'They just don't understand us':

The role of felt understanding in intergroup relations

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Abstract

We report five studies examining the unique role of felt understanding in intergroup relations. In intergroup terms, felt understanding is the belief that members of an outgroup understand and accept the perspectives of ingroup members, including ingroup members' beliefs, values, experiences, and self-definition/identity. In Studies 1 (Scotland-UK relations; $N = 5033$) and 2 (UK-EU relations; $N = 861$) felt understanding consistently and strongly predicted outcomes such as trust, action intentions, and political separatism, including participants' actual 'Brexit' referendum vote in Study 2. These effects were apparent even when controlling for outgroup stereotypes and meta-stereotypes. Felt understanding was a unique predictor of outgroup trust and forgiveness in Study 3 (Catholic-Protestant relations in Northern Ireland; $N = 1162$), and was a powerful predictor of political separatism even when controlling for specific, relational appraisals including negative interdependence and identity threat in Study 4 (Basque-Spanish relations; $N = 205$). Study 5 ($N = 190$) included a direct manipulation of felt understanding, which had predicted effects on evaluation of the outgroup and of ingroup-outgroup relations. Overall, the findings provide converging evidence for the critical role of felt understanding in intergroup relations. We discuss future research possibilities, including the emotional correlates of felt understanding, and its role in intergroup interactions.

Keywords: Felt understanding; intergroup relations; trust; reconciliation; meta-perspectives

'They just don't understand us': The role of felt understanding in intergroup relations

The challenge of improving relations between groups in settings of social conflict is considerable, and amongst other things can involve addressing deeply-entrenched mistrust and misunderstandings between groups. As a result, research on intergroup relations has extensively studied the role of beliefs about other groups, such as prejudiced attitudes, stereotypes, and threat perceptions. It has also more recently begun to study *meta* beliefs – that is, our beliefs about the perspectives and beliefs of an outgroup (e.g., Frey & Tropp, 2006; Judd, Park, Yzerbyt, Gordijn, & Muller, 2005). In this paper, we suggest that existing research nevertheless still misses a fundamental aspect of the psychology of intergroup relations: our concerns about the perspectives that the 'other' group have on one's own group's beliefs, experiences, and perspectives. This is encapsulated in the concept of felt understanding.

Below, we briefly review existing research on beliefs and meta-perspectives about outgroups, before outlining the conceptual distinction between these and felt understanding. We then report fives studies in which we tested the role of felt understanding in intergroup relations. Studies 1-3 were large-scale survey studies in different intergroup contexts (relations between Scotland and the UK; relations between the UK and the European Union; Catholic-Protestant relations in Northern Ireland), in which we tested the unique predictive value of felt understanding when it comes to outcomes such as separatist political behavior, trust, and forgiveness. In Study 4, focusing on Basque-Spanish relations, we also tested the predictive value of felt understanding relative to other specific, relational appraisals including negative interdependence and identity threat. Finally, in Study 5 we tested the causal role of felt understanding by directly manipulating it and examining its impact on evaluations of an outgroup.

Negative beliefs about other groups

There is extensive literature on the effect of different forms of belief about an outgroup on subsequent actions and intentions towards them. These beliefs include negative, prejudiced attitudes, and encompass general impressions of an outgroup as positive or negative (e.g., Allport, 1954; Sibley & Duckitt, 2008) as well as more content-specific stereotypes about the characteristics of an outgroup. These beliefs about the characteristics of an outgroup develop from perceptions of social status and functional relations with an ingroup (e.g., Alexander, Brewer, & Herrmann, 1999; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), including different forms of threat that they may pose (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). Key work here has established that outgroups tend to be viewed in terms of core evaluative dimensions of morality, warmth, and competence (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008; Fiske et al., 2002; Fiske, Thomas, & Vescio, 2007; Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto, 2007; Wojciszke, 2005; see also Koch, Imhoff, Dotsch, Unkelbach, & Alves, 2016). These evaluations then impact on subsequent actions and intentions by evoking specific emotions (Alexander et al., 1999; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993; Fiske et al., 2002; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000).

Meta-beliefs

While intergroup relations research has historically focused heavily on examining positive and negative beliefs about outgroups, more recent work has begun to examine *meta* beliefs – that is, our beliefs about the perspectives and beliefs of an outgroup, and particularly what they believe about 'us' (e.g., Frey & Tropp, 2006; Judd et al., 2005; Vorauer, Hunter, Main, & Roy, 2000; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). For example, research on meta-stereotypes – beliefs about the stereotypes that other groups hold about our group – highlights that believing that an outgroup holds a negative image of one's own group can produce negative emotions (Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001; Vorauer et al., 1998; see also Gordijn, 2010;

Gordijn, Brix, Wijnants, Koomen, & Finschilescu, 2008; Gordijn, Vacher, & Kuppens, 2017; Owuamalam, Tarrant, Farrow, & Zagefka, 2013; Vorauer, 2003), and is implicated in decreased performance amongst members of stigmatised groups (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008). In terms of intergroup attitudes, meta-prejudice (i.e., believing that an outgroup is prejudiced towards an ingroup[1]) has been found to in turn predict prejudice towards the outgroup (Putra, 2014, 2016; Putra & Wagner, 2017), and tendencies towards hostile and 'non-normative' behaviour (Issmer et al., 2013; Owuamalam, Issmer, Zagefka, Klaßen, & Wagner, 2014; Kteily, Hodson, & Bruneau, 2016; Owuamalam et al., 2013). Conversely, more positive meta-beliefs, such as a positive meta-stereotype, can improve expectations about future interactions with an outgroup, potentially facilitating positive intergroup contact and improved ingroup-outgroup relations (Vezzali, 2017). More generally, group members show concern for the image of their ingroup in the eyes of an outgroup, and will try to manage that meta-image by, for example, engaging strategically in benevolent behavior (Hopkins et al., 2007; Van Leeuwen & Tauber, 2012), or confirming aspects of the meta-stereotype (Klein & Azzi, 2001).

Felt understanding as a driver of positive social relations

Overall, research on meta-beliefs in intergroup relations underlines a critical point about social behavior: we take into account (our perceptions of) the beliefs and perspectives of others. The concept of felt understanding takes this further by addressing how we see the beliefs and perspectives of others *about our own beliefs and perspectives.* In the present research we define group-level felt understanding as the belief that members of an outgroup understand and accept the perspectives of ingroup members, including ingroup members' beliefs, values, experiences, and self-definition/identity. By 'accept', we specifically mean the belief that outgroup members accept ingroup members' perspectives as authentic and subjectively valid ('you really believe/feel/experienced that' as opposed to 'you say that you

think/feel X, but we don't think you do'), and having a non-judgmental/non-dismissive stance towards those perspectives (e.g., not in the same breath dismissing ingroup perspectives as silly, unworthy, or needing to be fixed), even if outgroup members disagree with those perspectives. Thus, 'accept' does not (necessarily) mean outgroup *agreement* with ingroup perspectives, so much as outgroup recognition that they are genuinely held and subjectively important to 'us' (Rogers, 1995). This definition of intergroup felt understanding refines the definition employed in interpersonal settings (e.g., Oishi et al., 2013; Reis et al., 2004; Reis, Lemay, & Finkenauer, 2017) for intergroup contexts in which perceptions occur through the lens of salient social identities, and the object includes the defining perspectives of others within one's ingroup, rather than just one's own perspectives as an individual.

Felt understanding is potentially unique as a predictor in intergroup relations because unlike all of the factors reviewed above, it involves beliefs about what another person or group believes that we believe. It thus involves an extra level of intentionality in which others' beliefs *and* our own beliefs/perspectives are the object of our own higher-order beliefs. Translated into more everyday language, such beliefs are represented in statements such as 'they don't understand our perspective', 'they have no idea what is important to us', or 'they think that we hate them'. Each of these reflects a belief about what another group thinks about our own perspectives and feelings.

Seen in this way, felt understanding differs from predictors that are typically studied in intergroup relations because it involves (at least) third-order intentionality (Dennett, 1987) or second order theory of mind (e.g., Kinderman, Dunbar, & Bentall, 1998; Liddle & Nettle, 2006; Perner & Wimmer, 1994; Stiller & Dunbar, 2006; Sullivan, Zaitchik, & Tagerflusberg, 1994): the capacity to see others – including members of other groups – as having a theory of mind too, and thus the capacity to infer and make judgments about others' perspectives, including our own. Interpersonal perceptions that involve third-order intentionality or second-

order theory of mind (or indeed, even higher-order iterations of these) have been shown to be crucial in interpersonal interactions and have been argued to be critical to language-based communication (Bennett, 1976; Grice, 1957; 1969); yet, this level of perception has not been systematically studied in intergroup relations. This is all the more striking given that lay (non-academic) experts frequently assert shared understanding as being a key component of conflict resolution and reconciliation (e.g., Bloomfield, Barnes, & Huyse, 2003).

Prior work from other areas of psychology suggests that felt understanding is a potentially potent predictor of intergroup orientations. The positive potential of feeling understood is a key feature of humanistic approaches to psychotherapy, for example. As Rogers (1967) put it, "to understand another person's thoughts and feelings thoroughly, with the meanings they have for him, and *to be thoroughly understood by this person in return* – this is one of the most rewarding of human experiences… It is such a relief, such a blessed relaxation of defenses, to find oneself understood" (p.323; emphasis added). Likewise, an early study by Vann Kamm (1959) of the phenomenology of 'feeling really understood' pointed to the feelings of acceptance, relief, and communion that accompany such a feeling. More recent research using quantitative (e.g., Lun, Kesebir, & Oishi, 2008; Oishi, Krochik, & Akimoto, 2010; Oishi, Akimoto, Richards, & Suh, 2013) and brain imaging (Morelli, Torre, & Eisenberger, 2014) methods has similarly pointed to the positive impact of feeling understood, both on individual wellbeing and on the broader functioning of relationships (Murray, Holmes, Bellavia, Griffin, & Dolderman, 2002; Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000; Reis et al., 2017).

With regard to intergroup reconciliation, addressing felt understanding offers an important advance on theories and interventions which focus on increasing empathy in cognitive (perspective-taking) and affective (recognizing another's emotions) terms as a means of improving relations between groups (Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Cikara et al., 2011;

Dovidio et al., 2010; Halperin, 2015; Stephan & Finlay, 1999). This can be contrasted with the higher-order perspective that *an other is empathic towards oneself* – that is, that an other does or is trying to understand one's own thoughts and feelings (e.g., Berndsen, Wenzel, Thomas, & Noske, 2018; Goldstein, Vezich, & Shapiro, 2014). Again, despite the intuitive importance of such beliefs for willingness to reconcile, they have rarely been directly addressed in the wide literature on empathy in intergroup conflict (see Nadler & Liviatan, 2006, for an exception).

Another theoretical perspective that is relevant here is self-verification theory (Swann, 1983). Self-verification theory suggests that one will be more positively oriented towards another individual or group to the extent that they are seen to verify one's own view of oneself, even if that view is negative. This is in principle consistent with the role posited here for felt understanding. However, as Reis et al. (2017) argue, felt understanding is a broader concept than self-verification, encompassing our own beliefs, values, motives, and experiences, as well as one's self-concept – and crucially, the extent to which these are seen accurately *and accepted* by others. For example, Chen, Chen, and Shaw's (2004) work on self-verification in intergroup relations manipulated verification by an outgroup simply in terms of whether an outgroup's beliefs about ingroup characteristics were similar to what the ingroup believed those characteristics to be. In other words, verification related to *meta-stereotype accuracy*, where outgroup beliefs about the ingroup were varied. In contrast, felt understanding relates to outgroup beliefs about *what the ingroup thought that the ingroup was like* – that is, we believe that they understand how we see ourselves.

Finally, when felt understanding has been examined in intergroup relations in a small number of studies (e.g., Mallett, Akimoto, & Oishi, 2016; Shelton, Douglass, Garcia, Yip, & Trail, 2014; Stelenpohl, Reed, & Keys, 2018), it has been examined primarily as *an end state in itself,* and its potential importance in terms of *affecting* intergroup relations is not the main

focus. This is despite the profound relational consequences that felt understanding has been conceptualized as having in interpersonal relations.

Beliefs about appearing to be prejudiced. As well as testing the effect of felt understanding over and above beliefs and meta-beliefs about an outgroup, we also wanted to test the role of felt understanding while taking into account another variable discernible in the intergroup relations literature that also involves third-order intentionality/second-order theory of mind: the belief that one (or one's ingroup) is seen as prejudiced by an outgroup. This involves beliefs about outgroup members' beliefs about what I/we believe about them in terms of prejudiced attitudes. For example, research on inter-racial interactions has found that White participants' concerns about appearing to be prejudiced – that is, a negative expectation about what an other thinks about one's own beliefs about them – affects the positivity of subsequent interactions (Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Shelton, 2003; Shelton, West, & Trail, 2010; West, 2011; see also Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002, and Plant & Devine, 2003; Vorauer, 2003; Vorauer et al., 2000).

Despite its important contributions, prior work has not made the conceptual distinction between beliefs about appearing prejudiced, and the general meta-perception of being liked or disliked, or positively or negatively evaluated by an outgroup. Beliefs about appearing prejudiced are likely to have particular power in shaping intergroup interactions because they relate not only to outgroup beliefs about 'us', but outgroup beliefs about *what we believe about them*. Instead, concerns about appearing to be prejudiced have been conceptualized more simply as a form of meta-stereotype (e.g., Shelton, 2003; Shelton et al., 2010; Vorauer et al., 1998; see West, 2011, for a review). The higher-order perspective involved in beliefs about appearing prejudiced is likely to contribute to poorer subsequent interactions, because it involves managing not only a meta belief (whether the other person likes me), but also the other person's meta beliefs about oneself (whether the other person

thinks that I don't like them). The social challenges involved in doing so are arguably greater, extending beyond simply subverting a negative meta-stereotype by being warm and friendly (cf. Shelton, 2003). Accordingly, the typical behavioral response to concerns about appearing prejudiced is distancing (e.g., Goff et al., 2008), or increased awkwardness and avoidance as a result of elevated anxiety (Plant & Butz, 2006; Plant & Devine, 2003; Shelton, 2003; Shelton et al., 2010; West, Shelton, & Trail, 2009).

Importantly, research on concerns about appearing prejudiced also does not typically *directly* assess beliefs about the extent to which outgroup members see oneself or one's ingroup as prejudiced. Instead, this research has more typically assessed such beliefs indirectly, for example in terms of the threat that it may pose to the image of one's ingroup (e.g., Goff et al., 2008) or the motivation to avoid appearing prejudiced (e.g., Shelton et al., 2010; see also Dunton & Fazio, 1997). There are a number of good reasons for this, including the need for relatively simple, experiential measures in the context of diary studies (e.g., Shelton et al., 2010; West et al., 2009). Nevertheless, studies of concerns about appearing prejudiced have not distinguished this higher-order perspective from a more general meta-perspective about the extent to which the outgroup sees the ingroup as cold, unpleasant, or hostile. In contrast, the research we report here directly assesses beliefs that the outgroup sees the ingroup as prejudiced – termed beliefs about appearing prejudiced – and testing its predictive effects on outcomes such as action intentions and trust.

Summary and aims of the present research

Our aim in the present research was to integrate the theoretical perspectives outlined above within a unifying approach that emphasizes the specific importance of felt understanding in intergroup relations. The research we report in this paper examines how felt understanding provides a basis for trust and other pro-social, relational outcomes such as forgiveness. This is because it contains a representation of how one's own views are in turn

represented by members of another group. This representation signals the potential for co-operative, communal intergroup relations in a manner that is distinct from more straightforward beliefs about an outgroup, or indeed meta-perspectives such as whether the outgroup has positive or negative perspectives on 'us'. In other words, beliefs about what they think and feel *about what we think and feel* should predict positive intergroup orientations, over and above what they think and feel about us per se. Conversely, feeling *mis*understood by an outgroup is likely to be a key factor when groups are pulled apart, for example through political separatism.

We tested these ideas in five different intergroup contexts: relations between Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom (UK; Study 1), relations between the UK and the European Union in the context of the 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU (Study 2), relations between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland (Study 3), and relations between the Basque region and the rest of Spain (Study 4). Study 5 then examined relations between different generational groups (adolescents vs. adults). These contexts were particularly relevant because they include relations between groups in a period following violent conflict in which efforts towards reconciliation are ongoing (Studies 3 and 4), along with settings in which national political separatism is leading or has led to profound social change (Studies 1, 2, and 4). Specifically, the data in Study 2 were collected immediately before and after the EU referendum in the UK, and include actual voting behavior in the referendum as an outcome. The data from Study 1 were also gathered at a time of increased demands for Scotland to become an independent country – a movement which was narrowly defeated in a 2014 referendum, and which has grown in strength again with demands for a second Scottish independence referendum (e.g., Dickie, 2017).

In sampling from these varied contexts, we wanted to test the predictive role of felt understanding when it comes to intergroup outcomes such as action intentions, trust, support

for political separatism (Studies 1, 2, and 4), intergroup forgiveness (Study 3), and evaluations of an outgroup and of the ingroup-outgroup relationship (Study 5). Here we tested the prediction that felt understanding would predict more positive action intentions, greater trust both in the outgroup (Study 3) and in superordinate political institutions (Studies 1, 2, and 4), and less support for political separatism in terms of voting intention (Studies 1 and 4) and actual voting behavior (Study 2). This was expected to be the case over and above the effects of beliefs about the outgroup (measured in global terms encompassing stereotypes of warmth, morality, and competence), meta-beliefs regarding what the outgroup believes about the ingroup (also measured in global terms, encompassing warmth, morality, and competence), and beliefs about appearing prejudiced as a more specific form belief that involves at least third-order intentionality/second-order theory of mind. By directly manipulating felt understanding in Study 5, we also sought to test its causal role when it comes to evaluations of an outgroup and of the quality of the ingroup-outgroup relationship. Specifically, we expected more positive evaluations when the outgroup understood (vs. misunderstood) the ingroup's perspectives.

A final, subordinate aim was to test whether the predictive effects of felt understanding were consistent regardless of how the outgroup was framed (Studies 1 and 2) and across different groups in the same context (Study 3). For this reason, participants in Studies 1 and 2 were randomly assigned to a questionnaire in which all items referred to the outgroup in general terms (English people in Study 1; Europeans in Study 2), or to a questionnaire in which items referred more specifically to political representatives of the outgroup (English politicians in Study 1; people in EU institutions in Study 2). This distinction was informed by discourse in the respective contexts, in which campaigners often seek to frame their target as being specific political representatives of the outgroup rather than the outgroup more generally, as a way of countering perceptions that the movement is

driven by more general animosity towards the outgroup as a whole. In Study 3, the fact that we sampled both Catholics and Protestants also allowed for a test of whether the predictive effects of felt understanding and other predictors were consistent across these two groups. This meant that in Studies 1-3, we were able to test whether, as expected, the effects of felt understanding are robust across outgroups, rather than being an artefact of the specific framing of the outgroup in each case.

Below, we report the analysis and findings from Studies 1 and 2 together in order to enhance comparability, given that they were closely matched in methodological terms, and both involved tests of the same set of possible factor structures and predictive relations. Studies 3-5 are then described separately, given that Study 3 included an additional predictor in the form of specific felt understanding about experiences during violent conflict, and differed in terms of the measurement of outgroup beliefs and meta-beliefs, while Study 4 focused on additional predictors in the form of negative interdependence and identity threat, and Study 5 adopted an experimental design.

Studies 1 and 2

Method

Participants

Study 1. The first sample consisted of 5,080 people from Scotland. Thirty-eight individuals' data were deleted because of $\geq 50\%$ missing values, and a further nine were removed because they were under the age of 16 years (the age at which one became able to vote in the independence referendum), leaving a sample of 5,033 individuals. The study was advertised via Facebook, with a direct link to the survey in the advert. Entry into a prize draw for one of four £25 Amazon vouchers was offered as an incentive. The survey was available from 2nd to 12th July 2016.

There were 3,070 males and 1,819 females, while 11 identified their gender as 'other' (a further 133 did not report their gender). The mean age of the sample was 48.68 years (SD = 14.48), and age ranged from 16 to 85 years. In terms of educational qualifications, 198 indicated that they had no formal qualifications, 619 had standard high-school-level qualifications (GCSE; Scottish Standard grades; National 4/5 or equivalent), 1406 had higher high-school-level qualifications (Scottish Higher/Advanced Higher; A-Level, or equivalent), 1583 had an undergraduate-level degree, and 1084 had a postgraduate-level qualification (a further 143 did not respond to this question). In terms of occupational status, 2675 were employed, 680 were self-employed, 204 were unemployed, 1010 were retired, and 317 were students (a further 147 did not respond to this question).

Study 2. The second sample consisted of 861 people in the UK who responded to both parts of the survey. They were recruited via Prolific Academic, and were paid a total of £4 for their participation. Recruitment for the first part of the study took place on 14th and 15th June 2016, and the follow-up questionnaire was open from 28th June to 3rd July 2016.

There were 346 males and 507 females, while three identified their gender as 'other'. The mean age of the sample was 34.58 years (SD = 11.56), and age ranged from 17 to 73 years. In terms of educational qualifications, two indicated that they had no formal qualifications, 89 had standard high-school-level qualifications (GCSE; Scottish Standard grades; National 4/5 or equivalent), 247 had higher school-level qualifications (Scottish Higher/Advanced Higher; A-Level, or equivalent), 366 had an undergraduate-level degree, and 152 had a postgraduate-level qualification. In terms of occupational status, 485 were employed, 119 were self-employed, 100 were unemployed, 30 were retired, and 122 were students. A further five participants did not record demographic information.

Materials and Procedure

The surveys were compiled using the EFS survey software from Unipark. The landing page contained information about the survey, and allowed participants to give their informed consent by clicking on a 'continue' button at the bottom of the page in order to continue to the survey questions. Participants then proceeded through the survey, which contained questions with the content and in the order described below. The full survey as presented to participants can be found on the OSF site

(https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7).

Outgroup beliefs. A scale of global beliefs about the outgroup consisted of 16 semantic differential items. These included items intended to tap beliefs about the competence (e.g., highly skilled-unskilled; competent-incompetent; intelligent-unintelligent), warmth/sociability (e.g., likeable-dislikeable; warm-cold; friendly-hostile), and morality (e.g., moral-immoral; honest-dishonest; admirable-disgusting) of the outgroup, as well as items assessing overall positivity (e.g., positive-negative). The list was prefaced with the statement 'In general, (outgroup members) tend be…'. Responses were scored from 1 (positively-anchored scale end) to 7 (negatively-anchored scale end). However, the response scale as visible to participants was not numbered so as to avoid attaching implied value to one type of response. The only scale labelling visible to participants specified the midpoint (scored as 4) as 'Neither'.

Meta beliefs. A scale of meta-beliefs about the ingroup (i.e., what outgroup members think about the ingroup) also consisted of 16 semantic differential items. These were based in form and content on the outgroup beliefs scale, but modified so that the items were prefaced with 'In general, (outgroup members) tend to think that (ingroup members) are…'.

Felt understanding. Beliefs about the extent to which outgroup members understood ingroup members' beliefs, values and perspectives were assessed on 15 items. These

consisted of statements such as 'In general, (outgroup members) have a very good understanding of the views of (ingroup members)', to which participants responded on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (completely disagree) through 0 (neither) to 3 (completely agree). Items referred to the ingroup's views (e.g., '(outgroup members) could learn more about the views of (ingroup members)'), values (e.g., '(outgroup members) understand (ingroup) values'), perspectives (e.g., '(outgroup members) know a lot about (ingroup) perspectives), identity (e.g., '(outgroup members) do not understand the identity of (ingroup members)'), and culture (e.g., '(outgroup members) have little idea about (ingroup) culture'). To prevent acquiescence bias in responses, eight of the 15 items were negatively phrased. Responses on these items were subsequently reverse scored.

Beliefs about appearing prejudiced. Six items were used to assess the extent to which participants believed that outgroup members saw ingroup members as being prejudiced against them. Participants responded to three negatively-worded statements ('In general, (outgroup members) think that (ingroup members) are prejudiced against them/look down on them/don't like them') and three positively-worded statements ('In general, (outgroup members) think that (ingroup members) have positive views about them/like them/respect them') on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (completely disagree) through 0 (neither) to 3 (completely agree). Responses to the negatively-worded items were subsequently reverse scored, so that high scores meant lower belief that the outgroup see the ingroup as prejudiced.

Action tendencies. Action tendencies regarding outgroup members were assessed using 10 items developed from Mackie et al. (2000). These items assessed positive approach (e.g., talk to them; be friendly with them; find out more about them), negative approach (e.g., confront them; argue with them; oppose them), and negative avoidance (e.g., avoid them; keep them at a distance; have nothing to do with them) tendencies. The items were prefaced

with the statement 'Please indicate the extent to which (outgroup members) in general make you want to...', and participants responded to each item on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely).

Institutional trust. Trust in the superordinate institution which contains the ingroup and outgroup (the UK in Study 1; the EU in Study 2) was assessed using nine items adapted from work by McKnight, Choudry, and Kacmar (2002). These included statements such as 'I feel that the UK acts in Scotland's best interest'; 'The UK is run in an efficient and effective way'; 'The UK is interested in the well-being of people in its member countries'; and 'I feel confident that I can rely on the UK to function well'. Two items were negatively phrased, and scores on these were subsequently reversed. Participants responded on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (completely disagree) through 0 (neither) to 3 (completely agree).

Support for separatism. Participants' support for separatism (Scotland leaving the UK in Study 1; the UK leaving the EU in Study 2) was assessed using a number of items.

In Study 1, participants were asked whether they would be for or against another referendum on Scottish independence, and whether in general they were for or against Scotland being an independent country (i.e., leaving the UK). Responses were made on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly against) through 5 (neither for nor against) to 9 (strongly for). However, the response scale as visible to participants was not numbered so as to avoid attaching implied value to one type of response.

In Study 2, participants were asked to indicate their overall attitude towards the EU on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly against) through 5 (neither for nor against) to 9 (strongly for). However, the response scale as visible to participants was not numbered so as to avoid attaching implied value to one type of response.

Voting intentions (Studies 1 and 2) and actual vote (Study 2). Participants in sample 1 were also asked about whether they would vote for or against Scotland becoming an

independent country if there were to be another referendum tomorrow. Response options were 'for Scotland to become independent', 'for Scotland to remain part of the UK', 'undecided', and 'would not vote'.

Participants in Study 2 were also asked whether they had already voted in the referendum (yes/no), and if so, how they voted (leave/remain). They were then asked how they intended to vote if they had not yet done so. Response options were 'Leave, 'Remain', 'undecided', and 'will not vote'.

Finally, participants in Study 2 were invited to complete a brief follow-up questionnaire one week after the referendum. They were asked whether they voted in the referendum (yes/no), and if so how they voted (leave/remain).

Additional measures. Each survey contained some additional measures whose data are not analyzed here. These included four-item scales of identification at the start of the survey, the perceived impact of separatism (Scottish independence; Brexit), and other single-item measures relating to separatism. The full survey as presented to participants is available on the OSF site (https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7).

Results

All analyses were conducted using AMOS v23.

Missing data treatment

Analysis of missing data in Study 1 revealed that across all measures, only 1.90% of values were missing, and only 0.60% were missing in Study 2. In both samples, missing values were imputed using the EM (expectation-maximization) method in SPSS (Graham, 2009). The range of scores on each item was then checked to ensure that all values fell within the possible range of the scale in each case. If any estimated values fell outside of the scale range, they were recoded to the nearest possible value; that is, all values less than 1 were coded as '1', and all values greater than 7 were coded as '7'.

Item parceling

Given the number of items used to measure predictors and outcome variables, item parceling was conducted into order to reduce the number of latent variable indicators (Little, Rhemtulla, Gibson, & Schoemann, 2013). Six parcels were produced for outgroup beliefs, and six for metabeliefs. Items were parceled based on whether they assessed warmth (e.g., warm-cold and peaceful-aggressive), competence (e.g., intelligent-unintelligent, hardworking-lazy, and highly skilled-unskilled), or morality (e.g., trusting-suspicious, moral-immoral, and honest-dishonest), with two parcels produced for each of these dimensions.

Five parcels were produced using indicators of felt understanding. Items were parceled based on whether they referred to values and culture (one parcel of three items), views (one parcel of four items), beliefs and perspectives (one parcel of four items), and identity (one parcel of two items), and perspectives on the EU (Study 2) or UK (Study 1) (one parcel of two items). Three parcels were produced using indicators of beliefs about appearing prejudiced, each of which consisted of one positively-worded and one negatively-worded item.

In terms of outcome variables, three parcels were produced for institutional trust. Items were parceled based on whether they referred to efficient operation (one parcel of three items), the extent to which the institution acts in the interests of the national ingroup (one parcel of four items), and the extent to which the institution acts in the interests of its member states/nations more generally (one parcel of two items).

Summary of models

Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to test between six different possible specifications of the factor structure underlying the measured predictors. These analyses are reported more fully in supplementary materials on the project OSF page: (https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7). We first set up the

hypothesized factor structure (Model 1), in which outgroup beliefs, meta beliefs, beliefs about appearing prejudiced, and felt understanding are represented as distinct, correlated factors. Reflecting the multi-dimensional nature of the outgroup beliefs and meta-beliefs scales, these factors were specified as second-order factors consisting of distinct first-order dimensions of warmth, morality, and competence.

Finally, reflecting the fact that indicators of warmth, competence, and morality could conceivably covary for reasons other than the common latent factor of outgroup beliefs – for example, common method variance – the specification of Model 1 was modified slightly to allow for one covariance between error terms of a warmth parcel and a competence parcel, a warmth parcel and a morality parcel, and a morality parcel and a competence parcel. No covariances between errors were considered between parcels indicating the same factor, nor were cross-factor covariances considered. Based on an initial run of the model, only two error-to-error covariances were added for parcels indicating outgroup beliefs: one between a warmth parcel and a competence parcel, and one between a morality parcel and a competence parcel. A similar process was carried out for parcels of meta-belief indicators, resulting in one error-to-error covariance between a warmth parcel and morality parcel, and one between a morality parcel and a competence parcel. To ensure comparability between models and samples, the same error-to-error covariances were included in all subsequent model tests in Studies 1 and 2.

Akaike weights calculated across all six models (Model 1 and five more parsimonious alternatives) for each Study indicated that the normalized probability that Model 1 is the preferred model was >.999 in both samples; thus, the probability that any other model is preferable was extremely small. We thus proceeded to the structural analysis with the four-factor specification of the predictors.

Structural models: predicting intergroup outcomes

Having confirmed the factor structure of our predictors, the next step was to test the predictive roles of these factors. The specification was modified to include the intergroup outcome scales – action intentions, institutional trust, and voting intentions and behavior – as endogenous factors predicted by each of outgroup beliefs, meta beliefs, beliefs about appearing prejudiced, and felt understanding. These models also included participant age, gender, and highest educational qualification as control predictors of the endogenous outcome variables.

In order to avoid over-complicating the model, each outcome was tested in a separate model; that is, the three action intentions were included as the outcomes in one model, institutional trust as the outcome in a second model, and voting intention (Study 1) and behavior (Study 2) as the outcome in a third model. Standardized path coefficients and R^2 values for each outcome variable are summarized in Table 1.

We also report 95% confidence intervals (CIs) in Table 2 of the supplementary materials file (https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7) . CIs were calculated using slightly reduced samples because of listwise deletion of cases with missing values for gender and/or highest educational qualification. This was due to AMOS requiring full data in order to estimated bootstrapped CIs.

In the action intentions model, each form of action intention (positive approach, negative approach, and avoidance) was represented as a latent factor indicated by the relevant items. The three action intention factors were also allowed to covary in the model. In the institutional trust model, institutional trust was represented as a latent factor indicated by the parcels described earlier. In Study 1, support for Scottish independence was included as a manifest variable.

Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between all scales are also summarized in Tables 3 and 4 of the supplementary materials file. It should be noted that the main analyses reported below are of latent variables, and did not use these manifest scale scores. In contrast, the descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations reported in supplementary materials were computed using composite scales created by averaging items scores for each scale.

Action intentions. In both Studies 1 and 2, outgroup beliefs unsurprisingly emerged as a strong and significant predictor of each type of action intention, $\beta s = \pm .47 \leq \pm .60$, with more negative beliefs about the outgroup associated with stronger avoidance and negative approach tendencies, and lower positive approach tendencies. In contrast, meta-beliefs had a weaker and less consistent predictive role, $\beta s = \pm .01 \leq \pm .14$: it negatively predicted avoidance and negative approach tendencies in Study 2 but not Study 1, and negatively predicted positive approach tendencies in Study 1 but not Study 2.

More importantly, felt understanding also consistently emerged as a unique predictor of each type of action intention, $\beta s = \pm .17 \leq \pm .34$, with more felt understanding associated with lower avoidance and negative approach tendencies, and stronger positive approach tendencies in both samples. In contrast, beliefs about appearing prejudiced did not significantly predict any action tendency, $\beta s = \pm .00 \leq \pm .06$, with the exception of a weak negative association with negative approach tendencies in Study 1.

Institutional trust. The role of felt understanding was even more pronounced when it came to predicting institutional trust. In both Study 1, $\beta = .63$, and Study 2, $\beta = .52$, it was by some way the strongest predictor of trust. In addition, outgroup beliefs negatively predicted trust in Studies 1 and 2 ($\beta s = -.06$ and $-.26$ respectively), while meta-beliefs negatively predicted trust in Study 1 ($\beta = -.09$) but positively predicted trust in Study 2 ($\beta = .07$). Likewise, beliefs about appearing prejudiced negatively predicted trust in Study 1 ($\beta = -.04$),

but had a positive but non-significant association with trust in Study 2 ($\beta = .03$). Overall, the model explained 49% of the variance in institutional trust in Study 1, and 50% of the variance in Study 2.

Support for independence (Study 1). As with institutional trust, felt understanding emerged as the strongest predictor of support for Scottish independence in Study 1, $\beta = -.48$, with less felt understanding associated with more support for independence. Outgroup beliefs ($\beta = .06$), meta-beliefs ($\beta = .05$), and beliefs about appearing prejudiced ($\beta = .08$) also all positively and significantly predicted support for independence. Overall, the model explained 29% of the variance in support for Scottish independence.

Voting intention (Study 1) and actual vote (Study 2). Voting intention in Study 1 and actual voting behavior in Study 2 were binary response variables, so analysis was conducted using the Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) option in AMOS v23. This is a method that allows Bayesian estimation of model parameters, and in the present case is particularly useful because it uses a probit model to represent the underlying probability of observing either outcome category on a binary outcome variable (Arbuckle, 2014). For each predictor, the analysis thus produces an estimated regression weight which represents the effect of a unit change in the predictor on the probability of observing category '1' rather than category '0' in the outcome – in other words, the probability of intending to vote for Scottish independence (Study 1) or of having voted for the UK to leave the EU (Study 2). Similarly, standardized (β) regression weights represent the effect of a $1SD$ change in a predictor on SDs of the probability of intending to vote for Scottish independence (Study 1) or of having voted for the UK to leave the EU (Study 2).

The MCMC algorithm involves running thousands of simulations based on the observed data and producing a posterior distribution for all parameter estimates (Depaoli & van de Schoot, 2017). Once convergence has been achieved, the mean of each distribution is

then extracted as the estimate for that parameter. In the present analyses, the algorithm began with 10,000 'burn in' iterations, and allowed for up to 50,000 further iterations. Default priors were not changed in order to keep the analysis as comparable as possible with the analyses of other outcome variables. We also set stringent convergence criteria, such that convergence was judged to have been achieved when the convergence statistics for the overall model and for every individual regression weight in the model were all less than 1.001 (values closer to 1 indicate greater convergence, and the AMOS default is 1.02; Arbuckle, 2014). In both Study 1 and Study 2, convergence was achieved well before the 50,000[th] iteration, and the algorithm was terminated.

In line with the findings for trust and independence support, felt understanding emerged as the strongest predictor of intentions to vote for Scottish independence (β = -.57, 95% *CI*s: -0.53, -0.60), and of actual voting behavior in the EU membership referendum (β = -.43, 95% *CI*s: -0.33, -0.53). In both cases, less felt understanding was associated with a greater probability of a separatist vote. Negative outgroup beliefs also significantly predicted voting intention and behavior, with more negative beliefs associated with a greater probability of a separatist vote (Study 1 β = .12, 95% *CI*s: 0.17, 0.07; Study 2 β = .30, 95% *CI*s: 0.19, 0.40). Likewise, beliefs about appearing prejudiced significantly predicted voting intention and behavior, with greater beliefs about appearing prejudiced associated with a greater probability of a separatist vote (Study 1 β = .19, 95% *CI*s: 0.14, 0.23; Study 2 β = .17, 95% *CI*s: 0.07, 0.28). Negative meta beliefs predicted a greater probability of intentions to vote for Scottish independence in Study 1 (β = .08, 95% *CI*s: 0.02, 0.13), but did not significantly predict the probability of a vote for the UK to leave the EU in Study 2 (β = -.09, 95% *CI*s: -0.20, 0.01).

Multi-group analyses

The final step in the analyses was to test whether the predictive roles of felt understanding, beliefs about appearing prejudiced, meta beliefs and outgroup beliefs varied as a function of the generality of the outgroup category specified in the questionnaire items. As described in the Method, half of participants in each sample received items that referred to the outgroup in broad terms (English people in Study 1; Europeans in Study 2), while the other half received items that referred more specifically to political representatives of the outgroup (English politicians in Study 1; people in EU institutions in Study 2).

The analytic strategy here was to first test a multi-group model in which the predictive paths from the four latent predictors to the outcome variables (with the exception of voting intention/behavior) were constrained to be equal across the two groups (outgroup referred to in general vs. specific terms), and then test this against a model in which those predictive paths were free to vary across groups. A significant $\chi^2\Delta$ value indicates that at least one of the paths differed in strength across groups. In such a case, each predictive path was tested separately for cross-group variation. The results of the multi-group analyses are summarized in Table 2.

Overall, the predictive paths were found to be relatively invariant across groups, with five out of 20 paths in Study 1 and none of the paths in Study 2 showing significant variation. Of the paths showing significant cross-group variation in Study 1, four were of the same sign and remained highly significant regardless of group. Three of these (felt understanding $\rightarrow$ positive approach tendencies, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 14.06$, $p < .001$; outgroup beliefs $\rightarrow$ institutional trust, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 13.35$, $p < .001$; meta beliefs $\rightarrow$ institutional trust, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 6.05$, $p = .014$) indicated that predictive path was stronger when the items referred more specifically to political representatives of the outgroup. One path (outgroup beliefs $\rightarrow$ avoidance tendencies, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 17.07$, $p < .001$) showed the opposite effect, with a stronger association when the outgroup was referred to in more general terms. However, it should be noted that the magnitude of the

paths in both groups is actually quite similar, and the large size of Study 1 in particular makes the $\chi^2\Delta$ test very sensitive to even small differences in path magnitudes. Finally, the path from beliefs about appearing prejudiced to positive approach tendencies varied significantly across the groups, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 4.56$, $p = .033$, but in neither case was the path significant.

Discussion

The primary aim of this research was to test the predictive role of felt understanding when it comes to intergroup outcomes such as action intentions, trust, support for political separatism. With regards to action tendencies, results from both samples indicated that felt understanding predicted more positive tendencies, over and above the unsurprising effects of negative beliefs about the outgroup. Notably, felt understanding was a stronger and more consistent predictor of action tendencies than meta-beliefs, which have been found in previous work to predict orientations towards an outgroup (e.g., Issmer et al., 2013; Kteily et al., 2016; Owuamalam et al., 2014, 2013; Putra, 2014, 2016; Putra et al., 2017; Vezzali, 2017). While meta-beliefs did predict positive approach tendencies in Study 1 and negative approach and avoidance tendencies in Study 2, its other associations with action tendencies were non-significant. Likewise, felt understanding was a more consistent predictor of action tendencies than beliefs about appearing prejudiced, which represents a more specific perception that, like felt understanding, involves third-order intentionality/second-order theory of mind. Indeed, beliefs about appearing prejudiced only had one significant (but weak) association with any of the action tendencies: negative approach tendencies in Study 1 (cf. Goff et al., 2008; Plant & Butz, 2006; Plant & Devine, 2003; Shelton, 2003; Shelton et al., 2010; West et al., 2009).

The predictive value of felt understanding was even more apparent when it came to specific political attitudes and behavior. Institutional trust in the superordinate political entity (the UK in Study 1; the EU in Study 2) was most strongly associated with felt understanding,

as was degree of support for Scottish national independence in Study 1. In terms of separatist voting intention (Study 1) and actual vote (Study 2), felt understanding was again the strongest predictor, with less felt understanding associated with a greater probability of a separatist vote. Beliefs about appearing prejudiced also emerged as a unique predictor of voting intention and behavior, with more beliefs about appearing prejudiced (i.e., a stronger belief that the outgroup see the ingroup as prejudiced against them) predicting a greater probability of a separatist vote in both samples. This is in line with previous work which has indicated that a concern about appearing prejudiced predicts avoidance or withdrawal behavior (Plant & Butz, 2006; Plant & Devine, 2003; Shelton, 2003; Shelton et al., 2010; West et al., 2009). However, a clear caveat here is that beliefs about appearing prejudiced did not predict more general avoidance tendencies.

Finally, the effects of each of the predictors was relatively stable regardless of whether the outgroup referent in the questionnaire measures was framed in general (English people in Study 1 and Europeans in Study 2) or specific (English politicians in Study 1; people in EU institutions in Study 2) terms. In particular, felt understanding only differed in one instance in terms of its association with an outcome; namely, positive approach tendencies in Study 1. Even here, the effect of felt understanding was still positive and highly significant in both framings, while the effect of beliefs about appearing prejudiced was not significant in either framing.

Overall, these findings offer considerable initial support for the predictive power of felt understanding when it comes to separatist political attitudes as well as more general orientations towards an outgroup. This underlines the particular importance that we suggest for felt understanding in intergroup relations: drawing on early work on the positive – and indeed, transformative – *relational* potential of feeling understood by an other (e.g., Oishi et al., 2010; Reis et al., 2000, 2017; Rogers, 1967; Van Kamm, 1959), feeling that an ingroup is

understood by an outgroup was expected to have a strong and unique role in predicting relational outcomes such as separatist political attitudes and behavior.

In contrast to felt understanding, the role of beliefs about appearing prejudiced in predicting intergroup outcomes was less clear-cut. While it did predict separatist voting intention (Study 1) and vote (Study 2), it did not have strong or consistent associations with the other outcomes (all βs < .1). This was somewhat surprising given the relationships found in previous research between the concern about appearing prejudiced and intergroup orientations (e.g., Goff et al., 2008; Shelton, 2003; West et al., 2009). These findings will be discussed further in the General Discussion in view of the findings of Studies 3 and 4.

Study 3

Study 3 built upon Studies 1 and 2 by considering relations between groups in a post-violent conflict setting; namely, relations between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. In addition to felt understanding and beliefs about appearing prejudiced, we sought to examine another specific perspective that involves third-order intentionality/second-order theory of mind and that may have relevance in such a setting: namely, beliefs about what the outgroup believes about ingroup experiences during the conflict. We term this felt recognition of conflict experiences.

There is abundant research on the subjective experience of victimhood, including the different forms it can take and their implications for subsequent relations between the groups (e.g., Cohrs, McNeill, & Vollhardt, 2015; Noor, Vollhardt, Mari, & Nadler, 2017; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015; Vollhardt, Mazur, & Lemahieu, 2014). These are all essentially beliefs about (or strategic representations of) one's ingroup's experiences, or in the case of competitive victimhood, beliefs that also refer to meta-experiences (beliefs about outgroup experiences during the conflict). In contrast, felt recognition of ingroup experiences during conflict refers to ingroup beliefs about what the outgroup believes about ingroup experiences and

perspectives regarding the conflict – for example, 'they don't believe that we suffered during the conflict'. The potential importance of this form of perspective is evident in real-world post-conflict reconciliation processes, in which emphasis is placed on each side acknowledging the experiences and perspectives of the other (Meital & Rayman, 2018). The idea here is at least in part to generate a sense that an outgroup understands how the conflict affected the ingroup, as a precursor to reconciliation in the form of forgiveness and trust. It is therefore likely to be closely related to group-based felt understanding in the more general sense assessed in Studies 1 and 2, but refers specifically to ingroup experiences and perspectives regarding the violent conflict. Critical empirical questions in Study 3 were therefore whether felt recognition of conflict experiences are best represented as distinct from a more general sense of feeling understood by an outgroup, and whether it plays a unique predictive role when it comes to action intentions, outgroup trust, and forgiveness.

Otherwise, our aims in Study 3 were similar to those in Studies 1 and 2; namely, to test the predictive roles of outgroup beliefs, meta-beliefs, felt understanding, and beliefs about appearing prejudiced, alongside the newly-introduced felt recognition of conflict experiences, when it comes to action tendencies, outgroup trust, and forgiveness. Associations between the predictors and action tendencies were expected to be similar to those observed in Studies 1 and 2, while it was predicted that trust and forgiveness would be positively predicted by felt understanding and felt recognition of conflict experiences, and negatively predicted by negative beliefs and meta-beliefs about the outgroup, and by beliefs about appearing prejudiced.

Participants

The sample consisted of 1,288 people from Northern Ireland. Of these, data from 115 participants were not considered for analysis because they did not identify as Catholic or Protestant. A further 11 individuals' data were deleted because of $\geq 50\%$ missing values,

leaving a sample of 1,162 individuals. The study was advertised via Facebook to people living in Northern Ireland, with a direct link to the survey in the advert. Entry into a prize draw for one of four £25 Amazon vouchers was offered as an incentive. The survey was available from 25th May to 22nd June 2016.

Seven hundred and twelve participants identified as Protestant and 450 as Catholic. There were 441 males and 681 females, while three identified their gender as 'other' (a further 37 did not report their gender). The mean age of the sample was 41.97 years ($SD =$ 15.18), and age ranged from 16 to 85 years. In terms of occupational status, 655 were employed, 83 were self-employed, 48 were unemployed, 155 were retired, and 151 were students (a further 70 did not respond to this question).

Materials and Procedure

The survey was compiled using the EFS survey software from Unipark. The landing page contained information about the survey, and allowed participants to give their informed consent by clicking on a 'continue' button at the bottom of the page in order to continue to the survey questions. Participants then proceeded through the survey, which contained questions with the content and in the order described below. The full survey as presented to participants can be found on the OSF site (https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7).

Outgroup beliefs. A scale of global beliefs about the outgroup consisted of 15 statements, to which participants responded on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (completely disagree) through 0 (neither) to 3 (completely agree). As in Studies 1 and 2, these included items intended to tap beliefs about the competence (e.g., '(outgroup members) are competent; submissive'), warmth/sociability (e.g., '(outgroup members) are likeable; nice; unpleasant; cold'), and morality (e.g., '(outgroup members) are honourable; moral; untrustworthy) of the

outgroup, as well as items assessing overall positivity (e.g., 'I have a positive view of (outgroup members)'; 'I don't like (outgroup members)').

Meta beliefs. A scale of meta-beliefs about the ingroup (i.e., what outgroup members think about the ingroup) also consisted of 15 statement-based items. These were based in form and content on the outgroup beliefs scale, but modified so that the items referred to outgroup members' beliefs about ingroup members (e.g., '(outgroup members) see (ingroup members) as honest').

Felt understanding. Beliefs about the extent to which outgroup members understood ingroup members' beliefs, values and perspectives were assessed on the same 15 items used in Studies 1 and 2, but adapted for the context.

Beliefs about appearing prejudiced. The extent to which participants believed that outgroup members saw ingroup members as being prejudiced against them was assessed using the same six items used in Studies 1 and 2, but adapted for the context.

Felt recognition of conflict experiences. Beliefs about the extent to which outgroup members understood ingroup members' experiences during the period of violent conflict known as the 'Troubles' were assessed on five items. Unlike the more generally-focused felt understanding items, these items focused specifically on conflict experiences. They consisted of statements such as '(ingroup members') feelings about the Troubles are not appreciated/recognized by (outgroup members)'; '(ingroup members') experiences are fully acknowledged by (outgroup members)', and '(ingroup members') suffering is not really understood by (outgroup members)'. Participants responded on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (completely disagree) through 0 (neither) to 3 (completely agree).

Outgroup trust. Trust in the outgroup was assessed using six items adapted from Noor, Brown, and Prentice (2008) and Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, Manzi, and Lewis (2008). However, two items ('Most (outgroup members) can be trusted'; 'Most (outgroup members)

are honest') were subsequently dropped from the scale because of high similarity with items on the outgroup beliefs scale. The remaining four items included statements such as 'Most (outgroup members) try to be fair'; 'Most (outgroup members) cannot be trusted to deliver on their promises'; and 'Most (outgroup members) wish to exploit the vulnerability of us (ingroup members)'. Three items were negatively phrased, and scores on these were subsequently reversed. Participants responded on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (completely disagree) through 0 (neither) to 3 (completely agree).

Intergroup forgiveness. Willingness to forgive the outgroup was assessed using six items also adapted from Noor, Brown, and Prentice (2008). These included statements such as 'I try not to hold a grudge against (outgroup members) for their misdeeds'; 'I am prepared to forgive (outgroup members) for their misdeeds'; 'I hold feelings of resentment towards (outgroup members) for their misdeeds'; and 'Getting even with (outgroup members) for their misdeeds is not important to me'. Two items were negatively phrased, and scores on these were subsequently reversed. Participants responded on a 7-point scale ranging from -3 (completely disagree) through 0 (neither) to 3 (completely agree).

Action tendencies. Action tendencies regarding outgroup members were assessed using the same 10 items used in Studies 1 and 2, but adapted for the context.

Additional measures. Each survey contained some additional measures whose data are not analyzed here. These included four-item scales of identification at the start of the survey, an alternative trust scale based on Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, and Cairns (2008), and a two-item scale assessing empathy. The full survey as presented to participants can be found on the OSF site, along with the data file containing data relating to these additional measures (https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7).

Results

Missing data treatment

Analysis of missing data revealed that across all measures, only 1.47% of values were missing. Missing values were imputed using the EM (expectation-maximization) method in SPSS (Graham, 2009). The range of scores on each item was then checked to ensure that all values fell within the possible range of the scale in each case. If any estimated values fell outside of the scale range, they were recoded to the nearest possible value; that is, all values less than 1 were coded as '1', and all values greater than 7 were coded as '7'.

Item parceling

As with Studies 1 and 2, item parceling was conducted into order to reduce the number of latent variable indicators (Little et al., 2013). Six parcels were produced for outgroup beliefs, and six for meta beliefs. In contrast to Studies 1 and 2, these scales employed attitude statements rather than semantic differentials, and thus contained a range of positively- and negatively worded items. Items were consequently parceled not only on the basis of whether they assessed warmth (e.g., friendly; aggressive), competence (e.g., competent; submissive), or morality (e.g., honest; untrustworthy), but also by pairing one positively-worded and one negatively-worded, rescored item on each parcel (Little et al., 2013). Three parcels related to warmth, two parcels related to morality, and one parcel related to competence.

Parceling procedures for felt understanding (five parcels) and beliefs about appearing prejudiced (three parcels) were identical to those for Studies 1 and 2. Two parcels (one with two items and one with three items) were created using indicators of felt recognition of conflict experiences, with each parcel combining positively-worded and negatively-worded items.

No parcels were created for outcome variables.

Summary of models

Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to test between seven different possible specifications of the factor structure underlying the measured predictors. These are summarized in supplementary materials along with the CFA analyses from Studies 1 and 2.

Model 1 reflected the hypothesized factor structure, in which outgroup beliefs, meta beliefs, beliefs about appearing prejudiced, felt understanding, and felt recognition of conflict experiences are represented as distinct, correlated factors. Following the structure examined in Studies 1 and 2, outgroup beliefs and meta beliefs were specified as second-order factors consisting of distinct first-order dimensions of warmth, morality, and competence.

Finally, following the same process as in Studies 1 and 2, the specification of Model 1 was modified slightly to allow for one covariance between error terms of a warmth parcel and a competence parcel, a warmth parcel and a morality parcel, and a morality parcel and a competence parcel. No covariances between errors were considered between parcels indicating the same factor, nor were cross-factor covariances considered. Based on an initial run of the model, only two error-to-error covariances were added for parcels indicating outgroup beliefs: one between a warmth parcel and the competence parcel, and one between a warmth parcel and a morality parcel. A similar process was carried out for parcels of meta-belief indicators, resulting in one error-to-error covariance between a warmth parcel and the competence parcel, and one between a warmth parcel and a morality parcel. To ensure comparability between models, the same error-to-error covariances were included in all subsequent model tests.

Model 1 fitted the data well, $\chi^2_{191} = 736.74$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 3.86$, TLI $= .978$, CFI $= .982$, RMSEA $= .050$. Model 2a also showed acceptable fit, $\chi^2_{195} = 841.66$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 4.32$, TLI $= .975$, CFI $= .979$, RMSEA $= .053$. However, comparison of Model 2a with Model 1 suggests that Model 1 is preferable, $\Delta\chi^2_1 = 104.92$, $p < .001$, ΔAIC $= 96.92$. Moreover, Akaike weights calculated across all six models indicated that the normalized probability that

Model 1 is the preferred model was >.999. Consistent with the findings in Studies 1 and 2, the probability that any other model is preferable was thus extremely small.

Structural models: predicting intergroup outcomes

In order to test the predictive roles of the factors in Model 1, the specification was modified to include the intergroup outcome scales – action intentions, intergroup trust, and forgiveness – as endogenous factors predicted by each of outgroup beliefs, meta beliefs, beliefs about appearing prejudiced, felt understanding, and felt recognition of conflict experiences. Following the strategy employed in Studies 1 and 2, each outcome was tested in a separate model; that is, action intentions were included as the outcomes in one model, trust as the outcome in a second model, and forgiveness as the outcome in a third model. Standardized path coefficients and R^2 values for each outcome variable are summarized in Table 1.

As with Studies 1 and 2, we also report 95% confidence intervals (CIs) in Table 2 of the supplementary materials file

(https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7) . Again, CIs were calculated using slightly reduced samples because of listwise deletion of cases with missing values for gender and/or highest educational qualification. This was due to AMOS requiring full data in order to estimated bootstrapped CIs. Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between all scales are also summarized in Tables 3 and 4 of the supplementary materials file. It should be noted that, as was the case in Studies 1 and 2, the main analyses reported below are of latent variables, and did not use these manifest scale scores. In contrast, the descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations reported in supplementary materials were computed using composite scales created by averaging items scores for each scale.

Action intentions. Consistent with the findings from Studies 1 and 2, outgroup beliefs emerged as a strong and significant predictor of each type of action intention, with

more negative beliefs about the outgroup associated with stronger avoidance (β = -.44) and negative approach (β = -.33) tendencies, and lower positive approach tendencies (β = .44). In contrast, meta-beliefs did not significantly predict any of the action intentions.

Felt understanding and felt recognition of conflict experiences had relatively weak associations with each of the action tendencies. However, noting the strong correlation (r = .87) between felt understanding and felt recognition of conflict experiences, we tested the model again with the paths between felt understanding and each action tendency constrained to 0, and again with these paths freely estimated, but with the paths between felt recognition of conflict experiences and each action tendency constrained to 0. These additional model tests provide estimates for one of the predictors while forcing the effect of the other to be zero, and allowed us to gauge whether these two predictors really had weak associations with action tendencies, or whether they were effectively cancelling each other out due to their high covariance.

Consistent with the 'cancelling out' possibility, these additional tests revealed that felt understanding emerged as a unique predictor of each type of action intention when the effect of felt recognition of conflict experiences was zero, with more felt understanding associated with lower avoidance (β = -.17) and negative approach (β = -.22) tendencies, and stronger positive approach tendencies (β = .13). Likewise, felt recognition of conflict experiences emerged as a unique predictor of each type of action intention when the effect of felt understanding was zero, with more positive felt recognition of conflict experiences associated with lower avoidance (β = -.16) and negative approach (β = -.21) tendencies, and stronger positive approach tendencies (β = .16).

In contrast, beliefs about appearing prejudiced only significantly predicted avoidance tendencies, β = -.10.

Trust. The role of felt understanding and felt recognition of conflict experiences became even more pronounced when it came to predicting trust in the outgroup. When entered together, they both had unique and highly significant predictive effects, $\beta = .27$ for felt understanding and $\beta = .21$ for felt recognition of conflict experiences. When the effect of one was constrained to zero, the effect of the other was stronger still, making it the strongest predictor in the model; $\beta = .43$ for both felt understanding and felt recognition of conflict experiences. In addition, positive outgroup beliefs predicted greater trust ($\beta = .33$), as did positive meta-beliefs ($\beta = .11$). Beliefs about appearing prejudiced again showed no reliable association with this outcome. Overall, the model explained 57% of the variance in outgroup trust.

Forgiveness. As with outgroup trust, felt understanding emerged as a highly significant predictor of forgiveness, $\beta = .28$, even when allowing the effect of felt recognition of conflict experiences to be freely estimated; however, the latter was not significant. When the effect of felt recognition of conflict experiences was constrained to zero, the effect of felt understanding remained roughly the same, $\beta = .25$. When the effect of felt understanding was constrained to zero, the effect of felt recognition of conflict experiences became significant, $\beta = .20$. In addition, positive outgroup beliefs predicted greater forgiveness ($\beta = .43$), as did beliefs about appearing prejudiced ($\beta = .09$). Positive meta-beliefs showed no reliable association with this outcome. Overall, the model explained 36% of the variance in forgiveness.

Multi-group analyses

The final step in the analyses was to test whether the predictive roles of felt understanding, beliefs about appearing prejudiced, felt recognition of conflict experiences, meta beliefs and outgroup beliefs varied between Catholic and Protestant participants. The

analytic strategy here followed that of Studies 1 and 2, with an initial test of a multi-group model in which the predictive paths from the five latent predictors to the outcome variables were constrained to be equal across the two groups, and then test this against a model in which those predictive paths were free to vary across groups. In the case of a significant $\chi^2\Delta$ value, each predictive path was tested separately for cross-group variation. The results of the multi-group analyses are summarized in Table 2.

For the action tendency and outgroup trust outcome variables, there was no significant cross-group variation in the predictive roles of any of the factors. Unexpectedly, though, there was significant cross-group variation in path strength for the forgiveness outcome variable: with the exception of meta beliefs, the predictive roles of each of the predictors was stronger for Protestants than for Catholics (outgroup beliefs, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 5.90$, $p = .015$; beliefs about appearing prejudiced, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 10.14$, $p = .002$; felt understanding, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 12.86$, $p < .001$; felt recognition of conflict experiences, $\chi^2_1\Delta = 11.53$, $p < .001$). The effects of felt understanding and felt recognition of conflict experiences (tested when constraining the effect of the other to zero) and of outgroup beliefs were nevertheless significant for Protestants and Catholics.

Discussion

The findings of Study 3 provided further evidence for the unique predictive role of felt understanding when it comes to intergroup outcomes. Replicating the effects found in Studies 1 and 2, felt understanding negatively predicted avoidance and negative approach intentions, and positively predicted positive approach intentions, all over and above the less surprising effect of negative beliefs about the outgroup. However, a caveat here is that these effects of felt understanding were not distinguishable from those of more specific felt recognition of conflict experiences; that is, the effects of felt understanding and felt recognition of conflict experiences were only apparent when constraining the effect of one of these factors to be zero. This suggests that while confirmatory factor analyses did indicate

that these were two distinct factors (despite their very high correlation), their respective associations with outcomes such as action tendencies were overlapping – in other words, for action tendencies at least, the predictive value of felt recognition of conflict experiences is due to its shared variance with felt understanding, and vice versa. Cancelling out the effect of one thus allows the effect of the other to become apparent.

A similar pattern emerged for outgroup trust and forgiveness, both of which are critical components of reconciliation processes in post-conflict settings such as Northern Ireland. Notably, felt understanding was a unique, positive predictor of trust and forgiveness even when the effect of felt recognition of conflict experiences was included in the model. When the effect of the latter was constrained to zero, the effect of felt understanding on trust in particular became even stronger. Likewise, the predictive effects of felt recognition of conflict experiences were stronger when the effect of felt understanding was constrained to be zero.

Also echoing the findings of Studies 1 and 2 were the more modest effects of beliefs about appearing prejudiced; indeed, it only had a significant overall association with avoidance tendencies and forgiveness. Similarly, meta-beliefs were only significantly associated with one of the outcomes: trust (cf. Putra, 2016; Putra & Wagner, 2017)).

Lastly, multi-group analyses revealed that for action tendencies and trust, there were no differences between Catholic and Protestant respondents in terms of the predictive roles of each of the factors. Unexpectedly, though, there was a consistent difference between the groups in terms of effects on forgiveness: with the exception of meta-beliefs, the association between each predictor and forgiveness was stronger for Protestant respondents than for Catholic respondents. The reason for this is unclear from the data, particularly given the absence of cross-group differences in associations involving trust. Moreover, it is also the case that the effects of felt understanding and felt recognition of conflict experiences were

both significant among Catholic respondents when constraining the effect of the other to be zero. One possible explanation echoes the argument that others have made regarding the greater focus on forgiveness among Catholic relative to Protestant people in Northern Ireland (e.g., Myers, Hewstone, & Cairns, 2009; Spencer, 2012). In the present context, the stronger associations between forgiveness and the predictors amongst Protestants may indicate that in addition, variability in forgiveness is more systematically associated with other perceptions and appraisals, relative to the more religious denomination-specific strictures associated with forgiveness among Catholics in this context (see Leonard, Yung, & Cairns, 2015, for a similar pattern regarding the association between collective guilt and forgiveness). However, this is necessarily speculative and requires a more appropriate and focused examination than is possible with the current data.

Study 4

The findings of Studies 1-3 offer encouraging evidence for the distinctive role of felt understanding in intergroup relations. Notwithstanding their strengths, the analyses in Studies 1-3 have nonetheless assessed the role of felt understanding relative simply to a global evaluation of the outgroup in terms of warmth, morality, and competence, and to meta-perspectives on the same evaluative dimensions. This leaves open the question of whether felt understanding also has a unique role when taking other, more specific relational appraisals into account; namely, perceptions of negative interdependence (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961) and identity threat (Livingstone, Spears, Manstead, & Bruder, 2009). The specific value of such a test is in advancing our overall aim of assessing the unique predictive value of felt understanding in intergroup relations, including whether felt understanding predicts intergroup outcomes over and above more well-researched sets of beliefs about other groups, including appraisals of the extent to which 'they' pose threats to us. An alternative, for example, might be that felt understanding is itself epiphenomenal to these fundamental

appraisals of how an outgroup affects our goals and interests – a possibility that was not directly tested in Studies 1-3 because of the global manner in which beliefs and meta-beliefs about the outgroup were operationalized.

The aim of Study 4 was to provide such a test in a setting that combines elements of Study 3 in being a post-violent conflict society, and Studies 1 and 2 in terms of the importance of political separatism – namely, the Basque region in Spain. The Basque region experienced a decades-long violent conflict between a proscribed group (known as ETA) and the Spanish state, ostensibly over the possibility of an independent Basque state, and the region's distinctive language and culture. ETA declared a lasting ceasefire in 2010, and in 2018 announced that it would disband completely. More broadly, political separatism is a long-standing feature of the region (Lecours, 2007; Watson, 2003).

In extending our analysis to include specific, relational appraisals, we settled on negative interdependence and identity threat because they map on to fundamental concerns with competition over material status and power on the one hand, and the vitality and security of ingroup identity on the other. Both of these are fundamental features of intergroup conflicts in many settings, and particularly in the case of relations between minority ethnolinguistic groups and advantaged majority groups (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977; Livingstone, Spears, & Manstead, 2009; Livingstone et al., 2009; Livingstone, Manstead, Spears, & Bowen, 2011).

Negative interdependence – the perception of zero-sum relations between ingroup and outgroup, such that the gains of one are reflected in losses for the other – is the central component of realistic conflict theory (Campbell, 1965; Sherif et al., 1961). Its emphasis on competitive relations over valued outcomes is also echoed in other theoretical perspectives on different forms of intergroup threat, each of which stress that 'realistic' threat is a key predictor in intergroup conflict (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999; Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong,

1998; Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001; Riek, Mani, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Indeed, for realistic conflict theory, (perceived) negative interdependence is *the* key determinant of intergroup relations.

In contrast, identity threat refers here to another major concern for groups – and minority groups in particular – in intergroup relations: the perception that one's ingroup's identity is threatened in terms of its distinctiveness and vitality, for example through the erosion, dilution, or appropriation of cultural practices, symbols, and language. Its emphasis on less tangible aspects of an ingroup identity is echoed in different models of threat, and is cognate with concepts such as distinctiveness threat (Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004) and symbolic threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Together with the more instrumental concerns behind negative interdependence, these concerns for the integrity of ingroup identity itself have been found to be two of the main factors that drive behavior such as ingroup bias (e.g., Scheepers, Spears, Doosje, & Manstead, 2002, 2003, 2006).

Specific predictions extended those of Studies 1 and 2, in that we expected that felt understanding would predict greater trust in superordinate political institutions, less support for political separatism (including voting intention), and more positive action intentions. This was expected to be the case over and above the effects of negative interdependence and identity threat, as well as the more generic beliefs and meta-beliefs about the outgroup (measured in global terms encompassing stereotypes of warmth, morality, and competence) that were assessed in Studies 1 and 2.

Method

Participants and design

Of a total of 311 participants who answered at least some of the questionnaire, the final sample was composed of 205 participants (110 women and 92 men) who provided answers in all sections of the questionnaire. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 61 ($M =$

35.23, SD = 10.96), including three participants who did not indicate their age, gender or first language. One hundred and thirty-six participants indicated 'Spanish' as their first language, 64 chose '*Euskera*' (Basque language), and one participant indicated their first language as 'other'. With regard to participants' employment status, 20.3% described themselves as students, 59.9% were employees, 8.9% were self-employed, 9.9% classed themselves as not having a job and 1% were retired.

The survey was available from 27th June until 9th July 2017, and the recruitment strategy was to maximize the size of the sample within this timeframe. In terms of power, a sensitivity analysis using G*power suggests that the current sample of 205 would provide 80% power to detect an individual predictor effect of f^2 = .038 (two-tailed; α = .05; nine predictors), equivalent to an r of .19.

Materials

The survey was an online questionnaire developed in Spanish using Enterprise Feedback Suite (EFS) Survey 10.6 software. The full survey as presented to participants can be found on the OSF site (https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7). Respondents worked their way through the questionnaire, in which items were presented across nine separate pages. The penultimate page recorded participants' demographic information and the final page provided details about the study and the research project as a whole. The survey was constructed so that participants were able to withdraw and be debriefed at any time. Unless otherwise stated, participants responded on a 7-point scale anchored by *strongly disagree* (-3) to *strongly agree* (3) with a neutral midpoint *neither disagree nor agree* (0).

Stereotypes and meta-stereotypes. These were assessed using shortened, 11-item versions of the semantic differential scales (e.g., friendly-hostile; cold-warm; moral-immoral;

competent-incompetent) used in Studies 1 and 2. The scale specifically assessed stereotypes (α = .87) and meta-stereotypes (α = .86) of Spanish people.

Felt understanding. The extent to which participants felt that Basques were understood by Spanish people in general was assessed using a shortened, 10-item version of the scale used in Studies 1-3 (α = .77); for example, "in general, Spanish people have a good understanding of what Basques think".

Beliefs about appearing prejudiced. This was assessed on a 5-item version of the scale used in Studies 1-3 (α = .76); for example, "in general, Spanish people think that Basques have positive views about them". A low score on this scale represented stronger beliefs about appearing prejudiced.

Negative interdependence. Perceptions of the Basque-Spanish relationship as being negatively interdependent was assessed on a 4-item scale[2] (α = .72); for example, "The successes of Spain as a whole are damaging to the Basque country", and "In general, the things that benefit Spain as a whole also benefit the Basque country" (reverse scored).

Identity threat. A 4-item scale (α = .75) assessed the extent to which participants perceived Basque identity to be under threat. These items asked whether Basque identity was vulnerable/in danger/under threat/strong and secure (reverse scored).

Action intentions. *Positive approach* (4 items, α = .78), *negative approach* (3 items, α = .84) and *avoidance* (3 items, α = .75) action intentions were assessed in the same manner as in Studies 1-3.

Institutional trust. Trust in the Spanish state was assessed using a 9-item scale (α = .84) based on the one used in Studies 1 and 2 (e.g., "I feel that Spain acts, in general, for the Basque Country's best interest").

Support for separatism. Participants' support for separatism (the Basque region becoming an independent country) was assessed using two items based on those used in

Studies 1 and 2. Participants were asked whether they were for or against the Basque region being an independent country. Responses were made on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly against) through 5 (neither for nor against) to 9 (strongly for). However, the response scale as visible to participants was not numbered so as to avoid attaching implied value to one type of response. Participants were also asked about whether they would vote for or against the Basque region becoming an independent country if there were to be a referendum tomorrow. Response options were 'for the Basque region to become independent', 'for the Basque region to remain part of Spain', 'undecided', and 'would not vote'.

Additional measures. The survey also contained a range of items that are not analyzed here. These include scales of Basque identification and Spanish identification; the perceived cost or benefit of Basque independence; whether participants self-defined as a Basque nationalist; whether participants would support having a referendum on Basque independence; and perceptions of the political situation in the Basque region and in Spain as a whole. The full survey as presented to participants can be found on the OSF site, along with the data file (https://osf.io/puhwb/?view_only=c9a2a1b9d98b4968baf81c4758bba6e7).

Procedure

The aim was to target respondents who indicated that the Basque Country was their native 'Autonomous Community' (a first-level region division of Spain). Potential participants were contacted via email and social networks – Facebook and Twitter – through contacts of the second author. A snowball-sampling technique was used in order to find more participants. Participants entered by a link to the online questionnaire, which was introduced as a study about current attitudes and beliefs among Basques regarding Spanish people from other Autonomous Communities. No reward was offered for completing the questionnaire and confidentiality and anonymity were assured.

Results

The aim of the analyses was to test whether the predictive effects of felt understanding observed in Studies 1-3 would also be evident when accounting for specific, relational appraisals such as negative interdependence and identity threat, as well as the more global evaluations contained in the stereotype and meta-stereotype scales. To do so, each analysis consisted of a multiple regression model which contained the stereotype, meta-stereotype, beliefs about appearing prejudiced, and felt understanding scales (following the models in Studies 1-3), along with the negative interdependence and identity threat scales. As in Studies 1-3, age, gender, and highest educational qualification were also entered as control variables. In the case of intended independence vote, the model was run as a binary logistic regression, and included only the 171 participants who indicated that they would vote for or against Basque independence. Table 3 reports zero-order correlations between all variables in the analyses.

Trust and support for political separatism

The results of multiple regression models for institutional trust and support for independence, and the binary logistic regression model for intention to vote for independence are reported in the left-hand columns of Table 4. They indicate that while negative interdependence was a significant predictor of each outcome – predicting lower trust, more support for independence, and a greater likelihood of voting for independence – felt understanding again emerged as a strong and consistent predictor over and above the scales reflecting beliefs and meta-beliefs about the outgroup. Specifically, felt understanding was associated with greater trust, lower support for independence, and a lower likelihood of voting for independence. Indeed, the odds ratio (-0.15) for the latter effect indicates that a unit increase in feeling *mis*understood (i.e., a unit decrease in felt understanding) increased

the odds of voting for independence by approximately six-and-a-half times. No other

predictors had significant associations with these outcome variables.

Action intentions

The results of the multiple regression models for the action intention outcomes are

reported in the right-hand columns of Table 4. In these models, the predictive effect of felt

understanding was in the predicted direction, but was not significant at the .05 level. The only

effect of beliefs about appearing prejudiced to reach this level was on avoidance tendencies,

with stronger beliefs about appearing prejudiced associated with greater avoidance

tendencies. Negative interdependence again emerged as a strong, consistent predictor, being

associated with lower approach tendencies and greater negative approach and avoidance

tendencies. Echoing the findings from Studies 1-3, the global stereotype of the outgroup also

significantly predicted each of the intention scales, with a more negative evaluation

associated with lower approach tendencies and greater negative approach and avoidance

tendencies.

Discussion

The findings of Study 4 align with those of Studies 1-3, indicating that felt

understanding is a unique and powerful predictor of intergroup orientations in a post-conflict

setting (echoing Study 3), particularly when it comes to political separatism (echoing Studies

1 and 2). The specific added value of this study is that the role of felt understanding and

beliefs about appearing prejudiced were tested alongside specific, relational appraisals that

have been shown to play a major role in intergroup conflict, as well as the more global

evaluations examined in the stereotype and meta-stereotype scales used across Studies 1-4.

Specifically, felt understanding in particular still emerged as a consistent, strong predictor of

political separatism, even when taking perceptions of negative interdependence (Sherif et al.,

1961) and identity threat (Livingstone et al., 2009) into account.

Balanced against the clear effects of felt understanding in terms of political separatism, its role was less clear-cut when it came to the more generic action tendency outcomes. Here, despite significant zero-order correlations with positive and negative approach intentions and avoidance intentions, felt understanding did not emerge as a significant predictor in the regression models (although its effect was tending in the expected direction). This pattern is actually similar to that in Studies 1-3, in which the value of felt understanding was more pronounced for the more situationally-relevant outcome measures to do with political separatism than for the more generic, a-contextual action intention measures. This might suggest that the role of felt understanding is most apparent when the outcomes to which it is related are both situationally-meaningful and specific. The extent to which this represents a limit to the role of felt understanding, or alternatively a limit to the value of a-contextual and generally-pitched action intention measures is unclear, but it is a pattern that should be borne in mind and ideally followed up in future research.

Finally, it is notable that none of the other predictors in the model consistently predicted the outcome variables in the presence of perceived negative interdependence. Even the global evaluative scale of outgroup stereotypes only predicted the action intention outcome variables, and not the political separatism outcomes (cf. Studies 1 and 2). While this clearly underlines the importance of negative interdependence as a central appraisal in intergroup relations, it also highlights just how striking the effects of felt understanding are.

Study 5

Studies 1-4 have provided consistent evidence of strong associations between felt understanding and a range of intergroup outcomes. However, they are nevertheless correlational and cross-sectional (with the exception of the Brexit vote analysis in Study 2), somewhat limiting the extent to which the hypothesized causal role of felt understanding can be assessed. Greater confidence in the causal role of felt understanding requires direct

manipulation of felt understanding to test its effects on outcomes such as evaluations of an outgroup and of the ingroup's relationship with that outgroup. The aim of Study 5 was to provide such a test – the first such test of which we are aware.

In testing the effect of felt understanding experimentally, we suggest that it is important to try to distinguish effects of felt *understanding* from effects of lower-level perspectives such as merely feeling *liked/disliked* by an outgroup. This is important in order to establish whether any effect of a felt understanding manipulation is not simply due to the perception of being liked or disliked *per se*, without reference to one's own ingroup's perspectives – a much less novel explanation. Feeling liked does not specifically require the third-order intentionality/second-order theory of mind involved in believing that the outgroup do/do not *understand our perspectives,* yet could conceivably (1) be affected by a felt understanding manipulation, and (2) be a confound of any effect of such a manipulation on positive intergroup outcomes.

For the above reasons, we elected to orthogonally manipulate both felt understanding (understood vs. misunderstood) and felt liking (liked vs. disliked) by an outgroup. We did so in the context of inter-generational relations between adolescents (the ingroup sampled in this study) and older adults, which is the site of collective tension in many countries (e.g.,Clinch, 2013; Smith, 2017), and particularly so in the setting of this study (Spain), where economic austerity policies have disproportionately affecting younger people (e.g., Barber, 2015).

In terms of specific predictions, we expected independent main effects of both felt understanding and felt liking on evaluations of the outgroup and the ingroup-outgroup relationship. Specifically, orientations towards the outgroup were expected to be more positive when ingroup members believed that the outgroup understands (vs. misunderstands) the ingroup's beliefs, and when ingroup members believe that the outgroup likes (vs. dislikes) the ingroup – that is, there would be an effect of feeling *understood* that is distinct from

merely feeling liked. We also tested these predictions in relation to the intergroup action tendencies assessed in Studies 1-4.

Method

Participants

Two hundred and twenty-five Spanish school students initially participated in the study. One class of 35 students was omitted because the testing session unexpectedly took place immediately after another questionnaire that students had to complete as part of their school activities, changing the testing conditions relative to the other participants. This decision was taken prior to the analyses reported below. This left a final sample of 190 participants (95 male and 95 female, M_{age} = 16.56 years, SD = 0.77, age range = 16-19 years). Eighty-one were students from four different classes in a public school in the province of Salamanca (Spain) and 109 were students from eight different classes in a public school in Asturias (Spain).

Design

The study had a 2 (felt understanding: understood vs. misunderstood) X 2 (felt liking: liked vs. disliked) between-participants design. Dependent variables were evaluations of the out-group, perceptions of the positivity-negativity of the ingroup-outgroup relationship, and action intentions (receptiveness, positive approach, negative approach, and avoidance).

Materials

Mock articles. Participants were presented with mock articles from the website of *El País* (a well-known Spanish newspaper). The articles reported on evidence of the (mis)understanding and (dis)liking that adults have of adolescents. Participants in the felt understanding conditions read an article indicating that adults had a good understanding of adolescents' perspectives, while participants in the felt misunderstanding condition read articles indicating that adults had a poor understanding of adolescents' perspectives.

Independently of the information regarding outgroup (mis)understanding of ingroup perspectives, the articles also contained information about whether adults also (dis)liked adolescents. Participants in the felt liking condition read an article indicating that adults liked adolescents as a whole, participants in the felt disliking condition read an article suggesting that adults disliked adolescents as a whole. For example, the English translation of the article in the understood-but-disliked condition highlighted that surveys found that "for young people, adults come to understand them but they don't make the effort to like them". In contrast, the article in the misunderstood-but-liked condition indicated that "for young people, adults do not understand them, but they do make an effort to like them".

Questionnaire measures[3]. The article was followed by a questionnaire containing all relevant measures. Unless otherwise stated, responses were measured on a 5-point scale anchored by strongly disagree (-2) through neither disagree nor agree (0) to strongly agree (2). Scores on negatively-worded items were reversed.

Manipulation checks. In order to check the felt understanding manipulation, participants completed a six-item scale ($\alpha = .75$) based on the felt understanding scales used in Studies 1-4. Example items included "in general, adults do not understand adolescents' views" and "in general, adults understand adolescents' values". The felt liking manipulation was checked using a six-item scale ($\alpha = .74$) consisting of items such as "in general, adults like young people" and "in general, adults enjoy adolescents' company".

Stereotypes and meta-stereotypes. Eight-item semantic differential scales based on those used in Studies 1-4 were used to assess stereotypes ($\alpha = .80$) and meta-stereotypes ($\alpha = .69$) on dimensions of warmth, morality, and competence. Scores ranged from -2 (negative anchor) to 2 (positive anchor).

Beliefs about appearing prejudiced. This was assessed on a 6-item version of the scale used in Studies 1-4 ($\alpha = .72$); for example, "in general, adults think that adolescents are

prejudiced against them". A low score on this scale represented stronger beliefs about appearing prejudiced.

Action intentions. Three of the four action intention scales followed those used in Studies 1-4, assessing avoidance (three items; $\alpha = .66$), positive approach (three items; $\alpha = .75$), and negative approach (two items; $r = .50$). An additional 3-item scale ($\alpha = .76$) was developed to assess tendencies to be receptive to the outgroup (e.g., 'listen to them'; 'take their advice'), given the importance of this in the relationship between adolescents and adults.

Perceptions of the ingroup-outgroup relationship. Adolescents' general perceptions of their relationship with adults was measured on a scale ($\alpha = .77$) composed of six semantic differential items (e.g., negative/positive; cold/warm; tense/relaxed) measured from -2 (negative anchor) to 2 (positive anchor). These were preceded by the statement "The relationship between adults and adolescents is...".

Feelings towards the outgroup. Participants were asked to rate their general feelings towards adults using a feelings thermometer measure, on a scale of 1 to 100. We also asked them to rate their feeling towards their own group.

Procedure

The experiment took place in different classrooms during school hours, each lasting roughly 40 minutes. Headteachers of both schools were initially approached and signed a consent form allowing us to carry out the experiment as part of normal curricular activity. All participants were over the age of 16 and could therefore give consent on their own behalf. The students were told that the purpose of the study was to investigate feelings and actions of adolescents towards adults. They were also instructed of the process and were randomly assigned into one of four conditions by receiving the newspaper article followed by the questionnaire, which was identical across conditions. They were instructed not to communicate with other students while completing the questionnaire. After completing the

questionnaire, participants were fully debriefed with a written information sheet containing details of the purpose of the study and the manipulations. Participants were thanked and provided with contact details of the researcher, supervisor, and ethics committee.

Results

Manipulation Checks

A 2 (felt understanding: understood vs. misunderstood) X 2 (felt liking: liked vs. disliked) ANOVA[4] on the felt understanding manipulation check revealed a main effect of felt understanding $F(1, 186) = 17.44$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .09$. The felt understanding manipulation had the intended effect, with felt understanding higher in the understood condition than in the misunderstood condition ($M = -0.01$, $SD = 0.65$ vs. $M = -0.39$, $SD = 0.61$). No other effects were significant, Fs$(1, 186) \leq 2.49$, ps $\geq .116$, η^2_ps $\leq .013$.

A similar ANOVA on the felt liking check revealed a significant effect of the felt liking manipulation, $F(1, 186) = 13.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .07$. The manipulation had the intended effect, with felt liking higher in the liked condition than in the disliked condition ($M = -0.04$, $SD = 0.58$ vs. $M = -0.36$, $SD = 0.65$). The only other significant effect was a small independent main effect of felt understanding, $F(1, 186) = 4.90$, $p = .028$, $\eta^2_p = .026$. Felt liking was higher in the understood condition than in the misunderstood condition ($M = -0.10$, $SD = 0.65$ vs. $M = -0.27$, $SD = 0.59$).

Main analyses

The main hypothesis-testing analyses consisted of two separate 2 (felt understanding: understood vs. misunderstood) X 2 (felt liking: liked vs. disliked) between-participants MANOVAs. The first MANOVA assessed effects on intergroup perceptions (outgroup feelings thermometer and perceptions of the intergroup relationship), while the second MANOVA assessed effects on action tendencies (positive approach, negative approach,

avoidance, and receptiveness). Means and *SD*s for each outcome variable are reported in Table 5.

Intergroup perceptions. The analysis of intergroup perceptions revealed only a multivariate main effect of felt understanding, $\lambda = .96$, $F(2, 183) = 3.64$, $p = .028$, $\eta^2_p = .04$, all other effects $\lambda s \geq .98$, $Fs(2, 183) \leq 1.42$, $ps \geq .245$, $\eta^2_p s \leq .015$. The univariate main effect of felt understanding was significant on both outcome variables, $Fs(1, 184) \geq 4.03$, $ps \leq .046$, $\eta^2_p s \geq .021$. Feelings towards the outgroup ($M = 63.43$, $SD = 17.04$ vs. $M = 57.52$, $SD = 18.60$) and perceptions of the intergroup relationship ($M = 0.10$, $SD = 0.59$ vs. $M = -0.09$, $SD = 0.65$) were both more positive in the understood condition than in the misunderstood condition.

Action intentions. The analysis of action intentions unexpectedly revealed no significant multivariate effects, $\lambda s \geq .98$, $Fs(4, 183) \leq 1.00$, $ps \geq .408$, $\eta^2_p s \leq .021$. The largest of these was the main effect of felt understanding, and the only univariate effect approaching significance ($p < .10$) was the main effect of felt understanding on avoidance, $F(1, 186) = 3.55$, $p = .061$, $\eta^2_p = .02$: avoidance tendencies were lower in the understood condition than in the misunderstood condition ($M = -0.91$, $SD = 0.67$ vs. $M = -0.72$, $SD = 0.70$).

Follow-up multiple regression analyses

While the main analyses provided evidence that the manipulation of felt understanding did affect intergroup perceptions (though not action intentions), we also conducted multiple regression analyses to test whether the measure of felt understanding had a similar predictive role to that found in Studies 1-4; that is, while controlling for beliefs about appearing prejudiced, stereotypes, and meta-stereotypes. In addition, the measure of felt liking was also included in the models. These models provide the analyses and effect size estimates that are most comparable with those of Studies 1-4. Zero-order correlations are reported in Table 5, and the results of the regression analyses are summarised in Table 6.

Consistent with the findings of Studies 1-4, the results indicated that felt understanding again emerged as a strong and consistent predictor over and above the scales reflecting beliefs and meta-beliefs about the outgroup. Specifically, felt understanding was associated with more positive feelings towards the outgroup and more positive perceptions of ingroup-outgroup relations, and with lower avoidance and greater receptiveness tendencies. Its unique association with positive approach was also approaching significance. The exception was its association with negative approach: only stereotypes emerged as a unique predictor of this action tendency.

Discussion

Building upon the correlational findings of Studies 1-4, the findings of this study provide the first experimental evidence that felt understanding affects intergroup orientations. In the context of intergenerational relations, the adolescent participants reported more positive evaluations of older adults, and perceived the ingroup-outgroup relationship to be more positive, when told that older adults understood (vs. misunderstood) adolescents. This main effect of felt understanding was also distinct from that of felt liking, increasing our confidence that the effect of felt understanding is specifically related to the higher-order perspective it involves, addressing 'our' own perspectives in the mind's eye of the outgroup. In contrast, felt liking requires only the outgroup's perspective on the ingroup per se, rather than their perspectives *on our perspectives* in turn.

In contrast to the significant effect of felt understanding, the non-significant effect of felt liking was unexpected. Our predictions for this study were of main effects of both felt understanding and felt liking, and there is good reason based on previous research (e.g., Gordijn et al., 2008; Issmer et al., 2013; Owuamalam et al., 2014, 2013; Putra, 2014, 2016; Putra et al., 2017) to expect that a meta-perspective such as felt liking can affect intergroup orientations. Particularly in view of this previous research, we do not draw firm conclusions

regarding the role of felt liking from the present findings. Instead, further research using a similar design is necessary in order to draw firmer conclusions regarding the relative effects of felt understanding and felt liking on intergroup orientations. These would ideally involve developing stronger manipulations of felt understanding and felt liking that have large and independent effects on these constructs (indicated by the manipulation check findings).

The key caveat from the present findings regarding the effect of felt understanding is that it did not have a significant multivariate effect on the action tendency measures, notwithstanding a significant univariate effect on avoidance tendencies. The poorer predictive role of felt understanding in the case of negative approach tendencies may reflect the particular meaning that the tendency to directly confront may have in the context of close, inter-generational settings, especially in an 'honor' culture such as Spain. Confronting an adult in the manner implied by the measures may have been seen as decidedly non-normative in this setting, relative to the other action tendencies. On the other hand, the somewhat less clear-cut role of felt understanding when it comes to action intentions does echo the findings of Studies 1-4.

General Discussion

The research reported in this paper addresses an important, but neglected aspect of intergroup relations: the role of felt understanding. We have suggested that felt understanding has a potentially unique role because it involves perspectives on an outgroup's perspectives on our own perspectives (beliefs, values, etc.). Felt understanding differs critically from beliefs about an outgroup, and their beliefs about us *per se* (meta-beliefs), because it addresses how *our own (ingroup's) perspectives are perceived and evaluated by an outgroup*. Building upon research on interpersonal relationships (e.g., Oishi et al., 2010; Reis et al., 2000, 2017; Rogers, 1967; Vann Kamm, 1959) which suggests that felt understanding is critical to the positive functioning of social relationships, we tested the role of felt

understanding in intergroup relations. We did so across five different intergroup contexts: relations between Scotland and the rest of the UK (Study 1); relations between the UK and the EU at the time of the 'Brexit' referendum (Study 2); relations between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland (Study 3); relations between the Basque region and the Spanish state (Study 4); and inter-generational relations between adolescents and adults (Study 5).

Felt understanding as a critical factor in intergroup relations

The specific predictive value of felt understanding was clear in all five intergroup settings. Felt understanding emerged as a unique predictor of action tendencies in Studies 1-3, and was the strongest predictor of separatist political attitudes, voting intentions, and actual voting behavior in Studies 1, 2, and 4. Specifically, felt understanding was associated with more positive and less negative action tendencies, with greater trust, with more unity-oriented political intentions and behavior, and with greater post-conflict forgiveness in Study 3. Moreover, the manipulation of felt understanding in Study 5 affected outgroup evaluations and perceptions of the ingroup-outgroup relationship. This consistent overall pattern is in line with theories that emphasize the positive relational potential of felt understanding (e.g., Lun et al., 2008; Oishi et al., 2010, 2013; Vann Kamm, 1959), and extends them into the domain of intergroup relations. It thus complements the very small number of existing studies on felt understanding in intergroup relations (Mallett et al., 2016; Shelton et al., 2014). Critically, though, the present research highlights the potential *predictive* power of felt understanding in intergroup relations, in addition to its relatively more well-understood role as an outcome of face-to-face intergroup interactions.

Together, the findings offer support for a conceptualization of felt understanding as a predictor that can have profoundly positive effects on relations between groups, echoing its role in relationships at an interpersonal level. Felt understanding, we suggest, provides a basis

for trust and other pro-social, relational factors such as trust and forgiveness precisely because, as a perspective that involves at least third-order intentionality (Dennett, 1987) or second-order theory of mind (Kinderman, et al., 1998; Liddle & Nettle, 2006; Stiller & Dunbar, 2006; Sullivan et al., 1994), it contains a representation of how one's own views are in turn represented by members of another group. In this sense, it represents a *meta-meta* perspective (Laing, Phillipson, & Lee, 1966): a set of beliefs about (their) beliefs about (our) beliefs). This representation of what they think and feel *about what we think and feel* signals the potential for co-operative, communal intergroup relations in a manner that is distinct from more straightforward beliefs about an outgroup, or indeed meta-beliefs such as whether the outgroup has positive or negative perspectives on 'us'.

Promise and limits to the role of beliefs about appearing prejudiced

In contrast to the consistent predictive role of felt understanding, the role of beliefs about appearing prejudiced in predicting intergroup outcomes was more equivocal. This on the face of it contrasts with previous work on how a concern with appearing prejudiced can influence subsequent intergroup (and usually inter-racial) interactions (West, 2011). One reason for the absence of consistent effects of beliefs about appearing prejudiced in the present research could be that such a belief can produce competing reactions: on the one hand, one may be motivated to disabuse the outgroup of their beliefs about ingroup prejudice by acting positively towards them. On the other hand, as other research has established, a concern with appearing prejudiced can also produce anxiety about subsequent interactions that fuels avoidance, or 'leaks out' to affect the interaction (e.g., West et al., 2009). It is also conceivable that, for people low in prejudice at least, believing that one is seen as prejudiced is also experienced as unfair, insofar as the outgroup hold an unjustified and perhaps inaccurate, negative belief about the ingroup's views of them. This sense of unfairness could also contribute to less positive orientations towards the outgroup. In sum, beliefs about

appearing prejudiced may have an equivocal association with the sorts of outcomes assessed here because it leaves group members somewhat conflicted about how to act towards the outgroup. In contrast, felt understanding is much more straightforward in terms of its relational implications, suggesting unambiguously that the outgroup have a positive and accurate grasp of ingroup perspectives. This in turn provides a clearer basis for subsequent (positive) orientations towards the outgroup, reflected in the strong associations found across all four samples here. Moreover, the effect of beliefs about appearing prejudiced may also be more indirect, operating through its emotional consequences, such as anxiety, and/or through appraisals of the unfairness or otherwise of the outgroup's perceived view of ingroup beliefs about them. Finally, much of the previous research on the effects of a concern about appearing prejudiced has been conducted among members of advantaged groups in contexts marked by clear status and power differences between groups. The fact that this was not consistently the case across the contexts studied in this paper could also conceivably help to explain the relatively weak effects of beliefs about appearing prejudiced here.

Extending and elaborating the role of felt understanding

The above explanation suggests that further research is required to examine indirect as well as direct effects of beliefs about appearing prejudiced in particular. It also speaks more generally to the potential value of considering other emotions as mediators of the effects of felt understanding. While anxiety is relatively well established as a mediator of the effects of beliefs about appearing prejudiced, felt understanding is likely to be associated with emotions clustered around positive relational appraisals. Relevant emotions here include hope (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2014), relief (Shepherd, Spears, & Manstead, 2013), communion, and joy (Vann Kamm, 1959). When the object of these emotions is another group (or the relationship between ingroup and outgroup), they in turn are likely to be associated with action tendencies and orientations focused on improved, closer relations with

that outgroup. Other mediators could include empathy and self-other overlap, both of which were found by Goldstein et al. (2014) to mediate the effect of perceived perspective taking on liking and pro-social behavior towards an other.

It is also conceivable that beliefs (including relational appraisals such as threat), meta-perspectives such as felt liking, and felt understanding can operate in a more sequential manner than the parallel effects examined here. One intuitive possibility is that basic relational beliefs regarding threat may in turn inform higher-order perspectives such as felt understanding. Alternatively, feeling understood may itself be a basis from which lower-level meta-perspectives such as felt liking emerge, relational beliefs such as threat perceptions improve, and outgroup evaluations (e.g., as warmer and more communal) become more positive (see Van Kamm, 1959). This latter sequence is more consistent with how felt understanding is understood to have positive consequences in therapeutic contexts too (e.g., Rogers, 1967): it enables a sense of positive regard from an other, and makes one more open in turn to regard them positively (see also Reis et al., 2017).

Finally, future research should also address the question of how felt understanding can be brought about, especially in troubled intergroup relations. We suggest that a critical determinant is the extent to which *communication* between groups allows for understanding and positive regard to be signaled by one group and 'picked up' by another group. In this sense, feeling positive and empathic towards another group is not enough, if that empathy is not effectively communicated to that outgroup. As research on interpersonal relations has shown, felt *mis*understanding develops when communication from one party to another – both intended and unintended, verbal and non-verbal – is suboptimal (Condon, 2008; Fisher, 1993). On the one hand, group members may for various reasons feel unable to communicate an authentic version of the ingroup's identity, values, and experiences (e.g., because of intergroup language or cultural differences, or lack of communication channels such as

contact). On the other hand, outgroup responses to ingroup signals of 'our' perspectives may be maladaptive too: what the outgroup reflects back may be patronizing, inaccurate, disingenuous, or downright hostile (see Condon, 2008, for a review in the context of interpersonal relations); or, they may not reflect back anything meaningful at all. We suggest that overcoming these communicative challenges is a key way in which felt understanding and its benefits can be developed.

Conclusion

In the meantime, the research we have presented here provides clear initial support for the role of felt understanding in intergroup relations, consistent with our view that felt understanding has the potential to have profoundly positive, and potentially transformative effects on relations between groups. These findings echo and extend other research which sees felt understanding as critical to the functioning of close relationships (e.g., Oishi et al., 2010; Reis et al., 2000), and to between-person communication in general. It is thus possible to state an even stronger agenda for future research: higher-order perspectives such as felt understanding are at the heart of every coordinated, collaborative activity in which we engage with other people, and theories of intergroup relations that neglect these perspectives risk not just neglecting an additional form of variable; they risk missing a fundamental aspect of what it is to be human in even the most basic social relationships. Integrating felt understanding into our understanding of intergroup relations ensures that we do not miss these most human of concerns in those relations.

Footnote

[1] Note that 'meta-prejudice' has also been used to refer to beliefs about other ingroup members' prejudice against outgroup members. In the present paper we use the term only to refer to beliefs about outgroup members' prejudice against ingroup members.

[2] A fifth item was removed from this scale because it had very low correlations with the other four items, rs ≤ .093. On reviewing this item ('When Spain as a whole makes decisions, they affect the Basque country'), it assessed the inequality of the power relationship in general, rather than negative interdependence specifically.

[3] The questionnaire also included scales of higher-order liking (six items; α = .72); that is, adolescents' beliefs about whether adults think that adolescents like them or not (e.g., "in general, adults think that adolescents have positive views about them"; "in general, adults think that adolescents respect them"); and perceptions of in-group understanding of the out-group (six items; α = .70); that is, whether adolescents understand adults' beliefs and values (e.g., "In general adolescents do not understand adults' perspectives" and "In general adolescents respect adults' values").

[4] An alternative analysis strategy took into account the nesting of participants within 13 classes within two schools. Linear mixed models that also estimated random slopes of felt understanding, felt liking, and their interaction indicated that the fixed effects of these IVs and their interaction were highly similar to the reported ANOVAs, and there was no indication that any of these effects varied across class and school. The ANOVAs are reported here to enhance comparability across studies, particularly with regard to effect size estimates.

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Table 1: Summary of structural model (predictive paths) for outcome measures in each sample. Each analysis controls for age and gender, and analyses of Studies 1 and 2 also control for highest educational qualification. Values are standardized path coefficients.

Study	DV	Outgroup beliefs	Meta-beliefs	Beliefs about appearing prejudiced	Felt understanding	Felt recognition of conflict experience	R^2
1 (Scotland)	Neg. approach	.53***	.01	-.03*	-.19***		.43
	Avoid	.55***	.03	.00	-.20***		.48
	Pos. approach	-.53***	-.05**	.01	.17***		.44
	Inst. trust (UK)	-.06***	-.09***	-.04**	.63***		.49
	Indep. support	.06***	.05**	.08***	-.48***		.29
	Indep. vote intention	-.12***	-.08*	-.19***	.57***		
2 (UK-EU)	Neg. approach	.47***	-.14***	-.06	-.22***		.37
	Avoid	.48***	-.11***	-.01	-.34***		.48
	Pos. approach	-.60***	.07	-.04	.23***		.50
	Inst. trust (EU)	-.26***	.07*	.03	.52***		.50
	Brexit (remain) vote	-.30***	.09	-.17**	.43***		
3 (Northern Ireland)	Neg. approach	-.33***	-.04	-.07	-.16*(-.22***)	-.08(-.21***)	.31
	Avoid	-.44***	-.02	-.10*	-.12/(-.17***)	-.06(-.16***)	.35
	Pos. approach	.44***	.07	.03	.01/(.13***)	.16*(.16***)	.36
	Trust	.33***	.11**	.01	.27***(.43***)	.21***(.43***)	.57
	Forgiveness	.43***	-.03	.09*	.28***(.25***)	-.04(.20***)	.36

Table 2: Summary of multi-group analyses of structural models (predictive paths) for outcome measures in Studies 1-3. Where two values are reported for Study 1, the first value refers to the outgroup as a whole, and the second value to outgroup politicians specifically. Where more than one value is reported for Study 3, the first value relates to Protestant participants. Values in parentheses for Study 3 are estimates when felt recognition of conflict experience or felt understanding were constrained to be 0.

Study	DV	Outgroup beliefs	Meta-beliefs	Beliefs about appearing prejudiced	Felt understanding	Felt recognition of conflict experience	$\chi^2\Delta$ (df)
1 (Scotland-UK)	Neg. approach	.53***	.01	-.03*	-.19***		1.09 (4)
	Avoid	.40***/.35***	.03	.00	-.20***		27.27*** (4)
	Pos. approach	-.53***	-.05**	-.03/.03	.18***/.28***		16.73** (4)
	Inst. trust (UK)	-.09***/-.20***	-.05*/-.11***	-.04**	.63***		16.29** (4)
	Indep. support	.06***	.05**	.08***	-.48***		6.56 (4)
2 (UK-EU)	Neg. approach	.47***	-.14***	-.06	-.22***		8.98 (4)
	Avoid	.48***	-.11***	-.01	-.34***		1.42 (4)
	Pos. approach	-.60***	.07	-.04	.23***		1.52 (4)
	Inst. trust (EU)	-.26***	.07*	.03	.52***		6.28 (4)
3 (Northern Ireland)	Neg. approach	-.33***	-.04	-.07	-.16*(-.22***)	-.08(-.21***)	3.42 (5)
	Avoid	-.44***	-.02	-.10*	-.12/(-.17***)	-.06(-.16***)	4.83 (5)
	Pos. approach	.44***	.07	.03	.01/(.13***)	.16*(.16***)	4.00 (5)
	Trust	.33***	.11**	.01	.27***(.43***)	.21***(.43***)	5.38 (5)
	Forgiveness	.46***/.31***	-.03	.10*/-.11	.37***(.38***)/.15(.17**)	.09(.34***)/.-.14(.13*)	38.00*** (5)

Table 3: Zero-order correlations and descriptive statistics for all variables analyzed in Study 4. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Felt understanding	2.33 (0.88)										
2. Beliefs about appearing prej.	2.94 (0.97)	.308***									
3. Positive approach	3.99 (1.02)	.233***	.200**								
4. Negative approach	4.17 (1.43)	-.222***	-.184**	-.225***							
5. Avoidance	4.07 (1.39)	-.260***	-.251***	-.412***	.570***						
6. Identity threat	3.82 (1.40)	-.054	-.168*	-.118	.196**	.252***					
7. Negative interdep.	3.24 (1.19)	-.263***	-.190**	-.326***	.389***	.463***	.206**				
8. Inst. trust	1.91 (0.88)	.519***	.260***	.236***	-.191**	-.296***	-.119	-.382***			
9. Stereotypes	3.74 (0.87)	-.126	-.104	-.279***	.231***	.338***	.208**	.210**	-.126		
10. Meta-stereotypes	3.29 (0.98)	-.150*	-.197**	-.154*	.144*	.181**	.253***	.186**	-.032	.308***	
11. Support for indep.	6.89 (2.58)	-.407***	-.194**	-.263***	.266***	.367***	.170*	.470***	-.664***	.206**	.114

Table 4: Coefficients for multiple and binary logistic regression analyses in Study 4. Values are standardized (β) regression coefficients followed by 95% CIs for the unstandardized (*b*) estimate in square brackets and *p* values in parentheses, with the exception of the vote for independence analysis

	Inst. trust $R^2_{adj} = .334$	Support for indep. $R^2_{adj} = .331$	Vote for indep.*	Positive approach $R^2_{adj} = .147$	Negative approach $R^2_{adj} = .154$	Avoidance $R^2_{adj} = .298$
Felt understanding	.42 [.29, .53] (< .001)	-.27 [-1.14, -.42] (< .001)	0.15 [.06, .38] (< .001)	.12 [-.02, .30] (.090)	-.10 [-.39, .06] (.142)	-.10 [-.36, .04] (.110)
Beliefs about appearing prej.	.10 [-.02, .20] (.115)	-.04 [-.43, .22] (.535)	1.48 [.71, 3.07] (.297)	.11 [-.03, .26] (.129)	-.06 [-.29, .11] (.389)	-.13 [-.36, -.002] (.047)
Stereotype	-.01 [-.13, .12] (.942)	.06 [-.20, .53] (.376)	1.68 [.74, 3.83] (.215)	-.20 [-.40, -.07] (.006)	.14 [.004, .46] (.046)	.24 [.17, .58] (< .001)
Meta-stereotype	.10 [-.02, .20] (.111)	-.00 [-.34, .32] (.946)	0.90 [.41, 1.97] (.783)	-.02 [-.17, .13] (.777)	-.01 [-.22, .19] (.875)	.00 [-.18, .19] (.979)
Negative interdep.	-.26 [-.28, -.10] (< .001)	.36 [.50, 1.03] (< .001)	3.41 [1.82, 6.47] (< .001)	-.24 [-.33,-.08] (.001)	.30 [.19, .52](< .001)	.33 [.23, .53] (< .001)
Identity threat	-.05 [-.12, .05] (.476)	.06 [-.12, .34] (.353)	1.07 [.66, 1.73] (.780)	.01 [-.10, .11] (.925)	.10 [-.04, .25] (.152)	.12 [-.004, .25](.057)

*Values in this column are odds ratios.

Table 5: Zero-order correlations and descriptive statistics for all variables analyzed in Study 5. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Felt understanding	-0.20 (0.66)										
2. Felt liking	-0.19 (0.63)	.569***									
3. Positive approach	0.43 (0.85)	.319***	.319***								
4. Negative approach	-0.34 (0.99)	-.193**	-.232**	-.257***							
5. Avoidance	-0.81 (0.69)	-.336***	-.266***	-.501***	.453***						
6. Receptiveness	0.63 (0.90)	.302***	.179*	.461***	-.255**	-.382***					
7. Outgroup feelings	60.44 (18.04)	.403***	.255***	.520***	-.12	-.301***	.286***				
8. Perceptions of intergroup relations	0.00 (0.63)	.472***	.487***	.434***	-.164*	-.375***	.324***	.374***			
9. Stereotypes	-0.37 (0.60)	-.327***	-.269***	-.322***	.241**	.383***	-.236**	-.266***	-.338***		
10. Meta-stereotypes	0.20 (0.55)	-.170*	-.356**	-.293***	.224**	.229**	-.094	-.093	-.309***	.139	
11. Beliefs about appearing prej.	-0.10 (0.60)	.363***	.550**	.344***	-.218**	-.236**	.118	.224**	-.422***	-.200**	-.364***

Table 6: Coefficients for multiple regression analyses in Study 5. Values are standardized (β) regression coefficients followed by 95% CIs for the unstandardized (*b*) estimate in square brackets and *p* values in parentheses.

	Outgroup feelings $R^2_{adj} = .174$	Perception of intergroup relations $R^2_{adj} = .361$	Receptive-ness $R^2_{adj} = .091$	Positive approach $R^2_{adj} = .211$	Negative approach $R^2_{adj} = .094$	Avoidance $R^2_{adj} = .200$
Felt understanding	.37 [5.51, 14.62] (< .001)	.23 [.08, .35] (.003)	.27 [.14, .61] (.002)	.16 [-.003, .41] (.053)	-.02 [-.29, .23] (.829)	-.21 [-.39, -.05] (.013)
Felt liking	-.07 [-7.56, 3.45] (.484)	.17 [.01, .34] (.037)	-.04 [-.34, .22] (.689)	.00 [-.24, .25](.990)	-.11 [-.48, .13] (.249)	.02 [-.18, .22] (.866)
Beliefs about appearing prejudiced	.10 [-1.80, 7.91] (.216)	.16 [.01, .31] (.032)	-.01 [-.26, .25] (.954)	.18 [.04, .48] (.024)	-.07 [-.38, .17] (.445)	-.06 [-.25, .11] (.442)
Stereotype	-.14 [-8.36, .10] (.055)	-.22 [-.35, -.10] (.001)	-.15 [-.44, -.004] (.046)	-.21 [-.49, -.10] (.003)	.17 [.04, .52] (.023)	.29 [.17, .49] (< .001)
Meta-stereotype	.00 [-4.65, 4.82] (.971)	-.12 [-.28, .01] (.058)	-.04 [-.32, .18] (.583)	-.17 [-.48, -.04] (.019)	.13 [-.03, .50] (.085)	.14 [-.01, .35] (.059)