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Together to welcome, together to exclude Intergroup contact as an antecedent of collective and interpersonal behaviors pro and against migrants

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## **Abstract**

This preregistered study examined whether positive and negative intergroup contact with migrants relates to collective action supporting and opposing migrants as well as to interpersonal exclusion towards them via the key processes identified in the Social Identity Model of Collective Action. Structural equation models conducted on cross-sectional data from 506 Italian and English participants showed that positive (negative) contact related to higher (lower) collective inclusion and lower (higher) collective and interpersonal exclusion of migrants via group anger, identification, and efficacy. Considering positive and negative contact, collective action pro and against migrants, and interpersonal behaviors simultaneously, the study provided a nuanced picture of the antecedents and processes underlying the advantaged group members' behaviors towards migrants.

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## **Together to welcome, together to exclude: intergroup contact as an antecedent of collective and interpersonal behaviors pro and against migrants**

Social exclusion of migrants raises impelling political, social, and psychological concerns in many Western countries (Jetten & Esses, 2018). Social exclusion, by threatening fundamental human needs (Williams, 2009), harms the mental health of migrants exposed to rejection and discrimination (Marinucci & Riva, 2020). Besides, the migration phenomenon mobilizes national groups, dividing society into supporters for migrants' inclusion and those who pursue their exclusion. In recent years, big collective demonstrations of opposite meanings, pro and against migrants, have been held. For example, in Italy, the 2017 demonstration "No one is illegal" was organized in support of migrants' rights, while the "Italians firsts" movement in 2018 was opposing them. In the UK, in September 2020, two rival protests opposing ("Protect Britain's border") and supporting migrants ("Rise above fear. Refugees welcome") resulted in clashes (Wallis, 2020). Even social scientists recently engaged in collective action by addressing an open letter to European political institutions calling for them to "*bring an end to the inhuman disregard*" of migrants' exclusion at the European borders (Wagner et al., 2021).

### **Collective Action towards the Disadvantaged**

Research on collective action has primarily focused on investigating collective action in support of disadvantaged social groups – any group action aimed to ameliorate the disadvantaged's situation (Hovland & Sears, 1940).

The social identity model of collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren *et al.* 2008; 2011) identified four core predictors of collective action: group identity, group-based anger, group efficacy beliefs, and moral convictions. Accordingly, people are motivated to act collectively based on their *group identity*, which refers to people's identification with a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In

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the SIMCA, group identity is assumed to promote collective action directly and indirectly through *group-based anger* (i.e., the emotional experience of injustice about the group's condition; van Zomeren et al., 2004) and *group efficacy beliefs* (i.e., the beliefs that the group can achieve its goals; Hornsey et al., 2006).

SIMCA also includes the motivational power of *moral convictions* – strong attitudes about whether something is moral or immoral (Skitka et al., 2005). Given that moral convictions are experienced as absolute stances that must be defended and that tolerate no exceptions, people who are morally convinced are strongly motivated to act collectively to defend their moral convictions (van Zomeren, 2013).

Two studies conducted by van Zomeren *et al.* (2011) revealed that holding strong moral convictions against social inequality increased identification with the victims of social inequality, which in turn fostered collective action directly and indirectly through greater feelings of group-based anger and group efficacy beliefs (*see also* De Cristofaro et al., 2021; Mazzoni et al., 2015).

Besides moral convictions, the current work sought to deepen the knowledge of a novel antecedent that literature has recently been starting to investigate: *intergroup contact*.

### **Intergroup Contact and Collective Action**

Researchers have considered intergroup contact as a possible predictor of collective action among advantaged and disadvantaged group members (Choma & McKewon, 2019; Hässler et al., 2020b). Among disadvantaged groups, intergroup contact is generally associated with lower collective action, presumably because of a decrease in their perceived injustice, inequality, and motivation to achieve social change (Cakal et al., 2011; Hässler et al., 2020a). Differently, among advantaged groups, intergroup contact generally facilitates collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged. Carter and colleagues (2019) showed that positive contact between college students from disadvantaged (underrepresented ethnic minorities) and advantaged (White individuals) groups

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dampened disadvantaged group members' motivation to act collectively. Instead, advantaged group members presented heightened collective action motivation following positive contact with minority students. Similarly, Selvanathan and colleagues (2018) found that positive contact with Black Americans predicted greater support for collective action among White Americans.

However, the reason why intergroup contact would promote advantaged group members' collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged has caught scholars' attention only recently.

Intergroup contact has several positive effects for the advantaged group members such as fostering inclusive identification (Thomas et al., 2020; Vazquez et al., 2020), intergroup empathy, and anger toward injustice (Selvanathan et al., 2018) which likely contribute to collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged. MacInnis & Hodson (2019) underlined that intergroup contact could increase collective action via enhanced awareness of what the disadvantaged group is deprived of compared to the advantaged. Similarly, Di Bernardo *et al.* (2021) found that Italian students' decreased perceived legitimacy of the status differences mediated the relation between intergroup contact with migrants and support for collective action challenging inequality. Kotzur *et al.* (2018) found that positive intergroup contact with asylum-seekers increased solidarity-based collective action intentions by improving immigrants' warmth perception and the intergroup emotion of contempt.

Yet, while considerable attention has been devoted to the association between positive contact and collective action, less attention has been given to the role played by negative contact. Meleady and Vermue (2019) found that negative contact between British nationals and European migrants was associated with less support for collective action to protect the rights of European migrants during Brexit negotiations. In the Italian context, Vezzali and colleagues (2017) found that, in the aftermath of the earthquake which hit Northern Italy in 2012, negative contact between Italian and immigrant survivors was associated with less support for social policies in favor of immigrants. Reimer and

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colleagues (2017) argued that negative contact lowers advantaged group members' intentions to act collectively on behalf of the minority group. The researchers showed that, for heterosexual students, negative contact with the LGBT community was associated with lower LGBT activism, while positive contact was associated with heightened LGBT activism. Valuably, the authors found that heterosexual students' identification with the LGBT movement mediated the relationship between positive and negative intergroup contact and collective action intentions, whereas improved outgroup attitudes mediated the effect of positive contact only. Similarly, Graf and Sczesny (2019) found that positive and negative direct contact influenced support for migrants via intergroup attitudes.

Consequently, the present research aims to complement and expand previous results by investigating, in the context of migration, the intergroup antecedents, and processes underlying collective action not only supporting the disadvantaged but also opposing them in the form of social exclusion.

### **Social Exclusion as a Form of Collective Action**

Social exclusion can be defined as keeping somebody, physically or emotionally, separated from one's own group (Riva & Eck, 2016). The literature has focused on the psychological consequences triggered by different phenomena of social exclusion (e.g., rejection and ostracism; Bernstein, 2016), besides investigating the antecedents of social exclusion. Hales *et al.* (2016) identified the ingroup-protective motives of defending the group from threatening members, correcting deviant members, and ejecting those resisting correction. North and Fiske (2016) argued that social exclusion could arise from biases and needs like *ingroup favoritism* that could lead to outsiders' derogation and control as dominant groups seek to maintain the social hierarchies.

Social exclusion plays fundamental functions to the benefit of those who implement it, and this resonates with the "group advantage" that can derive from the implementations of many forms of collective action. However, the two concepts have rarely been connected. Indeed, the literature on

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collective action against the disadvantaged is rather recent and scarce, even more so when considering social exclusion as collective action against migrants.

Research on collective action opposing the disadvantaged showed that the majority group's action against a minority is more likely when the advantaged perceive hostile intergroup relations (Stefaniak et al., 2020), when they hold negative attitudes towards minorities (Sheperd et al., 2018), or when they have a strong ingroup identification (*e.g.*, national or ethnic identification; Osborne et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2020). Apart from the emerging literature on majority action against the disadvantaged, the conceptual link between social exclusion and collective action has not been investigated, and none of the recent psychosocial models of collective action have ever been applied to explaining social exclusion phenomena, neither in the form of collective nor interpersonal behaviors which could be highly intertwined (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Indeed, as pointed out by Killen *et al.* (2013), exclusionary behaviors at the interpersonal levels (*e.g.*, not sitting next to a person) may be driven by intergroup processes like group membership and identification (*e.g.*, based on nationality or ethnicity). In this sense, exclusionary behaviors towards migrants during interpersonal interactions can represent the desire to exclude migrant people as a whole, similarly to other collective action behaviors (*e.g.*, taking part in a demonstration against migrants) and as such depend on similar processes.

In the current research, we merged the literature on social exclusion and collective action by focusing on a topic that has been at the center of the Italian and European public debate for the past decade, linked to the social inclusion/exclusion of minority migrant people by the national majority groups (Villa, 2019).

### **The present study**

The present study investigated the antecedents and processes that could promote collective action and interpersonal social exclusion towards migrants. We sought to examine whether past

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experiences of positive and negative intergroup contact with migrants, alongside the key processes identified in the literature on collective action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2011), could relate collective action intentions both supporting and opposing migrants as well as interpersonal exclusionary behaviors towards them.

Based on the SIMCA, we expected that moral convictions would relate to collective inclusion of migrants via group anger, identification, and efficacy (H1). We tested if previous experiences of positive intergroup contact with migrants could be associated with higher collective action pro and lower collective action against migrants via SIMCA processes (*i.e.*, group anger, identification, and efficacy) (H2a). Oppositely, we expected that negative contact would relate to lower collective inclusion and higher collective exclusion via the same mediators (H2b). Moreover, we expected that collective action opposing migrants would rely on similar psychological processes explaining collective action supporting migrants (H3). Lastly, we tested if interpersonal exclusionary behaviors towards migrants could be explained by the same psychological mechanisms of the SIMCA (H4). The Ethics Committee of the corresponding author's University approved the study. The original preregistration is available at <https://osf.io/vc48b>. The blinded preregistration, dataset, Qualtrics questionnaire, and analytic code are available on the OSF platform at the following link: [https://osf.io/dge78/?view\\_only=f9a112b663844b8aafef469845fdedf0](https://osf.io/dge78/?view_only=f9a112b663844b8aafef469845fdedf0).

## **Method**

### **Participants**

As planned, 506 participants from Italy and the UK took part in the study. A sensitivity power analysis conducted with RStudio using the package *WebPower* (Zhang et al., 2018) showed that the sample allowed reliably detecting a very close fit (RMSEA = 0.034, with power = 0.80 and alpha = 0.05) in a structural equation model with 57 degrees of freedom (the baseline model tested). Therefore, the study was highly powered. We recruited the participants through the Prolific platform,

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setting as participants' eligibility criteria: 1) 18 years or older 2) born in the survey countries (*i.e.*, Italy,  $n = 252$ ; the UK,  $n = 254$ ). Participants gave their informed consent before participating, and they were paid ~2.3 € for completing the 10-minutes questionnaire. None of the participants failed the attention check. The sample was balanced for gender, 275 females (55.0%), 222 males (44.4%) and 3 (unknown). The respondents ranged from 18 to 76 years, with a mean age of 31.94 ( $SD = 11.79$ ). Concerning education, 267 participants (53.4%) had a bachelor's degree or a higher education level, 191 (38.2%) a high school degree, and 42 (8.4%) a lower education level. Concerning occupational status, 264 (52.2%) participants were employed. Forty-four (8.8%) participants had at least one parent who was not born in the country of the survey.

### **Measures**

#### **Predictors.**

*Moral convictions* about the presence of migrants in their living country were assessed asking participants to report their agreement with three items (e.g., "My opinion about the presence of migrants in [Country] is an important part of my moral norms and values") adapted from Van Zomeren et al. (2011). Possible answers ranged from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The reliability was acceptable ( $\alpha = .865$ ) and a mean index was created ( $M = 4.55$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ).

Past experiences of *positive* and *negative contact* with migrants were assessed with two scales (four items each), adapted from Hayward et al. (2017). For positive contact, participants reported if they experienced interactions with migrants that made them feel wanted, welcomed, included, and accepted. For each of the four adjectives, answers ranged from 1 (never) to 7 (always). For negative contact, participants were asked to report if they experienced interactions with migrants that made them feel unwanted, unwelcomed, excluded, and rejected. The reliability was acceptable (positive contact  $\alpha = .940$ ; negative contact  $\alpha = .954$ ) and mean indexes were created (positive contact  $M = 4.17$   $SD = 1.72$ ; negative contact  $M = 2.46$   $SD = 1.45$ ).

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## **Mediators.**

*Group anger* for a) the presence of migrant individuals in the country and b) participants' experience with migrants was assessed with three bipolar items each adapted from Mackie et al. (2000) and Van Zomeren et al. (2004). Participants reported how they felt (i.e., calm/angry, serene/irritated, and quiet/furious) when thinking about the presence of migrants in the living country and when thinking of their experience with migrants, using a scale from 1 to 7. The six scores were averaged in a mean index, with higher scores indicating higher levels of anger ( $\alpha = .948$ ;  $M = 2.55$ ;  $SD = 1.27$ ).

Group identification was assessed with different reference groups: *identification with the living country*, *identification with the group of migrants*, and *identification with the superordinate common group* of “World citizens”. We decided to focus on these three levels of group identification based on the literature attesting the role of the advantaged identification with: a) their ethnonational group for collective action favoring their ingroup (e.g., Thomas et al., 2020), b) the disadvantaged for solidarity-based collective action (e.g., Reimer et al., 2017), and c) a superordinate common group as literature showed it is an intergroup contact-triggered processes predicting better intergroup relations (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). For each of the three groups, participants answered to three items adapted from Mazzoni *et al.* (2015). The three items for the identification with the country were “I feel Italian/British”, “I feel connected to the other Italian/British people”, and “I feel similar to the other Italian/British people”. Possible answers ranged from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The reliability was acceptable and mean indexes were created (National identification  $\alpha = .860$ ;  $M = 5.02$ ;  $SD = 1.45$ ; Migrant identification  $\alpha = .795$ ;  $M = 3.05$ ;  $SD = 1.41$ ; Common identification  $\alpha = .886$ ;  $M = 5.09$ ;  $SD = 1.47$ ).

*Group efficacy pro-migrants* and *against-migrants* oriented were also assessed. Each scale consisted of three items that were adapted from Mannarini et al. (2009). An example of pro-migrants

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item was “If Italian/British people want, they could increase the rights of migrant people living in Italy/UK.”. An example of against-migrants items was “Through their commitment, Italian/British people could reduce the number of migrant people living in Italy/UK”. Answers ranged from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The reliability was acceptable and mean indexes were used in the analyses (Group efficacy pro-migrants  $\alpha = .840$ ;  $M = 5.14$ ;  $SD = 1.42$ ; Group efficacy against migrants  $\alpha = .851$ ;  $M = 3.48$ ;  $SD = 1.66$ ).

### **Outcomes.**

*Collective exclusion* was assessed with two methods that have been adopted in the literature to assess collective action intentions. The first method was a three-item scale (e.g., “I would participate in a demonstration to reduce the number of migrants in Italy/UK”) adapted from Van Zomeren et al. (2011). Possible answers ranged from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The reliability was acceptable and a mean index was created ( $\alpha = .926$ ;  $M = 2.40$ ;  $SD = 2.31$ ). The second method consisted of the following question: “If you were asked to distribute leaflets for an initiative to reduce the number of migrants in Italy/UK, how many would you take?”. In this case, possible answers ranged from 0 to 1000 leaflets ( $M = 35.49$ ;  $SD = 135.52$ ).

*Collective inclusion* was assessed with the same two methods of collective exclusion. An instance of items was: “I would take part in a demonstration to support migrant’s rights in Italy/UK” ( $\alpha = .955$ ;  $M = 4.67$ ;  $SD = 1.84$ ). The number of leaflets for promoting migrants’ rights was also assessed ( $M = 168.98$ ;  $SD = 265.42$ ).

*Interpersonal social exclusion* was assessed with two methods. The first one consisted of four bipolar items (e.g., “If a migrant person asks me something on the street ...”) aimed at measuring different forms of social exclusion based on previous theorizations (see Riva & Eck, 2016). . Possible answers ranged from 1 (“I would like to continue on my way without giving an answer to him/her”) to 7 (“I would friendly answer to him/her”). The reliability was acceptable and mean indexes were

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created ( $\alpha = .748$ ;  $M = 2.73$ ;  $SD = 1.11$ ). Higher values indicated higher intention to socially exclude migrant individuals.

The second method consisted of two scenarios of exclusion/inclusion (Mazzoni et al., 2021). Two black and white images were created. Each picture depicted one person on one side, described as “Italian/English”, and one person on the opposite side, identified as a “migrant”. The Italian/English and the migrant figures were very similar. Each picture was preceded by a brief caption describing the situation (e.g., “The people presented below are waiting for the bus at the bus stop”). Participants indicated the position they would occupy in the scene by clicking on it. The device allowed to record the position and thus the desired distance from the Italian/British person and migrants. The pictures were included in the questionnaire using the function Qualtrics Heat Map which measures the position selected in pixels from the left side of the image. The width of each image was 600 pixels. The score for the image depicting the migrant person on the right side was reversed (*i.e.*, 600 minus the score) so that higher scores indicated higher interpersonal distance from the migrant person. The two scenarios were averaged in a mean index ( $M = 302.71$ ;  $SD = 28.32$ ). Table 1 reports correlations between the observed variables.

The survey also included measures of social desirability, general attitudes towards migrants, political trust, and political orientation. These additional measures were not considered in the present study. We reported how we determined the sample size, all data exclusions, and all measures in the study.

## Results

Nested structural equation models tested the hypotheses of the study. The models were tested using the full-information Maximum Likelihood estimation. We assessed the model fit comparing the RMSEA (acceptable below .08), the CFI (acceptable above .90), and the SRMR (acceptable below .07); decisions about competing models were made considering the Chi-squared difference test (Hu

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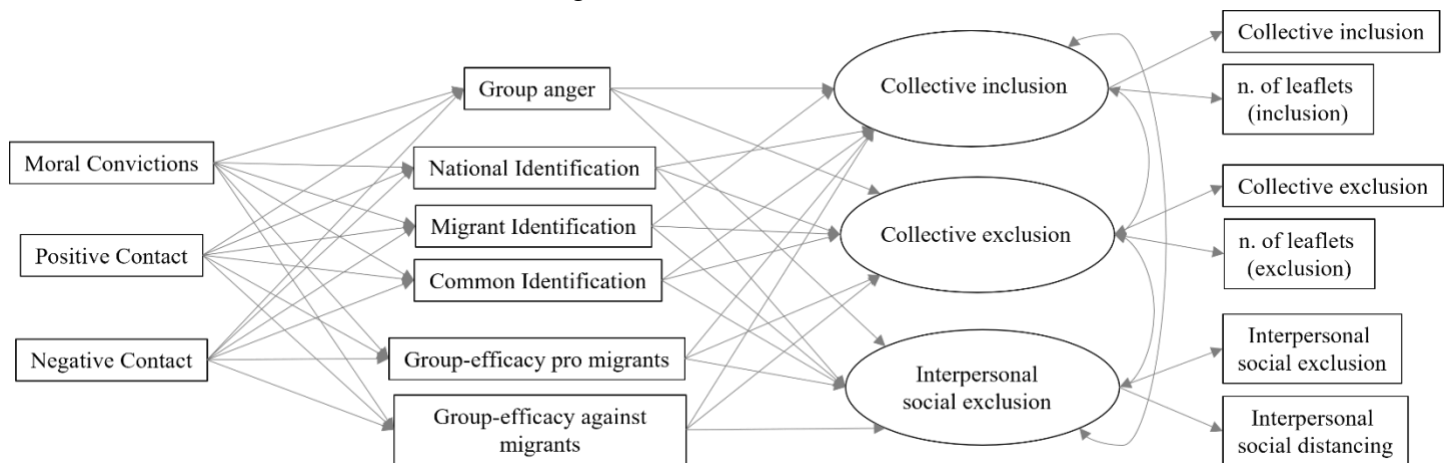
& Bentler, 1999; Marsh et al., 2005; Satorra & Bentler, 2001). At first, confirmatory factor analysis showed that the outcomes measuring collective inclusion (*i.e.*, the scale of collective inclusion and number of leaflets supporting inclusion), collective exclusion (*i.e.*, the scale of collective exclusion and number of leaflets supporting exclusion), and interpersonal social exclusion (*i.e.*, the scale of social exclusion and the graphic measure of social distancing) were adequately saturated by three latent variables. The model showed excellent fit ( $\chi^2(6) = 20.167, p < .01$ ; CFI = .977; RMSEA = 0.068, 95% CI [0.037 0.102]; SRMR = 0.034), therefore we used the three latent scores derived from the six observed variables as the outcomes of the main analyses. Furthermore, we controlled for possible contextual differences between the British and Italian samples by conducting a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (estimating all the parameters separately for the two samples) and comparing it with the unified solution that aggregated the two samples. Results from the Chi-squared difference test supported that the addition of the multi-group parameters did not significantly improve the model fit compared to the unified solution ( $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df = 6) = 9.04, p = .172$ ). The analysis supported that there were not considerable differences between the two samples in the factorial structure of the items, justifying the aggregation of the two samples. Then, based on our hypothesized theoretical model, we tested a baseline path analytical model as depicted in Figure 1 (model a). As for the confirmatory factor analysis, we tested possible contextual differences by confronting model a with an alternative multi-group model estimating each parameter separately for the British and Italian samples. Again, results showed that the larger multi-group model did not have a better fit than the smaller unified model a ( $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df = 57) = 41.91, p = .933$ ), ruling out a possible influence of the different contexts on the relationships between the variables and justifying the aggregation of the two samples. Given that the goodness-of-fit of the unified baseline model was only discrete (values of the RMSEA and CFI were only approaching the acceptability thresholds; see Table 2), we proceeded to run additional models with parameter constraints. Following a backward specification strategy

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(Tarka, 2018), we started fixing non-significant paths to zero (model *b*). Then, based on the inspection of the modification indices, we added an additional correlational parameter between migrant identification and common identification (model *c*; see table 2 for the fit statistics of the models). Besides the statistical evidence, we decided to include the additional correlational parameter as it aligns with the predictions from the *common ingroup identity model* (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000): the identification with a common ingroup (world citizens) would be related to the perception of similarity and shared identification among people from different groups (migrants and Italian/UK citizens). The final model (*c*) showed acceptable fit indices, and it is depicted in figure 2.

Figure 1. Baseline model (a)



We then studied the indirect relations from the predictors to the dependent variables via the specified mediators, estimating bootstrapped standard errors (number of bootstrap draws =1000). The indirect relations from models (*c*) are reported in Table 3. As expected, the results showed that moral convictions related to collective action for the inclusion of migrants via reduced group anger towards migrants, increased identification with them, and increased group efficacy pro-migrants (H1).

Furthermore, the findings supported our hypotheses concerning the role of positive and negative contact as additional antecedents (H2), and interpersonal social exclusion as an outcome

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derived from the same processes underlying collective action (H4). The results also highlighted that collective action against and pro migrants are partially explained by the same group processes (H3).

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Moral convictions	-													
2 Positive contact	.295***	-												
3 Negative contact	-.110*	-.124**	-											
4 Group anger	-.263***	-.434***	.481***	-										
5 National identification	-.030	.004	.150**	.125**	-									
6 Migrant identification	.301***	.426***	-.158***	-.313***	-.152**	-								
7 Common identification	.242***	.314***	-.239***	-.319***	-.058	.422***	-							
8 Group efficacy against	-.118**	-.136**	.157***	.271***	.148**	-.152**	-.175***	-						
9 Group efficacy pro	.269***	.274***	-.172***	-.324***	-.054	.285***	.302***	.047	-					
10 Collective inclusion (self-report)	.422***	.394***	-.324***	-.544***	-.222***	.424***	.391***	-.309***	.423***	-				
11 Collective inclusion (leaflets)	.228***	.168***	-.156***	-.229***	-.059	.285***	.254***	-.171***	.205***	.392***	-			
12 Collective exclusion (self-report)	-.121**	-.172***	.248***	.406***	.194***	-.180***	-.163***	.218**	-.300***	-.383***	-.144**	-		
13 Collective exclusion (leaflets)	-.029	-.122**	.110*	.233***	.069	-.059	-.030	.123**	-.179***	-.151**	.080	.404***	-	
14 Interpersonal exclusion (self-report)	-.291***	-.438***	.237***	.548***	.056	-.366***	-.270***	.309***	-.322***	-.542***	-.278***	.438***	.209***	-

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15 Interpersonal exclusion (pictures)    -.094\*    -.275\*\*\*    .231\*\*\*    .384\*\*\*    .104\*    -.295\*\*\*    -.260\*\*\*    .280\*\*\*    -.254\*\*\*    -.336\*\*\*    -.215\*\*\*    .267\*\*\*    .152\*\*    .486\*\*\*

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*Table 1.* Correlations between the variables.

*Note.* Pearson's  $r$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

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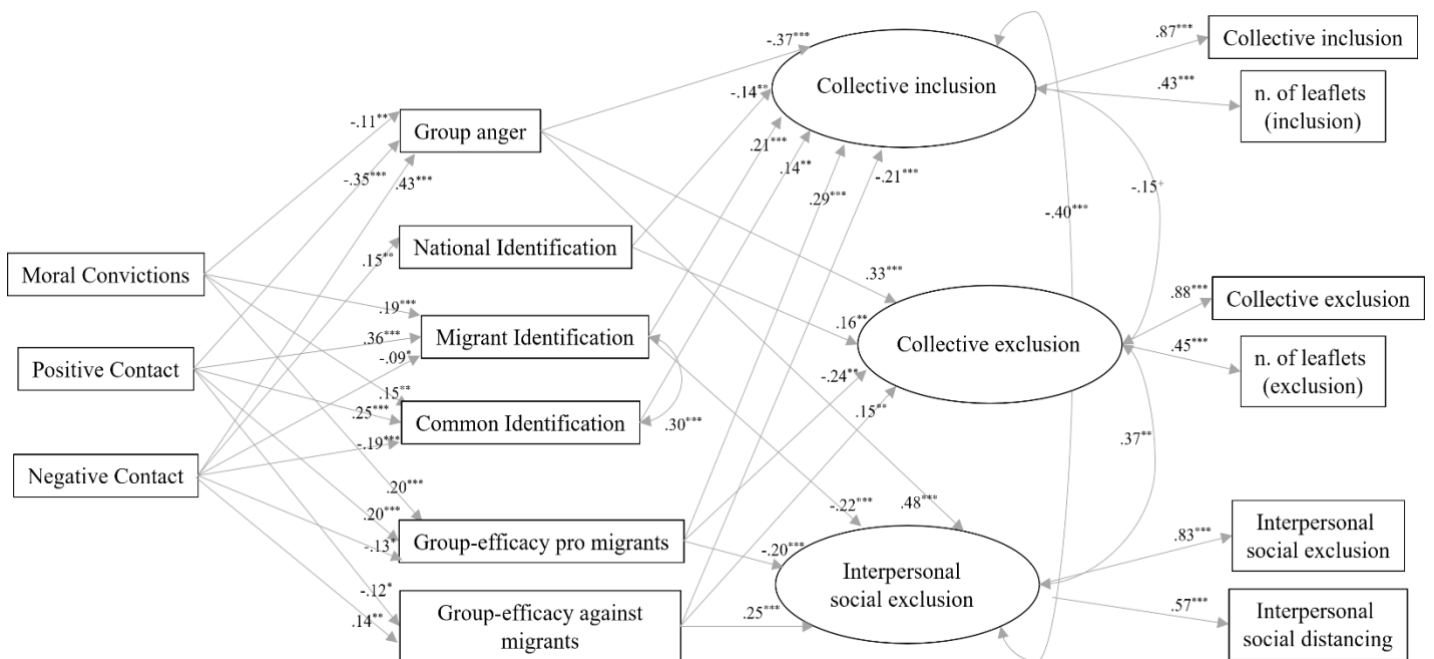
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Table 2. Fit statistics and model comparisons

	$\chi^2$	Df (nfp)	CFI	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI	SRMR	Model comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$ ( $\Delta df$ )
Model <i>a</i>	279.18***	57 (69)	0.880	0.088	[0.078, 0.98]	0.062	-	-
Model <i>b</i>	284.97***	64 (62)	0.880	0.083	[0.073, 0.093]	0.062	<b>a vs. b</b>	5.78 (7)
Model <i>c</i>	237.47***	63 (63)	0.905	0.074	[0.064, 0.084]	0.056	<b>b vs. c</b>	47.50*** (1)

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . nfp = number of free parameters. Letters in bold indicate the better models.

Figure 2. Final model (c). Standardized regression coefficients



Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ , +  $p = .06$

Specifically, positive contact related to higher collective inclusion of migrants via decreased group anger and group efficacy against migrants and increased group efficacy pro-migrants,

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identification with migrants, and a superordinate common ingroup. Oppositely, negative contact related to lower collective inclusion via increased group anger, group-efficacy against migrants, and via reduced group-efficacy pro-migrants and identification with a common ingroup. Also, previous negative contact with migrants related to higher national identification, which was associated with lower collective inclusion of migrants.

Table 3. Indirect effects

Indirect paths	<i>B</i>	95% CI	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Outcome: Collective inclusion				
Moral convictions*group anger	0.04	[0.01 0.08]	.04	.033
Positive contact*group anger	0.11	[0.07 0.17]	.13	<.001
Negative contact*group anger	-0.16	[-0.23 -0.11]	-.16	<.001
Negative contact*national identity	-0.02	[-0.05 -0.004]	-.02	.041
Moral convictions*migrant identity	0.04	[0.02 0.07]	.04	.013
Positive contact*migrant identity	0.07	[0.04 0.12]	.08	<.01
Negative contact*migrant identity	-0.02	[-0.05 -0.003]	-.02	.068
Moral convictions*common identity	0.02	[0.004 0.05]	.02	.077
Positive contact*common identity	0.03	[0.01 0.06]	.04	<.01
Negative contact*common identity	-0.03	[-0.06 -0.01]	-.03	.029
Positive contact*efficacy against	0.02	[0.004 0.05]	.03	.039
Negative contact*efficacy against	-0.03	[-0.06 -0.01]	-.03	.014
Moral convictions*efficacy pro	0.05	[0.03 0.10]	.06	<.01
Positive contact*efficacy pro	0.05	[0.02 0.09]	.06	<.01
Negative contact*efficacy pro	-0.04	[-0.08 -0.01]	.04	.027
Outcome: Collective exclusion				
Moral convictions*group anger	-0.03	[-0.06 -0.01]	-.04	.026
Positive contact*group anger	-0.08	[-0.13 -0.04]	-.12	<.001
Negative contact*group anger	0.12	[0.07 0.18]	.14	<.001
Negative contact*national identity	0.02	[0.01 0.04]	.02	.024
Positive contact*efficacy against	-0.01	[-0.03 -0.002]	-.02	.065
Negative contact*efficacy against	0.02	[0.003 0.04]	.02	.038
Moral convictions*efficacy pro	-0.04	[-0.07 -0.01]	-.05	.010
Positive contact*efficacy pro	-0.03	[-0.06 -0.01]	-.05	.016
Negative contact*efficacy pro	0.03	[0.01 0.06]	.03	.054
Outcome: Interpersonal social exclusion				
Moral convictions*group anger	-0.05	[-0.10 -0.02]	-.06	.013
Positive contact*group anger	-0.14	[-0.20 -0.10]	-.17	<.001
Negative contact*group anger	0.21	[0.15 0.29]	.20	<.001

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Moral convictions*migrant identity	-0.04	[-0.06 -0.02]	-.04	<.01
Positive contact*migrant identity	-0.07	[-0.11 -0.04]	-.08	<.001
Negative contact*migrant identity	0.02	[0.003 0.04]	.02	.049
Positive contact*efficacy against	-0.03	[-0.01 -0.05]	-.03	.035
Negative contact*efficacy against	0.04	[0.01 0.06]	.04	<.01
Moral convictions*efficacy pro	-0.04	[-0.07 -0.02]	-.04	<.01
Positive contact*efficacy pro	-0.04	[-0.07 -0.01]	-.04	.021
Negative contact*efficacy pro	0.03	[0.01 0.06]	.03	.038

Similar patterns were found for the collective exclusion of migrants. The only differences occurred for the indirect relations of positive and negative contact via common ingroup and migrant identification, which were not significantly related to collective exclusion.

As expected, both moral convictions and intergroup contact were related to interpersonal social exclusion via group anger, identification with migrants, and group efficacy pro and against migrants. Moral convictions related to lower interpersonal social exclusion via reduced group anger and increased identification with migrants and group efficacy supporting them. Also, positive and negative contact related to interpersonal exclusion in the expected directions via group anger, group efficacy pro and against migrants, and identification with migrants.

### Discussion

Although emerging literature has been increasingly showing that intergroup contact can mobilize advantaged social groups towards collective actions supporting the disadvantaged (Hässler et al., 2020b), only a few studies identified the mechanisms responsible for the mobilizing effect of intergroup contact (see Di Bernardo et al., 2021; Graf & Sczesny, 2019; Kotzur et al., 2018; Reimer et al., 2017; Vazquez et al., 2020). Thus, the literature lacks a nuanced and detailed understanding of the processes triggered by intergroup contact leading the advantaged to act collectively in favor of the disadvantaged. In addition, to our knowledge, none of the available studies focused on positive

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and negative intergroup contact as antecedents of collective actions supporting and against minority groups simultaneously.

The present research investigated if positive and negative contact with migrants – alongside moral convictions – related to collective action supporting migrants' inclusion and exclusion among Italian and British citizens. Based on the SIMCA (Van Zomeren et al., 2011), we investigated if group anger, identification (with participants' national group, migrants, and the superordinate group of the World citizens), and efficacy pro and against migrants mediated the association of intergroup contact and moral convictions with collective action oriented both towards migrants' inclusion and exclusion. Moreover, we tested if the SIMCA with intergroup contact implemented as an antecedent could be a theoretical framework relevant to explain exclusionary behaviors against the disadvantaged also at the interpersonal level.

To summarize, the present research 1) examined intergroup contact as an additional antecedent of the SIMCA processes; 2) addressed the associations of positive and negative contact and moral convictions with both collective action for the inclusion and the exclusion of migrants simultaneously; 3) tested if SIMCA processes with intergroup contact as antecedent could explain interpersonal behaviors oriented towards the exclusion of migrants.

Firstly, the findings supported that positive and negative contact, besides moral convictions, could be considered relevant antecedents of the processes responsible for collective action pro and against migrants. Secondly, they showed that collective actions pro and against migrants are partially explained by the same mechanisms. Thirdly, they highlighted how interpersonal behaviors against the disadvantaged could derive from the same processes responsible for collective behaviors.

### **Intergroup contact as an antecedent of the SIMCA processes**

We found that prior experiences of positive and negative contact with the disadvantaged motivated collective action supporting and opposing them, respectively. Specifically, results showed

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that the intergroup contact was associated with collective action via the three mediators identified in the SIMCA on the *emotional*, *identification*, and *empowerment* paths. These results will be commented below.

### **The emotional path**

Group anger mediated the relation of positive and negative contact with collective action both supporting and excluding migrants and with interpersonal social exclusion of migrants. Differently from Van Zomeren *et al.* (2011), the present measure of group anger referred to the broader intergroup emotion of anger against migrants. Therefore, the relation of positive *vs.* negative contact with collective and interpersonal actions may be explained by a reduction *vs.* increase in the negative group emotion of anger. Positive (negative) contact was associated with higher (lower) group anger that in turn related to interpersonal and collective actions. The emotional path showed the largest effects compared to the other paths, suggesting that it could exert the strongest influence on behaviors.

### **The identification path**

The effect of intergroup contact with collective action was mediated by identification with participants' national group, migrants, and the common ingroup of world citizens. However, positive and negative contact related differently to the group identifications.

Firstly, positive contact related to collective action via the identification with migrants, replicating the available findings (*e.g.*, Reimer *et al.*, 2017). Also, negative contact related to lower collective action via reduced identification with migrants but the indirect effect was only approaching the significance threshold.

Secondly, positive (negative) contact related to collective action pro migrants via increased (decreased) identification with the common ingroup. Accordingly, based on the *common ingroup identity model* (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), positive contact would lead intergroup members to recategorize themselves in a more inclusive superordinate category, reducing intergroup bias. From

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this standpoint, the present findings further added that negative contact could reduce the recategorization into a common ingroup and that the common identification could foster social cohesion also by promoting the advantaged to support social minorities.

Thirdly, results showed a unique negative contact-national identification path, meaning that previous negative experiences of interaction with migrants (like being unwelcomed and rejected) related to greater identification with the national ingroup. This effect was known in the rejection-identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999), according to which rejected individuals strengthen the identification with their ingroup as a way to cope with social exclusion. This model has been exclusively found among disadvantaged social groups, and the present findings highlighted that it could also apply to the majority group. Furthermore, whereas identification with the disadvantaged group acted as a positive resource protecting minority well-being, the findings showed that, among the majority group, the rejection-identification path could lead to collective behaviors undermining social cohesion via reduced collective action pro and increased collective action against migrants. Indeed, the literature showed that identification with the national group could promote collective action to improve the status of the advantaged national group (Thomas et al., 2020). Recent findings also showed that national identification promoted protests against refugees (Hasbun Lopez et al., 2019).

### **The empowerment path**

Group efficacy against and pro migrants mediated the effect of intergroup contact with both collective inclusion and exclusion. While supporting the SIMCA, the results extended the role of collective efficacy also for action against the disadvantaged and suggested that contact could influence the perception of the group's capability to support or oppose minority groups. Previous studies showed that vicarious contact (*i.e.*, observing ingroup members interacting with outgroup ones) increased individuals' perceived capability to positively interact with the outgroup (Mazziotta

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et al., 2011). Similarly, imagined contact led people to feel more confident about future outgroup interaction, whereas negative contact predicted lower perceived self-efficacy in outgroup interaction (Meleady & Forder, 2019).

The empowerment paths showed that intergroup contact could also promote group-related efficacy beliefs rather than self-related only. We found that previous positive (negative) contact with migrants related to increased participants' appraisal of their advantaged group's capability to act supporting the inclusion (exclusion) of migrants. Indeed, intergroup contact could influence both group-based evaluations of legitimacy and unfairness of the disadvantaged status and attribution of blame for the minority status (Cakal et al., 2016). Accordingly, positive contact with migrants could instill the advantaged group appraisal of the disadvantaged condition as illegitimate, unfair, and due to external factors, ultimately increasing the advantaged group perceived capability to ameliorate the disadvantaged status. Oppositely, negative contact could prompt the perception of the disadvantaged status as fair, legitimate, and due to the disadvantaged group's characteristics, empowering the advantaged to exclude the disadvantaged.

### **Social exclusion as an outcome of intergroup contact via the SIMCA paths**

A further strength of the current work is that it uncovered the processes leading collective and interpersonal action opposing migrants. The results showed that collective exclusion and inclusion of migrants largely rely on the same psychological processes, with the most significant exception being on the identification path. Furthermore, intergroup contact and moral convictions related to exclusion intentions via the emotional, identification with migrants, and empowerment paths. The key advancement of these findings is that they clarify why people may engage in exclusionary behaviors against the disadvantaged.

The present findings enrich the literature by showing that interpersonal social exclusion could be associated with individuals' differences in moral convictions and contextual factors related to

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previous experiences of intergroup contact with disadvantaged groups. Also, the results showed that emotional, empowerment, and identification mechanisms could further explain the association of intergroup contact and moral convictions with the exclusion of the disadvantaged.

### **Limitations and future research**

Future research should address some of the study's limitations. First, we provided cross-sectional data that could only inform about associations between the variables rather than causal paths. Although we preregistered the predictions of directionality between the effects and we framed the independent variables on intergroup contact to past experiences, future experimental studies need to provide more conclusive results.

Future research should also further investigate the reciprocal relationship between collective inclusion and collective exclusion of the disadvantaged. In the current work, we found a weak, marginally significant negative correlation between the latent variables of collective inclusion and exclusion. Future studies should determine if this was due to the specific collective action measured (*e.g.*, the variables coding the distribution of inclusion and exclusion leaflets were not significantly correlated; see Table 1) or to additional psychological processes predicting collective inclusion and exclusion. Future research could also deepen the investigation of the relationship between positive/negative contact and moral convictions. The correlations between the observed variables (Table 1) showed that moral convictions are positively correlated with positive contact and negatively with negative contact. Given the correlational nature of the study, we decided to hypothesize no directionality of the relations between the predictors. However, future longitudinal or experimental studies could clarify whether moral convictions predict contact or vice-versa. On the one hand, it could be that people with strong moral convictions against inequality are more open to seeking contact with the disadvantaged and engaging in friendly interactions with them. On the other, it could also be

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that previous experiences of positive and negative contact with minority group members could shape and modify the moral perspective towards them.

Another limitation consists in the analytical procedure we adopted, as we included some observed (the predictors and mediators) and some latent (the three outcomes) variables in the path models. We used such a hybrid approach aiming to reduce the number of parameters estimated to present an adequately powered, comprehensive SEM model simultaneously testing the four hypotheses of the study while ensuring clarity, interpretability, and synthesis of the findings. This approach could undermine the consistency of the analysis by considering constructs with different reliabilities (some including measurement errors, some not), and future studies should better plan the number of variables to include in the final SEM model to produce more consistent and reliable results.

Scholars could also identify additional mediators relevant for predicting collective action towards disadvantaged groups. For example, Hasbun Lopez *et al.* (2019) showed that autochthony beliefs influenced collective action intentions towards refugees, and research could test if such and similar worldviews could also influence the role of contact on collective actions. Furthermore, challenging but fascinating studies could be conducted on active demonstrators, potentially highlighting the psychological processes that effectively mobilize individuals. Lastly, research involving non-WEIRD (Heinrich *et al.*, 2010) participants could inform whether the processes uncovered by the present study could be generalized also to people from other global regions than Western Europe.

### **Conclusion**

The present preregistered research showed that positive and negative intergroup contact could influence collective action intentions pro and against migrants, as well as interpersonal exclusionary behaviors towards them via emotional, identification, and empowerment paths. Besides replicating the key role of moral convictions in predicting collective action, these findings enriched the literature

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on collective action, intergroup contact, and social exclusion uncovering new antecedents and outcomes of the traditional processes underlying advantaged groups' solidarity-based collective action. From an applied standpoint, the current work highlights what could be the specific processes to target, to prevent collective action undermining social cohesion and to promote social inclusion.

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