# Fighting Prejudice: Prejudice Reduction Through Indirect Intergroup Contact in Virtual Settings

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*Abstract*:

Negative affect, derogatory beliefs and hostile behaviour toward an individual just because of their group membership are some of the manifestations of prejudice. Research has long shown that positive intergroup contact improves intergroup attitudes, but scant literature considers the potential of digital platforms (e.g., VR, WebGL) for offering indirect contact by means of avatars representing different outgroups. This project aims to create a digital multiplatform application for a theoretically informed prejudice reduction intervention based on indirect contact with members of stigmatized groups.

To determine the optimal conditions for prejudice reduction via digital means that will later be used in the development of a digital application to improve intergroup attitudes, a systematic and quantitative review of the literature on prejudice reduction via digital applications (e.g., VR, WebGL, Mobile) will be developed. Secondly, a multiplatform application as a tool for indirect contact intervention for prejudice reduction toward one stigmatized group (e.g., Black people), in VR and WebGL, will be developed and tested. At last, this application will be extended to two other intergroup contexts (e.g. social class, LGBTQ+) and for one additional age group, adolescents (ages 13-17).

Finally, this project has enormous potential for future scientific developments, qualifying the participation with new proposals for funding calls in other institutions. Namely, literature shows that reducing prejudice at a young age is of primary importance given it is still malleable and more prone to changes. As such, the extension of the intervention developed in this research proposal, for prejudice-reduction using virtual settings for young children (ages 6-12) is of great scientific and social importance for future studies.