



The Social Psychology of Entering a New Culture

Borja Martinovic

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Universiteit Utrecht



**European Research Centre
on Migration and Ethnic
Relations**

Overview

- Getting to know each other
- Culture shock:
 - Changes in self-perception
 - Changes in group-perception
- “Us” versus “them”
 - Group belonging and identification
 - Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination
- The role of interethnic contact
- How to establish interethnic friendships



When did you arrive in the Netherlands?

- Just arrived
- Been here for about a year
- Been here for about 2-5 years
- Arrived more than 5 years ago
- Born in the Netherlands



Temporary or long-term stay?

- Just to finish the study
 - Possibly looking for a job afterwards
 - Definitely want to stay
-
- Dutch people who are considering moving abroad?

BEWARE of the “forever temporary” trap!!!



Culture shock

1. Honeymoon phase:

- The differences between the old and new culture are seen in a romantic light
- Fascination by the new culture

2. Negotiation phase:

- After some time (usually around 3 months), differences between the old and new culture become apparent and may create anxiety, frustration and anger
- Loneliness and homesickness

3. Adjustment phase:

- After some more time (6-12 months) the new culture begins to make sense
- You develop routines

4. Mastery phase (biculturalism):

- Able to participate fully and comfortably in the host culture



Living in-between

“Everything impressed itself on my memory, and with double associations; for I was constantly referring my new world to the old for comparison, and the old to the new for elucidation... All the processes of uprooting, transportation, replanting, acclimatization and development took place in my soul... It is painful to be conscious of two worlds”

Mary Antin, a Russian Jew in the US in 1912: “The promised land”



Different points of reference - self

Without changing your beliefs and practices, you become a different person after migration.

What you valued about yourself is not being recognized by others as valuable anymore...

... and what you didn't value is suddenly seen as special



Different points of reference - group

You might also evaluate your own ethnic group differently:

- Critical of ingroup's values and traditions → distance yourself from your ingroup and blend in with the new cultural group
- More proud of ingroup's values and traditions → identify more strongly ("reactive ethnicity", *Rumbaut, 2008*)



Personal and social identity

* Personal identity

- * Unique, differentiating
- * Sets one apart from others

* Social identity

- * Shared with others
- * Categorical characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity) that locate people in social space
- * Multiple social identities, salient at different moments
- * Social identity vs. sense of social identity?



**"I have no choice, I am a Jew – whatever
I do or say."**

Sociologist Norbert Elias

**"To be black and intellectual in America is to live in a
box. So I live in a box, not of my own making, and
on the box is a label, not of my own choosing."**

Legal scholar Steven Carter

**"From the outside I am Chinese but from the
inside I am Dutch."**

A Chinese-Dutch girl



Why do we identify with groups?

Social identity theory (*Tajfel & Turner, 1979*):

- People derive self-esteem from membership in groups that are distinct and positively evaluated
- Self-categorization
- Comparisons with out-groups

“US” versus “THEM”

→ Identification with ingroup depends also on how relevant other groups accept and evaluate your group

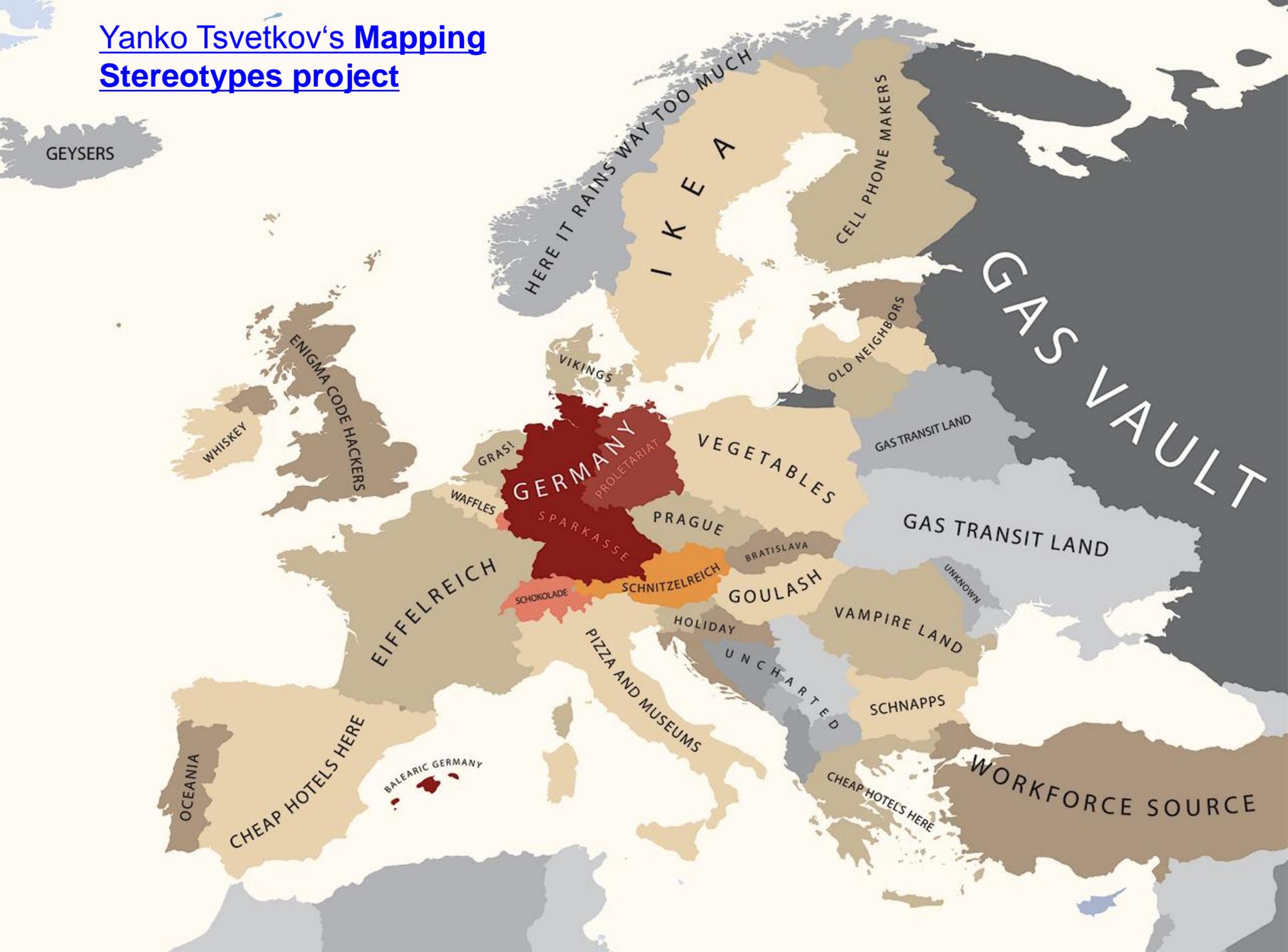


Stereotypes

- Cognitive tools for processing information about individuals
- Help us simplify the complex world we are living in
- Can be positive (e.g. trustworthy, friendly) or negative (e.g. lazy, aggressive)



Yanko Tsvetkov's Mapping Stereotypes project



Stereotypes

Valence context dependent?

Heaven is where:

policemen are English,
cooks are French,
mechanics are German,
lovers are Italian, and
everything is organized by the Swiss.



Stereotypes

Valence context dependent?

Hell is where:

policemen are German,
cooks are English,
mechanics are French,
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everything is organized by Italians.



Stereotype content model

Do they want to harm me?

WARMTH	COMPETENCE
Trustworthy	Clever
Sincere	Skillful
Friendly	Intelligent
Dishonest	Clumsy
Rude	Slow
Selfish	Inefficient

Are they capable of harming me?



Competence

Low

High

Warmth

High

Paternalistic stereotype

low status, not competitive

(e.g., housewives, elderly people, disabled people)

Admiration

high status, not competitive

(e.g., ingroup, close allies)

Low

Contemptuous stereotype

low status, competitive

(e.g., welfare recipients, poor people)

Envious stereotype

high status, competitive

(e.g., Asians, Jews, rich people, feminists)

Stereotypes: Good or bad?

- Stereotypes serve a function (processing and organizing information)
- They are useful and we need them! So not necessarily bad!!!
- But...They are also faulty generalizations, distortions of reality
- Can have negative consequences



Consequences of stereotypes: Stereotype threat

- **Stereotype threat** = being at risk of confirming a negative stereotype about one's group (*Steele & Aronson, 1995*)
- People perform less well on a task when the task is framed in terms of active stereotypes:
 - African Americans are less intelligent
 - Men are better at math
- Situationally specific—experienced in situations where the critical negative stereotype applies



Consequence of stereotypes: Prejudice and discrimination

- Stereotypes (cognitive dimension) can lead to **prejudice** (affective dimension) + **discrimination** (behavioral dimension)
- Prejudice and discrimination can fuel intergroup tensions and conflicts

REMEDY?

Intergroup contact



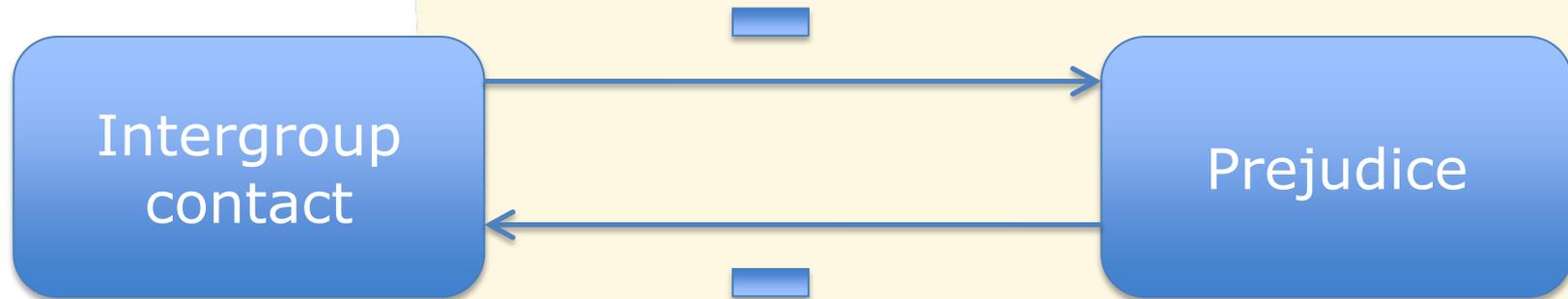
The importance of contact (I)

Corrects stereotypes and reduces prejudice

- Casual vs. deep contact (*Allport, 1954*)
 - Optimal conditions:
 - Equal status
 - Common goals
 - Cooperation
 - Support of authority
- Facilitating but not necessary conditions
(*Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006*)



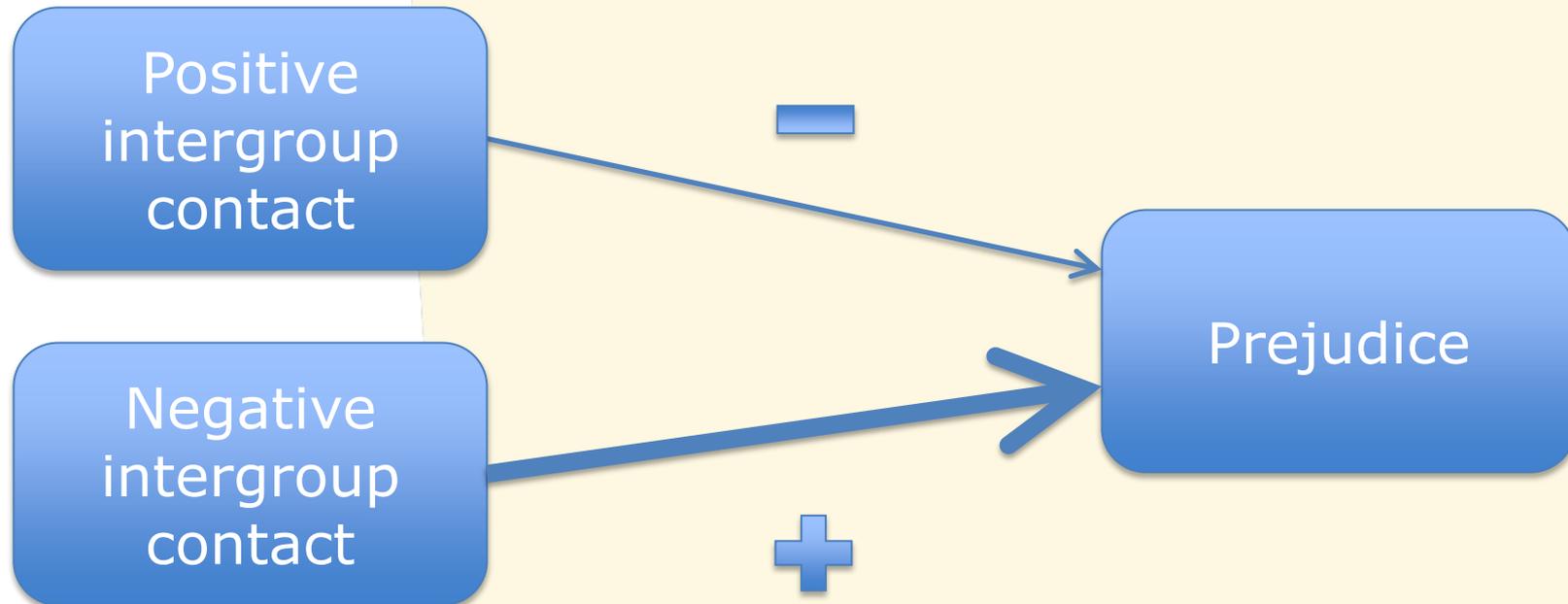
Contact reduces prejudice



But prejudice also reduces contact



Positive vs. negative contact



Negative contact increases prejudice more than that positive contact decreases it (*Barlow et al., 2012*)



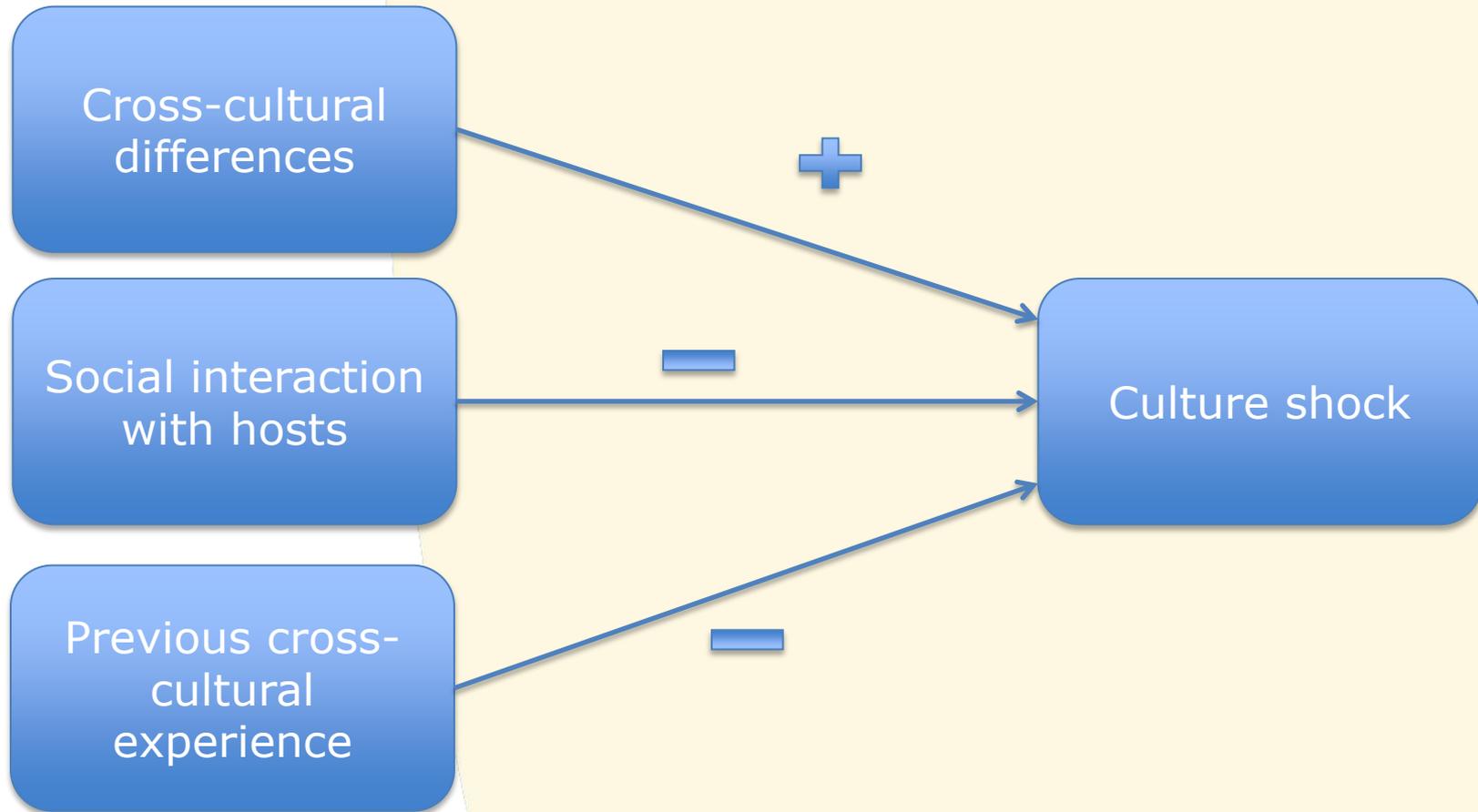
The importance of contact (II)

Soothes the culture shock

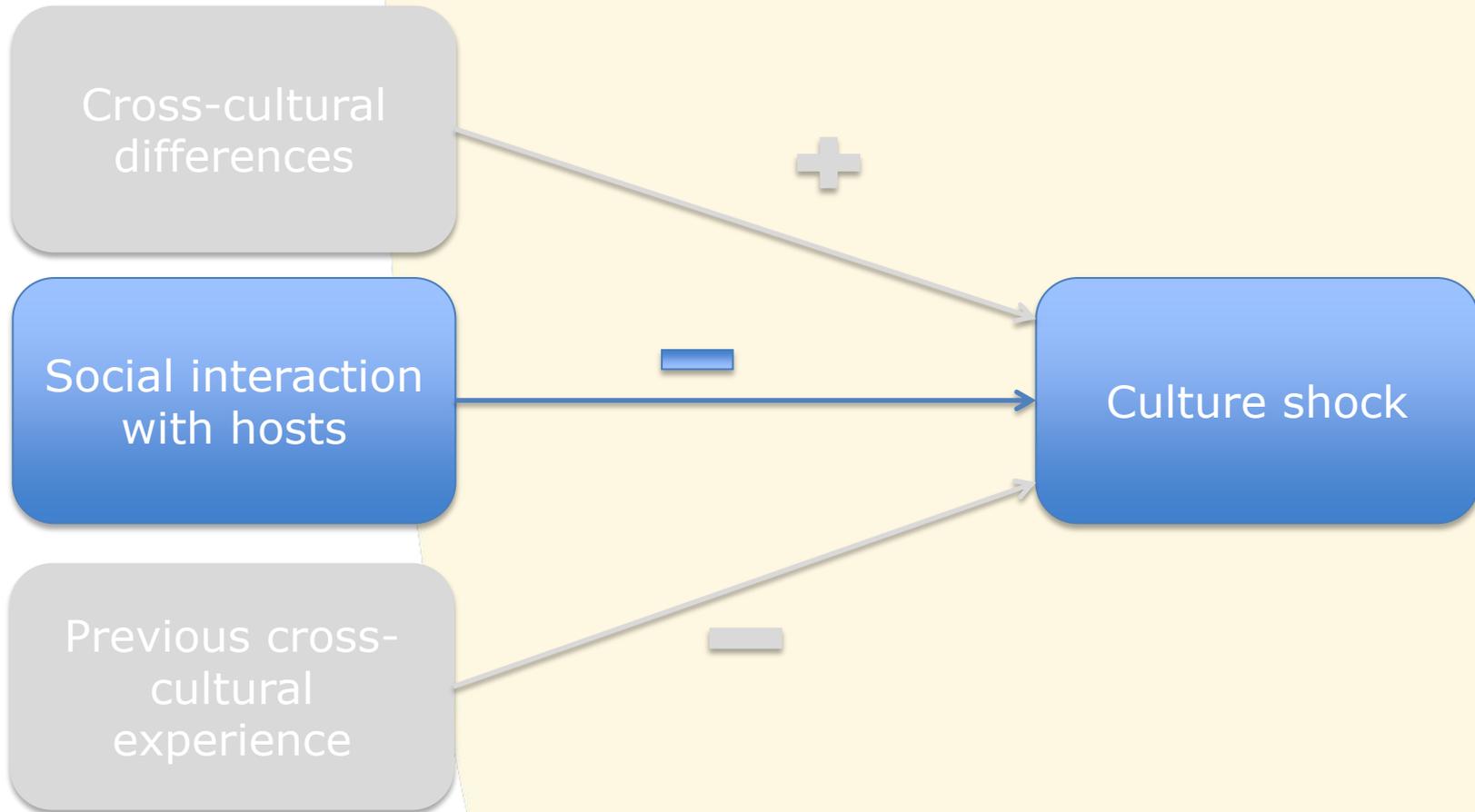
- Research among international students in Canada
(*Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004*)
- Culture shock measured as a difference in the degree of social difficulty in interactions in the home and host country (getting to know people well, understanding jokes/humor, etc.)



A model of culture shock



A model of culture shock



The importance of contact (III)

Catalyzes the development of a sense of belonging to the host nation

Gordon (1964): Stages of assimilation

- **Acculturation**: adoption of language and daily customs and norms
- **Structural assimilation**: large-scale entrance of minorities into cliques, clubs and institutions in the host society.
- **Marital assimilation**: widespread intermarriage.
- **Identification assimilation**: the minority feels bonded to the dominant culture.



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Catalyzes the development of a sense of belonging to the host nation

Direct role of interethnic contact:

- stronger identification with the host country (*De Vroome, Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2014*)
- stronger settlement intentions in the host country (*De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2014*)

Indirect role of interethnic contact:

- Contact improves language proficiency (*Vervoort et al, 2012*)
 - Contact helps find jobs (*Kanas et al, 2011*)
- important for developing a sense of belonging to the host nation



Integration paradox

- Higher educated immigrants are the ones who are usually more integrated than lower educated immigrants
 - Better jobs, higher language proficiency, more contacts with natives
 - Yet they can at the same time be less satisfied with the host society than lower educated immigrants and turn away from it.
- EXPLANATIONS: perceived discrimination and perceived lack of respect

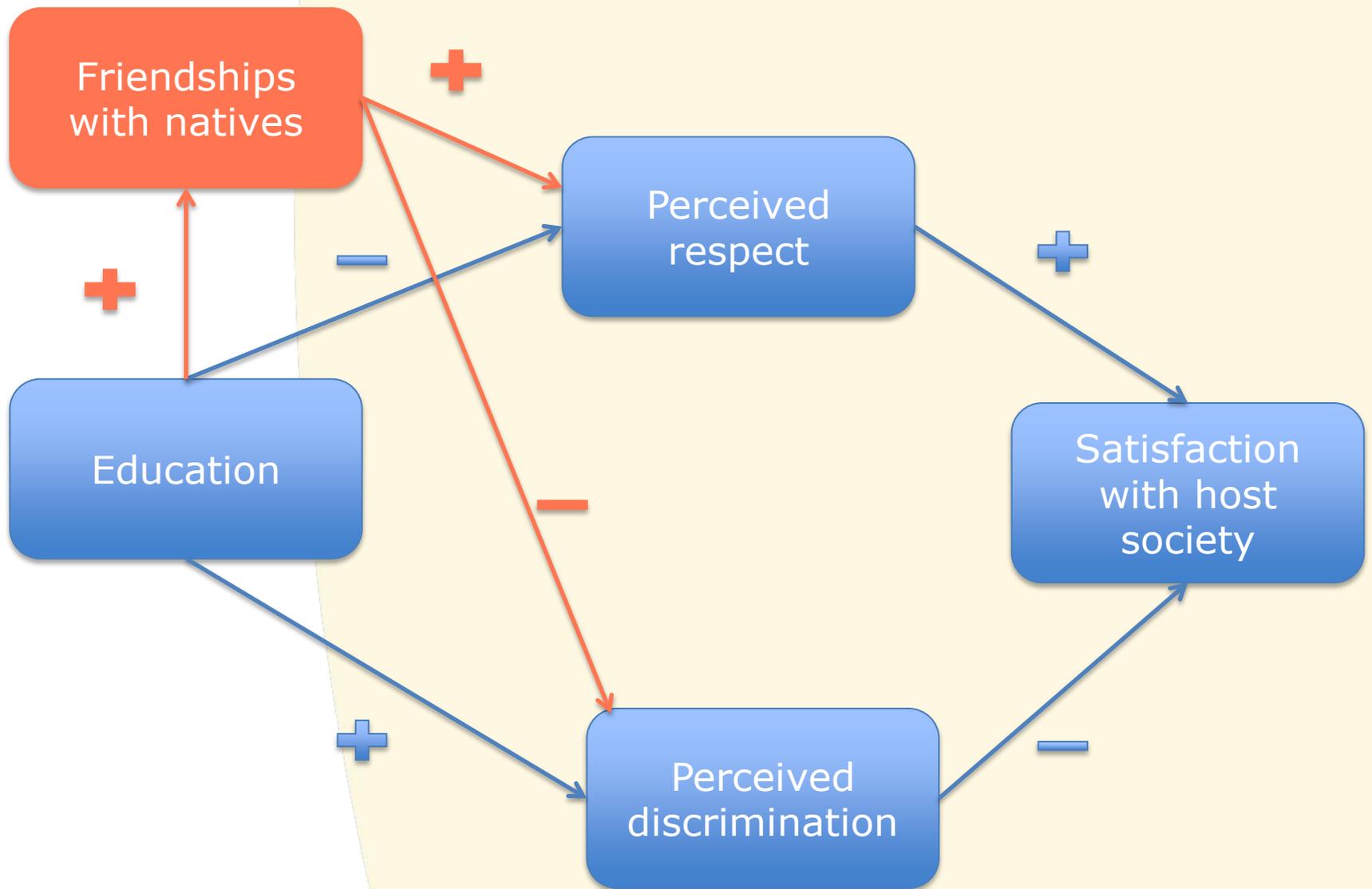


Integration paradox

- Higher educated might be:
 - More exposed to discrimination (contacts, work)
 - More perceptive of it (cognitive sophistication)
 - Higher expectations (more disappointed)
- Hypothesis:

Higher educated perceive more discrimination and less respect, and are therefore less satisfied with the Dutch society.





Determinants of intergroup contact - theory

Theory of preferences, opportunities and third parties

PREFERENCES: for a culturally and/or socio-economically similar others

OPPORTUNITIES: to meet preferred others
(depend on group size, segregation)

THIRD PARTIES: family or the community can encourage or discourage interethnic contacts



Determinants of intergroup contact - findings

LONGITUDINAL STUDIES FROM THE NETHERLANDS, GERMANY & CANADA:

- Younger age at migration
- Higher language proficiency
- Higher level of education
- Higher occupational status
- Membership in associations
- Non-segregated neighborhood
- Native partner



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Chances of divorce higher!

Table 7 Observed 10-year probabilities (percentages) of divorce for marriages representing all combinations of husband's and wife's nationality in the period 1974–84, the Netherlands (number of marriages in parentheses)

Nationality of husband	Nationality of wife				
	Dutch	Western European	Southern European	Turkish	Moroccan
Dutch	11.4 (862,995)	22.3 (8,572)	28.1 (2,712)	39.2 (158)	63.6 (275)
Western European	15.8 (9,742)	7.6 (1,570)	– (39)	– (0)	– (3)
Southern European	24.3 (4,708)	– (63)	9.3 (1,047)	– (1)	– (4)
Turkish	56.0 (1,385)	– (19)	– (20)	0.7 (2,288)	– (3)
Moroccan	52.2 (1,706)	– (26)	– (34)	– (2)	1.6 (1,258)

Note: Western European countries are Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and UK. Southern European countries are Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and (former) Yugoslavia. Percentages are not presented for cells in which $N < 100$. 'Other' nationalities not presented in the table.

Source: As shown in Table 2.



Conclusions

- Entering a new world is a tough endeavor
- Risk of culture shock:
 - Redefining the self
 - Seeking acceptance by outgroup
 - Staying loyal to ingroup
- Having to deal with stereotypes, (and sometimes even prejudice and discrimination)



Conclusions

- Friendships with natives are the best recipe for a smooth integration:
 - Reduce mutual stereotypes and prejudice
 - Soothe culture shock
 - Facilitate identification with the host country
- DUTCH FRIENDS MAKE YOUR STAY MORE PLEASANT!
- but do keep international friends, it's important to have someone to complain to about the Dutch every now and then ;)
- Learning the Dutch language, working, joining associations, and having a Dutch partner all help develop friendships with the Dutch



Conclusions

- What can the 'hosts' do :
 - Give friendship with an immigrant a chance (many stay longer than you'd think)
 - Speak Dutch to them if they want to learn the language

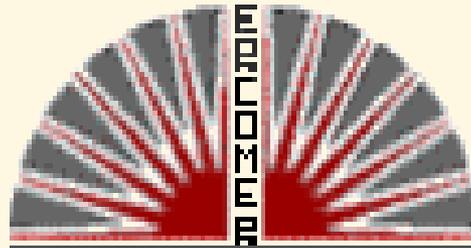
→ IMMIGRANT FRIENDS ENRICH YOUR LIFE!

but do keep Dutch friends to have someone to complain to about these weird foreigners every now and then ;)



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

b.martinovic@uu.nl



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