**NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF SOLIDARITY**

**EASP Small group meeting**

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Location:

Jury’s Inn Hotel

101 Stroudley Road

Brighton BN1 4DJ

UK

‘Solidarity’ is a central theme in much contemporary research in social psychology. It is particularly prominent in research concerning group processes and how people in groups cope with actual and potential adversity (e.g., responses to mass emergencies; Drury et al., 2009; Zagefka et al., 2011). It also features prominently in contemporary research concerning collective action (e.g., Subasic et al., 2008), interpersonal helping (e.g., Fetchenhauer et al., 2006), and social cohesion (e.g., Cassidy et al., 2007).

Yet, despite being so important in recent analyses of a range of social psychological phenomena, the concept of solidarity itself has received remarkably little sustained theoretical examination. Rather, solidarity has typically been invoked in the explanation of other phenomena (e.g., resilience, empowerment) or specific behaviours (e.g., the expression of prosocial behaviour, intentions to protest on behalf of a third party, and social support). The aim of this meeting is therefore to take this central but hitherto unexamined explanatory concept and to subject it to sustained critical examination.

In order to deliver such critical examination, we have organized this meeting at which people working across a range of areas will analyse and compare the ways in which the concept of solidarity is invoked and employed in different research traditions. Given the growing prominence of the concept, this critical enquiry is timely. At present the term ‘solidarity’ is used in rather loose ways and operationalised in different ways. To some degree this is inevitable when the topics under research are so diverse. However, unless there is greater conscious awareness of the diverse meanings of the term, research across a range of traditions will be blind to the hidden complexities in its usage with obvious implications for the development, investigation and communication of theory.

In making solidarity a focus, we believe we will be able to address questions raised implicitly or explicitly by previous research and thereby to take research on solidarity in new directions. Some of these questions include the following: What are the determinants of solidarity? Does solidarity between groups differ from that within a group? What are the points of similarity and difference between solidarity and prosocial behaviour? What is the relationship between solidarity and social identification? What are the social-psychological effects of solidarity on both those who display solidarity and those who experience others’ solidarity? How does solidarity contribute to everyday coordination and social stability and how does it contribute to social change? What are the conditions for solidarity to emerge in novel and unstructured situations? How can solidarity be evoked in mobilization? What is the relation between the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions of solidarity? What is the relation between solidarity, politics and empowerment? How does solidarity create a sense of community and vice versa? Is solidarity in small groups, where relations are familiar, different from solidarity with more abstract social categories and ‘imagined communities’?

The conceptual ground-clearing that we propose is important for progress in methods and theory. A concrete outcome of the meeting will therefore be the setting of a research agenda for the future, comprising research questions which would serve to delineate the necessary social psychological conditions and elements that are implied when we talk of ‘solidarity’.

*References*

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**ABSTRACTS**



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**“Solidarity is the kindness between peoples”: An exploration of solidarity experiences among Gezi Park activists**

Political solidarity across disadvantaged groups is thought to have an important impact on reducing prejudice. Prejudice reduction research has mostly focused on reducing negative affect as a means to improve relations between groups. Though positive affect between groups may be created, these forms of contact and common identification do not alter policy orientations of advantaged groups toward disadvantaged ones. A collective action model of prejudice reduction (Dixon et al., 2012) would create ties between disadvantaged groups to work together to create policy change that would benefit them all. Bearing this model in mind, we seek to show that the Gezi Park protests functioned as an intergroup phenomenon requiring the cooperation of a number of disadvantaged groups working together in solidarity to bring about social change and improve the status of all groups present. A series of interviews with 34 activists from the Gezi Park protests asked participants to reflect on their individual and group-based solidarity experiences during their time in the Gezi Park protests. Results show that Gezi is an example of a collective action model of prejudice reduction; through group perceptions and individuals’ descriptions of events, groups who had previously not been able to work together were able to work and stick together at Gezi. Results also imply that if disadvantaged groups work together in solidarity, they might change the position of both groups and improve each group’s disadvantaged position via collective action.



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**Antecedents and effects of solidarity in collective action contexts**

Although psychological research on collective action has increased over the last years, there is surprisingly little work on the role of solidarity in this context. In a series of four studies, we investigated the antecedents and effects of solidarity in a collective action framework. Building upon previous work by van Zomeren and colleagues, we integrated solidarity as a predictor of collective action. Results revealed that solidarity had direct and indirect effects (via collective efficacy) on intended collective action as well as on prosocial behavior. In our studies, solidarity successfully increased willingness to act on behalf of disadvantaged outgroups (e.g., victims of climate change) and it even increased willingness to support other species (e.g., orang-utans). We also found evidence for three potential sources of solidarity: global identity (e.g., a feeling of closeness and relatedness to all of humanity), personal moral convictions, as well as the perceived severity of the situation. In addition, our data supported the assumption that the effects of solidarity were independent of the effects of identity related variables. Furthermore, we found initial evidence of a link between solidarity and the formation of opinion-based groups. Taken together, our results emphasize the important role of solidarity as a driving force of collective action.



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**The impact of art: Exploring the social-psychological pathways that connect audiences to live performances**

In our research we investigate the emergence of solidarity between audiences and performers. Specifically, in two field experiments, conducted at a performing art festival, we examined whether solidarity can be transferred from an active target group onto a ‘passive’ audience during live dance performances. Audiences watched performances in which dancers displayed either no solidarity, mechanical, or organic solidarity. The experiments revealed that participants were able to recognize different forms of solidarity and also *experience* solidarity differently depending what type of solidarity they saw. When observing mechanical solidarity (compared to no solidarity), feelings of solidarity with the dancers and artistic evaluation of the performance were high, because the audience perceived unity among the dancers. When observing organic solidarity, feelings of solidarity with the dancers and artistic evaluation of the performance were high, because audiences perceived both unity *and* individual value among the dancers. We conclude that different pathways to solidarity determine why audiences feel connected to these performances. Finally, the last experiment shows that solidarity viewed on stage also influences post-performance audience behaviour. That is, audiences that had observed mechanical solidarity cooperated in a highly structured way. On the other hand, audiences that had observed organic solidarity took longer to form a structure, although they did so to the same extent in the end. However, audiences that had observed no solidarity were less structured overall. These findings have profound implications for the impact of performing arts on solidarity.



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**Solidarity across the spectrum of disadvantage: The impact of inter-disadvantaged contact and common ingroup identity**

In two correlational studies in Romania (Study 1; n = 279, Hungarian Ethnic Minority) and India (Study 2; n = 442, Muslims), we surveyed the intergroup processes that influence political solidarity between disadvantaged groups that share the same social context. In Study 1, stronger identification with the disadvantaged ingroup as Hungarian and intergroup contact with the stigmatized disadvantaged Roma predicted willingness to engage in political action on behalf of the Roma outgroup via group efficacy and shared grievances. In Study 2, we explicitly tested the effect of both Common Ingroup Identity (CII) as Indian and contact with the Dalits (members of the lower caste) on support for policies benefiting the all-inclusive disadvantaged group and collective action to improve the conditions for all the disadvantaged. Both CII and contact with Dalits predicted support for policies and willingness to engage in collective action benefiting the disadvantaged (Muslim ingroup and Dalit outgroup) via perceptions of solidarity and group efficacy. We discuss the implications of these findings in the context of solidarity and intergroup processes.



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**“I trust you to catch me”: Risk-taking signals and facilitates the development of shared group membership**

Shared identity and mutual trust are arguably preconditions for the emergence of coordinated action for mutual benefit. However, the means through which people communicate their shared identity to one another, thereby enabling group bonding and ultimately solidarity, has received little attention. We argue that overt demonstrations of trust, often via risk-taking, can be used as a social strategy to signal shared group membership. In three experiments spanning a variety of contexts such as unprotected sex, drink sharing and financial investment, I will demonstrate how risk-taking facilitates liking, warmth and ultimately the development of a shared identity. These results have implications for our understanding both of how social identity evolves and the social function of risk taking.

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**Pathways from group memberships to well-being via different forms of solidarity**

Evidence suggests that identifying with social groups is beneficial for people’s health and well-being. However, groups can differ fairly dramatically in how much contact the members have with each other, and on how important the members’ interactions are to maintaining the group’s existence. Drawing on theoretical accounts rooted in identity theory (Styker, 1980) and the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), I present a new theoretical model suggesting that groups can enhance the well-being of their members via two distinct but mutually reinforcing pathways, each with consequences for the experience of solidarity among group members. One pathway stems from the clearly defined and shared social identity that groups furnish their members with. This shared self-definition creates a sense of depersonalised solidarity among the members, which satisfies important psychological strivings for positively distinct and continuous self-definitions, therefore enhancing well-being. Furthermore, this shared collective self-definition feeds into a second pathway to well-being. Individuals are more attracted to and more likely to be prosocial towards others with whom they share a collective self-definition. Thus, interactions between fellow group members are likely to be psychologically nourishing, promoting feelings of interpersonal solidarity, intimacy, and competence that satisfy basic psychological needs and enhancing well-being. These two dynamic and reinforcing routes suggest that solidarity can take different forms depending on whether groups are rooted primarily to clear collective definitions or behavioural interactions, but that both can lead to enhanced well-being.



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**Exploring multiple understandings of solidarity: How high-status groups’ participation in social movements is viewed by low-status and high-status groups**

Social movements often seek to achieve equality for a low-status group. Participation in such movements is rarely limited to members of the low-status group. Rather, members of high-status groups may act in solidarity with the movement to help realize its goals. Social psychological work has emphasized the foundations upon which such solidarity may be built, such as shared group membership, efficacy, and emotions. Less attention has been paid to the ways in which status shapes the evaluation of solidarity: how is high-status groups’ participation in social movements perceived by members of the high-status and low-status groups? To address this question, two studies presented American and British respondents with a social justice organisation focused on gender equality (Study 1) or racial equality (Study 2), in which more than half of the leaders were members of the high-status group (men or White people) or members of the low-status group (women or people of colour). Participants from the low-status group responded more positively to low-status group leaders relative to high-status group leaders, with respect to evaluations of political role (knowledge of inequality, representation of low-status group interests, link to establishment) and leader characteristics (competence, sociability, motivation), perceived organisational efficacy, felt inspiration and anger, and collective action intentions. In contrast, participants from the high-status group did not generally differentiate between low-status and high-status leaders, except for reporting more positive evaluations of low-status leaders’ political role. Theoretical and practical implications for building effective solidarity within social movements will be discussed.



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# The spirit of solidarity: How ‘sticking together’ is a unique predictor of intergroup helping

In the psychological sciences, solidarity has often been treated as synonymous with helping behaviours. In the present paper, solidarity is delineated conceptually from other forms of helping in order to investigate whether solidarity can predict helping in an intergroup context. Study 1 (N = 129) investigated whether solidarity could predict helping towards ingroup members suffering from depression. Study 2 (N = 118) utilised the context of an international flood disaster to measure the relationship between solidarity and outgroup helping. Finally, Study 3 (N = 182) investigated the relationship between solidarity and helping towards both ingroup and outgroup members after a tragic road accident. Across all three studies, solidarity was an important predictor of helping, towards both ingroup or outgroup members. The strength of solidarity as a predictor of helping remained even when empathy and the perceived need to help were controlled for. Findings suggest that solidarity can be harnessed to promote prosociality in an intergroup context.

 

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**Through the eyes of my friends? When minority and majority peers (don’t) share perceptions of injustice**

When will minority youth show within-group solidarity and share their views on injustice with fellow minority peers? And when will majority youth show intergroup solidarity by taking the perspective of minority peers? Intra-group and cross-group contact can predict increased perspective taking and shared perceptions of injustice as a basis for solidarity. Yet, cross-group contact can undermine within-group solidarity for minority members when it erodes perceptions of injustice. Combining these two strands of research, we examine when and how minority and majority perceptions of injustice become aligned among same-group and cross-group friends in ethnically diverse peer networks.

We draw on a random sample of over 1700 (native Belgian) majority and 1800 (Turkish, Moroccan, African and Polish origin) minority youth in 440 classrooms in 70 Belgian secondary schools (CILS4EU/FL 2015). Using friendship nominations in class network data, we tested associations of friends’ perceptions with individual perceptions of injustice in school using multi-level models (individual/classroom level). We distinguished ingroup from cross-group friendships as distinct sources of shared injustice perceptions by separately averaging majority and minority friends’ perceptions in separate models for majority and minority youth.

In line with intergroup friendship as a basis for intergroup solidarity, average perceptions of minority friends predicted individual injustice perceptions of majority youth. In support of the role of friendship in minority group solidarity, average perceptions of fellow minority friends predicted minorities’ injustice perceptions. Finally, contrary to the hypothesized downside of cross-group friends for minority solidarity, average perceptions of their majority friends were unrelated to minorities’ injustice perceptions.



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**Heroes or fools: How do protesters and non-protesters perceive and evaluate each other?**

Only few members of a disadvantaged group engage in actions to confront unjust situation. It seems clear that efforts toward social change are facilitated by solidary relationships between these active and inactive subgroups within the disadvantaged group; however little is known how they perceive each other and which factors may facilitate or impede forming a unified group to fight its disadvantage. In the context of recent Dutch student protests, we conducted two field experiments examining how the protesters (*N* = 187) perceived and evaluated the non-protesters, and how the non-protesters (*N* = 145) perceived and evaluated the protesters. Based on theory and research suggesting that inaction is mostly motivated by individual/instrumental reasons, we asked the protesters about a fellow student who expressed individual vs. collective, and moral vs. instrumental motivations *for not protesting*. Furthermore, based on theory and research suggesting that action is mostly motivated by collective/moral reasons, we asked the non-protesters about a fellow student who expressed similar motivations *for protesting*. We found that the protesters perceived a clear boundary between themselves and the non-protesters, especially when the fellow student denied any *moral* motivation to protest. By contrast, the non-protesters had a positive view of the protesters, especially when the fellow student communicated *collective* motivation to protest. We conclude that these mutual perceptions and evaluations are asymmetrical which may decrease group cohesiveness and prevent social movements from achieving their goals.



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**Solidarity in national identity definitions in Sudan**

Working with political leaders and the local population in Sudan – and in other African conflict contexts – there is often a sense of negativity, focusing on malfunctioning social relations and structures. A shift in focus to also include the extensive solidarity often present in such contexts is a necessary step to understand such intra- and intergroup processes better.

My work in Sudan can serve as an interesting backdrop here. Interviews on perceptions of social identities, and superordinate identities in particular were conducted with the local population (N = 51) and political leaders (N = 17) in Khartoum, Juba and Kassala over three months (2011-2012). Solidarity can be seen in light of the divide between two content definitions of the national identity: the first, one where “Arabs” and Muslims qualified to a greater extent than others as “first-class citizens”, and a second broader definition more focused on unity-in-diversity. The former definition – resulting in an identity hierarchy within the national identity – is mainly that of the government sympathisers. The other was the prevalent view put forth by the opposition parties and most of the general population respondents. Interestingly, this latter was a strongly articulated position also amongst those who clearly fully qualified on the government hierarchical criteria. It thereby demonstrates sentiments of solidarity with fellow Sudanese.

The role of leadership in encouraging and discouraging solidarity may have large-scale consequences, and should be followed up on in further work on solidarity.



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**When citizens act in solidarity with refugees: Integrating theories of conflict elaboration and self-categorization**

Solidarity is a central issue in the refugee crisis experienced throughout Europe. Conflict between restrictive policies and asylum-seekers’ suffering occurs under the eyes of an important societal audience. Many citizens take on an active role to express spontaneous forms of solidarity that are often carried out in opposition to official legislation. Our contribution aims to understand how the national majority becomes willing to actively challenge political authority by showing solidarity with the refugee minority. Extending Moscovici’s work, we integrate minority influence with categorization and identity processes. In an experimental study (N = 118, Swiss nationals) participants read a minority position (pro-welcoming appeal), followed by measures of support for particular policies in favour of refugees in Switzerland. A 2 x 2 + control design was used, where the intergroup context was made salient in terms of the category of minority source (Swiss national vs. refugee) and integration norms mobilized in the pro-welcoming appeal (assimilation vs. multicultural integration strategies). Results showed a cross-categorization effect, whereby categorical and normative differentiation interacted to predict solidarity: conditions in which the Swiss source mobilized multicultural arguments and the refugee source mobilized assimilationist ones were more effective. Furthermore, influence was stronger for high national identifiers than for low identifiers. Our findings underline the importance of integrating theories of conflict elaboration and self-categorization in order to study minority influence. Practical implications for civic and political movements that are trying to challenge existing power relations between groups are discussed.

 

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**The perception, practice and promotion of solidarity**

Solidarity is a concept with a long history and with many faces. Often it is equated with perceptions of belonging, unity and commitment: an experience of “we-ness” that has much in common with social identification. But solidarity also refers to a social practice of cooperation and support, which may stem from such identification-like feelings, but also from compassion or obligation.

In the social identity tradition, it is customary that perceptions of solidarity lead to the practice of solidarity—cognition precedes action. But from a broad range of studies, we conclude that the reverse pathway is at least as robust and reliable.  The perception of solidarity may be inferred from cooperation in many different forms, and even from the mere coordination of action.

The implication of this research is that solidarity may result from a much broader range of circumstances than just the existence of an intergroup comparison or dynamic. Indeed, the insights from this research offer us a broad range of within-group processes that we can turn to if we seek to promote solidarity. Moreover, the processes described in this line of research may help us explain why solidarity can extend across intergroup boundaries (as is often the case in collective action) or unite entire communities irrespective of former differences (as is often the case in disaster situations).



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**When solidarity-based protest is loud or silent: Psychological motivations for collective action on behalf of an outgroup**

Collective action is usually defined as an act of a representative of a specific *ingroup* to improve the conditions of that group. Theory and research in the field of collective action have thus focused on the psychological predictors of collective action on behalf of ingroups. By contrast, the current contribution reports two studies examining what motivates actual participants in collective action *on behalf of an outgroup* (i.e., act in solidarity with an outgroup). Specifically, Study 1 was conducted during an anti-discrimination protest to test motivations for participants (*N* = 109), who were not targets of discrimination themselves, to engage in solidarity-based collective action. We found that their intention to join a similar collective protest in the near future was predicted by psychological variables commonly found to predict collective action (i.e., emotions, perceived social norms), based in identification with the other protesters (rather than with the outgroup). Similarly, Study 2 tested motivations for *N* = 120 Germans to participate in a minute’s silence for the victims of the November 2015 Paris attacks. Again, their intention to participate in a similar event in solidarity was predicted by ‘usual suspects’ (e.g., emotions, perceived social norms), yet based in identification with the outgroup (rather than with the other participants). We discuss whether and how solidarity-based collective action seems motivated by similar psychological processes as collective action on behalf of an ingroup, and an explanation for why different identities may become relevant in the case of participation in a collective protest versus a minute’s silence.



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**A meta-analysis of intergroup trust: A key construct in the study of solidarity**

Scholars recognise the fundamental role of trust in intergroup relations, particularly in the development of social cohesion in diverse societies (Putnam, 2007). While trust is associated with increased solidarity, the complexities of conflict and inequality often lead to reduced intergroup trust and pose a threat to solidarity (Rawls & David, 2005). Moreover, research has shown that solidarity is a psychological process of social change by which collective action efforts can change the status quo (Subasic et al., 2008). This is important for conflict societies, where trust is nevertheless considered key in the reconciliation process (Kelman, 2004). Therefore, a focused examination of the role of trust in intergroup relations may shed light on the complexities surrounding the development of solidarity. Preliminary findings of a meta-analysis investigating frequently studied constructs relevant to intergroup relations (*k* = 36, *n* = 11,391) revealed significant medium effect sizes for the relationship between intergroup trust and prejudice (*r* = -.42), ingroup identification (*r* = -.21) and direct contact (*r* = .29). These initial results suggest that intergroup trust has a significant contribution to make to the study of solidarity. For example, while a sense of social identity may lead to increased solidarity amongst ingroup members, these findings indicate that ingroup identification may mean a reduced intergroup trust. In conflict societies, where distrust of the outgroup has become almost normative of one’s group identification, achieving solidarity between two conflicting groups may require a closer look at how constructs such as identity and contact relate to intergroup trust.



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**Closing the gender gap: Identity, solidarity and leadership at work**

Gender inequality at work persists despite efforts to eliminate it. Most gender equality initiatives target either women or organisations (e.g., mentoring programmes, recruitment/promotion policies). Men, as change agents and allies, tend to be overlooked yet are integral to achieving equality. In this talk, I will present a novel, social psychological analysis that explains how identity, leadership and solidarity processes interact to mobilise men (and women) to achieve a more equal workplace and a more equal society. As long as men—and male leaders in particular—remain the ‘silent majority’, gender inequality is unlikely to disappear. In contrast, male leaders who act as advocates of gender equality not only signal to women that ‘we are all in this together’, but also demonstrate to other men that change towards gender equality is both needed and desirable, thereby mobilising both groups. To illustrate these points, I will present recent experimental evidence that pro-equality messages promoting solidarity between men and women (rather than focusing on inequality as a women’s issue) more readily mobilise both sexes towards achieving equality. However, for men, this pattern emerges only when the message is attributed to a male leader. This research highlights the centrality of leadership and influence processes when it comes to widespread mobilization of support for social change.



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Dominic Abrams (University of Kent, UK)

**Can moral emotions promote prosocial responses and/or social solidarity among third-party outgroups?**

**Pre-Meeting recommended readings:**

The five organizers each chose a pre-reading for the meeting:

Drury, J., & Reicher, S. (2005). [Explaining enduring empowerment: A comparative study of collective action and psychological outcomes](http://www.uni-kiel.de/psychologie/ispp/doc_upload/drury_reicher.pdf). *European Journal of Social Psychology, 35*, 35-58.

Levine, R. M., Prosser, A., Evans, D., & Reicher, S. (2005). [Identity and emergency intervention. How social group membership and inclusiveness of group boundaries shape helping behaviour](http://psp.sagepub.com/content/31/4/443.abstract). *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 31*, 443–453.

Reicher, S., Cassidy, C., Wolpert, I., Hopkins, N., & Levine, M. (2006). [Saving Bulgaria's Jews: An analysis of social identity and the mobilisation of social solidarity](http://www.uni-kiel.de/psychologie/ispp/doc_upload/reicher_saving_bulgarias_jews.pdf). *European Journal of Social Psychology, 36*(1), 49-72.

Reicher, S. D., & Haslam, S. A. (2010). Beyond help: A social psychology of collective solidarity and social cohesion. In S. Stürmer and M. Snyder (Eds.), *The psychology of pro-social behavior: Group processes, intergroup relations, and helping* (pp.289-309). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

(see pdf attached to email)

Van Zomeren, M., Postmes, T., & Spears, R. (2008). [Toward an integrative social identity model of collective action: A quantitative research synthesis of three socio-psychological perspectives](https://www.rug.nl/staff/m.van.zomeren/van_zomeren_postmes_spears_2008.pdf). *Psychological Bulletin, 134,* 504-535.

Vezzali, L., Cadamuro, A., Versari, A., Giovannini, D., & Trifiletti, E. (2015). [Feeling like a group after a natural disaster: Common ingroup identity and relations with outgroup victims among majority and minority young children](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bjso.12091/abstract). *British Journal of Social Psychology, 54*, 519–538. doi: 10.1111/bjso.12091

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**Clifford Stevenson** (Anglia Ruskin University, UK)



**Hanna Zagefka** (Royal Holloway University of London, UK)

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