Normative Multiculturalism in Socio-Political Context

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Abstract

Normative multiculturalism refers to individuals' perceptions about the extent to which interactions between culturally diverse groups, multicultural policies and practices, and diversity-valuing ideologies are common or normative in one's society. In this paper, we explore these dimensions of normative multiculturalism as predictors of social connectedness (trust) and psychological well-being (flourishing) in two socio-political contexts: The United States and the United Kingdom. Two hundred and eighty-four residents (143 Hispanics and 141 non-Hispanic Whites) in the United States and 375 (125 British Indians and 250 British Whites) participated in the research. The results revealed that normative Multicultural Ideology predicted greater trust and normative Multicultural Contact predicted greater flourishing in both countries; however, minority-majority group status moderated the effects in different ways in the two contexts. The positive effects of normative multicultural ideology were confined to Hispanics in the United States, while in the United Kingdom it held for both groups with the effects being stronger for Whites. In addition, the positive effects of normative multicultural contact on flourishing was stronger for Indians than for Whites in the United Kingdom. The findings are discussed in relation to socio-political context and group characteristics along with limitations of the research.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Norms, Social Cohesion, Well-being

Normative Multiculturalism in Socio-Political Context

Multiculturalism is a highly contentious topic, variably described as the cure for social problems and the cause of social ills. Recognizing that at least part of the controversy surrounding multiculturalism arises from lack of a common consensus about its nature and definition (Ward et al., 2018), we have begun a program of research grounded in long-standing theorizing by Berry (2005, 2013) and more recent research by Guimond and associates (Guimond et al., 2013, 2014). The research is based on the premise that diversity is necessary, but not sufficient, to define multiculturalism. Beyond cultural heterogeneity, a multicultural society is characterized by a widespread appreciation and valuing of diversity as well as the policies and practices to support and accommodate it. Multiculturalism safeguards cultural maintenance for diverse groups, while also ensuring equitable participation (Berry & Sam, 2014; Berry & Ward, 2016). This means that diverse groups must be in contact with each other, rather than leading separate, parallel lives.

In our evolving program of research, the core components of multiculturalism have been described as Multicultural Contact, Multicultural Ideology, and Multicultural Policies and Practices. In addition, we have adopted a normative perspective as advocated by Guimond et al. (2014, p. 164), who have argued that intergroup ideologies, including views of multiculturalism, are not "located solely in individual minds," but are shared by members of a social group and become normative. Furthermore, these broad normative ideologies influence individuals' intergroup attitudes and behaviors. Consequently, we have proposed a tri-dimensional conceptualization of normative multiculturalism, described as

> …individuals' perceptions of the extent to which interactions between culturally diverse groups, multicultural policies and practices, and diversity-valuing ideologies are common or normative in one's society (Stuart & Ward, 2019, p. 313).

In essence, this captures individuals' normative perceptions of their national multicultural climate. Of particular interest is how normative multiculturalism relates to social cohesion and well-being.

Social Connectedness and Psychological Well-being

Trust is key indicator of social cohesion, and in general, research has shown that individuals tend to trust in-group members more than out-group members (Chen & Li, 2009). However, there is evidence to suggest that multicultural contact and multicultural ideology may lead to greater general trust. First, research has shown that both direct and extended intergroup contact provides a means for increasing out-group trust (Tam et al., 2009). Positive intergroup contact within neighborhoods has been linked to greater in-group, out-group, and neighborhood trust (Schmid et al., 2014) while residential segregation in both the United States and the United Kingdom has been associated with mistrust (Ulsaner, 2012).

At the same time, "comfort with difference" is positively associated with greater general trust (Han, 2017). Normative multicultural ideology, which reflects a national acceptance of diversity, may increase the permeability of intergroup boundaries and open up the possibility that general trust increases. Indeed, Stuart and Ward (2019) found that normative Multicultural Ideology predicted greater general trust in a predominantly White British sample, and we expect this pattern to replicate in the findings reported here. However, research has shown that there are ethnic differences in generalized trust, with minorities being less trusting and that these differences are partially explained by the experience of discrimination (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002). Therefore, it is further hypothesized that perceptions of normative Multicultural Ideology, which reflects valuing of diversity, will exert a stronger positive effect on trust for minorities compared to majority group members.

Beyond contributing to social cohesion, it may also be the case that multicultural norms have implications for psychological well-being. Certainly there is ample evidence that social context influences subjective well-being (Helliwell & Putnam, 2013); however, research demonstrating the proximal effects of normative multicultural contact, ideology, and policies on well-being is rare. Schachner and associates' research on normative diversity climates found a marginally significant effect of equality and inclusion norms, reflecting positive intercultural contact, on psychological and social well-being in immigrant children (Schachner et al., 2016). More broadly, it has been suggested that intercultural contact fosters social capital, bridging and enhancing linkages across social groups, and research has shown that this bridging capital is associated with greater flourishing and lower levels of psychological distress in immigrant and disadvantaged minorities, respectively (Ando, 2014; Mitchell & LaGory, 2002). Beyond intercultural contact norms, our own research has shown that both normative multicultural ideology and policies predict greater psychological well-being in Korean immigrants in New Zealand (Ward et al., 2020). To the best of our knowledge, however, evidence of the direct effect of these multicultural norms on well-being for majority groups is lacking. Accordingly, we hypothesize that normative multicultural contact, ideology, and policies and practices predict psychological well-being in minority groups and pose the research question as to whether this is also the case for majority group members.

The Socio-Political Context

The collection of data from multiple countries in our developing program of research on normative multiculturalism permits us to explore the extent to which findings converge across socio-political contexts. In this paper, we focus on two of these countries, the United States and the United Kingdom. In each country majority Whites and a minority group (Hispanics in the U.S. and Indians in the U.K.) are included. The contexts and groups are described in more detail in the remainder of this section.

While there are many ways to assess cultural diversity, measures of ethnic fractionalization, the likelihood that two randomly selected individuals in the same country are from different ethnic groups, indicate that the United States is more diverse than the United Kingdom (Patsiurko et al., 2012). The proportion of immigrants in the two countries

is almost identical: 13.7% in the U.S. (Radford & Noe-Bustamante, 2019) and 14% in the U.K. (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2018); however, the migration trends and source countries differ significantly. In the United States, half of the foreign-born population originates from Latin American countries, and overall Hispanics make up 18% of the U.S. population, now outnumbering African Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Within the United States, Hispanics face major social and economic inequalities compared to other ethnic groups, particularly in terms of education, employment, and health outcomes (Center for American Progress, 2012). In the United Kingdom, by contrast, 39% of immigrants are from the European Union, the largest group being Poles. Immigrants from non-EU countries tend to originate from former colonies, with Indians and Pakistanis being the largest groups (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2018). Based on the most recent census, Indians make up 2.3% of the U.K.'s population with only British black/Afro-Caribbeans (3%) being a larger visible minority (World Atlas, 2019). Indians in the United Kingdom fare well in terms of education and employment outcomes when compared to other ethnic minorities; they also have a high level of social integration (Castles, 2009).

National surveys indicate that Americans hold more positive attitudes toward diversity than do the British with 90% compared to 67% agreeing that it is a good thing for a country to be made up of different races, religions, and cultures (Pew Research Center, 2009; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Despite these positive views of diversity as an abstract principle, both countries have predominantly negative views about the impact of immigration (Ambrose & Mudde, 2015). Finally, the United Kingdom has stronger multicultural policies than the United States. It ranks equal fifth (with New Zealand) among 21 contemporary democracies compared to the United States at eleventh, on par with Ireland (Multicultural Policy Index, 2010).

Method

Participants

Two hundred and eighty-four adults (62.3% female) resident in the United States participated in the research. Participants were equally distributed across two ethnic groups (Hispanics, $n = 143$, 51.7% female; non-Hispanic Whites, $n = 141$, 73% female), and most (96.5%) were U.S. citizens. The majority (86.3%) of the participants were born in the United States. Of those born overseas, the mean length of residence in the United States was 31.65 years ($SD = 20.24$). The sample was diverse in age, ranging from 18 to 87 years; $M = 39.88$, $SD = 17.29$.

Three hundred and seventy-five adults resident in the United Kingdom made up the British sample. Of these 250 self-identified as British Whites (48.4% female) and 125 (56.8% female) identified as British Indians. The majority (79.5%) were born in the United Kingdom. Of those born overseas, the mean length of residence was 14.81 years ($SD = 12.13$). The sample was diverse in terms of age, ranging from 18-80 years; $M = 39.19$, $SD = 12.19$.

Measures

The survey included the Normative Multiculturalism Scale and measures of social connectedness (Trust) and well-being (Flourishing). In addition, demographic and background information was collected including: ethnicity, age, gender, country of birth, and if overseas-born, length of residence in the United States or United Kingdom.

Normative multiculturalism

We used the Normative Multiculturalism Scale (NMS; Stuart & Ward, 2019) to assess the perception that the social environment in which one resides is characterized by: (a) Multicultural Contact (four items; e.g., "*It is likely that you will interact with people from many different cultures on any given day*"); (b) Multicultural Policies and Practices (six items; e.g., "*Institutional practices are often adapted to the specific needs of ethnic minorities*"); and (c) Multicultural Ideology (seven items; e.g., "*Most people think that it is good to have different groups with distinct cultural backgrounds living in the country*"). Responses were prompted by "In the United States/United Kingdom, …" and were measured on a 5-point Likert Scale, *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5) so that higher scores indicate perceptions of greater contact with diversity, more policies and practices that promote cultural maintenance and participation, and a stronger national multicultural ideology.

In the current study, good internal reliability for the NMS subscales was found in the United States sample: Hispanics (α = .70 - .82) and Whites (α = .69 - .79). In the U.K. the alphas ranged from .70-.75 for Whites and .62 to .72 for Indians (see Table 1).

Table 1.
Psychometric Properties of the Measurement Scales

| | United States | | | | United Kingdom | | | |
| | Whites | | Hispanics | | Whites | | Indians | |
	M (*SD*)	α	*M* (*SD*)	α	*M* (*SD*)	α	*M* (*SD*)	α
MPP	2.70	.79	3.01	.82	3.35	.73	3.27	.70
	(.59)		(.74)		(.55)		(.60)	
MI	3.47	.77	3.24	.70	3.09	.75	3.38	.72
	(.57)		(.63)		(.58)		(.63)	
MC	3.60	.69	4.13	.72	3.90	.70	4.11	.62
	(.69)		(.62)		(.60)		(.51)	
Trust	3.49	.83	3.00	.82	3.11	.86	3.12	.94
	(.59)		(.71)		(.67)		(.70)	
Flourishing	6.07	.94	5.86	.89	5.13	.91	5.58	.91
	(.81)		(.82)		(.94)		(.91)	

Notes. MPP = Multicultural Policies and Practices, MI = Multicultural Ideology, MC = Multicultural Contact.

Trust

The measure of Trust from the World Values Survey (2012) was adapted in order to measure general trust in others by changing the original items from a categorical response option to a continuous Likert scale and anchoring the responses to "others in the United States/Great Britain." The scale included six items such as, "*Generally speaking, most people can be trusted in this country.*" Participants responded to each statement on a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5) so that higher scores were indicative of greater trust. In the current study, the measure was found to have good internal reliability in both Hispanics ($\alpha = .82$) and Whites ($\alpha = .83$) in the United States and Indians ($\alpha = .94$) and Whites ($\alpha = .86$) in Great Britain.

Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being was assessed with the eight-item Flourishing scale by Diener et al. (2009). Sample items include "*In most ways I lead a purposeful and meaningful life*," and "*I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.*" Participants were asked to report how they feel about themselves after reading each item on a 7-point scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree* so that higher scores reflect greater flourishing. In the current study, measures of flourishing yielded Cronbach alphas of .91 for British Indians and Whites, .89 for Hispanics and .94 for Whites in the United States.

Procedure

The studies were approved by our School of Psychology's Human Ethics Committee under the delegated authority of the University's Human Ethics Committee. Participants were invited to complete an online survey about multiculturalism if they were aged 18 and over and resident in the United States or United Kingdom. In the United States, Whites and Hispanics were recruited through various means including direct approaches to ethnic organizations and posting on online forums and social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Reddit), as well as crowdsourcing platforms. British participants were initially recruited through a crowdsourcing platform, which returned a sample of 93% Whites. This was followed by a targeted recruitment of British Indians.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The psychometric properties of the measurement scales are presented in Table 1. Prior to hypotheses-testing, the measurement invariance between the minority (Hispanic or Indian) and majority (White) groups was examined separately in the United States and the United Kingdom. The results of the Multi-group Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Hispanics and Whites in the United States are reported in Watters, Ward and Stuart (2020). The findings showed that configural and metric, but not scalar, equivalence was established for the

Table 2.

Fit and Equivalence of the Normative Multiculturalism Facets in the British Sample

	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	γHat	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA	ΔγHat
Multicultural Policies and Practices							
Configural	.910	.117[.079,.156]	.059	.936			
Metric	.909	.104[.069,.139]	.066	.949	.001	.013	-.013
Scalar	.899	.099[.069,.131]	.071	.950	.011	.004	-.001
Multicultural Contact							
Configural	.996	.037[.000,.133]	.133	.994			
Metric	1.000	.000[.000,.080]	.080	1.007	-.004	.037	-.013
Scalar	.994	.028[.000,.091]	.091	.996	.006	-.028	.011
Multicultural Ideology							
Configural	.943	.083[.047,.118]	.052	.962			
Metric	.951	.069[.032,.102]	.056	.973	-.008	.014	-.011
Scalar	.916	.084[.056,.111]	.076	.959	.035	-.014	.014

Notes. All indicators are estimated using an MLM estimator, reporting the robust variants.

Normative Multiculturalism Scale. In the British samples, the initial unmodified three-factor model of Normative Multiculturalism did not demonstrate a good fit to the data. Consequently, we tested the measurement invariance of the three NMS factors, Multicultural Ideology, Multicultural Contact and Multicultural Policies and Practices for British Whites and Indians (Fischer & Karl, 2019). The results, reported in Table 2, show that metric equivalence was established across each of the three factors without modifications, but that scalar equivalence was not consistently achieved. As the criteria for multigroup metric equivalence were met in both the British and American samples, this means that we can compare the relationships between the normative multiculturalism domains and the indicators of well-being and social connectedness in national minority and majority groups; however, because scalar equivalence could not be consistently established, we cannot compare the mean scores for Multicultural Contact, Multicultural Ideology, and Multicultural Policies and Practices.

Hypotheses Testing

The United States and United Kingdom data were analyzed separately by hierarchical regression with age and gender as controls, ethnicity entered in the second step, the NMS subscales (MPP, MI, and MC) entered in the third step, and the interactions between ethnicity and each subscale in the final step. The findings are reported below by outcome variables: trust and flourishing (see Table 3).

Table 3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Well-Being and Social Connectedness within the U.S. and the U.K.

|	Well-Being				Social Connectedness Among Members of Society			
U.S.	Flourishing				Trust in Others			
Step	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Age	.09	.07	.10	.09	.28***	.24***	.26***	.25***
Gender	.05	.03	.01	.01	.17**	.09	.09	.09
Ethnicity		.11	.14*	.15*		.31***	.23***	.23***
MPP			-.10	-.09			-.07	-.06
MI			.06	.02			.18**	.30***
MC			.17*	.27**			-.07	-.11
MPP X Ethnicity				-.01				-.03
MI X Ethnicity				.06				-.18*
MC X Ethnicity				-.14				.06
R^2	.008	.020	.048*	.057	.084***	.172***	.206***	.225***
ΔR^2		.012	.028*	.009		.088***	.034**	.018
U.K.								
Step	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Age	.02	.05	.06	.06	.02	.05	.06	
Gender	.05	.07	.10	.01	.05	.07	.10	
Ethnicity		-.24***	-.20***	-.18***		-.24***	-.20***	
MPP			.15**	.14			.15**	
MI			.02	.01			.02	
MC			.27***	.43***			.27***	
MPP X Ethnicity				.02				
MI X Ethnicity				.01				
MC X Ethnicity				-.19*				
R^2	.003	.057***	.163***	.172***	.003	.057***	.163***	
ΔR^2		.054***	.106***	.009		.054***	.106***	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Notes: MPP = Multicultural Policies and Practices, MI = Multicultural Ideology, MC = Multicultural Contact.

Trust

In the United States, being older ($ß = .25$, $p < .001$) and White ($ß = .23$, $p < .001$) predicted greater trust as did perceptions of strong ideological norms in favor of multiculturalism ($ß = .30$, $p < .001$).   However, the relationship between Multicultural Ideology and trust was moderated by ethnicity ($ß = -.18$, $p < .05$). Further analysis of the interaction effect revealed that normative Multicultural Ideology was associated with greater trust for Hispanics ($t(278) = 3.97$, $p < .001$), but that this relationship did not hold for Whites, $t(278) = .42$, *ns.*). The interaction is graphed in Figure 1. Together these variables accounted for 22.5% of the variance in trust.

Figure 1.
The Interaction Between Ethnicity and Multicultural Ideology in Predicting Trust in the U.S.
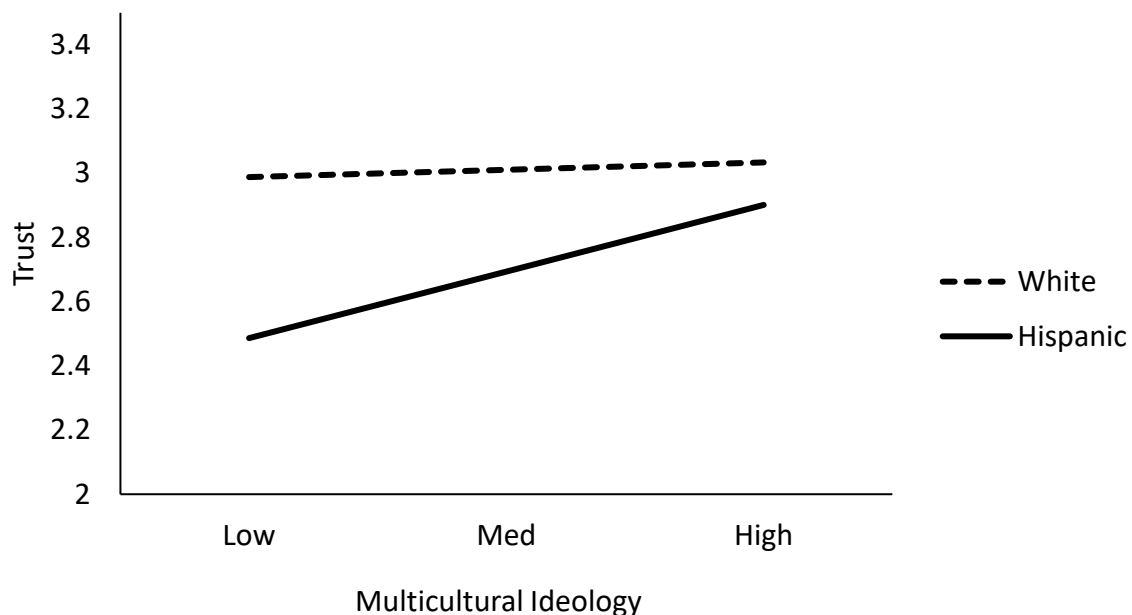
In the United Kingdom, age ($ß = .16$, $p < .01$) and Multicultural Ideology ($ß = .21$, $p < .05$) also positively predicted trust. Additionally, a significant interaction effect was found between ethnicity and MI ($ß = .16$, $p < .05$). Normative Multicultural Ideology was associated with greater trust for both groups; however, the effects were stronger for Whites ($ß = .38$) compared to Indians ($ß = .23$). $T_w (371) = 8.41$, $p < .001$), and $t_i (371) = 2.46$ $p < .015$ as seen in Figure 2. In combination these factors explained 15.9% of the variance in the trust outcome.

Figure 2.
The Interaction Between Ethnicity and Multicultural Ideology in Predicting Trust in the U.K.
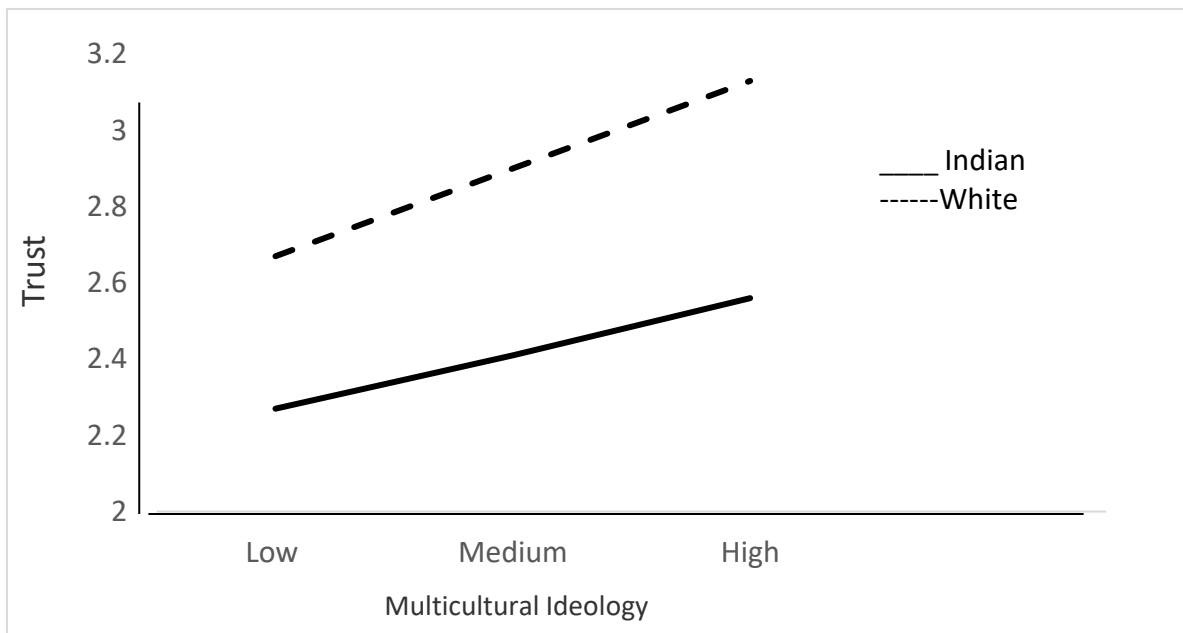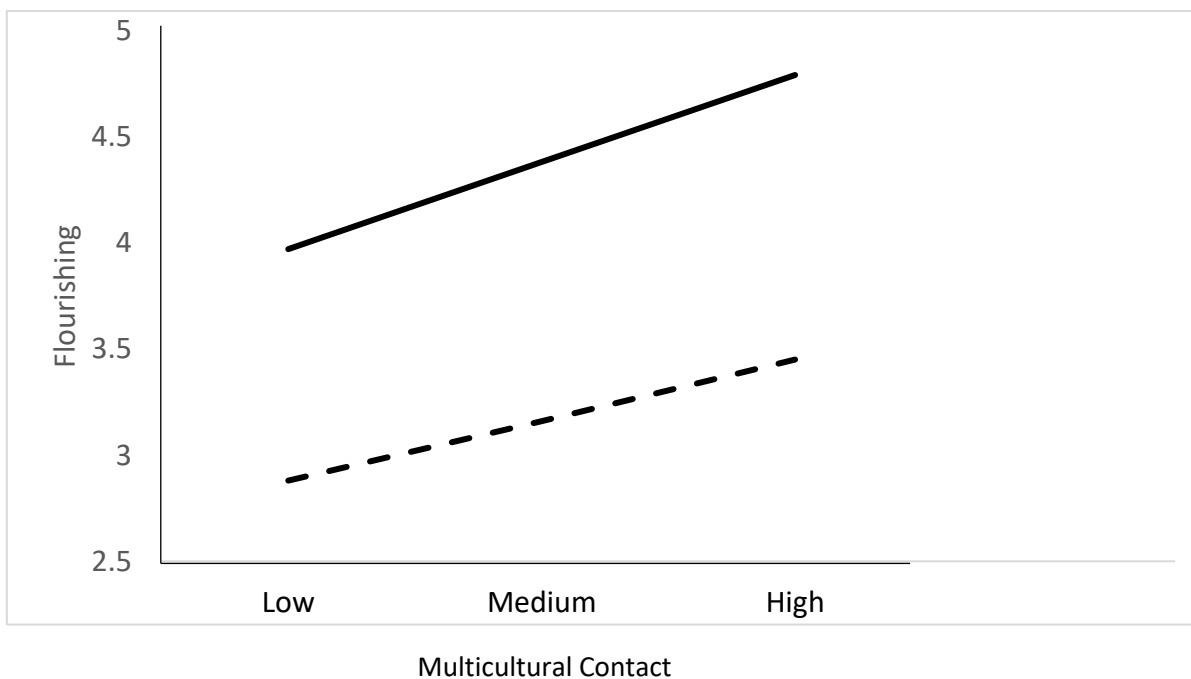

Figure 3.
The Interaction Between Ethnicity and Multicultural Contact in Predicting Flourishing in the U.K.

Flourishing

Neither age nor gender was related to this measure of psychological well-being in the United States; however, greater flourishing was associated with being White ($ß = .15$, $p < .05$). In addition, participants' perceptions of more normative Multicultural Contact predicted greater flourishing ($ß = .27$, $p < .01$). There were no significant interaction effects, and in total, only 5.7% of the variance in flourishing was explained in the final model.

Results from the United Kingdom revealed both similarities and differences. Ethnicity was a significant predictor of flourishing ($ß = -.18$, $p < .001$); however, it was Indians rather than Whites who had more positive outcomes. As was the case in the U.S., Multicultural Contact was associated with greater flourishing ($ß = .43$, $p < .001$); however, this main effect was qualified by an interaction with ethnicity ($ß = -.19$, $p < .05$). The relationship between Multicultural Contact and flourishing was significant and positive for both groups. $T_i(371) = 4.47$, $p < .001$, and $t_w(371) = 5.90$, $p < .001$; however, the slope appeared steeper for Indians ($ß = .71$) compared to Whites ($ß = .49$) as depicted in Figure 3. Together, the final model accounted for 17.2% of the variance in flourishing.

Discussion

The research examined the components of normative multiculturalism (contact, ideology, policy) as predictors of social connectedness and psychological well-being in the United States and the United Kingdom. This permitted us to explore the convergence of results in different socio-political contexts. We tested the hypothesis that normative multicultural contact and ideology predict greater trust, expecting stronger effects of ideology in minority groups. We also hypothesized that normative contact, ideology, and policies and practices predict greater flourishing in minority group members and considered the possibility that the same findings would emerge in the majority group. Our hypotheses were partially supported. Normative multicultural ideology predicted greater trust, and its effects were moderated by ethnicity. However, multicultural contact was the only significant predictor of flourishing, and this was the case for both minority and majority groups.

As hypothesized, normative multicultural ideology, reflecting the perceptions that cultural diversity is valued and multiculturalism is widely viewed in positive terms, predicted greater trust. This is consistent with previous research linking comfort with difference and general trust (Han, 2017). However, ethnicity moderated these effects in different ways between the two countries. In the United States, the positive effect of multicultural ideology was limited to Hispanics. In the United Kingdom, by contrast, multicultural ideology was associated with greater trust in both Indians and Whites with the effect being stronger in the majority group.

The U.S. findings are not surprising in that research has shown that Whites view multiculturalism as a diversity ideology that is relevant only to ethnic minorities, having little, if anything, to offer the White majority group (Plaut et al., 2011). Indeed, the notion of the great "melting pot" and a colorblind approach to diversity preceded the emergence of multiculturalism in the United States and still tends to be preferred by Whites (Apfelbaum et

al., 2012). Under these conditions it has been suggested that an "all-inclusive" approach, ensuring that members of the majority are explicitly made aware that multiculturalism applies to everyone, is required to reap the benefits of multiculturalism (Stevens et al., 2008). In contrast, the longer and richer discourse on multiculturalism linked to Britain's multi-racial colonial empire and subsequent immigration, which along with its rejection of assimilation and increasing emphasis on social cohesion, has created a different climate in the United Kingdom (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2018). According to Modood (2016), this climate has had positive implications for race relations in the United Kingdom. In this socio-political context, perceived normative multicultural ideology predicts greater general trust in both British Whites and Indians.

Contrary to our hypothesis, normative multicultural contact did not predict greater trust in either country. We suggest two possibilities for consideration. First, although the broader literature points to a relationship between intergroup contact and out-group trust (Tam et al., 2009; Voci et al., 2017), we measured more generalized trust in these studies. Second, contact is known to exert stronger effects on intergroup perceptions and relations, including trust, when interactions are positive and occur under favorable circumstances (Schmid et al., 2015). Our measure assesses the perception that intercultural contact is normative, which is critical for a multicultural society, but it does not assess the contact quality. Both of these factors may have diffused the normative contact-trust relationship examined in these studies.

In contrast, perceived multicultural contact norms predicted greater flourishing, and this was the case in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Moreover, the relationship held for both minority and majority groups although in the United Kingdom the effects were stronger for Indians than Whites. The findings can be interpreted in terms of social capital, where the over-arching theoretical framework posits that both bridging (linkages across social groups) and bonding (linkages within social groups) capital are associated with more positive social and psychological outcomes. Not only has bridging capital been shown to predict more flourishing in immigrants (Ando, 2014) and lower levels of psychological distress in disadvantaged minorities (Mitchell & LaGory, 2002), but more diverse networks are also associated with lower levels of depression (Erikson, 2003). As normative multicultural contact increases opportunities to access bridging capital for minorities and majorities, it is conducive to greater psychological well-being for both groups.

Neither normative multicultural ideology nor policies exerted a direct effect on flourishing. To interpret this finding, we suggest that the impact of normative multiculturalism on well-being may be indirect and mediated by relational factors. Our research with Korean immigrants in New Zealand has shown that the effects of normative multicultural policy and ideology on well-being are partially mediated by belongingness (Ward et al., 2020). Schachner, Schwarzenthal, van de Vijver and Noack's (2019) school-based research with immigrant and national children found that the relationship between diversity climates and well-being was fully mediated by belonging. Along similar lines, Le et al. (2009) reported that ethno-cultural empathy fully mediated the effects of school multiculturalism on subjective happiness. These findings point to the need for more complex mediational models to be explored in future research on normative multiculturalism.

Although no hypotheses were made about the pattern of minority-majority differences across the two contexts, some interesting trends emerged. In the United States, Whites were more trusting and flourished to a greater extent. In contrast, in the United Kingdom, there were no ethnic differences in trust, and Indians flourished more than Whites. International research has shown that with few exceptions immigrant and minority groups have lower levels of generalized trust (Smith, 2010), and this has been documented in previous research in the United States (Chávez et al., 2006). In the United Kingdom, however, recent surveys demonstrate that the trust rates are not significantly different between Whites and minority groups (Phillips et al., 2018). Consequently, our findings on trust are in accordance with the wider international literature on trust.

The results for flourishing are also consistent with earlier studies, which show that Hispanic children flourish to a lesser extent than non-Hispanic Whites (Kandasamy et al., 2018) in the United States, but that Indian children have a mental health advantage compared to Whites in Great Britain (Goodman et al., 2010). Interpreting these trends goes well beyond our data as the simultaneous influences of the national climate and the social and economic characteristics of the minority groups cannot be disentangled. We do know, however, that British Indians, compared to Hispanic-Americans, have the advantage of living in a country with a longer history of propagating multiculturalism, as opposed to colorblindness, as a strategy for managing diversity and that Indians appear to enjoy a relatively more favorable position in terms of educational and occupational status as well as social integration (Castles, 2009; Center for American Progress, 2012). Overall, these group characteristics are known to be conducive to greater trust and flourishing (Johnson et al., 2017; Wilks & Wu, 2019).

So, in the end what do these studies tell us about normative multiculturalism? First, at best, aspects of normative multiculturalism are associated with greater social connectedness and psychological well-being; at worse, normative multiculturalism is unrelated to these outcomes. Second, there is general consistency in the findings across the United States and the United Kingdom; in both contexts, perceived normative multicultural contact predicts greater flourishing and perceived normative multicultural ideology predicts greater trust. Third, the way normative multiculturalism plays out across minority and majority groups differs both within and between socio-political contexts. Normative multicultural ideology is associated with greater trust for Hispanics, but not Whites, in the United States while it is associated with greater trust in both Whites and Indians in the U.K., with the effects being stronger for Whites.

While the U.S. and U.K. data point to positive developments in theory and research on multicultural norms, there are notable limitations in this paper. First, the results from two socio-political contexts are reported here to explore the external validity of our findings on normative multiculturalism; however, this research was not originally designed as a comparative cross-cultural investigation. Consequently, there are issues of measurement invariance between the two countries that have not been addressed. Moreover, the characteristics of the two minority groups differ markedly. Had this been designed as a comparative investigation, it would have been preferable to recruit minority group members from the same ethnic community as participants in the American and British samples.

Relatedly, the length residence for the overseas-born participants in the two countries differed between the national samples and could not be controlled in these analyses. This may have affected the findings in undetermined ways. Second, we examine only two outcomes, trust and flourishing. The extent to which these findings would replicate across other outcomes reflecting social cohesion and psychological well-being is unknown. Third, only relatively small amounts of variance (6-23%) in the social and psychological outcomes were explained by normative multiculturalism, and the sample sizes were too small to also investigate the two and three-way interaction effects of the three components of normative multiculturalism. This is something that should be pursued in future research.

In conclusion, multiculturalism is a complex phenomenon. There is some evidence that it functions in the same way across countries; at the same time, it can also differentially affect minority and majority groups. Further research is required with more diverse groups and across more varied socio-political contexts. It is also recommended that future studies adopt a multinational cross-cultural comparative approach, simultaneously exploring objective measures of multiculturalism along with perceptions of multicultural norms and their relationships to social cohesion and psychological well-being.

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