



The impact of social diversity on wellbeing and health

Miguel R. Ramos – University of Birmingham



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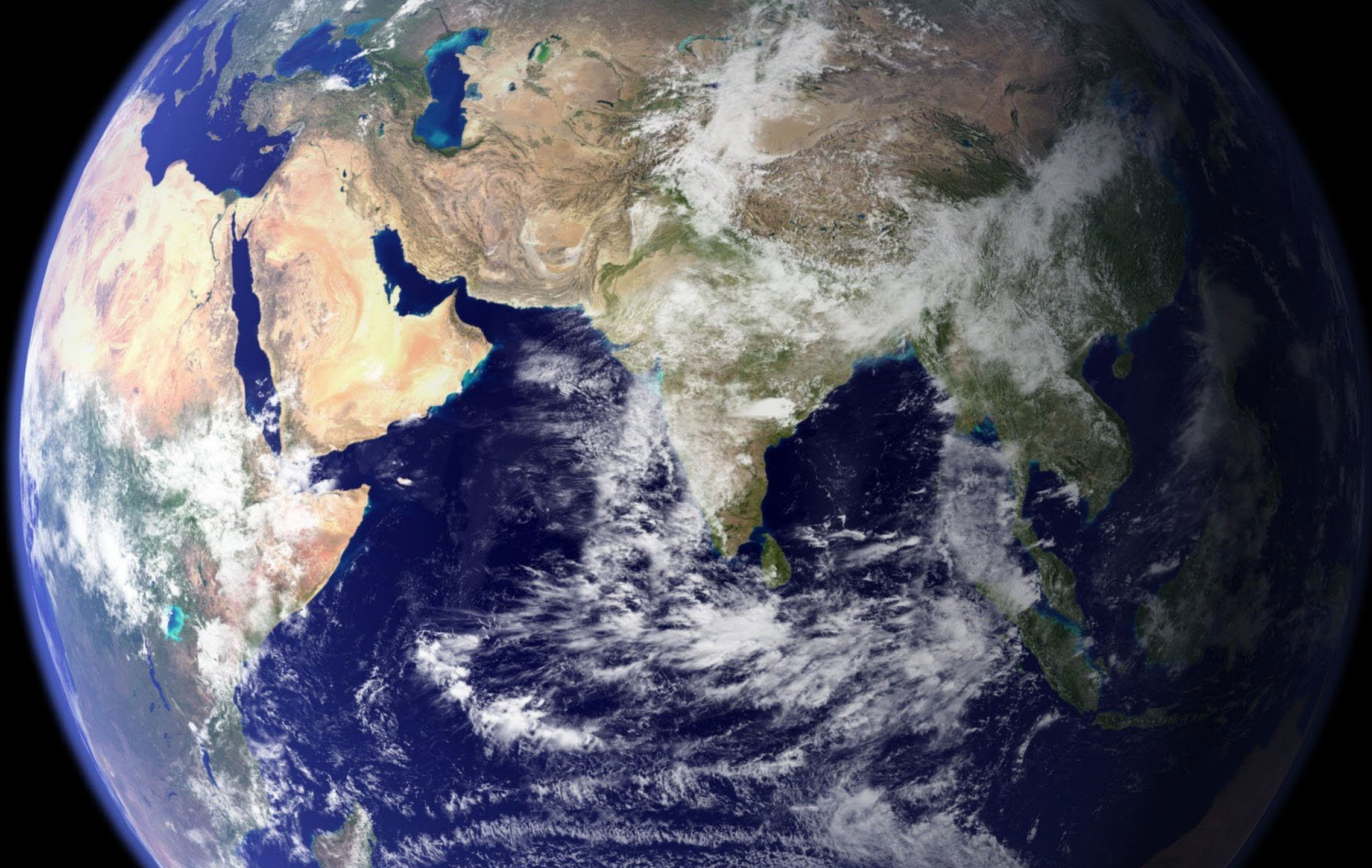
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Right-wing





Social diversity is:

Social diversification in terms of a larger variety of social categories (e.g., ethnicity, religion, culture, age).



Human evolution and social diversity

Preference for homogeneity and stability (Caporael, 1997), and to be among those who are similar to themselves (McPherson et al., 2001).

People tend to approach other groups with a certain degree of uncertainty (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).

(negative) Consequences of these motivations

Trust and social cohesion is lower in ethnically diverse communities (Putnam, 2000, 2007; van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014).

Social diversity has been associated with lower:

- economic growth (Easterly & Levine, 1997),
- public goods provision (Baldwin & Huber, 2010),
- civic engagement (Kesler & Bloemraad, 2010),
- ...and more conflict (Esteban et al., 2012).





The other side of human nature

- Biological advantage in gaining genetic variability through new mating opportunities (Glémin et al., 2003).
- Individuals acquire more diverse resources and knowledge (Bar-Yosef, 2002).



(positive) Consequences of these motivations

Diverse contexts → intergroup contact → trust and social cohesion (Schmid et al., 2014).

Diversity experiences lead to more inclusive intergroup attitudes (Aberson, 2010).

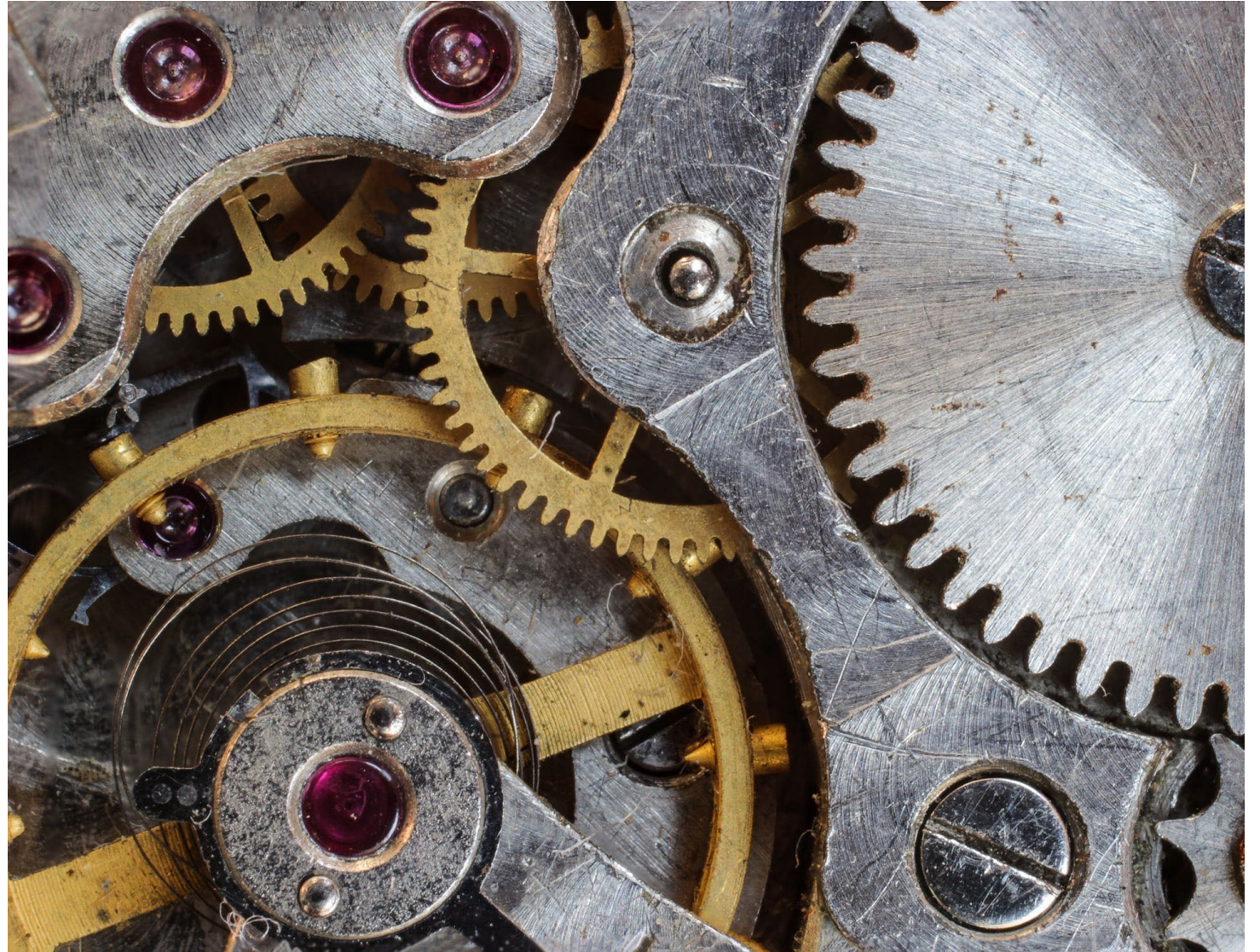
Exposure to diversity leads to openness to multicultural experiences (Sparkman et al., 2016).

Mechanisms

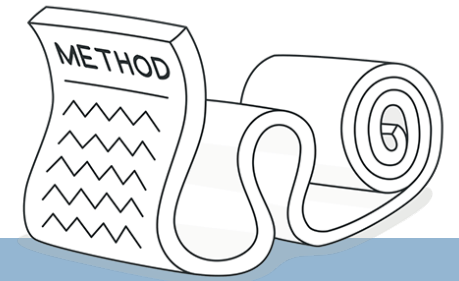
- **Negative mechanism:** erosion of social cohesion and trust in others (Beugelsdijk & Klasing, 2016).
- **Positive mechanism:** Intergroup contact (Allport, 1954; Christ et al., 2014).

An increase in social diversity should be associated with lower trust in others and, in turn, poorer quality of life.

With time, intergroup contact should emerge and counteract initial negative effects.



Method - The data



World Values Survey (1981 – 2014).
100 countries, 350 000 respondents.

Wave 1 (1981-84); Wave 4 (1999-04);
Wave 2 (1990-94); Wave 5 (2005-08);
Wave 3 (1995-98); Wave 6 (2010-14).



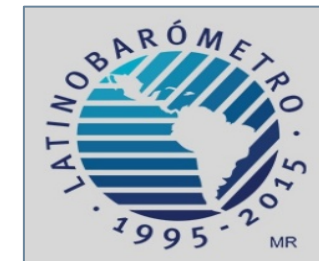
European Social Survey (2002 - 2014).
36 countries; 340 000 respondents.

Wave 1 (2002-03); Wave 4 (2008-09); Wave 7
Wave 2 (2004-05); Wave 5 (2010-11); (2013-14).
Wave 3 (2006-07); Wave 6 (2012-13);

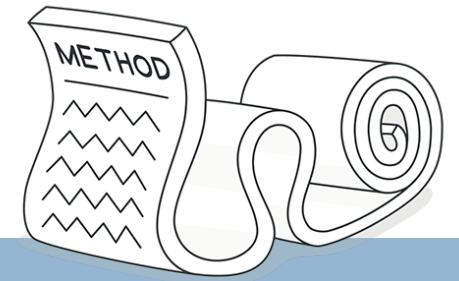


Latino Barometro (1995 – 2015).
18 countries; 274 000 respondents.

Wave 1 (1995); Wave 5 (2001); Wave 9 (2005); Wave 13 (2009); Wave 17 (2015).
Wave 2 (1996); Wave 6 (2002); Wave 10 (2006); Wave 14 (2010);
Wave 3 (1997); Wave 7 (2003); Wave 11 (2007); Wave 15 (2011);
Wave 4 (1998); Wave 8 (2004); Wave 12 (2008); Wave 16 (2013);

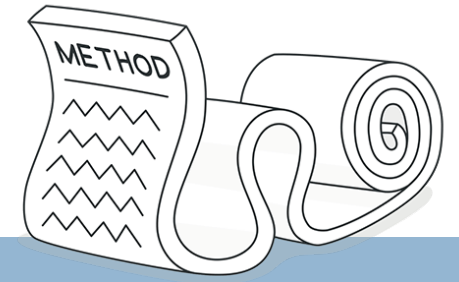


Method - The data



- British Household Panel Survey (2004-2008)
- Understanding Society (2009-2011)
- 47,000 respondents; 15,545 neighbourhoods

Method – Quality of life



European Social Survey

- How happy are you?
- How satisfied with life as a whole?
- How would you rate your health overall?

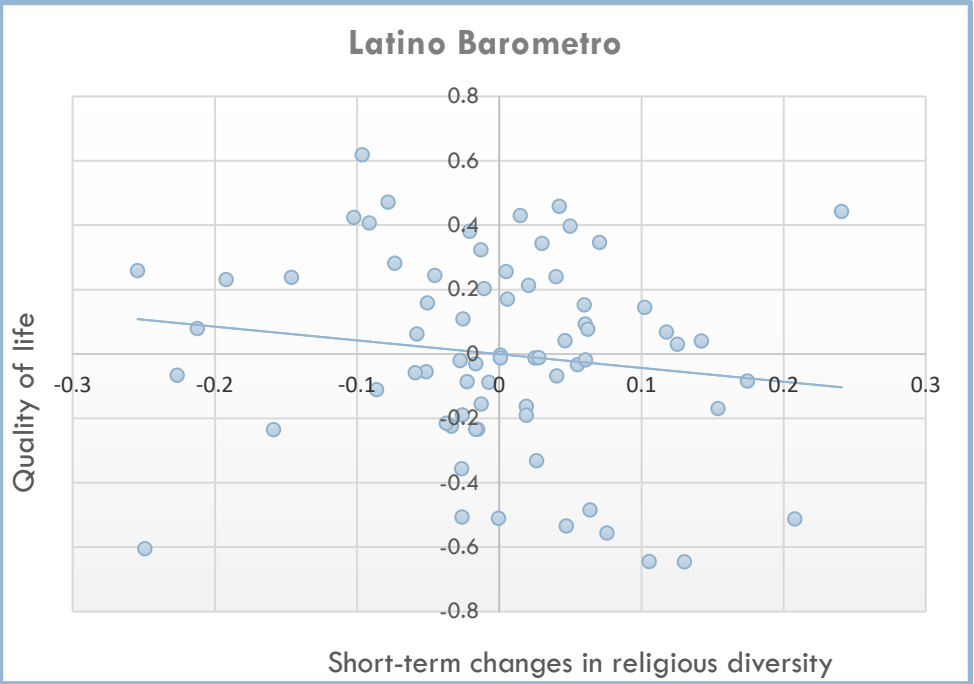
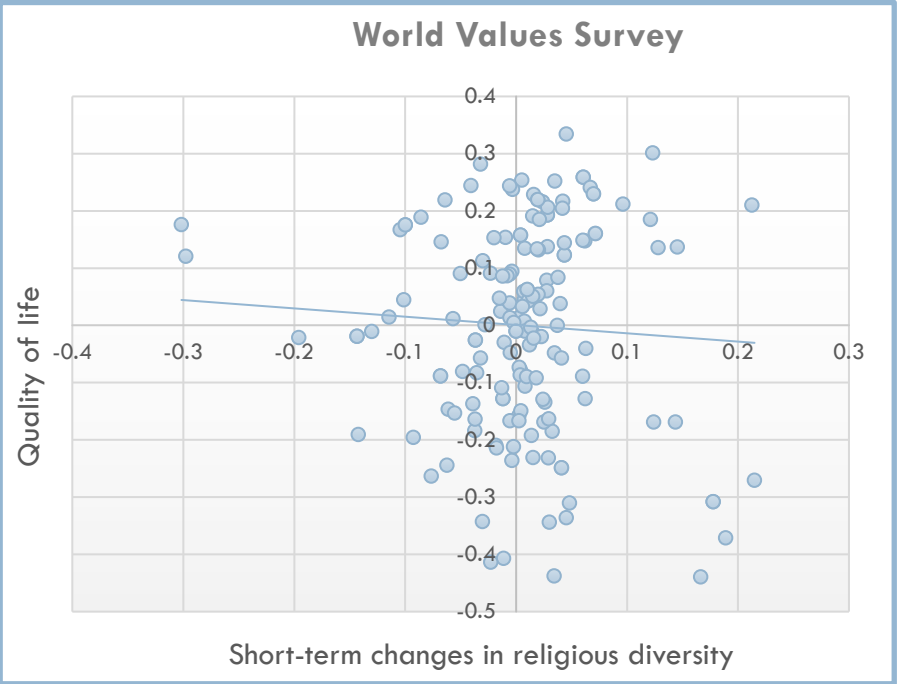
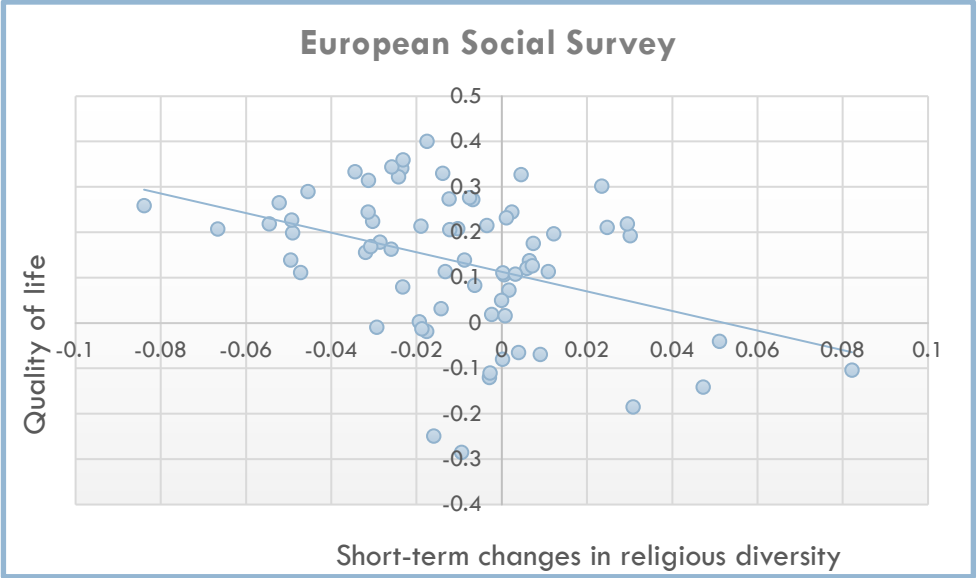


Understanding Society

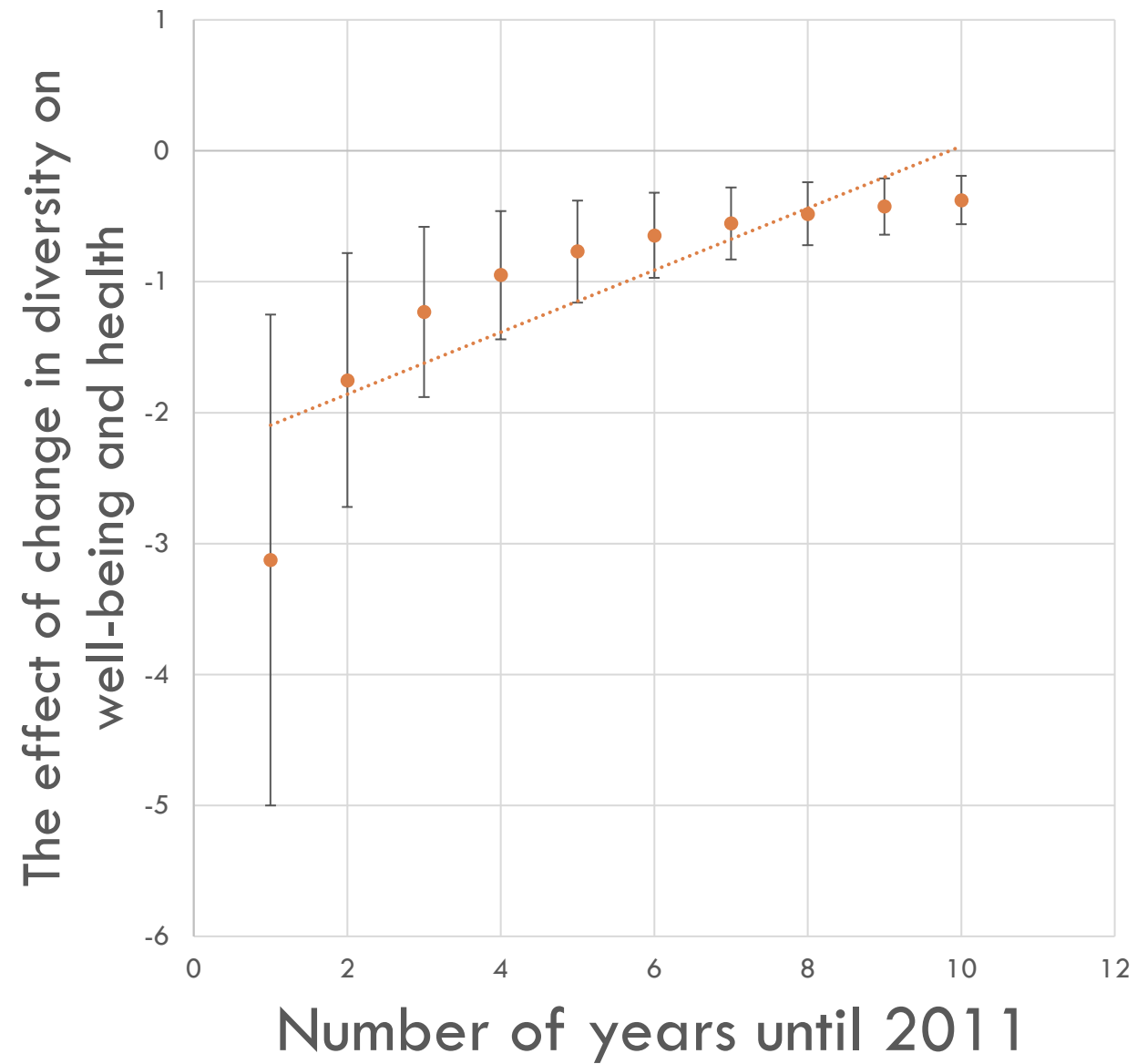
- Life satisfaction; general health
- Biomarkers: cardiovascular, metabolic, neuroendocrine and immunity biomarkers



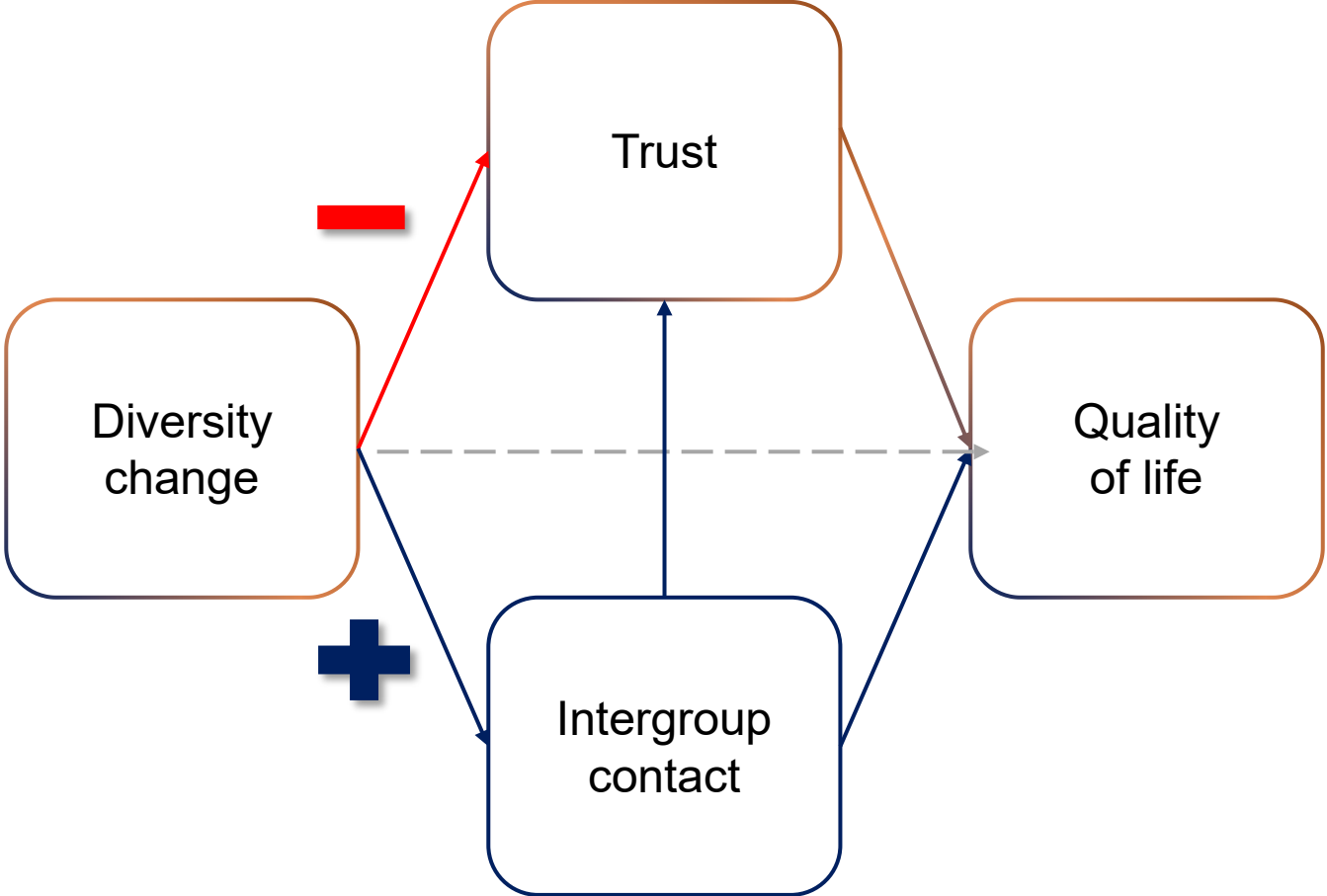
Religious diversity



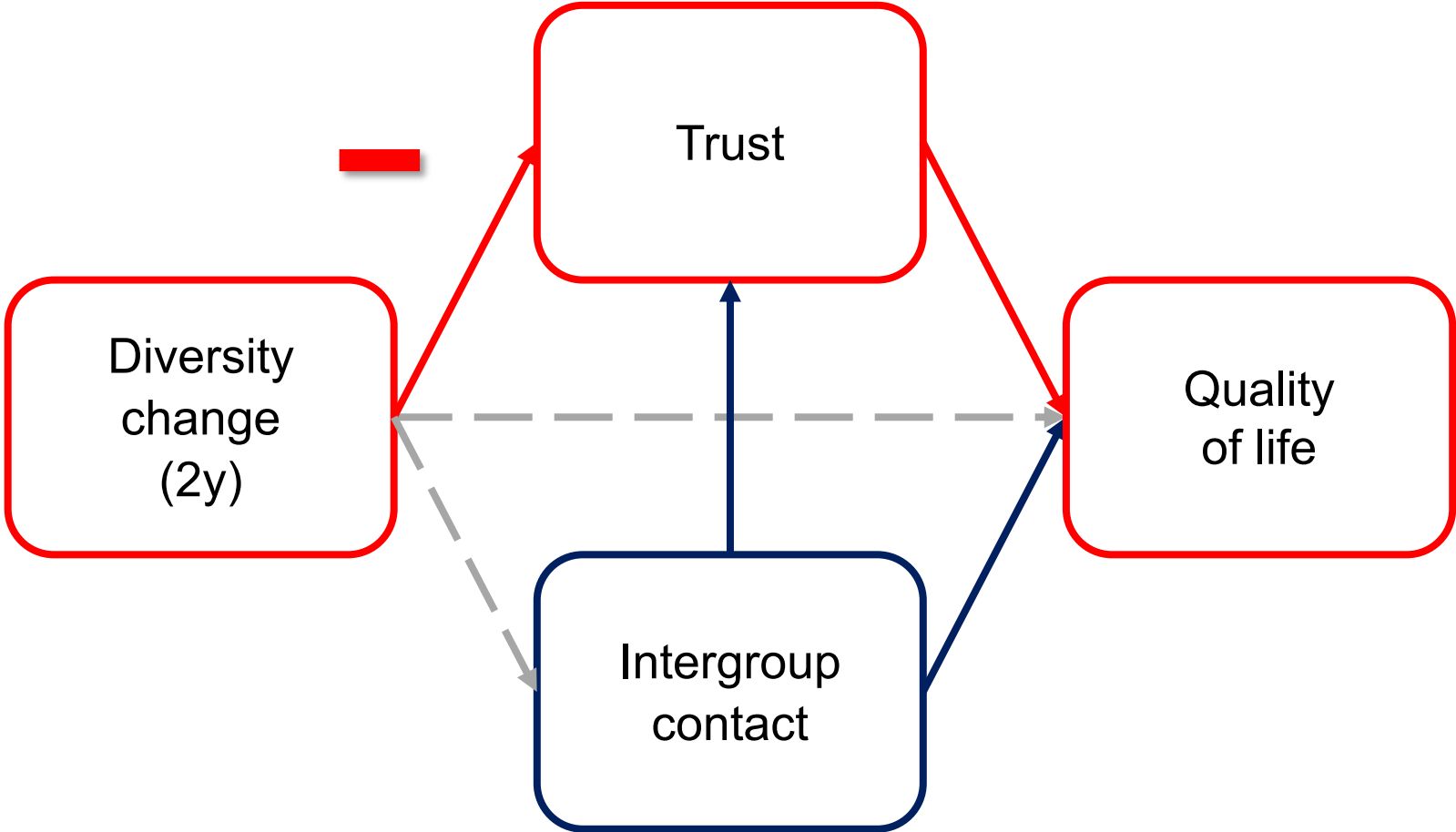
Ethnic diversity



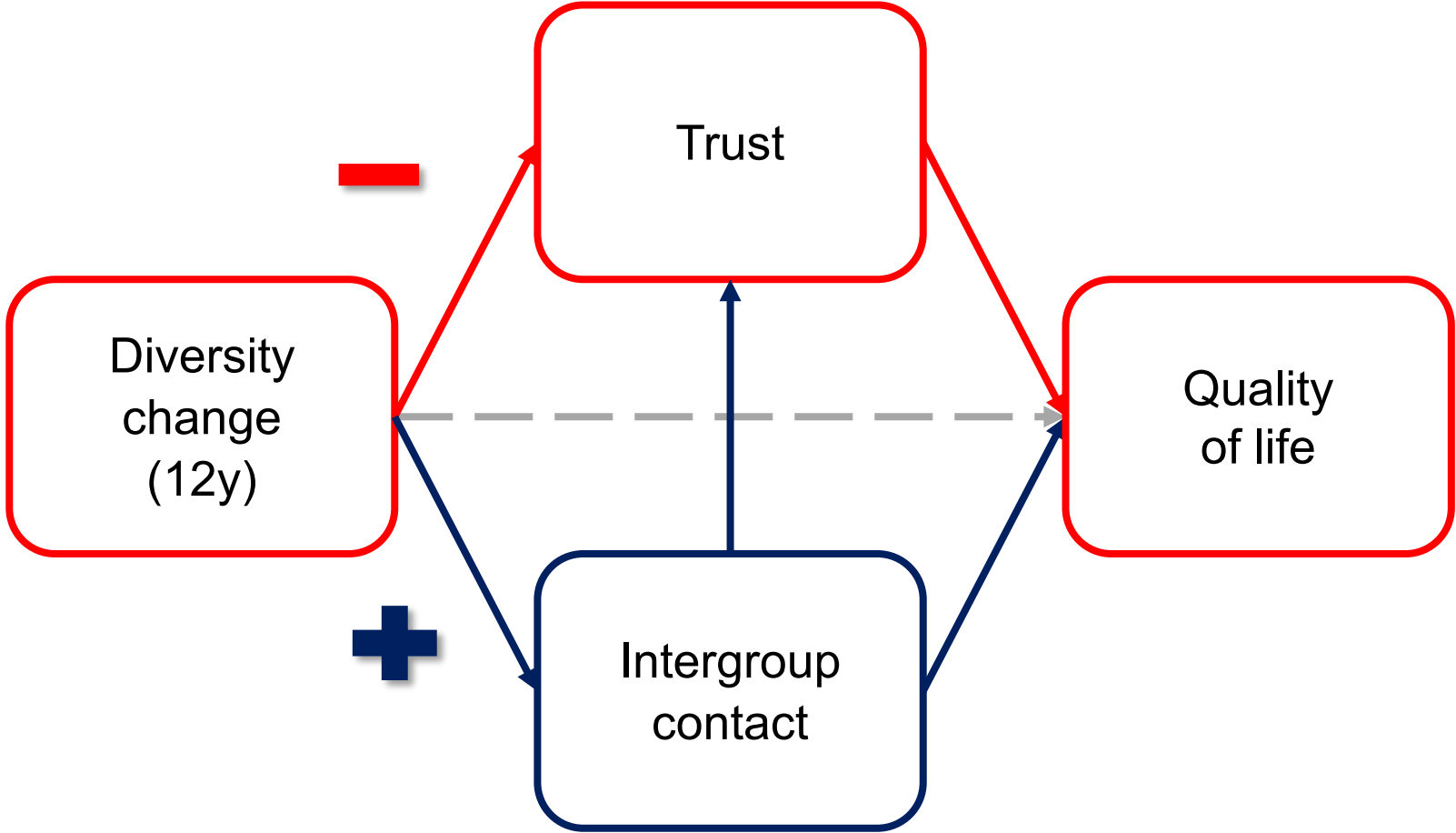
Why do we find this?



Short-term effect (2 years)



Long-term effect (12 years)





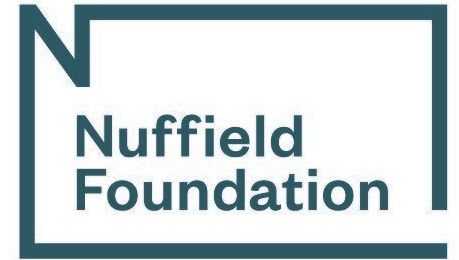
Summary

Despite initial resistance, intergroup relations tend to converge into more positive outcomes.

By focusing only on the short term, we may draw an inaccurate, pessimistic conclusion about the impact of diversity.

Intergroup contact is a key mitigating factor.

Co-authors



Danying Li
Imperial College London,
U.K.



Douglas Massey
Princeton University,
U.S.A.



Matthew Bennett
University of Sheffield,
U.K.



Miles Hewstone
University of Oxford,
U.K.

