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Belgrade, Serbia**INTERGROUP CONTACT AND INGROUP IDENTIFICATION AS PREDICTORS OF INTERGROUP ATTITUDES AND FORGIVENESS IN THE SERBIAN CONTEXT: THE MODERATING ROLE OF EXPOSURE TO POSITIVE INFORMATION²**

Intergroup contact reduces prejudice and improves outgroup attitudes, while a salient social identity might have the opposite effects. Recent research has shown that exposure to positive information about the outgroup could influence such effects of the contact and social identity on the outgroup attitudes. Here we investigate the effects of the contact and social identity on the outgroup attitudes, and forgiveness toward the outgroup of Bosniak Muslims among Serbs ($N = 400$) by randomly allocating them into control and experimental groups. In the experimental condition, the students were presented with brief biographies of three eminent Bosniak Muslims, in the positive context, after which they completed a survey. In the control group, students were only presented with the survey without the biographies. Subsequent independent samples *t*-tests showed that the mean values for ingroup identification and intergroup trust were significantly different in the two groups. Specifically, participants who were in the experimental condition, being exposed to the positive information about Bosniak Muslims, reported a higher level of intergroup trust and a lower level of ingroup identification as Serbian. We then performed a multi-group structural equation modeling through which we tested a predictive role of the past contact and in-the group identification on trust and collective guilt in both control and experimental conditions. Across both groups, past contact positively and ingroup identification negatively predicted both intergroup attitudes and forgiveness via trust and collective guilt. Exposure to the positive information about the outgroup moderated the indirect effects of the ingroup identification on the intergroup attitudes via collective guilt.

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Intergroup contact, i.e. bringing individuals from rival groups together under certain conditions, has positive effects on conflict reduction. Since its inception in 1954, numerous studies have backed this conflict reducing effects of the intergroup contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). We now know that a direct contact reduces prejudice if the contact is sanctioned by norms and authorities; if there is a friendship potential; if individuals from different groups have equal status during the interaction and they can work toward a common goal that will benefit both groups (Pettigrew, 1998). Intergroup contact is even shown to improve attitudes and reduce a conflict among groups which have been involved in the violent conflicts such as Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland (Tam et al., 2008; Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009; Tausch, Kenworthy, Cairns, & Christ, 2007) or Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots (Papadakis, 2008; Psaltis & Cakal, 2016; Tausch et al., 2010). Despite these convincing findings, bringing people from different groups is simply not possible in some situations, especially during the intense conflicts or in violent intergroup relations. Take for example the aforementioned intergroup context in Cyprus. Two communities were involved in a violent conflict from 1963 to 1974, when Turkey intervened. At the time, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots were completely isolated from each other by a heavily guarded border (Lytras & Psaltis, 2011; Psaltis, Beydola, Filippou, & Vrachimis, 2014) until 2003, when the border was opened. Another case in point is the present day intergroup context between Bosniak Muslims and Serbs who now live in separate states or in ethnically more homogeneous territories, where they are the dominant group. In Serbia, for instance, there is no possibility of the present-day contact with the Bosniak Muslims. One can rely on the effects of the positive past contact, but to what extent this past contact has the potential to improve the present-day intergroup relations between Serbs and Bosniak Muslims is difficult to know. Recent research has shown that contact has the capacity to improve the outgroup attitudes even among Serbs and Bosniak Muslims who have had a history of violent conflict (Voci, Hadziosmanovic, Hewstone, Cakal, & Veneziani, 2017). These findings show that intergroup contact can even override the effects of the past violent conflict. In the current state of affairs, however, bringing the two communities together with the aim of improving the intergroup relations may not be possible due to physical constraints, i.e. the existence of an actual border, homogenization of each community in a particular geographical location, or strong condemnation of such contact by social norms. In the last decade, research has shown that the alternative forms of contact, such as extended, imagined, and vicarious contacts, can have a positive effect on the intergroup attitudes even in situations in which bringing the two groups involved in conflict might not be possible (Vezzali et al., 2015; Vezzali, Hewstone, Capozza, & Wolfer, 2014). The extended contact refers to situations when individuals are aware of another member of the group who has outgroup friends (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997), and in the imagined contact situation, individuals are mentally stimulated by having a positive interaction with an outgroup member. Both extended and imagined contact scenarios involve either a real-life

situation or a dimension of agentic involvement, whereas in vicarious contact situations (Joyce & Harwood, 2012), individuals are exposed to positive intergroup situations via a recorded footage or a written text. Compared to other forms of indirect contacts, in an ideal vicarious contact situation, individuals are passive consumers of the information they are being exposed to. However, most of this research on vicarious contact has been conducted in the non-violent intergroup situations. Recent work on the contexts with a history of conflict (e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina), has highlighted a) the potential benefits of contacts across the intergroup spectrum (Freeman, 2012); (b) the need to repair social relations between groups involved in the conflict (Corkalo et al., 2004); and (c) has shown that even proximity to the outgroup increases trust and decreases fear of the outgroup (Mironova & Whitt, 2014). It is still not clear whether these alternative contact experiences would be equally effective in improving the intergroup relations in these more conflicting contexts.

In the present research we have taken the first stab at this, and focused on the vicarious contact across groups which have been involved in a violent conflict in the past, i.e. Serbians who live in Serbia as the ingroup, and Bosniak Muslims in general as the outgroup. In what follows we first briefly review the research on the vicarious contact, and outline the intergroup relations between the two groups. Then we report a study in which we have manipulated the exposure to positive information on the outgroup of Bosniak Muslims, as a proxy of the vicarious contact, and investigate the moderating role of this information in relation to our independent variables, past contact effects, and ingroup identification, with our outcome variables, forgiveness and outgroup attitudes, via trust and collective guilt. We have collected our data in a large University of Belgrade, where there is little opportunity for contacts with the outgroup of Bosniak Muslims.

Vicarious contact and positive information

In simple terms, in a vicarious contact situation, group members are provided with a narrative account of a positive encounter with an outgroup member. This might include a description of an intergroup contact situation via a text or a script, or even a positive description of an outgroup member (Mazziotta, Mummendey, & Wright, 2011). Various research has demonstrated that different operationalizations of a vicarious contact can positively improve intergroup attitudes (Mazziotta et al., 2011); meta-stereotypes (Gómez & Huici, 2008), while decreasing prejudice (West, Holmes, & Hewstone, 2011) across different target outgroups, such as immigrants (Joyce & Harwood, 2012; Mazziotta et al., 2011) or mentally ill (West et al., 2011), in the non-violent intergroup settings. Joyce and Harwood (2012) exposed their participants to interactions between US border patrol and an illegal immigrant. In the positive interaction condition, participants reported to like the illegal immigrant more, and this improved attitudes generalized to other outgroups which were not involved in the contact situation. Similar findings were

reported by Mazziotta and his colleagues (2011), and by West et al. (2011), who exposed their participants to positive textual information on people with schizophrenia. In their first experiment, West et al. (2011), who found that the imagined neutral contact with a stigmatized group might have negative consequences due to the increased intergroup anxiety. Then, they provided their participants in the neutral imagined contact conditions with the external stereotype, disconfirming evidence via vignettes (Experiment 2). The results showed that providing positive factual information on four real individuals via vignettes decreased the intergroup anxiety and increased the outgroup attitudes. Taken together, these results suggested that the vicarious contact and positive information external to the contact situation could potentially improve the outgroup attitudes in various intergroup contexts. If the exposure to positive information about the outgroup has the potential to improve the intergroup context, then it can also improve the intergroup relations between groups which were involved in a violent conflict. Most intergroup conflicts involve extreme denigration of the outgroup on the basis of the fact that the definition of the outgroup as a threat to the ingroup that is "uniquely good and virtuous" celebrates the eradication of the external threat, i.e. the outgroup, as a necessary step to protect the ingroup (Reicher, Haslam, & Rath, 2008). Therefore, one can hypothesize that exposing individuals to positive information about the outgroup might result in a situation where some extremities done to the outgroup should not have been done, and the outgroupers could be trusted. In the next section, we discuss these two possible mechanisms, i.e. collective guilt and intergroup trust.

Collective guilt and intergroup trust

Research shows that accepting that one's group has mistreated the others, i.e., collective guilt (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2003) is associated with prosocial behaviour toward the outgroup, intentions to restore justice, forgiveness, and decreased bias (Branscombe & Doosje, 2004). Collective guilt is negatively predicted by identification with the group. Because individuals seek to enhance their group identity, an acknowledgement of a past wrongdoing at the group level can damage this esteem related to their membership to the group. Hence, they might be tempted to ignore information regarding the past wrongdoings (Harth, Kessler, & Leach, 2008). Conversely, however, when ingroupers interact with members of an outgroup that has been mistreated by the ingroup, they might be more willing to accept their group's past wrongdoings. Using data from three representative surveys conducted in Northern Ireland, (Hewstone, Cairns, McLernon, Niens, & Noor (2004) showed that more positive contact with the outgroup of Catholics and Protestants predicted more group-based guilt, which in turn was associated with forgiveness, positive outgroup attitudes, and more willingness to support peace and reconciliation. Research conducted in the post-war Croatia, for

instance, showed that identification with the ingroup was a significant positive predictor of collective guilt assignment and collective guilt acceptance via justification of ingroup wrongdoing (Jelic, Biruski, & Ajdukovic, 2013).

Another important psychological mechanism linked to forgiveness and positive outgroup attitudes is the intergroup trust. Trust, as the expectation of benevolent motives of others that they will not exploit one's vulnerabilities, is an important positive predictor of cooperation, and a negative predictor of the conflict (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013). Because trust is an iterative process during which interacting partners establish their willingness not to exploit the other party, it requires a series of encounters. As such, positive intergroup encounters are predictors par excellence of coming to trust the outgroup (Tam et al., 2009; Tropp, 2008). For example, Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, and Niens (2006) showed that the intergroup contact could act as an antecedent of trust, and more importantly, it could predict forgiveness via intergroup trust among groups which shared a historical conflict.

Past research also showed that among Bosniak Muslims, for example, a high-quality contact with Serbs predicted forgiveness via increased trust and decreased intergroup anxiety (Brown, Cehajic, & Castano, 2008). Despite the previous research showing how the intergroup contact improved intergroup attitudes, particularly promoting forgiveness, trust and collective guilt, it is not known if the vicarious contact, i.e. an exposure to positive information, would exert a similar positive effect on forgiveness and collective guilt in particular. Given that the intergroup contact reduces prejudice and increases forgiveness by increasing trust and collective guilt, it follows that exposure to positive information about the outgroup could only emphasize these effects. More specifically, any form of a positive past contact would increase trust and collective guilt, which in turn would predict more forgiveness, and improved attitudes toward the outgroup. These paths, however, would be positively moderated by exposure to positive information.

Social identity and outgroup attitudes

Extant literature also shows that another important predictor of the outgroup attitudes and forgiveness, especially among groups involved in the violent conflict, is the way individuals identify with their groups, called social identity (Hewstone et al., 2006; Myers & Cairns, 2009). Social identity here refers to a sense of self people derive from their group membership which provides a lens through which people interpret a variety of social experiences and seek to tackle positive and negative life events (Haslam, Oakes, Turner, & McGarty, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Because individuals seek to achieve a positive self-image (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Crisp & Abrams, 2009; Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 2004), attempts to show that the ingroup is "positively distinct from the outgroup" can result in negative outgroup bias, thus increasing the intergroup conflict (Turner

& Crisp, 2010). Across different intergroup domains, such as racial, ethnic, and social, stronger identification with the ingroup predicts negative attitudes toward the outgroup (Duckitt & Mphuthing, 1998); increases perceived threats from the outgroup and increases stronger motivations to engage in-group serving behaviour (Cakal, Hewstone, Guler, & Heath, 2016). Furthermore, those who strongly identify with their group experience less collective guilt (Doosje, 2006; Doosje et al., 2004), resulting from past atrocities perpetrated by their group against the outgroup. For example, Čehajić and Brown (2008), qualitatively showed that Serbian participants were less willing to accept atrocities committed by the ingroup in order to preserve a positive social identity.

Thus, we argue that in order to unpack the effects of the contact and exposure to positive information on the outgroup attitudes, especially among groups which share a history of violent intergroup conflicts, one needs to understand how individuals identify with their group. Last but not least, because outgroup attitudes are a general perspective toward the outgroup without high psychological cost, we also include forgiveness which is more directly linked to reconciliation, and which has a relatively high cost compared to outgroup attitudes. Accordingly, we hypothesize that the ingroup identification will predict the intergroup trust and collective guilt negatively, which in turn will be associated with positive intergroup attitudes and more forgiveness.

Present research

Serbs and Bosniak Muslims are two Slavic nations, with some cultural, political, historical and religious differences. Although they have lived together for centuries, most recently as a single nation during the Communist regime in Yugoslavia, there have been significant differences regarding the political power and the status with Serbs being the economic and political majority. After The Second World War and during the communist Yugoslavia, the country went through a rapid modernization process, but this did not eradicate the ethnic identities (Smits, 2010). However, the modernization also resulted in the increased autonomy of the constituent republics (Hodson, Sekulic, & Massey, 1994). The intergroup relations between the two groups were cordial, but the cross-group marriages were not very common (Smits, 2010). Following the end of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, two groups were involved in one of the bloodiest and most violent conflicts in the recent history of Europe. It was believed that the conflict as such and the ensuing atrocities were the product of the ethnic competition that was fostered by the increased unemployment and scarier resources over which two groups competed together with other ethnic groups. The then deliberate misuse of history by the leaders to gain control of the political and economic resources resulted in ethnic polarization. Alternatively, one can also argue that ethnic polarization and an emphasis on group differences might have exacerbated the threat

from the outgroup (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). This, in turn, was used by politicians to gain leverage and personal interests. In the post-conflict era, politicians and policymakers established strong conflictive narratives, through school curricula and media, promoting victimization and negative stereotypes of other group members (Mirković, 1996). Consequently, during the post-conflict period, people, especially young generations, have obtained knowledge about the other group almost exclusively from those negative narratives, without many chances for the direct personal experience. It is therefore essential to understand factors that might contribute reconciliation between the two nations (Petrović, 2017). It is against this backdrop that we wanted to test our hypotheses. Specifically, we have hypothesized that the past contact with Bosniak Muslims would positively predict the outgroup attitudes and forgiveness via trust and collective guilt, while identification as Serbian would be their negative predictor. Based on our interpretation of the research on the vicarious contact, we have further hypothesized that the exposure to positive information would positively moderate these paths.

Method

Participants and procedure

Four hundred students (227 females, $M_{\text{age}} = 22.62$, $SD = 4.75$) from a major University of Belgrade were invited to participate in the research by completing a pen-and-paper questionnaire on attitudes toward “the other groups” in Serbia. They were recruited by a research assistant on a voluntary basis. Upon consenting to participate, participants were randomly allocated to the control and experimental group (positive information exposure group). In the control condition, all the participants directly proceeded to complete the questionnaire on the intergroup attitudes toward Bosniak Muslims. In the experimental condition, participants were exposed to positive information on Bosniak Muslims. They were presented with short biographies of three prominent Bosniak Muslims (Mustafa Kućuković, a famous football player; Mersad Berber, a painter, and Nasiha Kapidžić-Hadžić, a poet). Then they were asked to answer three basic reading comprehension questions on the biographies to assure that the participants read the biographies (see Appendix for a sample biography). Once they completed reading and answering the questions, they proceeded to complete the questionnaire.

Measures

We adapted and accordingly worded all our variables to the current context. Thus, all questions were phrased in such a way that they focused on the intergroup relations and attitudes toward Bosniak Muslims. All variables except the intergroup attitudes were measured by a 7-point Likert type scales (three items

for each variable, ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). To have a standard set of measures, we selected the three best performing items (with factor loadings above .50; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010; Kline, 2011). Only the intergroup attitudes were measured by a 7-point bipolar semantic differential scales. Higher values indicated more past contact with Bosnians, higher identification as a Serb, higher levels of the intergroup trust, collective guilt, and forgiveness, and more positive attitudes toward Bosnians. Cronbach's alphas were given in Table 1. We included the Serbian version of the questionnaire in the Appendix.

Past contact. Items were adapted from Voci, Hadziosmanovic, Hewstone, Cakal, and Veneziani (2017): e.g. 'Have you ever had any contact with Bosniak Muslims (*never-frequently*)?'.

Identification as Serbian. Items were adapted from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992): e.g. 'Being Serbian is an important part of my identity',

Collective guilt. Items were adapted from Wohl and Branscombe (2005): e.g. 'I feel guilty about the negative things my community has done to the other community (Bosniak Muslims) in the past'.

Intergroup Trust. The scale was adapted from Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, and Cairns(2009):e.g. 'Most members of the Bosniak community, in general, can be trusted'.

Intergroup Attitudes. The scale was adapted from Abrams, Eller, and Bryant (2006). Participants responded to semantic differential items, e.g. 'Please describe how you feel about Bosniak Muslims (*negative- positive*)'.

Intergroup Forgiveness. The items were adapted from Wohl & Branscombe (2005), e.g. 'I am able to show mercy towards offenders from the Bosniak community who committed atrocities to my community.'

Results

We reported the means and standard deviations of all variables in Table 1. Then we conducted a one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (positive information vs. no information/control). The results showed that the participants differed only in two variables: identification ($F(1, 397) = 8.44, p < .05$) and trust ($F(1, 397) = 4.36, p < .05$). In the experimental conditions, the participants reported lower levels of the ingroup identification ($M = 3.54, SD = 1.73$), and higher levels of trust ($M = 4.57, SD = 1.34$), compared to the participants in the control group (ingroup identification $M = 4.05, SD=1.75$; trust $M = 4.26, SD = 1.58$). These results showed that the exposure to positive information about the outgroup Bosniak Muslims significantly increased the level of trust toward the Bosniak Muslims, and the way individuals identified with their group. Afterwards, we proceeded to explore the relations between our variables and whether exposure to positive information moderated these associations.

Table 1
Means and standard deviations of all variables as a function of exposure to positive information

Variable	α	Control ($n = 200$)		Positive information ($n = 200$)	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Past contact	.86	3.56	1.62	3.63	1.50
Ingroup identification	.87	4.05	1.75	3.54	1.73
Collective guilt	.92	3.49	1.70	3.86	1.43
Intergroup trust	.92	4.27	1.58	4.57	1.34
Intergroup attitudes	.90	4.93	1.41	4.93	1.39
Forgiveness	.69	4.84	1.51	3.88	1.49

Model construction

Observed variables (the items we used to measure each variable) were combined to create latent variables, and the resulting model was tested via Structural Equation Modelling (Muthen & Muthen, 2008a, 2008b). Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that all our items loaded onto expected factors and did not cross-load onto other factors. The results also showed that all of our observed variables had good to excellent loadings on to their respective latent variables (above .50; Kline, 2011). Our model (Figure 1) fit the data well ($\chi^2_{(120)} = 204.29, p < .001, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .04$; good fit is indicated by a non-significant $\chi^2, \chi^2/df$ ratio lower than or equal to 3, .06 or lower for RMSEA, .95 or higher for CFI, and .08 or lower for SRMR, see Bentler, 2007; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

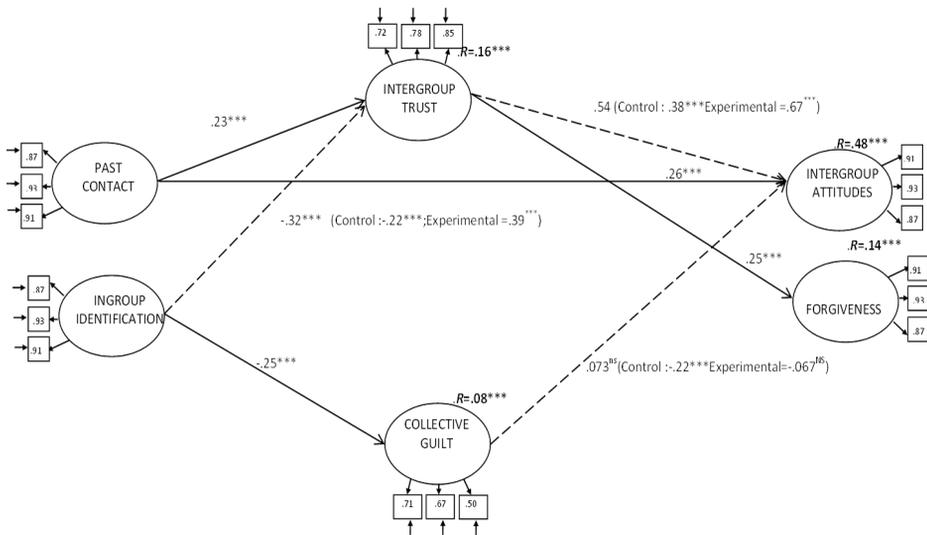


Figure 1. The structural equation model showing the estimated associations between the variables of interest.

Note. Ingroup ($\chi^2_{(149)} = 243.38, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 1.65, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .04$). Correlations between other variables in the model: Past contact-identification as Serbian, $r = -.05, p > .05$; Intergroup trust-collective guilt, $r = .34, p < .05$; Intergroup attitudes-forgiveness, $r = .18, p < .05$. Dashed lines showed the paths moderated by exposure to positive information about the outgroup.

Hypothesis testing. Our base model showed that the past contact positively and directly predicted the intergroup trust and intergroup attitudes. Ingroup identification negatively predicted the intergroup trust and collective guilt. The intergroup trust positively predicted both intergroup attitudes and forgiveness.

Indirect effects. We were also interested in the indirect effects of our two predictor variables, identification as a Serbian and the past contact on forgiveness via the intergroup trust and collective guilt. We created point estimates (PE) representing the effect sizes, and we probed these PE by creating confidence intervals based on 5,000 re-samples using the bias-corrected bootstrap command in Mplus (Muthen & Muthen, 2008b). A significant indirect effect of a predictor was indicated by confidence intervals (CI), not including zero (Hayes, 2013; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Below, we first reported the indirect effects in the single group analysis (Table 2). As can be seen, identification as a Serbian had a negative indirect effect on the intergroup attitudes and forgiveness via the intergroup trust. Conversely, the past contact with Bosniak Muslims had a positive indirect effect on the intergroup attitudes and forgiveness, again via the intergroup trust.

Table 2

Indirect effects of identification as Serbian and the past intergroup contact on intergroup attitudes and forgiveness via trust and collective guilt

Path	Mediator	Point estimate (β)	95% CI–99% CI
Identification: intergroup attitudes	Intergroup trust	-.17	-.28–.09
Identification: forgiveness	Intergroup trust	-.08	-.17–.01
Past contact: intergroup attitudes	Intergroup trust	.13	.04–.22
Past contact: forgiveness	Intergroup trust	.06	.01–.13

Note. Bootstrap is based on 5000 re-samples.

Moderating effects of the vicarious contact. In line with our hypotheses, we tested the effect of exposure to positive information on the outgroup in all possible paths. In line with Jaccard and Wan (1996), we run a multi-group analysis on the basis of exposure to the vicarious contact or positive information (experimental group), and the control group. We used the Satorra–Bentler chi-Square difference test (Satorra & Bentler, 2010) to compare the fit values of the model where the path in question is constrained to be equal across the models (a nested model), and the unconstrained model (a baseline model). The baseline model fit the data well ($\chi^2_{(264)} = 376.28, p < .001, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05$). Constraining each possible path to be equal across both groups, we found several significant paths (Table 3).

Table 3

Moderating effect of exposure to positive information on the association between variables in the model

Path	$\Delta\chi^2(df)$	p
Collective guilt – intergroup attitudes	9.25(1)	.002
Trust – intergroup attitudes	36.41(1)	.000
Identification – trust	4.21(1)	.004

Firstly, the model in which we constrained the collective guilt–intergroup attitudes path to be equal across groups fit the data considerably worse ($\chi^2_{(265)} = 383.28, p < .001, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .06; \Delta\chi^2(1) = 9.25, p = .002$). Specifically, in the control group, collective guilt was negatively associated with the intergroup attitudes ($\beta = -.23, p < .001$), whereas the same association was non-significant in the vicarious contact ($\beta = -.07, p > .05$). Secondly, the model

in which we constrained the trust-intergroup attitudes path to be equal across groups fit the data considerably worse ($\chi^2_{(265)} = 391.21, p < .001, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .07; \Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 36.41, p < .001$). In the control group, trust had a medium sized effect on the intergroup attitudes ($\beta = .38, p < .001$), whereas in the vicarious contact group this effect was larger ($\beta = .67, p < .001$). Finally, the model in which we constrained the identification as Serbian-trust path to be equal across groups fit the data considerably worse ($\chi^2_{(265)} = 380.64, p < .001, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .06; \Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 4.21, p = .041$). In the control group, identification as a Serbian had a larger negative effect on trust ($\beta = -.22, p < .001$), whereas in the vicarious contact group this effect was ($\beta = .39, p < .001$).

Afterwards, we run a second analysis, in which we unpacked these indirect effects by the group (a control versus experimental group), in order to explore the moderating role of exposure to positive information on indirect effects of identification, and the past contact on intergroup attitudes and forgiveness. The results showed that in the control condition, identification as a Serbian had an indirect effect on the intergroup attitudes (PE $\beta = -.07, 99\% CI [-.19, -.01]$), but this effect disappeared in the experimental contact condition (PE $\beta = .12, 95\% CI [-.03, .19]$). This suggested that the vicarious contact experience moderated the indirect effects of identification via collective guilt.

Discussion

By using an experimental design, we tested whether the exposure to positive external information would influence the effects of the past contact and identification as a Serbian on the outgroup attitudes and forgiveness. More specifically, we predicted that the past contact with the Bosniak outgroup members would be positively associated with the outgroup attitudes and increased forgiveness via trust and collective guilt, while identification as a Serbian would have a negative effect on the outgroup attitudes and forgiveness by decreasing trust and collective guilt. It was also predicted that the impact of both past intergroup contact and ingroup identification as a Serbian would be moderated by exposure to positive information. We found a partial support for these hypotheses. While the past contact did improve the intergroup trust and outgroup attitudes, these paths were not moderated by the exposure to positive information. Accordingly, the exposure to positive information moderated the ingroup identification – intergroup trust, intergroup trust-intergroup attitudes, and collective guilt – intergroup attitudes paths only.

These findings complement and extend the previous research on the contact, social identity, collective guilt, and forgiveness. More specifically, we showed that the enduring effects of the past contact was a significant predictor of the present-day outgroup attitudes toward Bosniak Muslims among Serbs as well (Cehajic & Brown, 2010). Also, we complement earlier research on the predictors of collec-

tive guilt and showed that collective guilt was not only predicted by the ingroup identification (Jelic, Biruski, & Ajdukovic, 2013), but also by the past contact via intergroup trust. This effect was positively moderated by exposure to positive information.

Implications for research on the intergroup contact

Our research shows that the contact has lasting effects on the intergroup attitudes even after a considerable time. This effect is both direct and indirect via increased intergroup trust, as our data show. Effects of the past contact on the outgroup attitudes can be fostered by exposing the individuals to positive information about the outgroup. Our findings show that this effect is indirect rather than direct. However, it seems that while the past contact was both directly and indirectly associated with the intergroup attitudes, which is in line with the previous literature, the past contact effects on forgiveness are mainly indirect via an increased intergroup trust. However, this effect is more observational than experimental. Contrary to our expectations, we had a partial support for the full moderating effects of exposure to positive information. While we have found significant differences in three paths, namely ingroup identification-intergroup trust, intergroup trust-intergroup attitudes, and collective guilt-intergroup attitudes across two groups, only the indirect effect of the ingroup identification on intergroup attitudes via collective guilt was moderated by exposure to positive information. Taken together, these results might sound inconclusive. The findings suggest however that the effects of the previous contact on forgiveness and intergroup attitudes are robust and can survive the subsequent negative experiences, even in the face of new positive information. On the other hand, this could be also interpreted as that these effects cannot be improved upon. Future research should seek to unpack these findings by manipulating both contact and exposure to new information simultaneously.

Implications for the research on social identity

As our results have shown, it appears that the negative effects of the ingroup identification on the intergroup attitudes via collective guilt can be reversed by exposing the ingroup members to positive information about the outgroup. Given the practical limitations on the intergroup contact in conflicting contexts, this finding brings fresh hope for reconciliation and reduction of prejudice in intractable conflicts. However, the present research was conducted in the context of the past conflict. It would be particularly interesting to see whether the indirect and direct effects of the past contact would hold in situations where the conflict is ongoing. Similarly, the previous research also suggests that a common ingroup identity could buffer the negative effects of the ingroup identification on the intergroup attitudes. Future research could look into whether exposure to positive informa-

tion on the outgroup target could enhance possible positive effects of common in-group identity, while decreasing the negative effects of the in-group identification.

Limitations

Our research has at least three limitations. First, we did not have baseline measures of our variables. Therefore one could argue that the differences could not be attributed to our experimental manipulation. Although this might sound as plausible, we also note under current circumstances and simple experimental design, that the pre-test measures could introduce a certain amount of bias. It would be ideal to test whether this is indeed the situation in a more complex design, such as repeated measures. Second, we did not have behavioral measures. Therefore we could only speculate that our measures are proxy measures, and that the findings are in line with the previous research. Thirdly, our sample is not random. We recruited students who were born mainly in the post-conflict era. Thus it is difficult to guess to what extent these findings could be replicated in the general population. Last but not least, we conducted our research in the context of the past conflict. Therefore, there is a possibility for our findings to be tainted by more recent interactions via media or other forms of communication.

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**MEĐUGRUPNI KONTAKT I MEĐUGRUPNA
IDENTIFIKACIJA KAO PREDIKTORI
MEĐUGRUPNIH STAVOVA I
OPRAŠTANJA U SRPSKOM KONTEKSTU:
MODERIRAJUĆA ULOGA IZLAGANJA
POZITIVNIM INFORMACIJAMA**

Intergrupni kontakt smanjuje predrasude i poboljšava stavove prema tuđim grupama, dok istaknuti socijalni identitet može imati suprotne efekte. Nedavna istraživanja pokazala su da izloženost pozitivnim informacijama o tuđoj grupi može da utiče na efekte kontakta i socijalnog identiteta na stavove prema tuđim grupama. U ovom istraživanju se ispituju efekti kontakta i socijalnog identiteta na stavove prema Bošnjacima i na praštanje prema njima, na uzorku Srba ($N = 400$) slučajno raspoređenih u kontrolnu i eksperimentalnu grupu. U eksperimentalnoj grupi ispitanicima su predstavljene kratke biografije tri eminentna Bošnjaka muslimana, u pozitivnom kontekstu, nakon čega su ispitanici odgovarali na upitnike. U kontrolnoj grupi ispitanici su samo odgovarali na upitnik, bez biografija. Rezultati su pokazali da se prosečne vrednosti za unutargrupnu identifikaciju i međugrupno poverenje značajno razlikuju između ove dve grupe. Konkretno, kod ispitanika koji su bili u eksperimentalnoj grupi, tj. izloženi pozitivnim informacijama o Bošnjacima, registrovan je viši nivo intergrupnog poverenja i niži nivo unutargrupne identifikacije kao Srba. Zatim je sprovedeno modeliranje multi-grupnim strukturalnim jednačinama, preko kojih je testiran prediktivni efekat prošlog kontakta i unutar grupne identifikacije na međugrupne stavove i praštanje, uz medijatorski efekat poverenja i kolektivne krivice, kako u kontrolnoj, tako i eksperimentalnoj grupi. U obe situacije prošli kontakt je pozitivno, a unutargrupna identifikacija negativno predviđala i međugrupne stavove i praštanje preko poverenja i kolektivne krivice. Izloženost pozitivnim informacijama o tuđoj grupi moderirala je indirektno efekte unutargrupne identifikacije na međugrupne stavove preko kolektivne krivice.

Ključne reči: kontakt, socijalni identitet, poverenje, kolektivna krivica, praštanje

Appendix A

Positive information vignettes

Mustafa Kučuković

He started his professional career at Hamburger SV in September 2004, and made his Bundesliga debut as a second-half substitute in the club's away match against VfB Stuttgart on 11 September 2004. He scored a goal only two minutes after entering the match as a substitute in Bundesliga in 2005. On 8 June 2011, he signed a two-year contract with Energie Cottbus. Described as a strong-willed man with impressive self-control and disarming skills in the field, Mustafa is one of the best promising players in Germany.

1. When did Mustafa start his career?
2. Did he score any goals in Bundesliga so far?
3. What kind of a person is he?

Mersad Berber

Berber was born in Bosanski Petrovac, Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He was trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, where he graduated with a B.A and MA. In 1978, Berber received a teaching position at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo. Today, Berber is known as one of the best known graphic artists in the world. He was included in the Tate Gallery collection in 1984. Berber has amassed an impressive range of international prizes and is considered one of the most prominent artists from the Balkans.

1. Where did Mersad receive his training?
2. Where did he start to teach first?
3. Name a famous museum where his work has been exhibited?

Nasiha Kapidžić-Hadžić

(1931–1995) is a Bosnian writer and poet of a great renown. Nasiha was born in Banja Luka. She finished elementary and high school in Banja Luka, and graduated from University of Philosophy in Belgrade. Nasiha became a professor and worked as a radio producer for children shows. Her literature was dedicated to children. She even published some textbooks for elementary schools. Most of her work is now considered as excellent examples of children's literature in the Balkans. As an individual, she was a hard-working and very optimistic person. She was proud of the multicultural structure of her country, and helped to establish good relations between the communities that made up the former Yugoslavia.

1. Where did Nasiha study for high school?
2. What kind of programmes did she make?
3. What kind of a person was she?