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RUNNING HEAD: Altruism born of suffering in NI

Altruism born of suffering among emerging adults in Northern Ireland

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### **Biographies**

Laura K. Taylor (PhD) is a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in the School of Psychology, Queen's University Belfast. Her research is framed by a developmental intergroup approach to study risk and resilience processes for youth in settings of protracted conflict. Her work has implications for youth outcomes, such as aggression, prosocial behaviours and social identity, as well as broader psychosocial processes, such as shared education and intergroup relations, which may fuel or constrain conflict. Toward this end, she studies how and why violence affects behaviours and attitudes related to conflict transformation, primarily during adolescence.

Jeffrey R. Hanna graduated with first class marks from the School of Psychology, Queen's University Belfast. During his undergraduate degree, he worked with Professor Rhiannon Turner on her programmatic line of research related to intergroup contact, including an innovative collaboration with Fiona White related to e-contact. In addition, he worked as a research assistant with Taylor and co-investigator Shelley McKeown Jones on their continued work on Altruism Born of Suffering and positive youth development.

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The paper explores altruism born of suffering (ABS), a theory that explains how the experience of suffering within one's own life may result in the motivation to help others, even outgroup members. **Design:** Participants were 186 emerging adults (63% female, 37% male; 69% Protestant, 41% Catholic; Average age = 21.3, Standard Deviation = 2.57, years old) in Northern Ireland, a setting of protracted intergroup conflict. Participants were randomly assigned to an in/outgroup condition, read four types of adversity that occurred to same-sex victim(s), and indicated their empathetic response and how much they would like to help the victims. **Findings:** Moderated mediation analyses revealed that empathy for the victim partially mediated the impact of perceived harm on desire to help; moreover, recent negative life events strengthened the link between harm and empathy. The path between empathy and helping was stronger in the outgroup compared to the ingroup condition. **Practical implications:** These findings support ABS, highlighting empathy as a key factor underlying more constructive intergroup relations in a divided society. **Originality:** This paper extends previous research on ABS by focusing on a post-accord context. The value of the current analyses demonstrate the important role of fostering empathy to promote outgroup helping in settings of divisive group identities.

*Keywords:* intergroup conflict, helping behaviours, altruism, empathy, Northern Ireland, prosocial behaviour

### **Altruism born of suffering among emerging adults in Northern Ireland**

Conflict between groups plagues dozens of countries around the world, while natural disasters such as earthquakes, flood and drought fill headlines. Facing these multiple forms of adversity, humans have a number of ways to respond. Altruism born of suffering (ABS; Staub, 2003; Staub and Vollhardt, 2008; Vollhardt, 2009), a theory developed to understand helping behaviours during the Holocaust, may shed light on the processes and conditions under which individuals respond to adversity by assisting others. Moreover, in divided societies, ABS may suggest pathways to promote intergroup helping behaviours (Taylor *et al.*, 2014). Understanding how past experiences shape individual responses to the suffering of others, such as empathy, is particularly important among young people. Past research has found that patterns of altruism and other prosocial orientations established in emerging adulthood often last across the life course (Bowman *et al.*, 2010). Toward this end, this is the first study to explore the role of ABS and its implications for improving intergroup relations among emerging adults in Northern Ireland (NI).

#### *Northern Ireland: Conflict and Context*

NI is a setting of protracted history of ethno-national struggle between those who wish to remain part of the United Kingdom and those who wish for a united Ireland (Darby, 1983). The most recent outbreak of sustained violence in NI was the 'The Troubles' (1968-1998), in which over 3,600 deaths, 35,000 injuries, and 14,000 bombings occurred (Goeke-Morey *et al.*, 2013). Almost two decades have passed following the signing of the 1998 Belfast Agreement, largely settling the constitutional dispute around territorial belonging. Yet, sporadic political violence persists, society remains largely divided and political stalemates are common. Despite intragroup variability along a number of dimensions (see Ferguson and Gordon, 2007), the two primary community backgrounds, Catholic and Protestant, often shape social interactions, such as school

attendance and neighbourhood (Hughes *et al.*, 2007). These divisions are still visually evident, from graffiti on walls to flags flying over segregated communities (McGrellis, 2005), and represent broader physical and psychological barriers between the groups. The current study examines one possible process that may improve out-group helping (i.e., along Catholic/Protestant lines) in a setting in which intergroup relations have been defined by animosity or avoidance (Bar-Tal, 2000). Thus, studying what factors may foster intergroup helping behaviours in this post-accord setting may hold insight for consolidating peace.

### *Roots of Altruism*

This paper defines altruism, a hotly debated topic, as the conscious state of a person in which their ultimate goal is to help or increase the welfare of another person (Batson, 2010). To understand possible intergroup helping during times of adversity, Staub (2003; 2005) developed the theory of altruism born of suffering (ABS). He explained how the experience of suffering within one's own life may result in the motivation to help others who are currently in distress: "Many people who have been neglected, physically or sexually abused, survived persecution, torture or genocide against their group, rather than becoming hostile or vengeful against the world devote themselves in significant ways to helping others" (Staub, 2003, p. 540).

Complementing theories which link intergroup conflict to outgroup aggression (Stroebe *et al.*, 2012), ABS recognises an alternative response to conflict. Building on the post-traumatic growth literature (Joseph and Linley, 2005), ABS incorporates a social psychological framework to outline mechanisms through which adversity, even in an intergroup setting, may lead to more altruistic responses, even toward outgroup members.

Staub and Vollhardt (2008) developed a useful heuristic that describes harm in terms of the victim (i.e., individual or collective victims) and intentionality (i.e., intentional or not-

intentional harm). For individual victims, the suffering caused can either be intentional or non-intentional. For example, sexual assault (Stidham *et al.*, 2012) and cancer (Ferrell *et al.*, 1995) affect individual persons in intentional and non-intentional ways, respectively. Past research may explain helping behaviours in response to individual intentional harm; for example, Campbell and Adams (2009) document that rape survivor's motivations to participate in focus groups were to help other survivors and support research on rape/sexual assault. At the same time, non-intentional harm may also affect individual people. For example, Godskesen *et al.* (2015) report the motivating factors in which cancer patients volunteer for clinical trials include hope for health benefits in establishing better treatments and the willingness to help. Other survivors share their stories or engage in helping professions, such as the health services, following cancer survival in the UK (Cancer Recovery Foundation, 2007). These responses to individual harm demonstrate altruistic responses after facing adversity.

At the collective level, suffering may also occur through both intentional and non-intentional ways, and both may lead to more altruistic responses. In the face of intentional collective harm, such as terrorism, Drury, Cocking and Reicher (2009) demonstrated helping in the aftermath of the London bombings in 2005. In the US, Steffen and Fothergill (2009) found an increase in altruistic responses following the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Gilcher (2001) highlighted the rise in blood donation following both the Oklahoma City bombings and tornadoes. The latter example shifts to a focus on non-intentional harm; natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina (Michel, 2007) and the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 (Becchetti *et al.*, 2012) have also been shown to be related to increased altruism. In the UK, air pollution victims are also more likely to take action in response to climate change (Whitmarsh, 2007). Across all four types of harm,

however, there may be similar underlying psychological processes at play that help to explain why individuals would be more likely to help others.

### *The Role of Empathy*

Although there are many definitions, the current paper understands empathy as an emotion by which individuals feel compassion, concern or sympathy toward others (Batson and Moran, 1999). The empathy-altruism hypothesis states that empathic concern, “an other-oriented emotion caused by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else” (Batson, 2010, p. 22), leads to altruistic motivation to help someone in need (Batson *et al.*, 2011). Other research supports the theoretical framework that altruistic behaviours are, at least, partially determined by the level of empathy one expresses toward the person in need; that is, empathy leads to altruism (Batson, 2012; Batson and Moran, 1999; Cialdini *et al.*, 1997; Eisenberg and Miller, 1987; Krebs, 1975; Roberts and Strayer, 1996; Toi and Batson, 1982).

ABS predicts that past suffering will enhance empathy and helping responses (Vollhardt, 2009; Vollhardt and Staub, 2011; Westmaas and Silver, 2006). That is, individuals may be more likely to engage in altruistic behaviours when they have experienced adverse life events compared to those who have not experienced negative life events. Such findings have been reported among HIV-positive individuals (Reeves *et al.*, 1999), as well as cancer (Ferrell *et al.*, 1995), sexual assault (Stidham *et al.*, 2012) and war survivors (Hartman and Morse, 2015). For example, in qualitative research HIV-positive individuals, they “repeatedly voiced their desire to help others” (Reeves *et al.*, 1999, p. 353). Those living with cancer also expressed altruistic motives for participating in clinical trials by helping to develop improved treatments for future patients (Godskesen *et al.*, 2015; Truong *et al.*, 2011). These findings suggest that personal



suffering may enhance helping acts. However, limited research has specifically tested the role of empathy for these relations in settings of divisive intergroup identities.

### *Helping in an Intergroup Context*

ABS outlines how helping behaviours may be extended to outgroup members, even in a setting of intergroup conflict or divided (Vollhardt and Staub, 2011). In such settings, experiences of harm lead individuals to re-categorise others as ‘fellow sufferers’ – this may lead to a common or shared identity (Gaertner *et al.*, 1993) in contrast to outgroup helping only exercised by strategic motivation, to gain power over the ingroup (Levine and Cassidy, 2009; Nadler, 2002; Nadler and Halabi, 2006). Instead, greater empathy and recognition of the harm caused may generate greater motivation to help both ingroup and outgroup members.

Past research has established the important role of empathy in explaining the link between perceiving the suffering of others and the motivation to help (Dovidio *et al.*, 2010). To understand helping in an intergroup context, Levine *et al.* (2005, study 2) demonstrated that a common identity of UK ‘football fan’ helped to explain when bystanders intervened to help an outgroup member (wearing the jersey of the opposing team) during an emergency situation. Vollhardt and Staub (2011, study 2) demonstrated that individuals (identifying as non-Asian) who had previously suffered traumatic events such as natural disasters, were more likely to display altruistic and prosocial behaviours, toward the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. In the US, even among Whites who identified strongly with their ingroup, empathy predicted support for social policies that would help Blacks (Saguy and Dovidio, 2008, cited in Dovidio *et al.*, 2010). These studies suggest that intergroup helping may occur in naturalistic settings, and more specifically, that empathy may be part of this underlying process. If empathy

is fostered toward an outgroup member, a reduction in prejudice should be evident and prosocial behaviours should emerge (Eisenberg and Miller, 1987).

Extending these findings to settings of protracted intergroup conflict, Hartman and Morse (2015) studied altruistic motivations in a diverse post-conflict society. Similar to ABS, they proposed that ‘empathy born from violence’ can result in increased altruism toward both ingroup and outgroup members. Testing their model in the Ivorian refugee crisis in Liberia, from 2010-2011, they illustrated how the experience of hardship and trauma led to an increase in empathetic concern, resulting in altruistic motivations toward both the ingroup and outgroup. Moreover, research in NI suggests that for youth, largely born after the peace accord, experiencing harm at the hands of the ingroup leads to more prosocial behaviours toward outgroup members overtime (Taylor *et al.*, 2014). Thus, there is also emerging support for ABS in setting of protracted conflict and contested intergroup identities.

### *Current Study*

Building on this previous research, the current study aimed to extend the support for ABS, testing its assumptions in post-accord NI. More specifically, this research examined how perceptions of harm related to the desire to help the victim(s). Consistent with the ABS theoretical framework, it was hypothesised that empathy would mediate the link between harm and helping; that is, individuals who perceived higher levels of harm to the victim(s) would also report higher levels of empathy and a stronger desire to help the victim(s). In addition, it was also expected that participants who had experienced more recent adverse life events would be more likely to report higher levels of empathy for the victim(s) in response to the perceived harm. Finally, extending these processes to intergroup-level, the study aimed to understand how

the ingroup or outgroup identity of the victim(s) affected the link between empathy and helping behaviours.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

One hundred and eighty six emerging adults (63% female, 37% male; 41% Catholic, 59% Protestant) between the ages of 18 and 28 years old (Mean age = 21.3, Standard Deviation = 2.57) participated. All individuals had been raised, with 91% born, in NI. In terms of education, 22% had left school, 37% were currently enrolled in university degree, 28% had completed their bachelor's degree, and 13% were enrolled or had completed a graduate degree. Many in the sample had previous opportunities for intergroup contact, including through integrated primary school (20%), integrated secondary school (25%), and shared education (36%). The sample was roughly the same breakdown in terms of Catholic/Protestant background, approximately the same in terms of educational qualifications (22% of working age population in NI has no qualifications; U4D, 2010; while 42% of graduating school pupils went on to higher education in 2015; DoE, 2016), but over-represented attendance in integrated education (approximately 7% in NI; Hughes and Loader, 2015).

### *Procedure and Materials*

Ethical approval was approved by *Author-Identifying University*. All participants were recruited through on-line outreach including Facebook and Twitter, targeting a range of educational institutions and community groups in NI. After giving informed consent online, participants were asked basic demographic information, including sex, Catholic/Protestant background and education. After completing the survey, participants could enter to win one of three £40 gift vouchers.

Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two between-subject conditions in which a gender-matched victim in a vignette was portrayed either as an ingroup or outgroup member. The ingroup/outgroup conditions were achieved using subtle, yet clearly understood cues, in NI. For example, participants' names and neighbourhoods were used that are distinct to each side of the divide. In a pilot study, names rated as *definitely/somewhat Catholic* included Ruairi (100%), Eimhear (96%), Eoin (100%) and Oisín (100%), whereas names selected as *definitely/somewhat Protestant* included Elizabeth (83%), Victoria (89%), Charles (85%) and William (96%). Additionally, contextual cues from the Catholic community included the Falls Road, Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and Derry, whereas from the Protestant community cues included the Shankill Road, the Northern Irish Football Cup and Londonderry.

Participants were then presented with a series of four vignettes, which were designed to fulfil four types of harm: individual/intentional; collective/intentional; individual/non-intentional; and collective/non-intentional (Vollhardt, 2009). Examples of vignettes were; an individual was beaten outside of a local leisure centre (individual/intentional); due to the economic downturn, a father was fired and the family home was repossessed (individual/non-intentional); a community event was cancelled due to dissident groups (collective/intentional); and a sport match was cancelled due to weather conditions (collective/non-intentional).<sup>2</sup> Participants were presented with three to four fidelity questions that ensured participants read each vignette; if the majority of the fidelity questions were not correct, the participant was eliminated for that vignette.

Following the fidelity checks, participants responded to six questions for each vignette, adapted from Vollhardt and Staub (2011). The three items used in this study included: how much

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<sup>2</sup> Full vignettes available in an on-line appendix / from the first author.

*harm* had been caused in the vignette, to what degree they *empathised* with, and to what extent they wanted to *help* the victim(s). Participants responded using an eleven-point scale ranging from 0 = “not at all” to 10 = “a lot.”

Participants also completed the *Life Events Scale (LES)* developed by Williamson *et al.* (2003). This scale assesses the number of recent life events; items were included if participants reported experiencing them in the past year. The twenty-eight items included events such as death of a family members, major personal illness or injury and breaking up with boyfriend/girlfriend; participants could also add their own events. For each of the life events selected, participants were then asked to indicate the degree that the event was negative or positive on a seven-point scale, ranging from -3 “extremely negative” to +3 “extremely positive.” Consistent with ABS, anyone who reported at least one negative life event was included (i.e., original score was 0 to -3). This variable was rescaled so that higher values represented more negative impact of the lift event, 0 “neutral” to 3 “extremely negative.” The average of all negative events was calculated for each participant.

## **Results**

Preliminary analyses examined the main variables of interest. A separate repeated measures mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted for harm, empathy and help, respectively; there were no significant between-group mean differences for the ingroup/outgroup condition. For the purposes of this study, responses were averaged across the four vignettes to get an overall picture of how ABS may unfold in this setting. Thus, Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, ranges and bivariate correlations for all variables.

For the primary analyses, age, gender, and Catholic/Protestant identity were used as demographic controls and moderated mediation was tested using Model 21, in PROCESS

(Hayes, 2013) in SPSS 21. In the mediation, the conditional effect of harm on helping through empathy was examined (Figure 1). Bootstrapped mediation was used with 5,000 replications to estimate the bias corrected bootstrap confidence intervals of the indirect effects.

The overall model explained 58% of the variance in desire to help. That is, across the four types of vignettes, the average harm predicted the average desire to help the victim, as mediated by the average empathy. In addition, the path from harm to empathy was moderated by the individual's recent negative life events. Moreover, the path from empathy to helping was moderated by ingroup/outgroup status of the victim. The conditional effects will be presented first, followed by an overall interpretation of the moderated mediation model.

As expected, the link between harm caused to the victim and empathy felt for the victim in the vignettes was significantly and positively related ( $b = .39$ ,  $se = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and the main effect of negative recent life events also related to higher empathy ( $b = .57$ ,  $se = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In addition, the interaction was significant ( $b = -.28$ ,  $se = .09$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The impact of harm in the vignette on empathy for that victim was moderated by the individual's own recent negative life events. That is, those with higher levels of recent negative events were more empathetic compared to those with lower levels of negative life events. For those with fewer negative life events, however, there was still a positive link between perceived harm and empathy for the victim. Regarding the demographic variables, gender and age had no significant relation on empathy for the victim in the vignette; however, compared to Protestant participants, Catholics reported more empathy ( $b = -.78$ ,  $se = .26$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

In the path from empathy to helping, there were also a significant main and interaction effect; however, the direction of the interaction was surprising. First, across all four conditions, greater empathy ( $b = .75$ ,  $se = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and more perceived harm ( $b = .16$ ,  $se = .07$ ,  $p < .05$ )

were related to more a stronger desire to help the victim(s) in the vignettes. Second, the main effect of in/outgroup status of the target was not significant ( $b = .22$ ,  $se = .21$ , ns); that is, individuals did not report that they were more or less likely to help based of on the group identity of the victim. However, the interaction of group identity and empathy was significant ( $b = .28$ ,  $se = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ). That is, there was a stronger link from empathy to helping the outgroup compared to helping ingroup victims.

Finally, regarding the conditional mediation, the path from harm to help remained significant ( $b = .16$ ,  $se = .07$ ,  $p < .05$ ); that is, there was partial mediation of the effect of harm on helping through empathy. The bootstrapped confidence intervals were significant; that is, 0 was not in the 95% confidence interval estimated at one standard deviation below and above the means for recent negative life events and for in/out group identity of the victim. The only exception was for the high negative life events/outgroup condition; for individuals who have faced many negative events in their personal lives, empathy mediated their desire to help an outgroup member in the vignette at the trend level.<sup>3</sup>

### Discussion

The current study aimed to apply the ABS theory among emerging adults in NI to examine how perceived harm related to the desire to help ingroup and outgroup victims. In a between-person experimental design, empathy partially mediated the link between perceived harm and the desire to help the victim across a range of vignettes. Moreover, recent negative life events also moderated the path from perceived harm to empathy for the victim; individuals who had recently suffered were more sensitised to the harm of others and reported more empathy. The link from empathy to helping was stronger in the outgroup, compared to the ingroup, condition.

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<sup>3</sup> The pattern of moderated mediation largely held across each of the four types of harm; insufficient power did not permit statistical testing of differences across harm type.

This finding suggests that empathy plays a particularly important role in promoting outgroup helping.

Consistent with previous research, across multiple dimensions of harm, there was support for the empathy-altruism hypothesis (Batson, 2010). In response to reading vignettes about adversity such as being beaten up, unemployment, cancelled community event or football match, individuals with greater empathetic responses were more likely to report an altruistic motivation to help the victim(s) in need. This direction supports a social psychological approach suggesting empathy would relate to more prosocial tendencies.

Further supporting ABS, this empathetic response was enhanced by the negative impact of recent life events (Vollhardt, 2009; Vollhardt and Staub, 2011). The average level of recent negative life events, such as losing a loved one, dropping out of school, etc., strengthened the relation between perceived harm and empathy for the victim(s). Previous research has suggested that this moderated effect may be due to individuals who have experienced suffering may reclassify the target in need through a common, or shared, victim identity. Thus, empathy may be enhanced by the creation of shared group memberships or forging of a common ingroup identity model (Gaertner *et al.*, 1993).

The identity of the target, however, did suggest that empathy may play a particularly important role for helping outgroup members. That is, the moderation effect found that there was a stronger relation between empathy and outgroup helping, compared to ingroup helping. This finding supports ABS empathy is positively related to higher helping for both groups, however, the emotion of feeling compassion or concern for an outgroup victim may be key to understanding intergroup helping. Therefore, empathy may be a particularly important response to foster to improve intergroup relations (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008).



This paper is not without limitations, however. First, analyses used single-items to assess *harm*, *empathy* and *help*, consistent with Vollhardt and Staub (2011). Second, the order of effects of the mediation cannot be teased apart without longitudinal data. Therefore, future research, with multiple points of measurement, is recommended to better understand the links among empathy and helping, particularly toward outgroup members. This approach is recommended as previous research has found positive reciprocal effects in which outgroup helping predict more positive outgroup attitudes over time (Taylor *et al.*, 2014). Third, other research has investigated the ‘dark side’ of empathy and outgroup helping (Hoffman, 1991; Stürmer and Snyder, 2009; van Leeuwen and Täuber, 2009); while not the focus of the current study, future research should consider such motivations. In addition, the goal of the current paper was not to interrogate philosophical questions such as if self-interest undermines and negates altruistic acts (Hein, Morishima, Leiberg, Sul and Fehr, 2016; Keltner, Kogan, Piff, and Saturn, 2014).

Fourth, findings may have been influenced by the largely integrated nature of NI higher education. Participants (84%) currently enrolled or who have completed some form of higher education would have had greater opportunity for positive intergroup contact, which is related to intergroup friendship (Paolini *et al.*, 2004). Fifth, the recruitment strategy using social media would not reach all sectors of the emerging adult population; overall in NI, 65% of individuals report using Facebook while 33% report using Twitter (McGarrity, 2015). Thus, generalisation of these findings may be limited and future work should replicate these findings with a representative sample of the general population, as well as with a younger cohort that attend segregated schools in NI. This latter approach will help to identify which groups to target for interventions aiming to improve intergroup relations.

*Implications for Intervention*

Despite a history of conflict, the findings identify empathy as one mechanism that may help to foster more constructive intergroup relations, particularly outgroup helping, in NI. Thus, interventions which can increase empathy may have longer-term implications for intergroup relations; facilitating intergroup contact may be one such avenue to promote empathy (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008; Hewstone *et al.*, 2008). For youth, interventions through integrated education (Hayes *et al.*, 2007) and the Shared Education Programme (Hughes *et al.*, 2007) in NI should specifically aim to enhance the positive impact of intergroup contact by promoting empathy. Outside of formal education initiatives, similar principles may inform services aimed to reach young people no longer in education or training (CFSP, 2016). Thus, programmes aiming to build positive and sustainable future in a post-conflict society should explicitly focus on empathy. The long-term impact of enhancing outgroup helping may support broader peacebuilding initiatives that aim to foster constructive intergroup relations.

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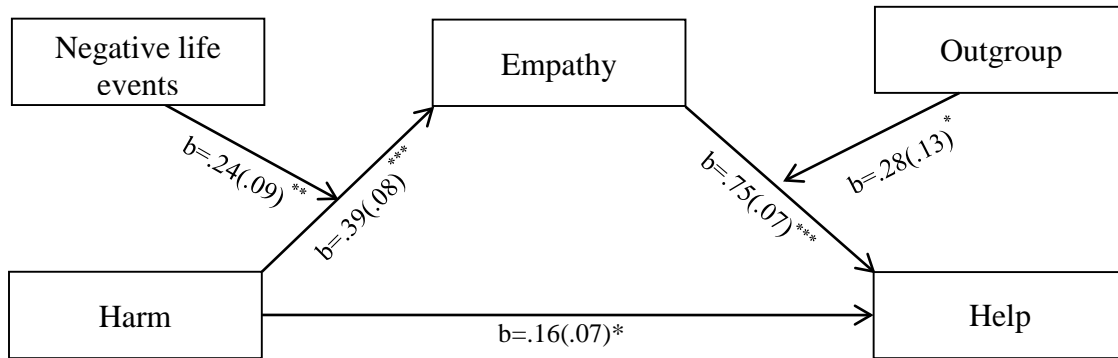
Table 1

*Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), Ranges and Bivariate Correlations*

|                        | M                            | SD   | Range | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4     | 5      |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|--------|
| 1 Protestant           | 59% Protestant, 41% Catholic |      |       | -    | .06  | .04  | .10   | -.01   |
| 2 Female               | 63% female, 37% male         |      |       | -.16 | -    | .04  | .36** | .08    |
| 3 Age                  | 21.34                        | 2.57 | 18-28 | .24* | .07  | -    | .07   | .09    |
| 4 Negative Life Events | 1.51                         | 0.81 | 0-3   | .07  | .09  | .04  | -     | -.07   |
| 5 Harm                 | 5.91                         | 1.67 | 0-10  | .23* | .05  | .12  | -.12  | -      |
| 6 Empathy              | 6.80                         | 1.69 | 2-10  | .14  | .16  | -.07 | .23   | .45*** |
| 7 Help                 | 6.50                         | 1.86 | 2-10  | .05  | .22* | -.16 | .13   | .43*** |

*Note:* Correlations for the ingroup condition are displayed below the diagonal and outgroup condition are displayed above the diagonal. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Figure 1. Bootstrapped moderated mediation model for Study 1. Unstandardized coefficients (b) with standard errors reported in parenthesis are reported. Demographic control variables of age, gender and Catholic/Protestant identity are left off for readability. Significant partial mediation; all conditional mediated indirect effects were significant with a 95% confidence interval, except high suffering/outgroup. Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



**Online Appendix: Vignettes**  
**Individual / Intentional**

Student **Elizabeth/Timothy/ Siobhan/ Sean**, from **Londonderry/Derry**, moved to Belfast, at the start of the new term, where **she/he** is studying Medicine at Queen's University, Belfast. Since starting **her/his** first placement, **she/he** finds **herself/himself** very tired and stressed, with fourteen hour shifts, four days a week. To relieve **her/his** stress, **Elizabeth/Timothy/ Siobhan/ Sean** decided to join the gym at **Shankill Leisure Centre/ Falls Leisure Centre**. One evening, as **she/he** was leaving the gym, **she/he** was approached by a group of youths, and asked details about **herself/himself**, including where **she/he** was from, **her/his** full name and other personal details about **herself/himself**. **She/he** was severely beaten by the group, and left with a fractured jaw, broken ribs and injuries to **her/his** face. **Elizabeth/Timothy/ Siobhan/ Sean** is now afraid to go out in public and fears for **her/his** own life, and has recently decided to drop out of university, and moved back to **Londonderry/Derry**, as **she/he** no longer feels safe living in Belfast.

Fidelity Checks

1. Where was **Elizabeth/Timothy/ Siobhan/ Sean** from?
2. Which leisure centre did **Elizabeth/Timothy/ Siobhan/ Sean** join?
3. What was **Elizabeth/Timothy/ Siobhan/ Sean** studying?

**Individual / Non-Intentional**

Due to the recent economic downturn and governmental cuts, the **Robinson/O'Neill** family are among many of those to become affected by its impact. The family consists of six members including; **Andrew/Eoin** (dad), **Charlotte/Marie Therese** (mum), sons, **Richard/Ruairi** (aged 16), **Phillip/Concobhar** (aged 14) and **Harry/Oisín** (aged 11) and daughter, **Alice/Eimhear** (age 7). Both **Andrew/Eoin** and **Charlotte/Marie Therese** worked for J. Harrison and Sons, however due to the company closure, they both found themselves redundant. Since then, they have struggled financially, with their home repossessed by the bank, due to missed mortgage payments. The housing executive placed the family in a two bedroom flat. The family are now experiencing a lot of conflict, with **Andrew/Eoin** and **Charlotte/Marie Therese** constantly arguing, and the kids are performing poorer at school, where **Richard/Ruairi** (aged 16), who was expected to achieve ten top GCSE grades, only achieved two grade C passes, in the summer exams.

Fidelity Checks

1. How many children does **Andrew/Eoin** and **Charlotte/Marie Therese** have?
2. What exams was **Richard/Ruairi** sitting?

### Collective / Intentional

**Matthew/Naomi/Cormac/Caoimhe** lives in Kilkeel, and having attended **Kilkeel High School/St. Louis Grammar School** and participating in the Shared Education Programme in Northern Ireland (whereby Protestant and Catholic schools come together for shared classes), **he/she** has gained a new respect for diversity, and wants the local community in Kilkeel to become more inclusive and less segregated, where in Kilkeel it is very much known to have Catholic and Protestant parts of town. Having gained new friendships from the other community in Kilkeel, **he/she** wants everyone else to have this opportunity. **Matthew/Naomi/Cormac/Caoimhe** has started to take action, where **he/she** has sought funding from peace organisations to have a funfair day in Kilkeel, which will allow many of the other members of the community to get to know one another. Dissident groups were not happy at this, and the night before the event was due to take place, a bomb was found in Kilkeel, which would have been set off during the event, and therefore the event was cancelled.

#### Fidelity Checks

1. What school did **Matthew/Naomi/Cormac/Caoimhe** attend?
2. What programme did **Matthew/Naomi/Cormac/Caoimhe** participate in?
3. Why was the event cancelled?

### Collective & non-intentional - Catholic version

The **Antrim Vs. Tyrone GAA** cup final was set to take place last weekend. The organisers worked very hard all year and have been preparing for the cup final which for the first time was set to take place in Casement Park, the home of Gaelic athletic association in Belfast. Over 32,000 tickets had been sold for the event and the match that would take place been **St.Brigid's** (Cloughmills, Antrim) and **Clogher Eire óg** (Tyrone) was said to be anyone's game and would go down in history. Due to excessive rain last week, the grounds were flooded and were not suitable for the match to take place. As a result, the game was cancelled. Both teams and fans were extremely disappointed having trained exceptionally hard for the match.

### Collective / Non-intentional - Protestant version

The **Northern Irish football cup** final was set to take place last weekend. The organisers worked very hard all year and have been preparing for the cup final which was due to take place in **Windsor Park**, the home of **Linfield** and **Northern Ireland** football clubs. Over 10,000 tickets had been sold for the event and the match that would take place been **Glentoran** and **Linfield** was said to be anyone's game and would go down in history. Due to excessive rain last week, the grounds were flooded and were not suitable for the match to take place. As a result, the game was cancelled. Both teams and fans were extremely disappointed having trained exceptionally hard for the match.

#### Fidelity Checks

1. What cup final was due to take place last weekend?

2. How many tickets had been sold?
3. Why was the event cancelled?