	1.86 (0.96)	–							
2. Positive storytelling	2.23 (1.57)	.18	–						
3. Indirect cross-group friendship	1.66 (0.98)	.14	.20	–					
4. Ingroup attitudes		−.07	.03	−.02	–				
5. Ingroup intentions		−.09	.15	.14	.10	–			
6. Outgroup attitudes		.03	.30*	.02	−.06	.13	–		
7. Outgroup intentions		.02	.32*	.02	.06	.30**	.31**	–	
8. Outgroup trust		.13	.38**	.05	−.08	.31**	.34**	.54**	–

Note. All contact measures may range from 1 to 4.
*p < .05 level. **p < .01 level.

Attitudes

Attitudes were submitted to a 2 (group: ingroup vs. outgroup) x 2 (interview phase: pre- vs. postinterview) repeated subjects design ANOVA. ANOVA revealed a main effect for group, $F(1, 74) = 75.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .51$. Ingroup attitudes ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.20$) were higher than outgroup attitudes ($M = 0.82$, $SD = 0.28$). A significant main effect of interview phase was found, $F(1, 74) = 11.15$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$. Postintervention attitudes ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.20$) were significantly higher than preintervention attitudes ($M = 0.79$, $SD = 0.28$). A two-way interaction between group and interview was significant, $F(1, 74) = 3.96$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .051$. Paired sample t tests showed that there was a significant effect of interview phase on attitudes toward the outgroup, $t(74) = 3.12$, $p = .003$ with outgroup attitudes being significantly higher postintervention compared with preintervention. As expected, there was no significant effect of interview phase on ingroup attitudes, $t(74) = 1.30$, $p = .20$ (see Table 4).

Intended Behavior

Intended behavior were submitted to the same 2 (group: ingroup vs. outgroup) x 2 (interview phase: pre- vs. postinterview) repeated subjects design ANOVA. Analysis revealed a significant main effect of group, $F(1, 74) = 55.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .43$. Ingroup intended behaviors ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.096$) were higher than outgroup intentions ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.12$). A significant main effect of interview phase was found, $F(1, 74) = 17.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$. Postintervention intended behaviors ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.11$) were significantly higher than preintervention intentions ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.10$). Additionally, a significant interaction between group and interview phase was also obtained, $F(1, 74) = 5.47$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2 = .07$. Paired sample t tests showed that there was a significant effect of interview phase on outgroup intended behavior, $t(74) = 3.99$, $p < .001$, with outgroup intentions being significantly higher postintervention compared with preintervention outgroup intentions. In contrast (and as expected), there was no significant effect of interview phase on ingroup intended behavior, $t(74) = 1.56$, $p = .12$.

Outgroup Trust

A significant effect of interview phase was found on trust, $t(65) = 4.65$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 5.06$. Postintervention trust scores were significantly higher than preintervention ones.

General Discussion

The aim of the two studies was to assess the role of intergroup contact on Turkish Cypriot

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of outgroup attitude and intended behavior, ingroup attitude and intended behavior, and trust as a function of phase of interview in Study 2.

	Preintervention *M* (*SD*)	Postintervention *M* (*SD*)	*t* test
Outgroup attitudes	0.03 (3.01)	1.55 (3.41)	3.12*
Outgroup intended behavior	3.08 (1.26)	3.68 (1.19)	3.99***
Ingroup attitudes	3.33 (2.16)	3.72 (2.16)	1.30
Ingroup intended behavior	4.05 (0.92)	4.22 (0.98)	1.56
Outgroup trust	2.64 (0.17)	3.50 (0.17)	4.65***

Note. Outgroup and ingroup attitudes may range from −6 to +6; outgroup and ingroup intended behavior and outgroup trust scores may range from 1 to 5.
*$p < .05$ level. ***$p < .001$.

children's attitudes and intended behaviors toward Greek Cypriots. The results are significant and original for the Cypriot context since, to our knowledge, contact research in Cyprus is yet to be conducted with children. In Study 1 we found evidence suggesting that not just positive direct contact was effective at enhancing positive attitudes (and intentions) but also extended contact in the form of positive storytelling within the family context was of importance (when controlling for direct positive, negative contact, and negative storytelling). Although conducted with adult populations, Andrighetto et al. (2012) and Tausch et al. (2011) found similar results with regard to the importance of families as a source of extended contact. Differently in this research however, the role of negative intergroup relations experienced by older family members was also assessed but found to have a null effect when compared to positive contact. These findings lend support to the notion that due to the intractable nature of the context, there may exist more room for significant positive contact effects compared to negative contact which is already most prominent (Bar-Tal, 1998; Paolini et al., 2014; Pettigrew, 2008).

Based on these findings, in Study 2 we used vicarious intergroup contact by reading stories of solidarity between Turkish and Greek Cypriot children for 3 consecutive weeks to Turkish Cypriot children. Additionally, we tested direct and extended contact, making this the first study to incorporate all three types of contact (direct, extended, and vicarious). Although based on a relatively weak pretest and posttest design without a control group, we found evidence that the vicarious intergroup contact intervention was successful at increasing positive attitudes, intended behavior, as well as outgroup trust. The findings are consistent with research on extended contact based interventions in the adult (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Paolini et al., 2004; Wright et al., 1997) as well as the children literature (Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Cameron et al., 2007). Additionally, in line with findings from Study 1, we found evidence of significant effects of extended contact (positive storytelling) on the outcome measures.

The research provides evidence that vicarious intergroup contact is a useful intervention tool in groups of intractable conflict. Previous research has generally used target outgroups such as the disabled and refugees (Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Cameron et al., 2007). The use of real-life conflicted groups increases our confidence in the effectiveness of indirect contact interventions in the field.

The role of outgroup trust was a particularly important finding since trust has been implicated as an important factor for friendship formation in children (Buzzelli, 1988) and the lack of trust can inhibit children's intentions of interacting with outgroup peers and also worsen attitudes (Vezzali, Capozza, Stathi, et al., 2012). We believe enhancing trust is especially important in contexts of conflict, for instance, in one study, Tam,

Hewstone, Kenworthy, and Cairns (2009) found that higher levels of positive contact between Catholic and Protestant university students in Northern Ireland predicted stronger tendencies to approach the target outgroup and this was mediated by outgroup trust. Improving outgroup trust is vital as it can lead to enhanced cooperation, information sharing, improved communication, and problem solving, all of which promote successful intergroup relations (Hayashi, Ostrom, Walker, & Yamagishi, 1999). Enhancing outgroup trust in children of conflicted societies is therefore critical for future relationships with the outgroup.

The findings have important implications for Cyprus, particularly for policy-makers. Since the opportunity and desire for contact between Turkish and Greek Cypriots is low, the benefits of contact strategies remain unrealized. It is for this reason that interventions such as vicarious intergroup contact would be a beneficial alternative to real and direct contact. Research suggests that initial expectations and stereotypes regarding the outgroup play a critical role in determining the outcome of direct contact experiences (Brown, 1995). Therefore, enhancing positive affect toward the outgroup and self-efficacy expectations about future contact prior to direct contact could help to enhance positive expectations and outcomes with regard to the actual contact situation (Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Mazziotta et al., 2011). Vicarious intergroup contact interventions as part of an educational program designed for preparing children for interaction with the outgroup can be applied prior to direct and real contact, and even in the absence of direct contact. The intervention can be particularly useful in the multicultural school that houses both Greek and Turkish Cypriot students in Cyprus. Turkish Cypriots constitute a small minority of students at The English School in Nicosia and were only readmitted to the school after the opening of the Green Line in 2003; however, problems have since occurred and serious incidents have been witnessed due to the mixing of students ("One Held for Cyprus," 2006). Including such an intervention prior to the inclusion of Turkish Cypriots to the classroom setting may encourage more positive attitudes and intentions.

Limitations and Future Research

A limitation of Study 1 was the cross-sectional nature of the research. Due to its correlational nature, it is hard to draw causality. The major limitation of Study 2 was its lack of a control group which means we must exercise more caution when interpreting the findings and causal link between the intervention and outcome measures. However, similar findings on several relatively different outcome measures (attitudes, intended behavior, and trust) allow for some confidence in the effectiveness of the intervention. Nonetheless, future research should include a control group to eliminate alternative explanations and threats to the validity of the design.

Future research should focus on further identifying the mechanisms underlying the vicarious intergroup contact intervention, such as perspective-taking, empathy, and the role of direct contact. For instance, in Study 2, contrary to our expectations, we found that direct contact did not play a significant role on any of the dependent measures, namely attitudes, intended behavior, or outgroup trust. Children in both studies reported very low prior positive contact which might explain the null effect of contact. This is an important finding in itself, suggesting that the intervention works, even in groups who have low contact and perhaps negative expectations. This is also in line with research by Cameron et al. (2011) who found extended contact to be most effective when children had low levels of reported intergroup contact. It would however be particularly beneficial to see how real behavior and subsequent interactions between Turkish and Greek Cypriots are influenced by the intervention.

To sum up, these findings suggest that vicarious intergroup contact can be used as a prejudice-reduction intervention tool in young children in contexts of intractable conflicts where the opportunity for direct contact is low, such as Cyprus.

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Note

1. The data was submitted to a 2 (gender: female vs. male) x 2 (group: ingroup vs. outgroup) x 2 (interview phase: pre- vs. postinterview) mixed design ANOVA, with the latter two variables being within participants. There were no significant main effects and interactions involving participant gender for any of the outcome measures: outgroup attitudes, outgroup intended behavior, and trust. Therefore, the analysis was conducted without gender as independent variable.

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