





# Experiencing VOICES: police and public reactions to an intergroup communication intervention

Lidia E. Nuño <sup>a</sup>, Shawn L. Hill<sup>b</sup>, Edward R. Maguire <sup>c</sup> and Howard Giles<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>USA School of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas, USA; <sup>b</sup>Lieutenant, Santa Barbara Police Department, University of California Santa Barbara, USA; <sup>c</sup>USA School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Arizona State University, Phoenix, Arizona, USA; <sup>d</sup>Distinguished Research Professor, University of California Santa Barbara, USA

## ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes police and public reactions to an intergroup-communication intervention developed and tested in Santa Barbara, California. We discuss the theory underlying the development of the intervention as well as its implementation as a means of improving relationships between police officers and members of the Hispanic community. Based on thematic analysis of interviews with program participants, we provide qualitative evidence about police and public reactions to the intervention. The data presented herein indicate that the intervention improved empathy and trust between participants from both groups. These results suggest that interventions based on principles of intergroup communication could be a useful mechanism for improving relationships between police and historically marginalized communities. They also provide a promising framework for research on how police can translate research into practice in the area of community trust-building with groups reluctant to engage with police. Future research should begin testing the effectiveness of these types of interventions using experimental or quasi-experimental methods.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 13 June 2022  
Revised: 29 September 2022  
Accepted: 8 November 2022

## KEYWORDS

Police; Hispanic immigrant community; trust; confidence; intergroup contact; intergroup communication

Historically, public opinion polls have found that the vast majority of the public views police in the United States in a positive light (Gallagher et al., 2001; Maguire & Johnson, 2010). However, U.S. police are currently experiencing a significant legitimacy crisis. Police legitimacy refers to people's judgments about the extent to which the police, as an institution, are 'entitled to be deferred to and obeyed' (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003, p. 514). Police legitimacy influences people's willingness to cooperate and comply with the police. In July 2020, about two months after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, a Gallup poll revealed that confidence in the police had reached its lowest point in the poll's 27-year history (Ortiz, 2020). Thoughtful police leaders are trying a variety of creative approaches to bolster their relationships with communities and improve the perceived legitimacy of the police, particularly in marginalized communities (e.g., Katz & Maguire, 2000). One approach for improving these relationships is bringing police officers and the public together to engage in genuine dialogue and to recognize each other's shared perspectives and humanity.

The relationship between the police and the public is intergroup in nature (see for example, Giles et al.; Giles et al., 2022). Social Identity Theory (SIT; e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explains how people have an intrinsic motivation to maintain a positive social identity (self-concept), and favor people they perceive to be similar to themselves (i.e., ingroup members). In the process, people develop unfavorable evaluations of those they perceive to be different (i.e., outgroup members).

Recognizing outgroup members' humanity and engendering mutual trust is important in overcoming intergroup conflict, and reducing prejudice and discrimination. These are central for converging to, and developing an affinity for, outgroup members (see, Giles, 2016). SIT has been a major driver of social psychology and communication theories, including intergroup communication theory (IGC). Intergroup communication occurs when people are relating to each other primarily as members of ingroups and outgroups, as a result of their social category memberships, as opposed to their individual characteristics or personalities (see, Dragojevic & Giles, 2014). In this paper, we introduce readers to an intergroup communication intervention called VOICES that was developed by police and community members in the City of Santa Barbara, California, to improve relationships between police and the public.

Historically, relationships between police and racial and ethnic minorities have been strained (e.g., Brunson, 2007; Epp et al., 2014; Foster et al., 2022; Peck, 2015; Pryce et al., 2021). Weitzer and Tuch (2004, p. 305) report that 'blacks and Hispanics are more likely than whites to report having negative interactions with police, to be exposed to media reports of police misconduct, and to live in high-crime neighborhoods where policing may be contentious – each of which increases perceptions of police misconduct' (see, also, Shrikant & Sambaraju, 2021). Research shows that there are often significant cultural differences between police and the residents of certain minority communities. For instance, based on a study in Texas, Carter (1985, p. 499) found that 'there appears to be a general lack of knowledge on the part of both the police and Hispanic community members about each other's culture.' These issues have grown more salient in recent years in the aftermath of numerous controversial uses of deadly force by American police against racial and ethnic minorities (Kochel, 2019; Maguire & Giles, 2022; Reny & Newman, 2021).

The history of policing immigrants in the United States is filled with controversy, unintended consequences, and tragedy. Law enforcement has frequently participated in discriminatory anti-immigrant programs and enforced anti-immigrant policies on behalf of the federal government (Provine et al., 2016). For example, state and local law enforcement agencies played a key role in supporting *Operation Wetback*, a federal initiative that involved the mass deportation of undocumented Mexican workers in the 1950s (Astor, 2009; García, 1981). The mass deportation of Salvadoran immigrants from the United States in the 1990s destabilized El Salvador and led to the growth and expansion of two well-known transnational gangs: MS-13 and Barrio-18 (Arana, 2005; Nuño & Maguire, 2021). Contemporary research evidence suggests that the policing of these transnational gangs continues to raise serious concerns about inaccurate labeling and the over-policing and over-criminalization of immigrants (Barak et al., 2020). As might be expected, these policing practices have strained the relationships between police and immigrant communities, beyond the already tenuous relationship with Hispanic Americans. Even for the many police departments that do not engage in overt anti-immigrant practices, communication issues arising from language and cultural barriers tend to hinder progress in improving these relationships. At the same time, research on immigrants' perceptions of the police suggests that when police officers engage with immigrants in a procedurally just manner, these interactions can positively influence immigrants' perspectives on the police (Pryce, 2018; Pryce et al., 2017).

The above stated cultural and language differences between police officers and immigrant communities are precisely the types of issues that intergroup contact and communication interventions are intended to address (see, Hewstone et al., 2014; Paolini et al., 2021).<sup>1</sup> The intergroup contact hypothesis (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005) suggests that when groups are brought together to interact with one another under certain (nonthreatening) conditions, the contact improves intergroup relations (for the successes of *mediated* and even imagined intergroup contact, see, Joyce, 2018). Intergroup contact interventions have been found to be successful in reducing prejudice in a wide variety of settings (for a meta-analysis of over 500 studies, see, Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). For example, a recent study in England and Northern Ireland found that intergroup contact improved social cohesion among adolescents from different ethnic backgrounds (Reimer et al., 2021). These interventions have also been found to be an effective tool for intergroup reconciliation following

intractable ethnic or religious conflict (Hewstone et al., 2008; Tropp et al., 2017; Voci et al., 2017). Given the variety of complex settings in which intergroup contact interventions have succeeded in reducing prejudice and promoting beneficial outcomes like forgiveness and trust, these interventions seem like a promising solution for helping to improve relationships between police and the public (Hill et al., 2021; see next section). In this paper, we report qualitative findings from an intergroup contact intervention involving police officers and Hispanic immigrant residents in Santa Barbara, California.

## Intergroup contact and communication

In a democracy, trust is a vital component of the social contract between the government and the populace (Kettl, 2017). This is especially true for law enforcement agencies, which are the only government agencies authorized to use deadly force against the citizens they are intended to serve (Bittner, 1970). Unfortunately, recent events have begun to diminish public trust in the police in the United States (Reny & Newman, 2021). This is especially true for racial and ethnic minorities, many of whom feel that police are more likely to harm them and their loved ones than to help them. Thus, a major current challenge for police leaders is learning how to increase trust between police and minority communities. Research and theory on intergroup contact and communication provide a useful framework for thinking about how to overcome these tensions and improve trust between police and communities (Hill et al., 2021; Holmes & Smith, 2012; for a critical review, see, Wagner & Hewstone, 2012).

Encounters between police and members of the public are a classic example of intergroup contact (Choi & Giles, 2012). When a police officer comes face to face with a member of the public, the communication dynamics between them cannot be described only in interpersonal terms. The officer represents a superordinate group (the police specifically and the law more generally), as clearly identified by a visibly distinctive uniform, a badge and other insignia, and weapons. The member of the public is subordinate to the police and the law and may represent other visible or invisible social group categories. Because the dynamics that occur in such an interaction are influenced heavily by the group memberships of the individuals involved (that is, they are *intergroup* dynamics), understanding these group memberships – and the social identities associated with them – can help illuminate the psychological and behavioral dynamics that occur during these interactions (see, Giles et al., 2021).

In the early twentieth century, scholars working from a social Darwinism perspective argued that intergroup contact inevitably results in conflict (Sumner, 1906). Allport's (1954) intergroup contact hypothesis was based on a very different perspective. It postulated that under certain conditions, intergroup contact could reduce prejudice and tension between groups:

“Prejudice . . . may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom, or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups”. (p. 281)

In this passage, Allport articulated four conditions under which intergroup contact could produce the most beneficial results: equal group status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). Research has found support for the intergroup contact hypothesis overall. It has also found that the abovementioned contact conditions are associated with greater reductions in prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Allport was also aware that under suboptimal circumstances, contact could *increase* intergroup tensions and prejudice. Such effects can reduce the likelihood of successful interpersonal communication by increasing the salience of one's own social identity, and worsening attitudes toward outgroup members. The chain of effects hypothesized to result from suboptimal contact conditions can be detrimental to the goal of bringing people together to seek commonalities and improve intergroup empathy and trust.

The vast majority of the scientific literature on the effectiveness of intergroup contact interventions has developed outside of policing. However, two studies have examined these interventions within policing. Researchers in England tested the effects of assigning police officers to schools on students' views of police. They found that students had more positive views of police officers assigned to schools (school liaison officers) than of police officers assigned to other functions. Students viewed the school liaison officers as atypical of police more generally because these officers had a specialized function that set them apart from their peers (Hewstone et al., 1992). Based on these findings, Hopkins (1994, p. 1409) noted that intergroup contact interventions often fail if the individuals making contact are not viewed as representative 'of the category as a whole.' These findings suggest that for intergroup contact interventions in policing to be successful, the officers involved in the intervention must be regarded by participants as 'typical' police officers (see, also, Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

Based on the literature on intergroup contact initiatives, police and community members in Santa Barbara, California worked together in 2017 to design and launch the VOICES intervention. This intervention involved bringing police officers and community members together to engage in structured dialogue sessions in a neutral setting. The sessions were purposely designed to incorporate Allport's (1954) optimal contact conditions. VOICES was initially pilot tested with several historically marginalized populations, including the LGBTQ community, delinquent youth, and previously incarcerated youth. Based on an analysis of surveys completed by participating community members, Hill et al. (2021) found that these initial VOICES sessions helped improve trust between police and the public. Participants reported that what they found most valuable about the sessions was the opportunity to talk with police officers and get to know the people behind the badge. Further details associated with this initial pilot test of VOICES are described in Hill et al. (2021). The present study reports findings from an evaluation of a later VOICES session that included police and members of the Hispanic immigrant community in Santa Barbara. This evaluation is based on more detailed qualitative data from both police officers and community members than the earlier study, which focused only on the experiences of community members.

## Method and materials

The City of Santa Barbara, California serves as the setting for this study. More than a third of the city's residents identify as Hispanic and approximately 22% of residents are foreign-born (U.S. Census, 2020). The racial/ethnic composition of the Santa Barbara Police Department resembles the composition of the community, with about 25% of sworn personnel identifying as Hispanic.

On 4 November 2021, the Santa Barbara Police Department and the Santa Barbara Unified School District's Family Engagement Unit held a VOICES intervention at a local school to improve the relationships between police officers and Spanish-speaking immigrant community members. In keeping with the spirit of intergroup contact interventions, the organizers sought to bring equivalent numbers of community members and police officers (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Five police officers and five Spanish-speaking community members (including three adults and two youth) participated in a structured dialogue session led by an experienced facilitator.<sup>2</sup> The facilitator had experience in restorative practices and post conflict community development, including field work in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sri Lanka. The event started with a catered dinner, with police officers and community members dining at the same tables together. Following the dinner, the chairs were formed into a circle and the facilitator led a discussion in which participants described their perceptions and expectations of the other group. The goal was to allow both groups to see the other's perspective, reduce prejudice and increase empathy for outgroup members. A translator was available for people who were not bilingual. Participants wore earpieces and a translator provided simultaneous translation.

Following the event, all VOICES participants were contacted by the first author, a Mexican-American university professor whose first language is Spanish. Semi-systematic interviews were

conducted with five of the six law enforcement participants, including four by phone and one using Zoom. A sixth officer agreed to be interviewed but we were unable to conduct the interview due to logistical difficulties. All of the interviews with police officers were conducted in English and recorded. Three of the four officers were interviewed within a month of the intervention, and two officers were interviewed within two months. The resulting interview transcripts served as data for our thematic analysis. Interviews were conducted with four of the five community members; one participant chose not to participate because she was not comfortable sharing her experiences. All community members were interviewed within a week of the intervention. Before the start of the interview, community members were asked whether they had any interaction with the police since the intervention. None of the participants reported having an interaction with the police after participating in the intervention. All of the community member interviews were conducted in Spanish, three via Zoom and one via telephone. We received permission from three of the community members to record the interview, thus resulting in three interview transcripts. One of the community members did not provide consent to record the interview, so we took detailed field notes summarizing this one interview. The resulting transcripts and field notes served as data for our analysis.

To analyze the data, we relied on thematic analysis, a qualitative methodology based on grounded theory that is useful for ‘reading, interpreting, and categorizing pieces of linguistic data and verbal interaction into theme-based patterns’ (Dittmar & Drury, 2000, p. 119). We were particularly interested in uncovering patterns associated with participants’ thoughts and feelings about themselves, the VOICES intervention, and the perceptions of the relations between the two groups that participated in the intervention. Coding was completed using a combination of manual methods and computer-aided methods available in *NVivo 12*, a software package used for qualitative data analysis (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). The initial coding process resulted in a series of codes that served as building blocks for identifying more general themes. This was an inductive process in which themes emerged from the coded data. After these themes were identified, the lead interviewer reviewed all the Spanish transcriptions to assure that the themes were accurately reflected in the transcriptions and translations, and to correct for any errors in translations. Based on this process, we identified three key themes that are presented in detail in the Results section. These themes served as the basis for theory development as articulated in the Discussion section. The various stages of this iterative analytical process involved ‘a number of cognitive and creative processes, from clustering and comparing to hypothesising and conceptual cohering’ (Chapman et al., 2015, p. 203).

## Results

Our analysis of the interview data revealed three dominant themes associated with the outcomes of the VOICES intervention. The first two themes – empathy and trust – constitute specific attitudinal dimensions. The third theme – police-community relationships – constitutes a more diffuse attitudinal dimension. We will discuss the difference between specific and diffuse attitudes in more detail in the Discussion section.<sup>3</sup> In addition, participants provided feedback about the structure and process of the intervention itself. We begin by reviewing the three themes that emerged in our analysis, and then we discuss feedback about the intervention itself.

### Empathy

Empathy was the most common theme that emerged during our interviews with participants (see, Clark et al., 2019), particularly among officers. Participants from both groups described having more empathetic thoughts and feelings toward the other group after participating in VOICES. For example, one officer explained that participating in VOICES affected the way he hopes to communicate with immigrants in the future. He explained that the intervention helped him understand the

importance of informing immigrants that as a local police officer, he does not enforce immigration laws. Another officer commented that he never understood before why someone would not want to call the police when they need help. He feels more empathetic after interacting with non-English speakers following the VOICES intervention. He now feels he has a 'better perspective of how hard it is for certain demographics to come forward to the police' and that there are 'a lot of complex issues that come into play of why they don't want to call the police.' Another officer stated that participating in the program allowed him to develop a better understanding of the challenges immigrants face and that he was grateful for 'how honest the community members were' during the VOICES session.

Feelings of empathy from the officers were often tied to language barriers and cultural differences. For example, one officer explained that through his participation in VOICES, he learned that language and cultural differences can heavily impact the outcome of an interaction. After participating in VOICES, he believes he is better prepared to better serve immigrant communities. Another officer learned from the community members that police sometimes do not provide clear explanations about the processes that take place during an interaction. Community members reported that this is a source of stress and confusion. The officer learned that simply providing more thorough explanations can help to improve the outcome of an interaction. The officer also stated that certain cultural barriers make interactions with immigrants more challenging. For example, immigrants sometimes engage in illegal behaviors that are considered culturally acceptable or are not routinely enforced in their nation of origin (e.g., driving without a license and driving while intoxicated). In such moments, officers sometimes do not take the time to explain the law and its requirements during their interactions with immigrants. Two officers mentioned the frustration they have experienced when trying to communicate with someone who does not speak English. Both officers stated that they wished they were bilingual to help facilitate these interactions. Participating in VOICES taught them that community members often feel the same frustration when not being able to speak English and communicate directly with an officer.

While community members also felt empathy towards the officers, this was not necessarily a result of participating in VOICES. Rather, community members explained that they already felt empathetic toward officers, particularly because they recognized the difficulties that officers faced on the job. One community member shared a 'negative' experience he had with the police during a traffic stop when officers removed his daughters from the vehicle. Though he referred to the experience as 'traumatic,' he also repeatedly said 'he understands that it is their job.' He stated a wish that 'police would be more sensitive around children because this causes trauma' and negative perceptions of the police. At the same time, he acknowledged that this is not his country and he needs 'to abide by the laws and rules.' Another community member stated that regardless of the outcome, he would have a hard time characterizing the interaction as negative because he 'understands the police are doing their job and that [he] shouldn't be driving without a license.' The same participant noted that 'perhaps the officer does not have any options, or perhaps they do not want to do it, but it is their job.'

Community members reported that participating in VOICES enabled them to humanize officers to a greater extent than previously. For example, one community member stated that while she always viewed police officers as authority figures, she never really thought of police officers as 'real people' who are also members of the community. Another community member stated that after participating in the program, she felt better able to understand the complexity of a police officer's job, and to feel more empathetic towards officers in general. For some community participants, this was the first time they had experienced a non-enforcement interaction with a police officer. A community member stated that she now sees police officers as 'real people ... with families like us.' Another participant stated that after interacting with the officers in this setting, she sees them as people just like her. 'They are equal to me ... they just have different professions. I am a mom, they are cops.' This participant also stated that the program allowed her to identify the



things they have in common and that the participating officers did not fit the stereotypical image of police officers.

### **Trust**

A second theme that emerged from our analysis was trust (see, Brunson, 2007). Several community members discussed the impact of VOICES on their level of trust in police officers. After participating in VOICES, community members reported feeling a higher level of trust in the police, including a greater willingness to call them for help or to report a crime. For example, one community member stated that she ‘wasn’t necessarily scared of the police before VOICES, but after the program [she is] definitely not scared.’ She also noted that she feels ‘much more trust in the police’ after participating in VOICES. Another participant stated that after participating in VOICES, she feels she can now trust the police. She stated that the ‘only perception [she] had about the police was from movies and social media’ and this perception was very negative. After meeting and sharing a meal with officers, she feels she can trust them and would like to engage more with them. One community member discussed how her trust in the police stems from an existing relationship that she and her family have with one officer who did not participate in VOICES: Officer Ramos (a pseudonym). She said that all of her experiences with the police have been positive and she attributes this to her interactions with Officer Ramos. Officer Ramos has been central to developing her trust and willingness to engage with the police. She explained that participating in VOICES can help foster relationships like the one her family has with Officer Ramos, by helping people learn to trust the police. This anecdote reinforces the importance of positive interactions between police and the public for building trust in the police.

Community members also highlighted the impact of cultural and language barriers on developing trust and willingness to call the police. For example, one participant stated that she ‘wouldn’t be as comfortable with an officer who wasn’t Hispanic or spoke Spanish’ and she doesn’t know how she ‘could open her heart to someone who doesn’t understand [her] language and someone who is not familiar with [her] experience as Hispanic . . . the fears of being undocumented.’ Another participant stated that she ‘wouldn’t call an officer to help with [her] children if [she] didn’t know the officer understood her language and culture’ because she’d be scared of a potential negative outcome where her ‘child was affected or taken.’ Overall, we find these results promising for developing and maintaining trust with this community. We discuss our interpretation of these findings below.

### **Police-community relationships**

The third theme that emerged from our analysis was related to police-community relationships more generally (see, Oxholm & Glaser, *in press*). Unlike empathy and trust, which are specific attitudinal dimensions, this theme is a more diffuse set of attitudes and perspectives. Several participants alluded to the relationship between the police and the community, and the potential impact of VOICES on this relationship. For example, one officer stated that participating in the program served as a really good reminder that people have mixed emotions about the police, and that these do not necessarily represent judgments about him personally. People carry previous experiences into later interactions with police, and officers need to understand the complexity of people’s attitudes toward the police. Another officer mentioned that programs like VOICES can help deal with the ‘source of the problem,’ which he believes to be a perceived negative relationship between police and communities. An officer also stated that participating in VOICES will help him to develop a better relationship with the community because he can now put a face to the population. He particularly appreciated children being included in the conversations. He felt it ‘was very powerful to hear the children speaking about their experiences’ as these experiences will affect how they grow to feel about the police.

Two officers also emphasized the importance of ‘being part of the community.’ For example, an officer stated that because she is Hispanic, was born and raised in the community, and attended local public schools, she has a unique perspective among Santa Barbara police officers. Another officer said that even though some fellow officers are from the area, they are not aware of many of the social issues in the community. She noted that ‘even though they [some other officers] are from here, they are not from *from* here’ because they have more privileged backgrounds. She feels that VOICES is a great opportunity for helping officers develop deeper relationships with the community.

Community members shared similar sentiments. One community member stated that she now feels more comfortable saying ‘hello’ to police officers when she sees them on the street. Another said he no longer distinguishes between ‘them and us’ but instead he sees police officers as people he can approach and say ‘hi’ to. A community member stated that after participating in VOICES, she now has a better understanding of what police work is and what officers do. Before this, she had a very negative perception and thought they were ‘bad guys.’ After meeting and interacting with them, her perceptions have started to change. She also stated that she felt she ‘learned her rights and their rights’ and now has a better understanding of what each party’s role is in an interaction. One community member stated that he really enjoyed the meeting because he feels that ‘communication is the best way to build community.’ Another community member stated that giving people a place to speak and validate their experience is one of the most valuable aspects of this program. She stated that ‘it is different than filing a report because instead you are listening to them.’ VOICES enables both groups to ‘be part of the solution and not only complain about the problem.’ She further stated that communication in these settings is essential because ‘maybe officers do not even know they are doing something wrong’ and having these conversations in what she referred to as a ‘safe space’ allowed her to be more trusting and be more willing to share. While respondents were generally quite positive about the intervention, one community member stated that he would like to see officers be friendlier and that he is still skeptical about approaching officers because he does not know whether *all* officers are going to be okay with being greeted in public.

### **Feedback about the VOICES intervention**

Though the goal of the interviews with participants was not to evaluate participants’ perceptions of the VOICES intervention, this was a recurring topic discussed by every participant and, thus, a recurring theme in our findings. Overall, participants reported that they were satisfied with their involvement in the VOICES intervention. Respondents from both groups provided useful feedback about their experience with VOICES. The principal concern noted by members of both groups was that the number of participants was too small. They believed more people should be involved, including both community members and police. For example, one officer stated that the program is ‘a little inefficient in terms of the ultimate goal of getting police on a good level with the community’ because of its size. However, participants also acknowledged that the groups need to be small enough to allow for intimate and honest conversations.

All officers said they would participate in VOICES again, if invited. One officer noted that VOICES created an opportunity to ‘see the other side’ and be able to understand others’ perspectives. It provided officers with a better understanding of what the residents are going through. He found it reassuring that, while community members had had negative experiences, they were still very supportive of the police department and the officers. Another officer said ‘it was an invaluable experience, and it was absolutely a good use of [his] time.’ Another stated that he ‘considered it a privilege to be part of this part of the program.’ The same officer stated that he left the meeting feeling that ‘community members appreciate what we are doing.’ One of the officers explained that the ‘conversation was overall really positive . . . some of the things that were shared were really challenging, but also really encouraging to me. I left there feeling . . . empowered and affirmed in the



role that I was taking. Which is cool because that is not the overall narrative right now, politically or socially right now, so it was it was really encouraging to hear from community members.'

While officers were generally satisfied with VOICES, they recommended certain changes to its design and implementation. For example, an officer stated that he hopes it will become voluntary and expressed a concern that he did not know beforehand what he was walking into. He also stated that the 'mingling' period before the meeting was a waste of time. However, another officer said that this portion of the event was nice because it allowed time to speak informally with other participants: 'I got to meet some people that I wouldn't normally meet during my daily life.' One of the officers stated that he felt skeptical about the actual outcome of the intervention. He said he would like to see some evidence about whether approaches like this are effective for improving relationships with the community. Two officers also stated that involving a mix of younger and older officers would be good because some older officers have lost touch with the community. Programs like this 'will help you stay connected especially for officers who have been in law enforcement for a long time and have become disconnected.'

All community members stated that they would participate in VOICES or similar programs again if given the opportunity. All community members also stated that they would gladly recommend VOICES to their neighbors, friends, and family. One community member noted that the program has a tremendous future because it provides benefits for both police and the community. Another community member reported being surprised to learn about the diverse backgrounds of the officers. She even envisioned her own daughter becoming a police officer and helping her community. Some community participants expressed hope that VOICES will grow and become available in other jurisdictions and venues. For example, one community member suggested that VOICES could be expanded to allow families to participate in the sessions together. Community members said they would like to see more youth involved in programs like this. Finally, all community members expressed a feeling that VOICES has the potential to close the gaps between the police and the community. We interpret participants' feedback about VOICES as supportive of the intervention and its potential for improving relationships between police and immigrants.

## Discussion

A large body of research evidence shows that intergroup contact interventions, when carefully planned and executed, can decrease stereotyping, reduce prejudice and promote harmony between groups with a history of conflict with one another (FitzGerald et al., 2019; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). However, little is known about the effects of such interventions for improving relationships between police and the public (for exceptions, see, Hewstone et al., 1992; Hill et al., 2021). This paper presented qualitative evidence on police and public reactions to an intergroup contact intervention called VOICES that was implemented in Santa Barbara, California. The results of our analysis reveal that the intervention led both groups to view the other with greater levels of empathy and mutual understanding. It also led community members to express a greater level of trust in, and empathy for the police. The intervention also led both groups to believe that VOICES could improve relationships between police and the public more generally. These findings suggest that intergroup contact interventions may be a promising mechanism for reducing prejudice and promoting harmony between police and the public.

One additional pattern that emerged from the interview data was that neither group appeared to view the other as homogeneous (e.g., 'all cops are the same' or 'all immigrants are the same'). This is positive because a common pattern in intergroup conflict is the tendency of groups to view outgroups as homogeneous. Learning to see outgroups as heterogeneous enables group members to avoid stereotyping and to recognize each other's shared humanity. Put differently, the more an outgroup is perceived as highly variable in its characteristics, the less likely it is that people will generalize stereotyped traits to members of that group (see, Hewstone & Hamberger, 2000). One important research question worthy of further inquiry is the causal mechanism through which

groups come to view each other as homogenous or heterogeneous. We hypothesize that intergroup contact interventions like VOICES may allow group members to observe differences between members of the other group and, therefore, to see the other group as heterogeneous. That causal mechanism, if valid, could help reduce stereotyping and prejudice, which would be a significant contribution to policing practices, and address concerns that have been highlighted by many recent high profile police use of force incidents.

Trust was a recurring theme throughout the interviews. Though there is a substantial body of work on trust in the police, not much is known regarding perceptions of police among Hispanics and/or other immigrant populations in the United States, including undocumented immigrants. The studies that have focused on these populations' perceptions of the police tend to find negative (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004) or null (Nuño, 2018) effects. Unlike prior studies, our results show that ethnic minorities *can* have positive perceptions of police when police take thoughtful, proactive steps to engage with them. We believe the results of our study are encouraging because they provide a promising framework for improving and maintaining trust with the Hispanic community specifically and immigrant communities more generally.

### ***Implications for policy and practice***

The findings from this study have useful implications for police policy and practice. Communication has been broadly recognized as a vital tool for police practitioners (S. L. Hill & Giles, 2021; McDermott & Hulse-Killacky, 2012; Schneider, 1998). However, theory and research evidence from the field of communication are rarely used in developing and implementing police programs and practices. Using this robust body of scholarship can provide police with practical frameworks for improving communication between police officers and communities. Intergroup interventions such as VOICES serve as a good example of how researcher-practitioner partnerships can influence how police approach community trust-building with groups that are reluctant to engage with them. More generally, this study provides a useful example of how evidence-based interventions can be tested and implemented in police agencies to improve police policies and practices (Sherman, 2013).

### ***Strengths and limitations***

This study has a mix of strengths and limitations that readers should keep in mind when evaluating the findings. First, although we were able to conduct interviews with most VOICES participants, the overall number of participants is nonetheless small. Second, the study relied on only one type of data and analytic method. The use of additional qualitative and quantitative methods would be a welcome supplement to our thematic analysis of the interview data (see, for example, Augoustinos & Goodman, 2018; Gallois et al., 2012; Regnault et al., 2017). In particular, VOICES is well-suited for a high-quality impact evaluation using experimental or quasi-experimental methods. Such research could also examine the effects of moderators such as age, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation as well as the intersectionality of these and other socio-demographic characteristics. Future research should also begin to explore the duration of effects associated with VOICES or similar interventions. Many interventions are only effective in the short term, therefore, it is vital to understand how long different program effects last (e.g., Williams & Jones, 2006). Third, there is also room in this body of research to explore interventions from a variety of different (but likely overlapping) theoretical frameworks. These could include a focus on expressions and perceptions of empathy (e.g., Klimecki, 2019), procedural justice (e.g., Tyler & Huo, 2002), common or super-ordinate group identities (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), and communication accommodation (e.g., Giles, 2016).

Furthermore, little is known about how interventions like VOICES propagate throughout social networks. Thus, it would be useful to explore the extent to which participants subsequently

conversed with others (e.g., their family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances) about their experience with VOICES. For instance, Shin et al. (2021) note that when participants discuss their experiences during the intervention with others, they are potentially widening its effects to people who did not participate (see, also, Pettigrew et al., 2018). This phenomenon is similar to the notion of a ‘diffusion of benefits’ in criminology, whereby people or places not targeted by an intervention still realize benefits from it (Guerette & Bowers, 2009). There is evidence that *indirect* forms of intergroup contact can influence people’s perspectives on an outgroup. For example, the extended contact hypothesis (see, Wright et al., 1997) has shown that mere knowledge of positive direct contact between groups can reduce intergroup anxiety and prejudice (see, Turner et al., 2007, 2008; Vezzali et al., 2015). Learning more about the direct and indirect effects of intergroup contact interventions like VOICES will help expand our knowledge about how to improve police-community relations.

In spite of the limitations outlined here, the present study makes several useful contributions to the literature. It is only the third study to examine the effects of an intergroup contact intervention in policing. It acquaints readers with useful concepts and theories from the study of intergroup communication and explains how these ideas can be applied in a practical sense to improve relationships between police and the public. It also broadens the scope of the earlier findings on VOICES reported by Hill et al. (2021) in two ways. First, it examines the effects of VOICES on Hispanic immigrants, a historically marginalized community that sometimes has tense relationships with police. Second, it also examines, for the first time, how police officers view participating in an intergroup contact intervention. Future research should continue to build on this study in different settings, using a variety of rigorous qualitative and quantitative methods.

## Conclusion

At its core, policing is an ongoing exercise in intergroup relations. Thus, policing can benefit from the large body of social psychological theory and research on preventing and reducing intergroup conflict. In particular, the evaluation research evidence on intergroup contact and communication interventions is useful for thinking about how to improve police-community relations, particularly those involving marginalized populations. Based on this scholarship, the Santa Barbara Police Department worked closely with community representatives to design and implement an intervention called VOICES. This paper provided qualitative evidence on the effects of VOICES on police officers and Hispanic immigrants. The results show that VOICES was associated with a number of beneficial effects for both police and the public. The emerging scientific evidence suggests that VOICES is a potentially promising intervention for improving police-community relations. The next step is to test the effects of this intervention using a rigorous experimental or quasi-experimental design.

## Notes

1. Here we use the terms intergroup ‘contact’ and ‘communication’ interchangeably to refer to interventions in which members of two or more groups are deliberately brought together under carefully specified conditions to communicate with one another.
2. The community members who participated in the intervention were chosen by community leaders who work with immigrant communities in the City of Santa Barbara.
3. For discussions of the difference between specific and diffuse attitudes generally, see, Easton (1965, 1975). For discussions of the difference as applied to policing, see, Brandl et al. (1994) and Frank et al. (2005).

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributors

**Lidia E. Nuño** is an associate professor of criminal justice and criminology at Texas State University. She also serves as the director for the Social Equity Research and Policy Lab. Her research interests include immigration, policing, and gangs.

**Shawn L. Hill** is a lieutenant with the Santa Barbara Police Department and a Ph.D. student at the University of California, Santa Barbara in the Department of Communication. He is a community policing committee member for the International Association of Chiefs of Police, a policing fellow at the National Policing Institute, and co-editor of the forthcoming *Rowman and Littlefield Handbook of Policing, Communication, and Society*.

**Edward R. Maguire** is a professor of criminology and criminal justice at Arizona State University, where he also serves as director of the Public Safety Innovation Lab. His research focuses primarily on policing and violence.

**Howard Giles** is distinguished research professor in Communication at the University of California Santa Barbara. He edited the *Handbook of Intergroup Communication* in 2012 as well as co-edited the two-volume *Oxford Encyclopedia of Intergroup Communication* in 2018.

## ORCID

Lidia E. Nuño  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4934-1792>

Edward R. Maguire  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8410-5288>

## References

- Allport, G. W. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Addison-Wesley.
- Arana, A. (2005). How the street gangs took Central America. *Foreign Affairs*, 84(3), 98–110. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20034353>
- Astor, A. (2009). Unauthorized immigration, securitization and the making of Operation. *Latino Studies*, 7(1), 5–29. <https://doi.org/10.1057/lst.2008.56>
- Augoustinos, M., & Goodman, S. (2018). Discursive psychological approaches to intergroup communication. In H. Giles & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The oxford handbook of intergroup communication* (Vol. 1, pp. 339–352). Oxford University Press.
- Barak, M. P., León, K. S., & Maguire, E. R. (2020). Conceptual and empirical obstacles in defining MS-13: Law-enforcement perspective. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 19(2), 563–589. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12493>
- Bittner, E. (1970). *The functions of police in modern society*. U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Brandl, S. G., Frank, J., Worden, R. E., & Bynum, T. S. (1994). Global and specific attitudes toward the police: Disentangling the relationship. *Justice Quarterly*, 11(1), 119–134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418829400092161>
- Brown, R., & Hewstone, M. (2005). An integrative theory of intergroup contact. M. P. Zanna(Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*. (Vol. Vol. 37, pp. 255–343). Elsevier Academic Press. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(05\)37005-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(05)37005-5)
- Brunson, R. K. (2007). “Police don’t like black people”: African-American young men’s accumulated police experiences. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 6(1), 71–101. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2007.00423.x>
- Carter, D. L. (1985). Hispanic perception of police performance: An empirical assessment. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 13(6), 487–500. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0047-2352\(85\)90078-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0047-2352(85)90078-9)
- Chapman, A. L., Hadfield, M., & Chapman, C. J. (2015). Qualitative research in healthcare: An introduction to grounded theory using thematic analysis. *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh*, 45(3), 201–205. <https://doi.org/10.4997/JRCPE.2015.305>
- Choi, C., & Giles, H. (2012). Intergroup messages in policing the community. In H. Giles (Ed.), *Handbook of intergroup communication* (pp. 264–277). Routledge.
- Clark, M. A., Robertson, M. M., & Young, S. (2019). “I feel your pain”: A critical review of organizational research on empathy. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 40(2), 166–192. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2348>
- Dittmar, H., & Drury, J. (2000). Self-image—is it in the bag? A qualitative comparison between “ordinary” and “excessive” consumers. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 21(2), 109–142. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870\(99\)00039-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0167-4870(99)00039-2)
- Dragojevic, M., & Giles, H. (2014). Language and interpersonal communication: Their intergroup dynamics. In C. R. Berger (Ed.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (pp. 21–59). De Gruyter Mouton.
- Easton, D. (1965). *A framework for political analysis*. Prentice Hall.
- Easton, D. (1975). A re-assessment of the concept of political support. *British Journal of Political Science*, 5(4), 435–457. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400008309>
- Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. P. (2014). *Pulled over: How police stops define race and citizenship*. University of Chicago Press.

- FitzGerald, C., Martin, A., Berner, D., & Hurst, S. (2019). Interventions designed to reduce implicit pre-judices and implicit stereotypes in real world contexts: A systematic review. *BMC Psychology*, 7(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-019-0299-7>
- Foster, K., Jones, M. S., & Pierce, H. (2022). Race and ethnicity differences in police contact and perceptions of and attitudes toward the police among youth. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 49(5), 660–680. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548221078296>
- Frank, J., Smith, B. W., & Novak, K. J. (2005). Exploring the basis of citizens' attitudes toward the police. *Police Quarterly*, 8(2), 206–228. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098611103258955>
- Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2000). *Reducing intergroup bias: The common ingroup identity model*. Psychology Press.
- Gallagher, C., Mastrofski, S. D., Maguire, E. R., & Reisig, M. D. (2001). *The public image of the police*. International Association of Chiefs of Police. <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/the-public-image-of-police>
- Gallois, C., Cretchley, J., & Watson, B. M. (2012). Approaches and methods in intergroup communication. In H. Giles (Ed.), *The handbook of intergroup communication* (pp. 31–43). Routledge.
- Garcia, J. R. (1981). *Operation Wetback: The mass deportation of Mexican undocumented workers in 1954*. Greenwood Press.
- Giles, H. (Ed.). (2016). *Communication accommodation theory: Negotiating personal relationships and social identities across contexts*. Cambridge University Press.
- Giles, H., Hill, S. L., Maguire, E. R., & Angus, D. (2021). Conclusion: New directions in policing and intergroup communication. In H. Giles, E. R. Maguire, & S. L. Hill (Eds.), *The Rowman & Littlefield handbook of policing, communication, and society* (pp. 371–390). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Giles, H., Maguire, E. R., & Hill, S. R. Eds. (2022). Special Issue of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations. *The police and the policed*. In press.
- Guerette, R. T., & Bowers, K. J. (2009). Assessing the extent of crime displacement and diffusion of benefits: A review of situational crime prevention evaluations. *Criminology*, 47(4), 1331–1368. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2009.00177.x>
- Hewstone, M., & Hamberger, J. (2000). Perceived variability and stereotype change. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 36(2), 103–124. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.1999.1398>
- Hewstone, M., Hopkins, N., & Routh, D. A. (1992). Cognitive models of stereotype change: I. Generalization and subtyping in young people's views of the police. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 22(3), 219–234. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420220303>
- Hewstone, M., Kenworthy, J. B., Cairns, E., Tausch, N., Hughes, J., Tam, T., & Pinder, C. (2008). Stepping stones to reconciliation in Northern Ireland: Intergroup contact, forgiveness and trust. In A. Nadler, T. E. Malloy, & J. D. Fisher (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup reconciliation* (pp. 199–226). Oxford University Press.
- Hewstone, M., Lollot, S., Swart, H., Myers, E., Voci, A., Al Ramiah, A., & Cairns, E. (2014). Intergroup contact and intergroup conflict. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 20(1), 39–53. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035582>
- Hilal, A. H., & Alabri, S. S. (2013). Using NVivo for data analysis in qualitative research. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 2(2), 181–186. <https://doi.org/10.12816/0002914>
- Hill, S. L., & Giles, H. (2021). Police culture: Us versus them communication. In H. Giles, E. R. Maguire, & S. L. Hill (Eds.), *The Rowman & Littlefield handbook of policing, communication, and society* (pp. 17–34). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hill, S., Giles, H., & Maguire, E. R. (2021). VOICES: A theory-driven intervention for improving relationships between police and the public. *Policing: An International Journal*, 44(5), 786–799. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-09-2020-0154>
- Holmes, M. D., & Smith, B. W. (2012). Intergroup dynamics of extra-legal police aggression: An integrated theory of race and place. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 17(4), 344–353. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2012.03.006>
- Hopkins, N. (1994). Young people arguing and thinking about the police: Qualitative data concerning the categorization of the police in a police-youth contact program. *Human Relations*, 47(11), 1409–1432. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679404701106>
- Joyce, N. (2018). Mediated contact. In H. Giles & J. Harwood (Eds.), *The Oxford encyclopedia of intergroup communication* (Vol. 2, pp. 128–138). Oxford University Press.
- Katz, C. M., & Maguire, E. R. (2000). *Transforming the police: Thirteen key reforms*. Waveland.
- Kettl, D. F. (2017). *Can governments earn our trust?* Polity Press.
- Klimecki, O. M. (2019). The role of empathy and compassion in conflict resolution. *Emotion Review*, 11(4), 310–325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073919838609>
- Kochel, T. R. (2019). Explaining racial differences in Ferguson's impact on local residents' trust and perceived legitimacy: Policy implications for police. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 30(3), 374–405. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0887403416684923>
- Maguire, E. R., & Giles, H. (2022). Public expressions of empathy and sympathy by U.S. criminal justice officials after controversial police killings of African-Americans. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 41(1), 49–75. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X211057238>



- Maguire, E. R., & Johnson, D. (2010). Measuring public perceptions of the police. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 33(4), 703–730. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13639511011085097>
- McDermott, P. J., & Hulse-Killacky, D. (2012). Strengthening the culture of police organizations through interpersonal leadership. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 81(10), 16–20. <https://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1057&context=education-facultypubs>
- Nuño, L. E. (2018). Hispanics' perceived procedural justice, legitimacy, and willingness to cooperate with the police. *Police Practice and Research*, 19(2), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2018.1418160>
- Nuño, L. E., & Maguire, E. R. (2021). The nature and structure of MS-13 in Los Angeles County. *Criminal Justice Review*, 073401682110299. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07340168211029990>
- Ortiz, A. (2020, August. 12). Confidence in police is at record low, Gallup survey finds. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/us/gallup-poll-police.html>
- Oxholm, P., & Glaser, J. (Inpress). Goals and outcomes of police officer communication: Evidence from in-depth interviews. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*.
- Paolini, S., White, F. A., Tropp, L. R., Turner, R. N., Page-Gould, E., Barlow, F. K., & Gómez, Á., (Eds.) (2021). Transforming society with intergroup contact: Current debates, state of the science, and pathways to engaging with social cohesion practitioners and policy makers. *special issue of Journal of Social Issues*(Vol. 77. 1, pp. 1–274). <https://spssi.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15404560/2021/77/1>
- Peck, J. H. (2015). Minority perceptions of the police: A state-of-the-art review. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 38(1), 173–203. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-01-2015-0001>
- Pettigrew, J., Segrott, J., Ray, C. D., & Littlecott, H. (2018). Social interface model: Theorizing ecological post-delivery processes for intervention effects. *Prevention Science*, 19(8), 987–996. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s1121-017-0857-2>
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2005). Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis: Its history and influence. In J. F. D'Ovidio, P. Glick, & L. A. Rudman (Eds.), *On the nature of prejudice: Fifty years after Allport* (pp. 262–277). Blackwell Publishing.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(5), 751–783. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.751>
- Provine, D. M., Varsanyi, M. W., Lewis, P. G., & Decker, S. H. (2016). *Policing immigrants: Local law enforcement on the front lines*. University of Chicago Press.
- Pryce, D. K. (2018). Does procedural justice influence general satisfaction with police? A study from a hard-to-reach population of immigrants in the United States. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 41(1), 31–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2016.1193820>
- Pryce, D. K., Johnson, D., & Maguire, E. R. (2017). Procedural justice, obligation to obey, and cooperation with police in a sample of Ghanaian immigrants. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 44(5), 733–755. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854816680225>
- Pryce, D. K., Olaghere, A., Brown, R. A., & Davis, V. M. (2021). A neglected problem: Understanding the effects of personal and vicarious trauma on African Americans' attitudes toward the police. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 48(10), 1366–1389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548211006756>
- Regnault, A., Willgoss, T., & Barbic, S.; International Society for Quality of Life Research (ISOQOL) Mixed Methods Special Interest Group (SIG). (2017). Towards the use of mixed methods inquiry as best practice in health outcomes research. *Journal of Patient-Reported Outcomes*, 2(1), 19. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41687-018-0043-8>
- Reimer, N. K., Love, A., Wölfer, R., & Hewstone, M. (2021). Building social cohesion through intergroup contact: Evaluation of a large-scale intervention to improve intergroup relations among adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 50(6), 1049–1067. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-021-01400-8>
- Reny, T. T., & Newman, B. J. (2021). The opinion-mobilizing effect of social protest against police violence: Evidence from the 2020 George Floyd protests. *American Political Science Review*, 115(4), 1499–1507. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000460>
- Schneider, S. R. (1998). Overcoming barriers to communication between police and socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods: A critical theory of community policing. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 30(4), 347–377. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008382621747>
- Sherman, L. W. (2013). The rise of evidence-based policing: Targeting, testing, and tracking. *Crime and Justice*, 42(1), 377–451. <https://doi.org/10.1086/670819>
- Shin, Y. J., Pettigrew, J., Ray, C. D., & Lu, Y. (2021). Frequency and importance of interpersonal communication about a school-based intervention with parents, peers, and teachers. Application of social interface model. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 49(6), 705–721. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909882.2021.1936122>
- Shrikant, N., & Sambaraju, R. (2021). 'A police officer shot a black man': Racial categorization, racism, and mundane culpability in news reports of police shootings of black people in the United States of America. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 60(4), 1196–1217. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12490>
- Sumner, W. G. (1906). *Folkways: The sociological importance of usages, manners, customs, mores, and morals*. Ginn & Co.
- Sunshine, J., & Tyler, T. R. (2003). The role of procedural justice and legitimacy in shaping public support for policing. *Law and Society Review*, 37(3), 513–547. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-5893.3703002>



- Tajfel, H., Turner, J. C., Austin, W. G., & Worchel, S. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *Organizational identity: A reader*, 56(65), 9780203505984–16.
- Tropp, L. R., Hawi, D. R., O'Brien, T. C., Gheorghiu, M., Zetes, A., & Butz, D. A. (2017). Intergroup contact and the potential for post-conflict reconciliation: Studies in Northern Ireland and South Africa. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 23(3), 239–249. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000236>
- Turner, R. N., Hewstone, M., Voci, A., Paolini, S., & Christ, O. (2007). Reducing prejudice via direct and extended cross-group friendship. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 18(1), 212–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463280701680297>
- Turner, R. N., Hewstone, M., Voci, A., & Vonofakou, C. (2008). A test of the extended contact hypothesis: The mediating role of intergroup anxiety, perceived ingroup and outgroup norms, and inclusion of the outgroup in the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95(4), 843–860. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0011434>
- Tyler, T. R., & Huo, Y. (2002). *Trust in the law: Encouraging public cooperation with the police and courts*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Vezzali, L., Stathi, S., Giovannini, D., Capozza, D., & Visintin, E. P. (2015). “And the best essay is . . . ”: Extended contact and cross-group friendships at school. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 54(4), 601–615. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12110>
- Voci, A., Hadziosmanovic, E., Cakal, H., Veneziani, C. A., & Hewstone, M. (2017). Impact of pre-war and post-war intergroup contact on intergroup relations and mental health: Evidence from a Bosnian sample. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 23(3), 250–259. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000222>
- Wagner, U., & Hewstone, M. (2012). Intergroup contact. In L. R. Tropp (Ed.), *The handbook of intergroup conflict* (pp. 193–209). Oxford University Press.
- Weitzer, R., & Tuch, S. A. (2004). Race and perceptions of police misconduct. *Social Problems*, 51(3), 305–325. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2004.51.3.305>
- Williams, A., & Jones, M. (2006). Patients' assessments of consulting a nurse practitioner: The time factor. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 53(2), 188–195. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03714.x>
- Wright, S. C., Aron, A., McLaughlin-Volpe, T., & Ropp, S. A. (1997). The extended contact effect: Knowledge of cross-group friendship and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(1), 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.1.73>