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We Need to Talk

Exploring the Effect of Shared Social Identity and Intellectual Humility on Willingness to Engage in Dialogue with Outgroup Members

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Abstract

Dialogue matters. It is indispensable in a world where topics such as immigration, climate change, abortion rights and many more trigger heated debates. Different views on moving topics lead to the formation of groups with opposing perspectives and can contribute to polarisation of societies. But how can people with conflicting opinions be brought closer together? This paper examined the role of shared social identity and intellectual humility as independent variables on willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members. 208 participants were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (Shared Social Identity: present versus absent) x 2 (Intellectual Humility: present versus absent) between-participants design and advised to vividly imagine a positive contact situation with a perceived outgroup member called Lou in a café. In the shared social identity conditions, a common taste in music was emphasised. The conditions for intellectual humility to be present included an information text and a thinking exercise. Disagreement was induced on the topic of immigration. It was hypothesised that shared social identity has a positive effect on people's willingness to engage in dialogue with an outgroup member, and that this effect is moderated by intellectual humility. Specifically, it was assumed that the effect would be stronger when intellectual humility was present. Statistical tests, however, did not confirm significant differences in the participants' willingness to engage in dialogue across conditions. Limitations, implications, and possible directions for further research deriving from this work are discussed.

Keywords: Social Identity, Intellectual Humility, Intergroup Relations, Dialogue, Common Ingroup Identity Model

We Need to Talk

Politics, climate change, vaccinations, immigration, abortion rights - name something, and people will likely be arguing about it. Certainly, there is no shortage of issues igniting heated debates in today's world. Different views on moving topics lead to the formation of groups with opposing perspectives and contribute to the division of societies (Back et al., 2021; Ford & Goodwin, 2017; Herold et al., 2023). According to Herold et al. (2023), immigration, and in particular the question of whether it should be made easier or more difficult, harbours great potential for social division in European countries. In general, the fronts between opposing parties appear to be hardening, and fierce antagonism between members of different groups can be observed as a pressing contemporary problem (Read, 2022; Herold et al., 2023). Discourses also become increasingly emotionally charged, often causing outrage and defamation of opinion opponents, making democratic decision-making more difficult (Herold et al., 2023).

In conjunction with the riots and storming of the Capitol on 6th of January 2021 in the United States of America, Miles and Shinew (2022) stress the demand for more meaningful intergroup contact that decreases political and other identity-based segregation and fosters intergroup understanding and empathy. Contrary to this need, they suspect that many American citizens tend to avoid engaging in intergroup dialogue to understand different perspectives but instead, rather disengage or resort to actions such as calling out or cancelling, which involve publicly shaming or punishing individuals with objectionable views or behaviours.

Such observations indicate a lack of meaningful dialogue between opponents, which would be, however, indispensable to navigate through today's world issues together and create a stable, aspirational future. So, for instance, Feller and Ryan (2012) stress how divided communities and practitioners must consistently and pervasively use dialogue as an approach

to post-conflict community and peacemaking in order to support social cohesion while preserving cultural integrity. They understand dialogue as the movement that aims to generate coexistence by encountering the 'other', to share experiences with each other, to think together in flexible and creative ways, and to jointly explore assumptions. Promoting willingness to engage in dialogue between opposing groups can have wide-reaching implications for conflict resolution, social cohesion, and the advancement of societal goals. Relating to this, the aim of this research was to explore possibilities to foster people's willingness to engage in dialogue with people who do not share each other's opinions. Concretely, the focus was on exploring the prospective benefit of shared social identity on willingness to engage in dialogue. The thesis additionally examined how people's awareness of their intellectual limitations, known as intellectual humility, contributes to their willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members and how it influences the relationship between shared social identity and willingness to engage in dialogue. Accordingly, the following research question was addressed: *How do shared social identity and intellectual humility affect the willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members?*

In order to shed more light on the possible benefits of these two variables for the willingness to engage in dialogue between outgroup members, the study employed positive imagined intergroup contact as the context. Intergroup interactions are an effective way to counteract prejudices and intergroup tension among different social groups and contexts (Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020; Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In extension to Allport's widely known contact theory, imagined contact hypothesis was developed, stating that "mentally simulating a positive contact experience will create a mental contact 'script', alongside more positive feelings about outgroups, that will result in more favourable outgroup perceptions and enhanced intentions to engage in future contact" (Crisp & Turner, 2012). Miles and Crisp (2013) conclude from the findings of their meta-analyses that imagined intergroup contact has solid effects on attitudes, emotions, intentions, and behaviours towards

the outgroup, stressing a great value of imagined intergroup contact as a tool to help improve intergroup relations.

Intergroup conflict

Böhm et al. (2020) define intergroup conflict as the perceived incompatibility of values or objectives among two or more individuals resulting from the fact that these people consider themselves to be members of different social groups. They name it as an integral part of human interaction. Intergroup conflict is also called to be the "problem of the century" (p. 123) by Fiske (2002) and can range from more subtle discrimination against members of a foreign group all the way to wars or genocides (Böhm et al., 2021). There are approaches to mitigate conflicts between groups and contribute to conflict resolution, but Tropp (2012) emphasises that it is challenging to decide how best to move forward in order to defuse conflict, promote reconciliation and achieve peaceful and sustainable relations. In the context of positive imagined intergroup contact, stressing shared social identity as well as cultivating intellectual humility and its potential value in the sphere of constructive dialogue were at heart of the study's investigation.

Social Identity

Social identity comprises that part of an individuals' identity that is derived from their membership in social groups, leading to a differentiation between *us* and *them* (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Fischer et al., 2010). It impacts people's social responses such as social judgement, social perception as well as pro- and antisocial behaviour and further seems to be a relevant determinant in the response to external stressors when being salient (Fischer et al., 2010; Haslam & Reicher, 2006). Social identity theory implies how people show a tendency of favouring members of their ingroup at the expense of non-members or outgroups (Bakagiannis and Tarrant, 2006). This is also put as ingroup favouritism or ingroup-outgroup bias, and its effect already occurs in minimal group conditions (Tafjel & Turner, 1986). Billig

and Tafjel (1973) observed that over- or underestimation of dots on a display and preference for abstract paintings by different artists were sufficient to induce ingroup favouritism - whereby the composition of the groups was in fact random. What does that imply? Groups exist when people think they do and no meaningful ingroup is needed to demonstrate ingroup favouritism. It also implies that influencing and creating a sense of ingroup identity is possible and that this could be used as a lever to positively affect interpersonal and intergroup relations, which is of interest for this study.

The common ingroup identity model provides complementary insights. It posits that shifting group members' representations of themselves from two separate groups towards one common ingroup category reduces prejudice and transforms members' perceptions towards a more inclusive *we* (Gaertner et al., 1993; Forsyth, 2019). Hence, it can reduce the perception of sharp divisions between groups, transcending ingroup-outgroup distinctions and holding the potential of improving relations between social groups through changing people's cognitive representations of the intergroup context. The model describes how such recategorization mitigates the conflict-aggravating cognitive factors that underlie the ingroup-outgroup bias, while allowing members to maintain their original identity, as long as it does not interfere with the recategorised group (Forsyth, 2019). Here is an example of interference with the recategorized group: Individual neighbourhoods can see themselves as belonging together as residents of a sustainable city. However, this overarching identity could fade into the background and fail to succeed if a windmill farm is to be placed directly in neighbourhood X and the residents in neighbourhood X are not in harmony with it because it disturbs their landscape. Their original identity here is out of sync with the recategorised group.

The potential value of exploring the effects of shared social identity might be demonstrated by Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006): Based on a minimal group paradigm, they categorised participants as either convergent thinkers or divergent thinkers. Participants

completed a questionnaire and were then told whether they had a convergent or divergent thinking style, with the categorisation actually being random. Depending on the condition, participants were then told that divergent and convergent thinkers have very similar or different musical preferences, or they were not given any information about this. Consistent with the common ingroup identity model, results showed that adolescents reported more positive perceptions between groups when they believed that the ingroup and outgroup had similar music preferences than when they had no information about the group's music preferences. Focusing on shared musical preferences accordingly facilitated recategorization of the two groups.

Levine et al. (2005) provide another example of the effects of shared social identity. They investigated the helping behaviour of soccer fans based on their social group membership. Their research showed how soccer fans wearing an ingroup team tricot get more help from ingroup fans than those wearing a rival team tricot or a neutral shirt. This dynamic changed, however, when a second study stressed belonging to the community of soccer fans instead of emphasizing club specific membership. In this case, people who were previously perceived as outgroup members got a comparable level of support, indicating the power of stressing a shared identity. Canto and Vallejo-Martin (2021) furthermore summarise how trust, respect, and communication among members of an ingroup increases when people share a social identity.

Transferred to the concern of the study, stressing a shared social identity with perceived outgroup members, who hold a different view on a certain topic, could help to increase the willingness to interact with each other. It could further help to make the salient social identity tied to the clashing perspectives less overriding and make people shift their focus from differences to similarities, ultimately facilitating conflict resolution. To further enhance the value of shared social identities, the concept of intellectual humility will be incorporated into this work. For people to identify not just extensively with smaller social

subgroups but also with broader superordinate groups, recognising complexities and admitting that one's own information is filtered and only part of a bigger picture can be useful assets. Since intellectual humility can encompass these assets and is associated with openness and broader perspective-taking, it is explored in more detail below.

Intellectual Humility

The concept of intellectual humility refers to recognizing intellectual limitations by understanding that one's own beliefs can be incomplete or even incorrect (Porter et al., 2022; Leary, 2018; Zmigrod et al, 2019; Krumrei-Mancuso & Begin, 2022). According to Zmigrod et al. (2019) it allows people to acknowledge their "potential fallibility when forming and revising attitudes" (p. 200), which makes it important for avoiding cognitive biases such as confirming prior beliefs and ignoring contradicting evidence. A body of research indicates correlations between intellectual humility and open-minded thinking, forgiveness of others, perspective-taking and seeking compromise (Porter et al., 2022). People scoring high on intellectual humility also tend to be less inclined to be judgmental of people with whom they do not agree with (Leary, 2017). De Keersmaecker et al. (2020) showed that intellectual humility mediated the positive association between cognitive ability and supporting freedom of speech (for groups ranging across the ideological spectrum). In line with this, intellectual humility is called to be a suitable predictor for conflict resolution (Permanasari & Permatasari, 2023).

However, Porter and his colleagues (2022) also explain how it may be easy to admit the limits of one's knowledge in situations where the stakes are low, but individuals are less likely to demonstrate intellectual humility when addressing high-stakes contexts, for example when involving religious, political, or ethical values. In general, they suggest that cultivating intellectual humility encourages learning and empathy, making it a promising tool for promoting more constructive responses in disagreements and conflicts overall. As such, the process of critically reflecting on one's own beliefs can encourage people to become more

moderate about their attitudes and those attributed to the ‘others’ (Mellers et al., 2019). This way, intellectual humility could help to move people away from extreme positioning.

For this work, it is of interest how people’s awareness of their fallibility affects their ability to be open to dialogue with people they perceive as outgroup members and disagree with on an ideological topic. As the study will try to involve a high-stakes context, it is moreover interesting how effects of intellectual humility will show as research claims it to be less likely than in low-stakes contexts. It is assumed that intellectual humility has a positive impact on the effect of a shared social identity on the willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members. This proposition stems from observations indicating that people who show a higher level of intellectual humility tend to be more open-minded and adopt a broader perspective. Krumrei-Mancuso (2016) found intellectual humility to emerge consistently as a predictor of self-reported prosocial outcomes, not only being related to more perspective taking but also empathetic concern, gratitude, altruism, less power seeking, benevolence, and universalism. The link to universalism may be especially interesting as the Human Values Scale (HVS; Schwartz et al., 2015) captures the concept in terms of 1) whether participants believe that all humans should be treated equally, 2) the importance of listening to and trying to understand people regardless of whether one agrees with them, and 3) whether humans must care about nature. Universalism therefore encompasses a sense of connectedness with all humans and nature, which possibly makes it easier to recognise the connectedness through a shared social identity. In addition, Stanley et al. (2020) propose that individuals lower in intellectual humility are more likely to derogate and less likely to befriend their opponents.

Findings like these overall imply that intellectual humility can play a part in how individuals relate to their counterparts. More precisely, they hint at a shift away from egocentric orientations towards a more receptive stance, making it potentially easier for people to distance themselves from their identities attached to the conflicting perspectives and more likely to focus on similarities rather than differences. This may ultimately pave the way

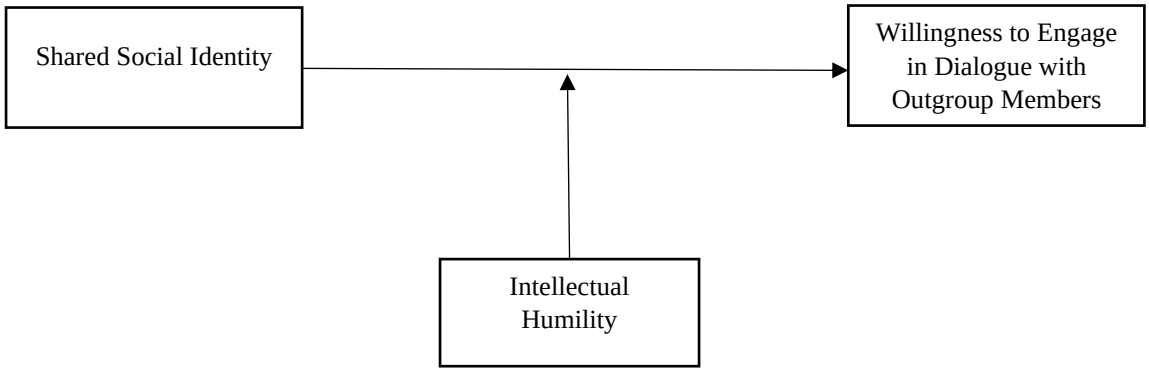
for shared social identity, reinforcing its effects on willingness to engage with outgroup members.

The present study

Deduced from the insights of integrated literature, the study at hand aimed to investigate how shared social identity and intellectual humility affects people's willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members, proposing the following hypotheses:

> **H1:** Shared social identity has a positive effect on people's willingness to engage in dialogue with an outgroup member, and this effect is moderated by intellectual humility; specifically, when intellectual humility is present, the effect will be stronger than when intellectual humility is not present.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



It was expected that stressing shared social identity has a beneficial effect on willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members as the shift from differences to similarities cushions the demarcation of outgroup members and facilitates connection. This effect was anticipated to be increased when people are aware of their own fallibility as literature indicates links to seeking compromise, forgiving others and skills of conflict resolution.

Method

Participants and Design

287 participants took part in the online experiment of the study "We Need to Talk". After excluding incomplete responses, 208 participants remained. The mean age was 34 years old (SD = 15.71), 129 considered themselves as female, 77 as male, and 2 as non-binary. The study had a 2 (Shared Social Identity: present versus absent) x 2 (Intellectual Humility: present versus absent) between-participants design, with willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members as dependent variable. Participants were allocated at random.

Procedure

The software Qualtrics was used to run the study, which was designed in both English and German. To disseminate the experiment and find participants, various channels such as sharing the study online via social media accounts by the author, contacting acquaintances, and recruiting students at the University of Twente through the SONA system, were employed. Participants of the study took part in the online experiment with a time frame of approximately 15-20 minutes and were initially asked to take note of the general information on the experiment whereby not all information was initially shared with the individuals to avoid biassing the research results. Demographic questions about age and gender were then asked. The participants in the experimental conditions including Intellectual Humility were asked to do a short thinking exercise that included reflecting on two questions *(Do you think you are right about everything? If you aren't right about everything, then what, exactly, are you wrong about?)* which was adopted from McRaney (2023). Then they were instructed to read a short information text about Intellectual Humility. Thereupon, all participants were encouraged to vividly imagine a positive intergroup contact situation with a stranger called Lou in which a disagreement occurred. The setting of the imagination was a café and disagreement was reached over a statement on immigration, for which the participants could either take a supportive or a rejecting position *(Immigrants should be unconditionally allowed*

to bring their core family here). To determine a topic, the study by Herold et al. (2023) on social division tendencies in Europe was consulted, in which the extent of (affective) polarisation on topics like immigration, climate change and a few more was examined. Immigration was chosen as it showed to have the greatest potential to divide society across Europe and, alongside climate change, holds the greatest potential for affective polarization. For participants who were allocated to the Shared Social Identity conditions, the imagined contact with Lou included information about having the same taste in music and listening to a new favourite track together. The taste of music was used as the vehicle as it was aimed to choose a basis for a shared social identity that is low-threshold and believed to be accessible to participants independently of their sociodemographic characteristics. Research supports the idea that shared musical preferences hold the potential to act as a social marking of group membership (Lonsdale, 2020; Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2008). After completing their participation, the subjects were informed of the actual purpose of the study and final consent was obtained. They were additionally asked about how vividly they perceived the imagination and how important the topic of discussion was to them (*Was your intergroup contact imagination vivid? Was the topic discussed important for you?)*. Further items were included to gain insights about perceived shared social identity and self-reported intellectual humility serving as manipulation checks. The materials used in study can be found in Appendix A

Measures

Willingness to Engage in Dialogue with Outgroup Members

To measure the dependent variable, the Readiness to Engage in Interreligious Dialogue Test (REIDT; Rydz et al, 2019) was adapted. Three out of four factors were derived from this, after one was judged to be too narrowly tailored to the religious context. Readiness to Seek Mutual Understanding (factor 1) was measured through seven items (e.g. *When talking to Lou about immigration, I respect that our opinions differ*) which, based on the

REIDT, captured the desire to understand and learn about different views and the belief in the value of good communication to solve conflicts. Personal Barriers to the Symmetry of Dialogue (factor 2) was captured through six items (e.g. *When talking to Lou about immigration, I tried to convince they about my view on the topic*), among other things, expressing a desire to impose one's own opinion, discomfort in confrontation with Lou and difficulty in accepting different view. The items of both factors were adapted so that they are suitable for recording a state variable. The means of the items were calculated for the factors. Originally, the factor Readiness to Seek Mutual Understanding comprised eight items, but one was excluded as it showed to increase reliability. To capture different facets of the concept, Readiness to Seek Mutual Understanding and Personal Barriers to the Symmetry of Dialogue were combined to measure Willingness to Engage in Dialogue (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$).
The third factor, Readiness to Communicate with People Holding Opposing Views (factor 3, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$), was used to gain trait-related insights and has been included to obtain additional information. It was measured through seven items (e.g. *I find it easy to come into contact with people with opposing opinions*) and predominately captured the extent of participants' positive attitude, respect and openness to contacts with people holding an opposing view on immigration in general. A response format of a five-point Likert scale (1 = "*definitely not*",2= "*not*",3= "*neutral/undecided*", 4 = "*yes*", 5= "*definitely yes*") was established for all of the factors.

Manipulation Check for Shared Social Identity

To assess if the manipulation of the independent variable Shared Social Identity was successful, differences in perceived closeness with Lou were assessed across the four conditions. Insights on perceived shared social identity were gathered through the Other in the Self Scale (IOS; Aron et al, 1992), which captured how close the respondent felt with Lou, and via an adapted form of a feeling thermometer in the form of a 5-point-Likert-Scale

ranging from very cold to very warm.

Manipulation Check for Intellectual Humility

To also determine if the thinking task and information text about intellectual humility differed across the conditions, the 3-item version of the Specific Intellectual Humility Scale (SIHS; Hoyle et al., 2016) was utilised (Cronbach's α = .79). Participants' level of intellectual humility in relation to the topic of immigration (e.g. *My views on immigration that I held in conversation with Lou may someday turn out to be wrong*) was queried after the imagined intergroup contact situation with Lou.

Results

Correlation Analyses

To get a better understanding of the data, correlative analyses were performed. Table 1 shows a correlation matrix which displays the relationships among the variables under investigation.

Table 1

Overview of Correlations

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Willingness Dialogue	3.44	0.42						
2. Trait Willingness Dialogue	3.24	0.61	.31**					
3. Specific Intellectual Humility	3.46	0.79	.30**	.18**				
4. Vividness Imagined Contact	3.92	0.92	.10	.23**	.02			
5. Topic Importance	4.07	0.99	-.10	.15*	-.14*	.33**		
6. Feeling of Warmth	3.14	0.70	.40**	.23**	.19**	.09	-.04	
7. Inclusion of Self in Others	3.07	1.35	.16*	.23**	.19**	.16*	.04	.43**

*Note. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates p < .05. ** indicates p < .01.*

A moderate positive correlation was observed for willingness to engage in dialogue with Lou and feelings of warmth towards Lou, $r(206) = .40$, $p < .001$. Willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members also appeared to moderately correlate with the trait

variable of willingness to engage in dialogue, $r(206) = .31$, $p < .001$, as well as self-reported intellectual humility referred to the topic of immigration policy, $r(205) = .30$, $p < .001$. A weak correlation with inclusion of self in others was revealed too, $r(205) = .16$, $p < .05$. The data furthermore indicates that the perceived importance of the discussed topic and experienced vividness of the imagined intergroup contact with character Lou is positively related, $r(205) = .33$, $p < .001$. In addition, the data confirmed a moderate positive correlation between feelings of warmth towards Lou and inclusion of self in others, $r(205) = .43$, $p < .001$. The stated importance of immigration policy was weakly linked to the respondents' self-reported intellectual modesty towards the topic of immigration policy, $r(204) = -.14$, $p < .05$. Other weak to moderate correlations can be checked in the table.

Main Analyses

The goal of the study was to gain insights on how Shared Social Identity and Intellectual Humility affect willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members. It was suspected to find a positive effect of Shared Social Identity on willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members which is reinforced by Intellectual Humility. Table 2 shows means and standard deviations for the dependent variable willingness to engage in dialogue for the two independent variables.

Table 2

Means and standard deviations for Willingness to Engage in Dialogue with Lou

		Shared Social Identity					
		Present		Absent		Total	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Intellectual Humility	Present	3.43	0.37	3.42	0.33	3.42	0.35
	Absent	3.42	0.51	3.48	0.44	3.45	0.48
	Total	3.43	0.45	3.44	0.45	3.44	0.42

Manipulation Checks

An independent t-test did not detect significant effects for feelings of warmth between participants being presented with a Shared Social Identity condition and those were not engaged in such a condition, t(206) = -0.71, p > .05. Similarly, there was no significant difference for inclusion of self in others, t(205) = -1.22, p > .05, between conditions with and without Shared Social Identity manipulation. The data also failed to show a significant difference between conditions including and excluding the manipulation for Intellectual Humility, t(205) = -0.24, p > .05. The analyses therefore did not confirm that the manipulation caused the intended differences between the conditions. These findings call for a particularly critical and conservative interpretation of the data. They may, for example, indicate an ineffective manipulation of the independent variables or a lack of suitability as a measurement parameter for the manipulations.

Analysis of Variance

A two-way ANOVA, including Shared Social Identity (present/ absent) and Intellectual Humility (present/ absent) as independent variables and willingness to engage in dialogue as the dependent variable of interest, was considered. No significant main effects for Shared Social Identity, $F(1, 204) = 0.09$, $p = .77$, and Intellectual Humility, $F(1, 204) = .18$, $p = .67$, were observed. Moreover, an insignificant interaction was found, $F(1, 204) = .32$, $p = .57$. The findings indicate that there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. No subsequent tests were conducted due to the lack of significant results.

Exploratory Analyses

For exploratory purposes, a factorial MANOVA was conducted to detect possible differences across the experimental conditions among the variables willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members, trait willingness to engage in dialogue (factor 3: readiness to communicate with people holding opposing views), feelings of warmth, inclusion of self in others, self-reported intellectual humility regarding immigration, perceived importance of the

topic discussed, and experienced vividness of imagined intergroup contact in the model. This inspection was included as it allows to test multiple dependent variables at a time and gives a grasp of how the independent variables influence the relationships between dependent variables. However, no significant main effects for Shared Social Identity, $V = 0.05$, $F(7, 196) = 1.45$, $p = .19$, and Intellectual Humility, $V = 0.01$, $F(7, 196) = 0.37$, $p = .91$, were found here either. Additionally, an insignificant interaction was found, $V = 0.02$, $F(7, 196) = 0.44$, $p = .89$. Overall, this means that the data provides no evidence of significant effects with the conditions as predictors, even after other variables were considered, complementing the dependent variable to be tested (willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members). Since the Pillai's Trace is close to zero, the results also hint towards the fact that the independent variables Shared Social Identity and Intellectual Humility do not have a high explanatory share in the variation of the dependent variables.

To check how much of an explanatory share the captured variables have in the variation in the outcome variable, a linear model was applied with willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members as the dependent variable and the independent variables Shared Social Identity and Intellectual Humility as well as feelings of warmth, inclusion of self in others, self-reported intellectual humility regarding immigration, perceived importance of the topic discussed, and experienced vividness of imagined intergroup contact as predictor variables was run and turned out to be significant, $R^2 = .21$, $F(7, 197) = 8.58$, $p < .001$. Including trait willingness to engage in dialogue slightly improved the model, $R^2 = .24$, $F(9, 196) = 9.28$, $p < .001$. With explaining about 24 per cent of the variance in willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members, the model does not fit the data well according to these results.

When checking further for abnormalities between the conditions , a two-way ANOVA suggested significant differences for stated importance of immigration policy depending on whether a Shared Social Identity manipulation was present ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.91$) or absent (M

= 3.88, *SD* = 1.04) in the experimental condition, $F(1, 203) = 8.00$, $p < .01$, while no main effect for Intellectual Humility, $F(1, 203) = 0.01$, $p > .05$, or interaction effect, $F(1, 203) = 0.47$, $p > .05$, was detected. Tukey HSD confirmed significant differences for groups with and without the Shared Social Identity manipulation, (Mdiff = -0.38, 95% CI [-0.65, -0.12], $p = 0.005$). This difference was not expected to be found and leads to the question where it is originating from. If this result comes from unexpected interactions between the variables, an unsuccessful randomisation, points to incorrect measurements or data analysis or is a random variation within the sample is unclear.

Discussion and Conclusion

Being able to engage in meaningful dialogue with outgroup members on issues that divide societies and trying to understand each other is crucial to decrease political and other identity-based segregations (Miles and Shanew, 2022). This work aimed to test how stressing shared social identity and intellectual humility influences peoples' willingness to engage in dialogue with perceived outgroup members.

Contrary to expectations, data neither confirmed that an experimental manipulation of shared social identity had a robust effect on willingness to engage with outgroup members nor that including a manipulation of intellectual humility had an influence on shared social identity on willingness to engage in dialogue. It remains unclear if there is, indeed, no real effect or if the data does not provide enough evidence and missing impact is attributable to unsuccessful manipulations in the experiment, restrictions of the model, or unidentified complexities in the relationship between the shared social identity, intellectual humility and willingness to engage in dialogue. Supplementary exploratory analysis overall confirmed the impression that the chosen models do not fit the data well. The need for cautious interpretation of findings and more research on the relations between the variables is additionally supported by the fact that stated importance of immigration policy was higher for

the conditions including shared music preferences than those not including a shared social identity and it not transparent why this is the case. Further tests should be carried out to determine whether this is a systematic difference. This might be another clue for the analysis approach not suiting the data and for unconsidered influences among the variables.

As Porter and colleagues (2022) explained how demonstrating intellectual humility in high-stake contexts is less likely than in low-stake contexts, some sort of variation depending on how important the topic of immigration was called, was expected. The data suggests a weak negative connection between self-reported intellectual humility regarding immigration policy and participants' stated importance of the topic, delivering light support for the assumption of Porter and colleagues.

Overall, the discussion on the willingness to engage in dialogue should attract attention in the scientific environment and underline the need for dialogue in order to approach social challenges and find a joint course of action. With this work, the author wants to encourage other researchers to further investigate the potential value of shared social identity and intellectual humility as well as other ways to increase willingness to engage in dialogue with people representing opposing views.

To this end, a promising gain in knowledge could be expected if the study were not only repeated with more participants, but also if the context of the dispute and the shared social identity were to vary. This would make it possible to determine whether the variables behave differently if common musical taste and immigration policy are not taken into account. This is especially interesting as Herold and colleagues (2023) detected asymmetries in terms of people polarising differently according to their interests on issues such as immigration and climate change. As manipulation checks revealed that the data does not confirm expected differentiation for shared social identity and intellectual humility, intensifying the employed conditions even with their given context might reveal new insights. For instance, one could test an even more extreme statement on immigration, expand the task

of reflection on intellectual humility or give relevant examples of the consequences of cultivating intellectual humility.

Additionally, it is of interest what role can be attributed to the context of positive imagined intergroup contact. It could be advantageous to include a condition with negative or non-positive imagined intergroup contact in prospective replication studies to gain more definable information about the impact of the imagined intergroup context. For a more accurate overall understanding, it should be examined how (positive) imagined intergroup contact interacts with shared social identity, intellectual humility and willingness to engage in dialogue in general.

With respect to the REIDT, from which the items for measuring willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members were derived from, it is worth to mention that reliability by means of Cronbach's α was originally higher than .79 for all subscales (Rydz et al, 2019). In this study, Cronbach's α ranged from .64 and .70 after the exclusion of one item (*Lack of dialogue between Lou and me on immigration could cause conflict*). Hence, the degree of reproducibility of the results when repeating the test under the same conditions is lower in this study than with the REIDT. This can be seen as clue for item revision. Items from the REIDT aim to extract information about participants' readiness to engage in interreligious dialogue in general whereas this study followed the goal of gaining knowledge about willingness to engage in dialogue with Lou as a state variable. This means that the specific situation was at focus. While it was decided to keep item formulations as close to the original ones from the REIDT, it should be tested if there are sentence structures and wording options that fit the state-focused approach better. Since an imagined intergroup contact was used as the context in the experiment, the items should possibly be re-evaluated with regard to their suitability for recalling the imagined situation. Whether the gender-neutral wording about contact with Lou has an effect on comprehension is another aspect that could be examined. As the REIDT was specifically designed for the context of interreligious dialogue, extending it, or trying other

measures additionally holds potential benefits. Wang et al. (2020) as well as Husnu and Crisp (2010), for example, made use of Ratcliffs et al's (1999) measure of behavioural intentions to investigate effects of (imagined) intergroup contact. Overall, accurately measuring the willingness to engage in dialogue with members of outgroups is seen as a challenge. By modifying and applying the REIDT for non-religious contexts, the work provides a possible starting point for further development of measurement options.

Intellectual humility is a rather new concept being explored in research, making knowledge extensions like this one overall reasonable. Since research on intellectual humility has been conducted in WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) societies in particular (Porter et al, 2022), a limitation of research regarding the concept in general and also with regard to this study can be identified here. This limitation simultaneously offers a clue for a further extension of the study - namely a replication with a more diverse and more purposefully selected sample.

The fact that the effects of intellectual humility also depend on context is shown by Ludwig et al. (2022) in their work on the prediction of the quality of apologies by intellectual and general humility. They found that intellectual humility uniquely predicted more comprehensive apology and less inaction after someone committed an intellectually based offence, illustrating the context-specific associations it has with apology behaviour. On the contrary, general humility was a stable predictor of more high-quality apologies and less inaction across all offence settings. Considering if a dispute is carried out on an intellectual basis, future studies could provide more nuanced results on when intellectual humility can help in conflict resolution.

An aspect that also calls for attention is that it needs a metacognition for what is a suitable frame for intellectual humility. As literature suggests, intellectual humility is associated with attributes like open-minded thinking and forgiveness of others and called as a suitable predictor for conflict resolution (Porter et al, 2022; Permanasari & Permatasari,2023).

An asymmetry here however holds the risk of moving to a consensus that might be critical when not all people move towards a more humble perception of their world view.

Linked to this, another risk can be derived from Read's research on finding common ground (2022) which considers that masking important differences between counterparts can be unfavourable. She therefore stresses the importance to find common ground that promotes connections between outgroups while simultaneously preserving important subgroup identities, which is in line with the common ingroup identity model. Considerations on this aspect were not integrated into the set-up of the study.

Regarding the common ingroup identity model, it should also be noted that the re-categorisation to a superordinate group was considerably stretched between having a certain stance towards immigration policies and shared musical preferences. More precisely, this means that musical preferences as a shared social identity and a dispute about immigration may be too far apart in terms of content for the mechanisms of the common ingroup identity model to work. While Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006) also use musical preferences in their research, using common ingroup identities like fan club identity (sub identity) and sport identity (primary identity) in the example of Levine and colleagues (2005) is more typical for the understanding of the model. Therefore, it might be questioned whether shared musical preference suits the model's assumption for a superordinate group identity. It may also have had an impact on the fact that there were no significant effects associated with the shared social identity condition. Indeed, Bakagiannis and Tarrant's (2006) research itself includes discriminating elements of shared music preferences as a basis for a shared social identity. Although they showed how participants use music as a source of discrimination between groups, it was not only for the condition in which comparable music preferences were emphasised that more positive intergroup attitudes were found compared to a control group. When participants were informed that their music preferences and those of the outgroup were "very different" (p.131), attitudes between the groups were also reported to be more positive.

Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006) suspect that the emphasis on differences in music preference led to the groups being perceived as very distinct, which may have prevented the outgroup from being considered sufficiently threatening to their social identity. Such results demonstrate that the concept of shared social identity and its implications appear to be complex. The author considers further research on different shared social identities and in particular on how they differ in their effects on interpersonal relations as valuable, for instance to decide which of them is more suitable for studies and the design of interventions.

The intention to enter into dialogue with people of different opinions was primarily considered from a social perspective in this project. Within a society, people are interdependent with others whose opinions they do not align with. The main assumption here was that cooperation with opposing groups is necessary, for instance, to be capable of taking action, driving social change, and finding joint solutions to issues such as immigration policy, climate change, pandemics and gender equality. Dialogue might help to cultivate common ground, increase agency, and move people from extreme positions. While this work comes from a societal perspective, further research should build a bridge to the individual level of this topic and bring more attention to peoples' personal intentions to engage in dialogue with outgroup members.

Acknowledging that one's own worldview cannot be flawless and is subject to subjectivity as well as bearing in mind that people have more in common than what separates them from each other was expected to be a favourable step towards willingness to engage in dialogue. Although the data failed to support this assumption, the study hopefully stimulates the development of practical interventions for intergroup communication and improving intergroup relations. It will ideally also provide a breeding ground for critical reflection on readers' own ability and willingness to engage in dialogue in the face of disagreements.

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Appendix A

Study information for participants

Hello! My name is Alina Topp and I would like to invite you to participate in the online study "We Need To Talk". This study is part of my master's programme Psychology at the University of Twente (Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences, Department of Psychology of Conflict, Risk & Safety).

Thank you for considering to participate in my online experiment! The study aims to explore communication patterns with strangers and is estimated to take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any point.

There are no known risks associated with this research study. However, as with any online activity, the possibility of a breach exists. No sensitive data will be collected and no information about your person can be derived from the study and its publication.

After giving your consent via the checkbox in the declaration of consent, the online experiment will commence with a few general questions. Following this, you'll be asked to vividly imagine a situation and then complete a questionnaire.

Participating in the study may offer you new insights into meaningful communication skills. As a psychology student at the University of Twente, you may be eligible to receive 0.25 credits as compensation.

Should you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at a.topp@student.utwente.nl.

Thank you for your time!

Declaration of consent to the collection and processing of data

Participation in the study

• I have read and understood the study information for participants
• I have the opportunity to ask questions about the study
• I voluntarily agree to participate in this study
• I understand that I can refuse to answer questions and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give a reason
• I am aware that participation in the study includes that my answers will be stored and used for the analysis anonymously

Risks associated with participation in the study

• Participation in the study is not associated with any direct risk for the respondent. All data will be treated confidentially.

Use of the information in the study

• I am aware that the information I have provided will be used to answer the research question in the researcher's Master's thesis and that this will be published on the university website.

Consent

• Under these conditions, I agree to participate in the experiment and consent to my answers being analysed.

Contact information for further information on the study

• In case of questions or remarks, please do not hesitate to contact Alina Topp, a.topp@student.utwente.nl

Contact information for questions about your rights as a research participant

• If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant, or if you would like to obtain information, ask questions or discuss concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher, please contact the secretariat of the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences of the University of Twente at ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl.

By clicking the checkbox, you consent to the collection and processing of data.

What is your age?

What is your gender?

- Female, male, non-binary

Control

Please take 2 minutes to imagine the following situation and consider the emotions, thoughts, and actions that might emerge from that situation as vividly and detailed as possible.

Imagine you meet a person called Lou in a café. You begin to talk and decide to settle down at a table together. You have a pleasant conversation, and you enjoy being in this moment.

As time progresses, you take note of the newspaper lying on your table. Today's headline reads: Immigrants should be unconditionally allowed to bring their core family here.

...Pause to acknowledge your stance on the statement …

You share your thoughts on the topic with Lou. However, Lou makes it very clear that there is no agreement between you and gives arguments that are in stark contrast to your worldview and your values. Your opinions are in complete contradiction. You are opponents of opinion on this topic.

After a while you two decide to switch the topic and continue talking about something else.

Shared Social Identity

Please take 2 minutes to imagine the following situation and consider the emotions, thoughts, and actions that might emerge from that situation as vividly as possible.

Imagine you meet a person called Lou in a café. You begin to talk and decide to settle down at a table together. You have a pleasant conversation, and you enjoy being in this moment.

You find out that you have the same great taste in music and that both of you celebrate the same artists. You keep talking about your common favourite tracks. Lou then shows you a new song. As you listen, you find an immediate resonance with the song and this newfound piece becomes an instant favorite, adding another layer to your shared musical connection.

As time progresses, you take note of the newspaper lying on your table. Today's headline reads: Immigrants should be unconditionally allowed to bring their core family here.

...Pause to acknowledge your stance on the statement …

You share your thoughts on the topic with Lou. However, Lou makes it very clear that there is no agreement between you and gives arguments that are in stark contrast to your worldview and your values. Your opinions are in complete contradiction. You are opponents of opinion on this topic.

After a while you two decide to switch the topic and continue talking about something else.

Intellectual Humility

1)

Here is a short exercise for you

First, ask yourself: Do you think you are right about everything?

If your answer is “no,” now ask yourself this second, more crucial question: If you aren’t right about everything, then what, exactly, are you wrong about?

Take a moment to think about these two questions before you proceed.

2)

Please read the text below

Intellectual humility refers to recognizing intellectual limitations by understanding that one’s own beliefs can be incomplete or even incorrect. It allows people to acknowledge their potential fallibility when forming and revising attitudes, which makes it important for avoiding cognitive biases such as confirming prior beliefs and ignoring contradicting evidence. Research suggests a link to open-minded thinking, forgiveness of others, perspective-taking and seeking compromise, making intellectual humility a promising tool for dealing with disagreements and conflicts.

Readiness to seek mutual understanding

- When talking to Lou about immigration, I respect that our opinions differ
- I can learn a lot from Lou’s different world-view
- When talking to Lou about immigration, I am open to understand their opposing view
- Talking to Lou about immigration helps me understand and get to know their goals and values
- Talking to Lou about immigration makes me understand Lou better
- In conversation with Lou, I try to hear the whole message that Lou wants to convert, even if their views on immigration are contrary to mine
- Lack of dialogue between Lou and me on immigration could cause conflict
- Conversation about immigration between Lou and me is the best solution in case of disagreement

Personal barriers to the symmetry of dialogue

- When talking to Lou about immigration, my prejudices come to light
- When talking to Lou about immigration, it makes me angry that Lou does not agree with me
- When talking to Lou about immigration, I want to convince Lou about my view on the topic
- When talking to Lou, I feel offended by their contrary point of view
- When talking to Lou about immigration, I find it difficult to understand what Lou wants to say to me
- When talking to Lou, accepting their different view on immigration does not come easily to me

Readiness to communicate with people holding opposing views

- I find it easy to come into contact with people with opposing opinions
- I like to start a conversation with people whose opinion is contrary to mine
- I have no problem in starting a conversation with a person representing a contrary point of view
- I like to talk with people with contrary opinions to mine
- I need to talk with people with opposing opinions
- I eagerly meet people with whose opinion I do not agree
- I have been involved in resolving problems experienced by people with opposing views and people that share my view

Please rate the vividness of your imagined contact situation and the importance of the discussed topic using the scale provided.

Was your intergroup contact imagination vivid?

Was the topic discussed important for you?

- (1 = “not at all”,2= “not really”,3= “undecided”, 4 = “somewhat”, 5= “very much”)

Please indicate to what extend you agree with the following statements.

My views on immigration that I held in conversation with Lou may someday turn out to be wrong

When it comes to my views on immigration that I held in conversation with Lou I may be overlooking evidence

My views on immigration that I held in conversation with Lou may change with additional evidence or information.

- (1 = “strongly disagree”,2= “disagree”,3= “neither agree nor disagree”, 4 = “agree”, 5= “strongly agree”)

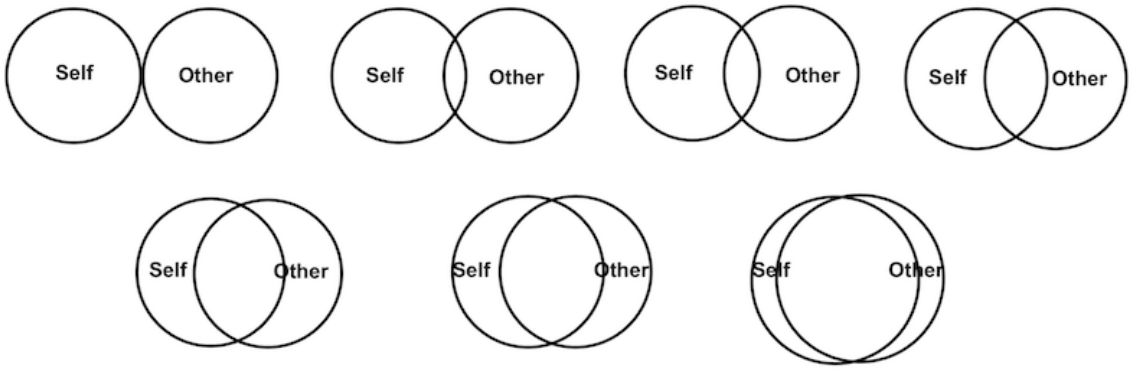
Next, your feelings towards Lou are of interest. Please indicate to what extent your feelings towards Lou are cold/rejecting or warm/receptive.

How do you feel towards Lou?

- 1= very cold 2= cold 3= neutral 4= warm 5= very warm

Here you see seven pairs of circles that range from just touching to almost completely overlapping. The “self” circle represents you and the “other” circle represents Lou.

Which picture best describes your relationship with Lou?



Study Participation Acknowledgment

Politics, climate change, vaccinations, abortion - name something, and people will likely be arguing about it. In times of polarization and division, it is essential to cultivate the ability to engage in meaningful conversations with people we disagree with. We need dialogue in order to navigate through the world's problems today and create a stable, desirable future. This online experiment was designed to delve into the factors influencing the willingness to engage in dialogues with perceived opponents. Your participation involved being randomly assigned to one of four distinct experimental conditions. The goal of this study is to investigate the impact of a shared social identity and intellectual humility (the ability to be aware of one's own fallibility) on willingness to engage in dialogue with outgroup members. The test conditions contained different levels for the two factors (present or absent).

If you still consent to the processing of your answers, please confirm once again by ticking the box.

Appendix B

Declaration on the use of artificial intelligence

While preparing this paper, I used DeepL to check and improve the quality of my text and ChatGPT to identify additional relevant concepts to include in my literature search as well as to address error messages in R. After using these tools, I thoroughly reviewed and edited the content as needed, taking full responsibility for the final outcome.