

Intergroup contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation in Cyprus: Exploring the mediating and moderating mechanisms

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Abstract

One of the major challenges in divided societies is finding ways to overcome geographical partition by increasing readiness for cohabitation in mixed areas. Cyprus has faced a protracted situation of division (between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots) for the last 44 years. In this paper, we explore the role of intergroup contact (both quantity and quality of contact) in enhancing the willingness of members of these two communities to reestablish cohabitation, using representative survey samples from both communities. We hypothesize that such an effect is mediated by a decrease in the levels of prejudice between the two communities and an increase in the levels of trust. In addition, we hypothesize that the direct effect of intergroup contact and the indirect effect of intergroup contact through trust and prejudice are both moderated by age. To explore these hypotheses, we collected data from a representative sample of 502 Greek Cypriots and 504 Turkish Cypriots. The hypotheses are tested among the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot samples separately. In both samples, the results show that the positive effect of intergroup contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation is mediated by both trust and prejudice. There is also some support for the moderating effect of age for both the direct and indirect effects of intergroup contact.

Keywords

Cyprus issue, Greek Cypriots, intergroup contact, prejudice, trust, Turkish Cypriots

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Introduction

Sustained intergroup conflict can cause adverse long-term consequences, negatively affecting all aspects of a society and potentially wounding surviving individuals and groups for a lifetime. It is thus especially important to uncover ways to

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reduce intergroup conflict and foster reconciliation. Intergroup contact, a subject of consistent interest to social scientists, is especially important for reducing prejudice and increasing trust and tolerance in deeply divided postconflict societies, to create social cohesion (Cox, Sisk, & Hester, 2017). As stated in some recent literature, however, only a few studies of these variables have considered contexts that have experienced violent conflicts such as civil war (De Tezanos-Pinto, Mazziotta, & Feuchte, 2017; McKeown & Psaltis, 2017; Tropp et al., 2017). Despite some prior research in Cyprus on the effect of intergroup contact on reduced prejudice and increased trust (Husnu & Crisp, 2015; Psaltis, 2012), and on decreased intergroup anxiety and threats (Stathi, Husnu, & Pendleton, 2017), very little is known about the effect of contact on direct measures for peaceful coexistence, such as intergroup reconciliation (Tropp et al., 2017)¹ or future contact intentions (McKeown & Psaltis, 2017).² Considering the unresolved and protracted state of the problem in Cyprus, it is important to explore factors that might contribute to better understanding the readiness of both Cypriot communities for cohabitation. Given the significance of intergroup contact in postconflict societies (Hewstone et al., 2014), it is also critical to clarify how intergroup contact enhances willingness for renewed cohabitation, by specifically focusing on the roles of trust and prejudice. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), in their meta-analysis of intergroup contact theory, concluded that the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice is significant across different intergroup contexts. They, moreover, argued that this effect remains significant “across samples involving different target groups, age groups, geographical areas, and contact settings” (p. 766). These results, according to the authors, “support the recent extension of intergroup contact theory to a variety of intergroup contexts, beyond its original focus on racial and ethnic groups” (p. 766).

With this in mind, this study further extends intergroup contact theory by empirically testing the role of age in intergroup contact effects between Greek Cypriots (GC) and Turkish Cypriots (TC).

Only a few studies have explored the role of age in intergroup contact in Cyprus. Two studies concluded that older Greek Cypriots mostly report extensive positive contact, but older Turkish Cypriots mostly report rare and fairly negative contact in mixed villages (Lytras & Psaltis, 2011; Psaltis, 2016). In a recent study, Psaltis, Loizides, LaPierre, and Stefanovic (2019) found that age correlated positively with acceptance of renewed cohabitation in the Greek Cypriot community; conversely, in the Turkish Cypriot community, a negative correlation was reported.

Our study extends prior research in three important ways. First, this study is the first to test the direct and indirect effects of intergroup contact through prejudice reduction and trust-building on a more direct measure of peaceful coexistence (i.e., willingness for renewed cohabitation), using representative samples from both communities. Second, rather than using trust and prejudice as outcome measures as in most prior research (Tropp, 2008; see also the two meta-analyses by Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011), this study tests the mediating effects of trust and prejudice on willingness for renewed cohabitation. Our novel dependent measure is directly relevant to negotiations for the resolution of the Cyprus issue, since freedom of movement and residence throughout Cyprus for members of both communities would mean immediate, albeit limited, renewed cohabitation given the bizonal nature of the federation under discussion. Finally, our most important contribution is exploring whether age moderates the direct and indirect effects of social contact through trust and prejudice. We test these three questions separately for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.

The Cyprus Context

The main geographical characteristic of Cyprus today is that of division of the country in two, with a UN-patrolled buffer zone. The north (37% of the island) is occupied by 30,000–40,000 Turkish military forces. These forces invaded Cyprus in 1974 after a short-lived coup engineered by the military junta in Greece aimed at

the union (*enosis*) of Cyprus with Greece. In the official historiography of the Turkish Cypriot community, this is portrayed as a “happy peace operation” since it liberated Turkish Cypriots from Greek Cypriot oppression and the impending *enosis* with Greece. The 1974 actions are in turn seen by Greek Cypriots as a tragic violation of international law, as they led to ethnic cleansing, the unwilling displacement of 160,000 Greek Cypriots, and occupation by Turkey of 37% of the country. In 1977, the leadership of the two Cypriot communities jointly agreed to negotiate a bizonal, bicomunal federal arrangement (BBF) in Cyprus. Later agreements further clarified the nature of this arrangement to be one of two separate geographical zones, administered separately by the two communities, with provisions for the return of an important number of internally displaced people to their former residencies and the return of territory to the GC community to be decided in future negotiations.

The TC leadership, under nationalist Rauf Denkash, unilaterally declared the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as an independent state in 1983, but since then it has only been internationally recognized by Turkey. The rest of Cyprus is controlled by the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus and governed by GCs. In 2003, a UN-sponsored peace plan known as the Annan plan, which would have reunified Cyprus as a BBF, was rejected by the majority of GCs and accepted by the majority of TCs. The Republic of Cyprus joined the EU in 2004 but the *acquis communautaire*³ is suspended in the north, pending a solution to the Cyprus problem. Negotiations have continued since 2004, in an attempt to reach a new BBF-based comprehensive settlement.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses the “contact hypothesis” proposed by Allport (1954). This hypothesis states that bringing members of conflicting groups together for face-to-face contact would reduce prejudice, which is then expected to create positive community relations between the groups. Subsequent work and meta-analyses of 515 studies (Pettigrew

& Tropp, 2006) offered consistent support for this hypothesis, and suggested that intergroup contact could lead to prejudice reduction as well as other outcomes, such as lower levels of intergroup anxiety and higher levels of trust (Barlow et al., 2012; Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009), along with reconciliation, peace, and reduction in intergroup conflict (Hewstone et al., 2014). It is important, however, not to focus only on the quantity of contact, but also on the quality of it, which some research has found to be more important than quantity of contact (Binder et al., 2009; McKeown & Psaltis, 2017). Using the foundation of the contact hypothesis, this paper predicts that intergroup contact (both quality and quantity) will impact the willingness for renewed cohabitation. Moreover, trust and prejudice are expected to mediate the effect of intergroup contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation.

Despite the fact that prior research has explored *how* intergroup contact is important (i.e., its mediators) by reducing realistic and symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) while increasing perspective taking and empathy (Brown & Hewstone, 2005), we know less about *when* intergroup contact works (i.e., its moderators). The contact hypothesis was originally used to understand the relationships between different racial and ethnic groups in different contexts (Bratt, 2002; Tropp & Barlow, 2018; Tropp et al., 2017; Voci, Hadziosmanovic, Hewstone, Cakal, & Veneziani, 2017). There is some evidence from a meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) that age could be considered as a moderator in contact–prejudice relationships.

In the context of Cyprus, there is research suggesting that older generations think differently about the Cyprus issue compared to younger generations (Latif & Sitas, 2012; Psaltis et al., 2019), and that they exhibit significantly different levels of prejudice and readiness for renewed cohabitation, with age effects going in opposite directions in the two communities. For example, Psaltis et al. (2019) found that age correlated positively with acceptance of renewed cohabitation in the Greek Cypriot community; conversely, in

the Turkish Cypriot community, a negative correlation was reported. In light of the work of Hodson, Costello, and MacInnis (2013), more prejudiced individuals might avoid contact more, but actually benefit more from contact once this takes place, compared to less prejudiced individuals. Building on evidence from prior research, particularly that in Pettigrew and Tropp's study (2006), our study further extends contact theory and is the first study to empirically test whether age moderates the direct and indirect effects of intergroup contact (both quantity and quality) on willingness for renewed cohabitation.

Intergroup Contact in Postconflict Societies

Prior research has found that intergroup contact has positive effects on intergroup attitudes (Brown, Eller, Leeds, & Stace, 2007; Eller & Abrams, 2004), social trust (Tam et al., 2009), and future contact intentions (McKeown & Psaltis, 2017), while reducing intergroup anxiety (Barlow et al., 2012) and prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In addition to the quantity of contact, which most of these studies focused on, some prior research argues that contact quality has a more significantly positive effect on outgroup relations (Brown, Maras, Masser, Vivian, & Hewstone, 2001; Johnston & Glasford, 2017).

Social psychological work in Cyprus has so far explored the views of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots regarding the other community, as well as issues relating to contact after the opening of checkpoints in 2003. Stathi et al. (2017), in a sample of 86 Turkish Cypriots (Study 2), showed that positive contact with Greek Cypriots and ingroup contact norms were related to decreased intergroup anxiety, threats, and dehumanization, and with increased common ingroup identification, which in turn were associated with increased forgiveness and support for reparation policies towards Greek Cypriots. In a comparative study between Northern Ireland and Cyprus, McKeown and Psaltis (2017) found evidence in a sample of 271 Greek Cypriots and 137 Turkish Cypriots that quality of contact was related to increased

future contact intentions and positive outgroup evaluations through the mediation of intergroup trust. More recently, Husnu, Mertan, and Cicek (2018) found in a sample of 86 children from 6 to 12 years old (Study 1) that positive contact and positive family storytelling were associated with more positive outgroup attitudes and intended outgroup behavior. They also found in their Study 2, which featured a sample of 75 children from 6 to 11 years old, that a 3-week intervention involving reading stories of solidarity between Turkish and Greek Cypriot children led to improved outgroup attitudes, intended behavior, and outgroup trust. Consistent with the contact hypothesis and findings from prior research, we present our first hypothesis:

H1: More quality and quantity of contact will be positively related to willingness for renewed cohabitation.

How Prejudice and Trust Act as Mediators

Exploring possible mediators between intergroup contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation helps us understand *how* intergroup contact shapes this outcome. Guided by the contact hypothesis, we highlight the roles of prejudice and trust as possible mediators. Consistent with the contact hypothesis, prior research has emphasized the importance of intergroup contact for outgroup trust (Hewstone et al., 2008; Tam et al., 2009). On the other hand, outgroup trust has been associated with several outcomes, such as behavioral tendencies toward outgroup members (Tam et al., 2009), harmonious intergroup relations, and conflict reconciliation (Hewstone et al., 2008; Lewicki & Tomlinson, 2003; Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000).

Some studies have empirically tested the mediating effect of trust (McKeown & Psaltis, 2017; Tam et al., 2009; Turner, West, & Christie, 2013). In a study set in Northern Ireland, another divided postconflict society, Tam et al. (2009, Study 1) reported that outgroup trust acted as a mediator of frequent and high-quality contact effects on

the willingness for future intergroup interactions and the avoidance of hostile action tendencies. Recent comparative research in Northern Ireland and Cyprus further disentangled the effects of quantity from quality of contact. There is evidence that both variables, but more so contact quality, have a positive effect on future contact intentions through the mediation of intergroup trust (McKeown & Psaltis, 2017). Overall, these findings lead to our second hypothesis:

H2a: Trust will mediate the relationship between quantity (and quality) of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation.

Our second mediator in this study is prejudice. Consistent with the contact hypothesis, prior research has concluded that intergroup contact is associated with lower levels of prejudice towards the outgroup (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Some other research also confirmed the effect of quality of contact (e.g., positive intergroup contact) on outgroup prejudice (Christ et al., 2014). Prejudice has also been shown to increase intergroup conflict, decrease positive intergroup emotions and beliefs, and increase negative reactions to members of other groups (Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012). These findings and arguments from prior research lead to the following hypothesis:

H2b: Prejudice will mediate the relationship between quantity (and quality) of contact and willingness to integrate with the other community.

How Age Moderates the Direct and Indirect Effects of Contact

Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis is one of the first studies to extend intergroup contact theory beyond its original focus on racial and ethnic groups to other intergroup contexts, one of which is exploring the effect of intergroup contact across different age groups. This meta-analysis argues that age could be a moderator of contact effects on prejudice reduction. The authors reviewed prior

research and reported differences in quantity of contact effects on prejudice between four age groups: children (under 12), adolescents (13–17), college students (18–21), and adults (22+). Contact effects obtained with children (mean $r = .24$) and college students (mean $r = .23$) did not significantly differ from those obtained with adolescents (mean $r = .21$). However, the effects for children were marginally stronger, and the effects for college students were significantly stronger, than were those obtained for adults (mean $r = .20$). They attribute the better results for college students as being in line with Sears's (1986) claim that college students are generally more open to change than are older adults. However, such findings mostly come from research on minority–majority relations in the US, and the youth sample almost exclusively comes from college students, representing only a minor fraction of the general population. There is thus a need to further explore the issue of age effects in postconflict settings,⁴ using representative samples that cover youth beyond college students and comparing them to older participants from the same context.

There is some evidence from prior research in Cyprus that younger and older populations also differ in their views on reconciliation. Latif and Sitas (2012) found that the older generation was more open to reconciliation, but they did not further investigate age differences within each community. Nevertheless, their decision not to disaggregate their findings in the two communities probably masked some significant differences between them. There is evidence from other research (Psaltis, 2016) that the proreconciliation attitudes in the older generations of each community vary considerably, with older Turkish Cypriots mainly reporting bicomunal relations of rather poor quality, and older Greek Cypriots mainly reporting positive relations with Turkish Cypriots, both in the past and present. Accordingly, we expect to find prejudice and trust levels to relate with age in opposite directions in the two communities in Cyprus. In a recent study, using a large representative sample from both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, Psaltis et al. (2019) explored the correlates of

acceptance of renewed cohabitation. This study found that older individuals were more accepting of renewed cohabitation in the Greek Cypriot community; conversely, in the Turkish Cypriot community, older individuals reported less acceptance of renewed cohabitation. These results suggest that not only there are age differences but also differences between the two communities. Given past research, initial prejudice levels could also moderate the prejudice reduction effects of contact, such that more prejudiced participants will benefit more once they have contact (Hodson et al., 2013; Kteily, Hodson, Dhont, & Ho, 2017). Given our novel outcome measure in this study, it is also important to explore whether age could moderate the direct effects of contact on readiness for renewed cohabitation over and above any mediated effects through prejudice reduction and trust-building. In a sample of those who are at least 18 years old, one could thus expect an interaction between age and quantity (and quality) of contact. Given this evidence, age might moderate the indirect effects of quantity of contact through trust and prejudice, so that those with the more negative and separatist attitudes within each community (older Turkish Cypriots and younger Greek Cypriots) stand to gain more from contact. To our knowledge, there is no research on quality of contact or indirect effects of contact moderated by age in representative populations over age 18 from any postconflict and deeply divided society. Our current study also aims to cover this gap. This leads us to our last hypothesis:

H3: The direct and indirect effects of quantity and quality of contact are expected to vary across age, so that older Turkish Cypriots and younger Greek Cypriots will benefit more from contact compared to younger Turkish Cypriots and older Greek Cypriots.

Data and Methods

This study uses original data from GCs and TCs who are at least 18 years old and who have voting rights. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 92 for GCs and from 18 to 89 for TCs. The

authors of this study prepared the survey questionnaires for each community in both Greek and Turkish. The University Centre for Field Studies (UCFS) of the University of Cyprus completed the telephone survey of 502 GCs during April 2017. Prologue Consulting Ltd, a research center in North Cyprus, conducted a telephone survey of 600 TCs during September 2017.⁵ Data were collected using a probability sample telephone survey of participants 18 and over with voting rights and self-declared to belong to the Greek Cypriot community (in the south part of Cyprus) or to the Turkish Cypriot community (in the north part of Cyprus). The sample was obtained through random digit calling of both mobile phones and land lines, and did not differ significantly from the latest census data on demographic characteristics such as district, urbanization, age, and gender.⁶ Poststratification weights were not applied for the analysis. However, the fact that these two data sets were collected 4 months apart might make it harder for comparison due to the collapse of the Cyprus reunification talks in July 2017.⁷ The full list of variables for the present study, along with the descriptive statistics of GC and TC samples, can be found in Table 1.

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable is the willingness for renewed cohabitation. All respondents were asked to rate their agreement with two statements adapted from the original Bogardus Social Distance Scale (Bogardus, 1925, 1933) and previous work in Cyprus (Psaltis, 2012): “I feel that I can live together with GCs [TCs] and “I would not mind having GCs [TCs] as neighbors” (1 = *absolutely disagree*, 5 = *absolutely agree*). The scale was created by averaging the scores on these two items. A higher number on this scale indicates more willingness for renewed cohabitation. To determine the reliability of this two-item scale, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficient and the Spearman–Brown coefficient (Eisinga, TeGrotenhuis, & Pelzer, 2013). The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.73 for GCs and 0.85 for TCs. The Spearman–Brown coefficient was almost the same as the Pearson correlation coefficient (0.74 for GCs and 0.84 for TCs).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for all Variables.

Variable name	Range	Greek Cypriot Sample (N=502)	Turkish Cypriot Sample (N=504)
		Mean ⁱ	Mean
Dependent Variable			
Willingness for renewed cohabitation	1-5	3.64*** (1.25)	2.73*** (1.30)
Independent Variables			
Quantity of contact	1-5	1.26* (0.55)	1.34* (0.63)
Quality of contact ⁱⁱ	1-5	3.55 (1.09)	3.46 (0.83)
Mediating Variables			
Social trust	1-3	1.97*** (0.83)	1.77*** (0.80)
Prejudice	1-11	5.10*** (2.40)	6.91*** (2.69)
Moderating Variable			
Age	18-92(GC) 18-89(TC)	59.12*** (16.36)	49.68*** (16.95)
Control Variables			
Less than high school	0-1	0.20***	0.34***
High school graduate or some college degree	0-1	0.40	0.36
University degree or higher (reference)	0-1	0.40**	0.30**
Residence (Urban=1)	0-1	0.76***	0.65***
Gender (Male=1)	0-1	0.44	0.49
Having a friend from the other community as a child or adolescent	0-1	0.51*	0.58*
Religiosity	1-3	2.63*** (0.65)	1.56*** (0.71)

ⁱStandard deviations are in parentheses.

ⁱⁱThe mean and standard deviation for quality of social contact is based on the smaller sample which has some contact with the other community.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Independent Variables

This study uses two main independent variables: quantity of contact and quality of contact. To measure quantity of contact, respondents were asked the following questions adapted from Islam and Hewstone (1993) for the Cyprus context:

Thinking of social contacts (communicating, talking, not just seeing the other person)—whether at home, at work, or somewhere else, how much contact do you have these days

with GCs [TCs] under the following conditions? (1) at work, (2) in bicomunal meetings, (3) in the area where you live, (4) occasional meetings in the south, and (5) occasional meetings in the north.

The answer categories ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very often*). The scale was created by averaging the scores on these five items. Cronbach's alphas for this scale are 0.78 for GCs and 0.88 for TCs. A higher number on this scale indicates a higher quantity of contact.

Three hundred and thirty respondents from the total sample size of 1,006 (141 GCs and 189 TCs) reported some contact with the other community. These 330 individuals were then asked the following questions to measure the quality of contact, adapted from Islam and Hewstone (1993) and Voci and Hewstone (2003) for the Cyprus context: “When you meet with Greek [Turkish] Cypriots anywhere in Cyprus, how often do you find the contact in general to be (1) pleasant, (2) in a cooperative spirit, (3) positive, and (4) based on mutual respect?” (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). The scale was created by averaging the scores on these five items. Cronbach’s alphas for this scale are 0.92 for GCs and 0.88 for TCs. A higher number on this scale indicates a better quality of contact.

Mediating Variables

This study uses two mediating variables: social trust and prejudice. Trust was measured by asking the respondents the following question, adapted from Brehm and Rahn’s Trust Scale (1997): “Would you say that most GCs [TCs] can be trusted?” (1 = *definitely cannot be trusted*, 5 = *definitely can be trusted*). The single-item measure for trust has been used in some prior research (Delhey & Newton, 2005; Snijders & Keren, 2001), as well as in the original version of some large-scale surveys such as the General Social Survey (GSS), the European Social Survey (ESS), and the World Values Survey (WVS). Prejudice was measured by asking the respondents to rate how warm their feelings towards the outgroup were on a thermometer scale from 1 (*0 degrees*) to 11 (*100 degrees*), with lower scores indicating colder, more negative feelings and higher scores indicating warmer, more positive feelings. This single-item measure has been used in prior research (Vezzali, Hewstone, Capozza, Giovannini, & Wölfer, 2014; Žeželj, Ioannou, Franc, Psaltis, & Martinovic, 2017).

Other Variables

This study uses age as a moderating variable. Age is treated as a continuous variable. Consistent

with prior research, this study uses several other control variables that are either related to quantity and quality of contact and/or willingness for renewed cohabitation (Paolini et al., 2014; Tropp et al., 2017; Voci et al., 2017; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015). These control variables are education, residence (urban or rural), gender, having a friend from the other community as a child and/or adolescent, and religiosity.

Results

Descriptive Findings

Descriptive findings for both GCs and TCs are presented in Table 1. The GC sample reported more willingness for renewed cohabitation. The TC sample reported more contact with the other community. There was no significant difference in the quality of contact between the two communities. The GC sample reported higher trust, whereas the TC sample reported higher prejudice.

In addition, the correlations between the main variables were examined separately for GCs and TCs (see Table 2). Quantity of contact and quality of contact were both significantly and positively correlated with trust and willingness for renewed cohabitation, and negatively correlated with prejudice for both groups. For GCs, however, age was positively correlated with trust and willingness for renewed cohabitation but negatively correlated with prejudice. On the other hand, for TCs, age was negatively correlated with trust and willingness for renewed cohabitation but positively correlated with prejudice.

Multivariate Analyses

Structural equation modeling. We present the results from each group separately using 5,000 bootstrapped samples to test the mediating effects of trust and prejudice separately. The results for GCs and TCs are presented in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. Models 1–3 include quantity of contact, whereas Models 4–6 include quality of contact.^{8,9}

Table 2. Correlation Table Among Main Variables in Each Community.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Greek Cypriot Sample						
1. Willingness for Renewed Cohabitation	–					
2. Quantity of Contact	.21***	–				
3. Quality of Contacta	.45***	.36***	–			
4. Trust	.60***	.26***	.50***	–		
5. Prejudice	–.65***	–.24***	–.52***	–.71***	–	
6. Age	.18***	–.11**	–.13	.14**	–.15***	–
Turkish Cypriot Sample						
1. Willingness for Renewed Cohabitation	–					
2. Quantity of Contact	.45***	–				
3. Quality of Contacta	.38***	.44***	–			
4. Trust	.73***	.41***	.35***	–		
5. Prejudice	–.76***	–.45***	–.48***	–.75***	–	
6. Age	–.45***	–.33***	–.27***	–.45***	.46***	–

^aThe correlations involving “quality of contact” in both communities is based on the smaller sample which has some contact with the other community.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3. Structural Equation Modeling Results for the Mediating Effects of Trust and Prejudice Among Greek Cypriot Sample.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Independent Variables												
Quantity of Contact	.47***	(.10)	.16	(.09)	.15	(.08)						
Quality of Contact							.44***	(.07)	.23**	(.09)	.18*	(.07)
Mediating Variables												
Social trust			.85***	(.06)					.59***	(.09)		
Prejudice					–.32***	(.02)					–.22***	(.04)
Chi-square	12.01**		31.53***		56.28***		15.85***		26.55***		35.93***	
df	4		5		5		4		5		5	
CFI	0.98		0.98		0.97		0.96		0.98		0.97	
RMSEA	0.02		0.02		0.03		0.04		0.03		0.05	
R ²	0.16		0.37		0.44		0.23		0.40		0.36	
N	502		502		502		140		140		140	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests). The analyses in this table include the following control variables: age, education, residence (urban or rural), gender, having a friend from the other community as a child and/or adolescent, and religiosity.

Greek Cypriot sample. The results of the bootstrap test revealed that the indirect effects of quantity of contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation through both social trust ($b = 0.32$,

$SE = 0.05$, $t = 6.22$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.22, 0.42]) and prejudice ($b = 0.32$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 5.68$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.21, 0.44]) are significant at $p < .001$. Overall, the reduced coefficient size

Table 4. Structural Equation Modeling Results for the Mediating Effects of Trust and Prejudice Among Turkish Cypriot Sample.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Independent Variables												
Quantity of Contact	.60***	(.08)	.27*	(.11)	.22*	(.09)						
Quality of Contact							.34***	(.08)	.19**	(.07)	.12	(.08)
Mediating Variables												
Social trust			.98***	(.06)					.66***	(.08)		
Prejudice					-.31***	(.02)					-.25***	(.03)
Chi-square	14.51**		84.56***		40.83***		19.24***		27.59***		30.45***	
df	4		5		5		4		5		5	
CFI	0.99		0.95		0.97		0.95		0.97		0.98	
RMSEA	0.04		0.03		0.02		0.05		0.05		0.05	
R ²	0.33		0.55		0.61		0.23		0.41		0.46	
N	504		504		504		194		194		194	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests). The analyses in this table include the following control variables: age, education, residence (urban or rural), gender, having a friend from the other community as a child and/or adolescent, and religiosity.

and nonsignificant main effects both indicate that social trust and prejudice fully mediate the relationship between quantity of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation.

The results of the bootstrap test revealed that the indirect effects of quality of contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation through social trust ($b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 3.86$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.12, 0.35]) and prejudice ($b = 0.27$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 5.54$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.18, 0.37]) are significant at $p < .001$. Overall, the reduced coefficient size and reduced significance level of main effects both indicate that social trust and prejudice partially mediate the relationship between quality of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation.

Turkish Cypriot sample. The results of the bootstrap test revealed that the indirect effects of quantity of contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation through social trust ($b = 0.33$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 5.41$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.22, 0.46]) and prejudice ($b = 0.38$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 6.67$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.28, 0.50]) are significant at $p < .001$. Overall, the reduced coefficient size and reduced

significance level of the main effects both indicate that social trust and prejudice partially mediate the relationship between quantity of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation.

The results of the bootstrap test revealed that the indirect effects of quality of contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation through social trust ($b = 0.15$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 3.22$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.07, 0.25]) and prejudice ($b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = 4.25$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.13, 0.33]) are significant at $p < .001$. Overall, the reduced coefficient size and reduced significance level of the main effect when social trust is added, along with the reduced coefficient size and nonsignificant main effect when prejudice is added, indicate that social trust partially mediates, whereas prejudice fully mediates, the relationship between quality of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation.

Conditional process modeling. This study further explores whether age moderates the direct and indirect effects of quantity (and quality) of contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation. We used a conditional process modeling to test for moderated mediation, as outlined by Hayes

Table 5a. Moderated Mediation Results from the Process Output among Greek Cypriots.

Antecedent		M (Trust)			Y(Willingness for Renewed Cohabitation)		
		Coefficient	SE	P	Coefficient	SE	P
X	Quality of Contact	.38	.06	<.001	.25	.07	.001
M	Trust	—	—	—	.57	.10	<.001
W	Age	.01	.004	.004	.01	.004	.014
X*W	Quality of Contact * Age	-.01	.004	.195	-.01	.004	.092
Constant		2.60	.31	<.001	3.39	.42	<.001
R ² =0.34				R ² =0.49			
F(9,130) = 7.36, p < .001				F(10,129) = 12.51, p < .001			

Table 5b. Conditional Direct and Indirect Effects from the Process Output among Greek Cypriots (X=Quality of Contact, M=Trust, W=Age).

Age	Indirect Effect	95% Bias-Corrected Bootstrap Confidence Interval for the Indirect Effect	Direct Effect	95% Bias-Corrected Bootstrap Confidence Interval for the Direct Effect
39 ¹	.28	.13 to .46	.41	.16 to .66
56	.21	.11 to .33	.24	.10 to .38
73	.17	.07 to .32	.15	-.02 to .32

¹These age categories are equivalent to age at 1 SD below the mean, at the mean, and 1SD above the mean respectively in the distribution.

(2013), using the PROCESS macro. Specifically, we tested whether age moderated the direct effect of quantity (and quality) of contact and the path from quantity (and quality) of contact to trust (and prejudice). This model corresponds to Model 8 in Hayes (2013).¹⁰ Due to space constraints, we only present the significant results from the conditional process models (full results can be provided upon request).

Greek Cypriot sample. Age moderates the conditional direct effect of quality of contact, after controlling for the mediating effect of trust. Specifically, the positive relationship between quality of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation, after controlling for the mediating effect of trust, is significant among younger individuals¹¹ ($b = 0.41, SE = 0.13, t = 3.20, p < .01, 95\%$ bootstrap CI [0.16, 0.66]), whereas for the oldest group, the effect is not significant ($b = 0.24, SE = 0.07, t = 3.33, p < .001, 95\%$ bootstrap CI [0.10, 0.38]; see Tables 5a and 5b).

Age also moderates the conditional direct effect of quality of contact, after controlling for the mediating effect of prejudice. Specifically, the positive relationship between quality of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation, controlling for the mediating effect of prejudice, is significant among younger individuals ($b = 0.28, SE = 0.14, t = 2.04, p < .05, 95\%$ bootstrap CI [0.01, 0.56]), whereas for the oldest group, the effect is not significant ($b = 0.19, SE = 0.08, t = 2.46, p < .05, 95\%$ bootstrap CI [0.04, 0.34]). Moreover, age moderates the indirect effect of quality of contact through prejudice. Specifically, the mediating effect of prejudice in the relationship between quality of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation is significant for the younger participants ($b = 0.40, SE = 0.08, t = 5.04, p < .001, 95\%$ bootstrap CI [0.25, 0.57]), whereas for the oldest group, the effect is not significant ($b = 0.26, SE = 0.05, t = 5.61, p < .001, 95\%$ bootstrap CI [0.17, 0.35]). This conclusion is also consistent with the significant value for the index of moderated mediation

Table 6a. Moderated Mediation Results from the Process Output among Turkish Cypriots.

Antecedent		M (Trust)			Y (Willingness for Renewed Cohabitation)		
		Coefficient	SE	P	Coefficient	SE	P
X	Quantity of Contact	.33	.06	<.001	.36	.08	<.001
M	Trust	—	—	—	.98	.06	<.001
W	Age	-.01	.002	<.001	-.01	.003	.004
X*W	Quantity of Contact * Age	-.002	.003	.673	.01	.004	.008
Constant		1.90	.12	<.001	1.05	.18	<.001
		R ² =0.31			R ² =0.59		
		F(9,494) = 24.19, p < .001			F(10,493) = 71.34, p < .001		

Table 6b. Conditional Direct and Indirect Effects from the Process Output among Turkish Cypriots (X=Quantity of Contact, M=Trust, W=Age).

Age	Indirect Effect	95% Bias-Corrected Bootstrap Confidence Interval for the Indirect Effect	Direct Effect	95% Bias-Corrected Bootstrap Confidence Interval for the Direct Effect
33 ¹	.35	.22 to .49	.13	-.04 to .30
50	.32	.18 to .48	.39	.23 to .55
67	.30	.08 to .55	.56	.31 to .81

¹These age categories are equivalent to age at 1 SD below the mean, at the mean, and 1SD above the mean respectively in the distribution.

reported in the PROCESS model ($b = -0.01$, $SE = 0.002$, $t = -3.00$, $p < .01$, 95% bootstrap CI [-0.01, -0.002]) that shows support for moderated mediation (see supplemental material, Tables S1A and S1B).

Turkish Cypriot sample. Age moderates the conditional direct effect of quantity of contact, after controlling for the mediating effect of trust. Specifically, the positive relationship between quantity of contact and willingness for renewed cohabitation, controlling for the mediating effect of trust, is not significant among the youngest individuals ($b = 0.39$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 4.75$, $p < .001$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.23, 0.55]), whereas the effect is significant for older participants¹² ($b = 0.56$, $SE = 0.13$, $t = 4.37$, $p < .001$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.31, 0.81]; see Tables 6a and 6b).

Age moderates the conditional direct effect of quality of contact, after controlling for the mediating effect of trust. Specifically, the positive relationship between quality of contact and

willingness for renewed cohabitation, controlling for the mediating effect of trust, is not significant among younger individuals, whereas the effect is significant for the oldest participants ($b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.09$, $t = 3.33$, $p < .001$, 95% bootstrap CI [0.12, 0.47]; see supplemental material, Tables S2A and S2B).

Discussion

This study explores the effects of quality and quantity of contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation among 502 GCs and 504 TCs. In doing so, it (a) theoretically replicates the important roles of quantity and quality of contact in prejudice reduction and trust-building in a post-conflict and divided context, using a comparative and representative sample survey for the first time in Cyprus; (b) examines the mediating effect of trust and prejudice reduction on a novel dependent variable directly relevant to the ongoing negotiations to resolve the problem; and (c) deepens

our understanding of the possible moderating role of age in postconflict and deeply divided settings.

Our results are consistent with the contact hypothesis—that intergroup contact is associated with positive outcomes—and highlight the roles of trust and prejudice in understanding further how intergroup contact matters for postconflict societies (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tam et al., 2009). Specifically, in the Greek Cypriot community, the quantity of contact effects were fully mediated by both trust and prejudice, while the quality of contact effects were partially mediated by both trust and prejudice. For GCs, good quality (but not quantity) of contact could directly influence the idea that renewed cohabitation is possible, even if it does not lead to prejudice reduction or the building of trust. In the Turkish Cypriot community, this was even truer, since three out of the four mediation models tested showed partial mediation and a significant path to our outcome variable. Further moderation analyses showed that this direct path was in many cases moderated by age.

Age differences turn out to be potentially very important in postconflict and deeply divided societies. Specifically, our representative sample reveals clear age differences on levels of prejudice, trust, and readiness for cohabitation. These trends go in opposite directions when comparing the two Cypriot communities, which is also consistent with some recent research in Cyprus (Psaltis et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, older people have experienced cohabitation in Cyprus and younger ones have not; however, whether they would actually opt for renewed cohabitation largely depends on their adherence to the official master narratives of the conflict, the current dominant political orientation of the community, and past political socialization during the respondent's formative years in early adulthood. As has been noted in the past, Turkish Cypriots are mostly in favour of a two-state solution or a Bizonal Bicomunal Federation with a strong bizonal character and limited renewed cohabitation. Conversely, Greek Cypriots are mostly in favour of a unitary state with the return of as many internally displaced people as possible

(Psaltis, 2016). This is reflected in our findings in Table 1, where GCs score significantly higher compared to TCs on willingness for renewed cohabitation. It would appear that in both communities, the older generations adhere more to the way their ingroup views the master narrative of the conflict, which colours the quality of their intergroup relations (Psaltis, 2016) and the amount of renewed cohabitation they see as ideal. Reduced adherence to this orientation leads in opposite directions in the two communities, with younger GCs showing less appetite for cohabitation compared to the older generation, and younger TCs showing more appetite for cohabitation compared to the older generation. This age effect is also reflected in levels of trust and prejudice, as clearly shown in Table 2.

Another contribution of this study is that we identify moderation findings by age on direct, albeit less so on indirect, effects of intergroup contact on our outcome measure. The directions of the moderation effects are very encouraging, as they suggest that those in need of prejudice reduction, trust-building, and overcoming relatively stronger within-group separatist orientations (i.e., younger GCs and older TCs) are the ones for whom contact works best. It is important to note that there is only little support for the moderated mediation effects (only the indirect effect of quality of contact through prejudice among GCs was found to be significantly moderated by age). The moderation of age on direct effects, which is a more consistent and widespread finding in this study, is probably due to the fact that both rare but high-quality contact and repeated casual but medium-quality contact for younger Greek Cypriots and older Turkish Cypriots could be enough evidence that “we can live together again,” even without any influence on the indirect paths through trust-building and prejudice reduction. Younger GCs, who have not lived together with Turkish Cypriots, tend to see TCs and a solution to the Cyprus problem as more of a risk than an opportunity (Ioannou, Filippou, & Lordos, 2015). On the other hand, given that the functions of contact vary between majority and minority groups (Tropp & Pettigrew,

2005), older TCs (compared to the younger group) might be less willing to interact with GCs due to their perceiving the interaction as unequal, in addition to having felt discrimination over the years, especially between 1963 and 1974, due to their numerical minority status (Ioannou et al., 2015; ten Teije, Coenders, & Verkuyten, 2013). Despite the fact that they would be more likely to avoid contact and have more sectarian attitudes toward GCs, once they do have casual (whilst shopping in the south, for example) or high-quality contact, they are the ones that are more convinced that renewed cohabitation might be worth a try, given that such contact might not lead to conflict.

Despite its strengths, there are several limitations to this research. First, its cross-sectional design prevents us from showing any causal relationships between our key variables, and from testing the long-term effects of quantity and quality of contact on willingness for renewed cohabitation. Thus, it is important for future research to explore this question further by using longitudinal data. Second, despite prior evidence exploring the effect of personality traits on trust and prejudice (Freitag & Bauer, 2016), and the mediating effects of perspective-taking and empathy, intergroup anxiety, and threat (Husnu & Crisp, 2015; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Stathi et al., 2017), this study could not account for these variables due to method limitations, notably the lack of time in short telephone surveys. Third, prior research has raised concerns about the use of single-item measures for trust and prejudice (see the review by Reeskens & Hooghe, 2008; see also Gawronski, Peters, Brochu, & Strack, 2008). Nevertheless, despite these limitations, these single-item measures for trust and prejudice have been widely used in prior research (Kenworthy et al., 2016; Snijders & Keren, 2001; Žeželj et al., 2017). Moreover, despite the importance of prior experience with the other community on current bicomunal relationships (Paolini et al., 2014; Voci et al., 2017), this study could not control for measures of negative prior experience with the other community, such as whether they remembered the war or were exposed to the war

(Paolini et al., 2014). We used “having a friend from the other community as a child or adolescent” as a proxy measure to capture the positive aspect of prior intergroup contact. Future research should consider using more direct measures for past experience. Finally, this study focused only on direct contact (both quality and quantity). Given the importance of different forms of contact in postconflict societies, such as imagined contact and extended contact (Dovidio, Love, Schellhaas, & Hewstone, 2017), future studies could test the relative importance of different types of contact on intergroup relations and the moderating role of age in these relationships in postconflict societies.

Despite these limitations, this study makes a contribution to existing research by replicating contact effects in a rarely studied postconflict context, empirically testing how and when intergroup contact matters in terms of willingness for renewed cohabitation among Greek and Turkish Cypriots, by highlighting the importance of trust and prejudice as mediators, as well as by revealing the important moderating effect of age for both the direct and indirect effects of intergroup contact. The role of age as a moderator in the context of Cyprus should not be underestimated since, from a policymaking perspective, it shows that opening the checkpoints back in 2003 has allowed real positive change for those Cypriots in more need of it (younger GCs and older TCs). Most importantly, this study finds differences across age groups in both communities. Given that the function of contact is expected to differ between majority and minority groups (Hagendoorn, Drogendijk, Tumanov, & Hraba, 1998), and that different generations are expected to have different views on reconciliation and coexistence (Sitas, Latif, & Loizou, 2007), these findings suggest future scholars should explore this question across different generations and contexts.

The present research findings also have some important further policy implications. Given the findings in our study, policymakers should concentrate on increasing the number of people who get the chance to meet and talk to members of the other community. Even after several attempts,

there is still a lack of intergroup contact between the GC and TC communities in Cyprus, and they still remain largely segregated (Psaltis & Cakal, 2016). The main goal should therefore be to improve both the quantity and quality of contact for all groups in the population, and specifically groups in more need of such interventions (i.e., Greek Cypriot youth and Turkish Cypriot older people), who in case of a solution to the Cyprus problem will have to adjust to renewed cohabitation even if it's to a limited extent.

Some progress toward this goal is already under way. For instance, recent efforts by the Bi-Communal Technical Committee of Education in Cyprus include contact initiatives like the "Imagine" program, which brings elementary and high school students in the UN buffer zone to an educational center, the Home for Co-operation. Such efforts should be institutionalized and get sustained support from the leaders of both communities, but it is clear from the present findings that an important addition to this contact scheme could be the engagement of older generations in this program (fathers, mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers). They could not only offer examples of successful cohabitation in the past, but also create opportunities for a change of ingroup family norms that could sustain broader social changes once they return to their own communities. Moreover, policymakers and NGOs from both communities should work together with schools to make student exchanges possible. The important language barrier between the communities can be overcome by introducing compulsory Greek and Turkish lessons in schools. Such exchanges need not be limited to schools: GC and TC employers in similar industries could work together to exchange employees on a short-term basis. In addition, employers could reserve some positions for qualified applicants from the other community. Both governments can work together to create more safe spaces where people from both communities can get together to share their memories and stories from the past, when they cohabited with the other community. Finally, and more directly relevant to the negotiations around the Cyprus problem, issues of educational desegregation, minority

returnees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) should be placed higher in the agenda. Any opportunity for institutionalizing bicomunal contact in light of the present findings should be seen as positive, not only because it would help build a road towards reaching a peace agreement but also because it would increase the possibilities of sustainable peace after a solution is found.

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Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. In the study by Tropp et al. (2017, p. 241), the authors measured reconciliation efforts by asking respondents to evaluate the following two statements: "I am actively involved in efforts to achieve peaceful relations between the two communities" and "I regularly participate in activities designed to establish peaceful relations between the two communities" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).
2. In the study by McKeown and Psaltis (2017, p. 396), participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements: "I would like to know more about the other community," "In general I would like to have more contact with the other community," and "I would like to have more friends from the other community" (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).
3. This is defined as the body of accumulated legislation and regulations of the European Union.
4. In the meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), out of the 24 different samples that came from Israel—the only comparable postconflict and divided society in the geographical vicinity of Cyprus—six were college student samples and three were adult samples. Within each type of sample, there were studies with significant and nonsignificant quantity of contact effects, with


no systematic trend towards one age group showing consistently better findings compared to the other age group.

5. Please see Funding section.
6. Some prior research has suggested that telephone surveys are not well suited for research as they lack important personal contact and visual communication (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). On the other hand, some other research has suggested that more personal issues can be better discussed over the phone due to greater anonymity (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Moreover, Vogl (2013) highlighted some logistical advantages of using telephone surveys, such as lower cost and good reachability due to mostly using the random digit dialing feature, which leads to representative samples and accurate results. The author compared face-to-face interviews and telephone surveys and found very little difference, challenging scholars' reluctance to conduct telephone interviews (Vogl, 2013).
7. In order to make the comparison between these two surveys more valid and reliable, two questions were added to the survey for TCs about whether their thoughts on living together with GCs or having GCs as their neighbors have been influenced by the failed talks. Those who responded yes to either one of these two questions were dropped from the analyses, leading to a final sample of 504 TCs. Comparing the complete sample of TCs ($N = 600$) versus the final sample we used ($N = 504$), there are no significant differences in terms of our key variables and control variables. This suggests that using the smaller sample ($N = 504$) does not bias our results.
8. Quantity and quality of contact scales were included in the analyses separately for several reasons. First, we ran exploratory factor analyses (EFA) based on all nine items from the quantity and quality of contact scales. The results showed that the five items that capture the frequency of quantity of contact load onto one factor (factor loadings range from 0.53 to 0.85 for TCs and from 0.51 to 0.61 for GCs), while the four items that capture the quality of contact load onto another factor (factor loadings range from 0.73 to 0.85 for TCs and from 0.81 to 0.89 for GCs). In addition, using confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), we compared the model where quantity and quality of contact are combined into one latent construct (for TC: CFI = 0.83, RMSEA = 0.13,

$p < .001$; for GC: CFI = 0.86, RMSEA = 0.14, $p < .001$) to a model where quantity and quality scales are examined separately (for TC: CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.04, $p < .001$; for GC: CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.03, $p < .05$). A chi-square difference test (for TC: $\Delta\chi^2 = 197.05$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$; for GC: $\Delta\chi^2 = 135.30$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$) indicated that combining the quantity and quality of contact items worsens the model's fit. The results from both EFA and CFA analyses suggest that the quantity and quality of contact scales should be modeled separately.

9. Despite the fact that some prior research has combined the quantity and quality of contact scales (Tam et al., 2007; Voci & Hewstone, 2003), we follow other prior research which has concluded that quantity and quality of contact have distinct and separate effects on outgroup attitudes and beliefs (McKeown & Taylor, 2017; Shamloo, Carnaghi, & Fantoni, 2018; Stephan, Diaz-Loving, & Duran, 2000; Viki, Culmer, Eller, & Abrams, 2006). Similar approaches have been also used in some prior research on Cyprus (McKeown & Psaltis, 2017). Our different results for quantity and quality of contact in this study also confirm that these two scales should be examined separately.
10. We also tested whether age moderated the path from trust (and prejudice) to willingness for renewed cohabitation using Model 15. There was no support for the moderation of this specific indirect effect.
11. The three age categories are equivalent to age at 1 *SD* below the mean, at the mean, and 1 *SD* above the mean, respectively in the distribution. "Younger" participants in the text refers to age at 1 *SD* below the mean and at the mean. "Oldest" group in the text refers to age at 1 *SD* above the mean.
12. "Older" participants in the text refer to age at the mean and 1 *SD* above the mean.

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