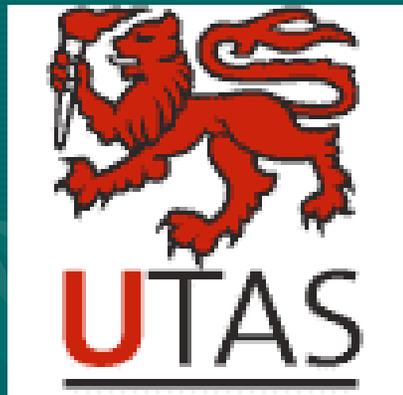# Facilitating readiness for natural hazards: The role of social trust

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Rarity & complexity of hazard activity means that people must rely on others to:
- acquire information,
- deal with their uncertainty, and then
- make decisions

Trust influences how well people can
- reduce uncertainty/complexity when
- faced with novel events

Siegrist & Cvetkovitch (2000)

Trust influences
- perception of other's motives
- their competence &
- the credibility of the information they provide

Earle (2004)

Acting on information...
Is as much a function of the relationship between people & the source of information as it is about the information itself

Paton (2005; 2007)
Pearce (2003)
Paton, Millar & Johnston (2001)

Test theoretical model of social trust

Kee & Knox (1970)

Mayer et el (1995)

Trust influenced by

Situational factors
- Information availability/familiarity

Individual/social structural factors
- Costs vs. benefits of acting
- Community characteristics

Study One

Information availability/familiarity Frequency with which people discuss hazard issues with others

	Weekly	Monthly
High		
Bushfire (N=281)	25%	52%
Low		
Earthquake (N=352)	8%	24%

	Bushfire *High information*	Earthquake *Low information*
Outcome expectancy	.193 (p<0.004)	.135 (p<0.01)
Action coping	.144 (p<0.024)	.153 (p<0.005)
Trust	.076 (ns)	.170 (p<0.001)
R^2	18%	19%

Factors predicting adoption of preparedness measures

Study Two
Community Characteristics, Trust and Preparedness

Dispositional factors
 costs & benefits

- positive outcome expectancy
  - benefits > costs
- negative outcome expectancy
  - costs > benefits

Community characteristics

When dealing with uncertainty, views of others with similar values influence
- conceptualisation of risk, and
- choices about confronting risk

Earle (2004)
Lion et al. (2002)

Community Participation

Eng & Parker (1994)

Faced with uncertainty
Perceived quality of information
- Degree to which it is consistent with needs & expectations of those seeking it

Function of:
- Ability to articulate uncertainty into meaningful question
- Answers to which will reduce uncertainty and inform decision making
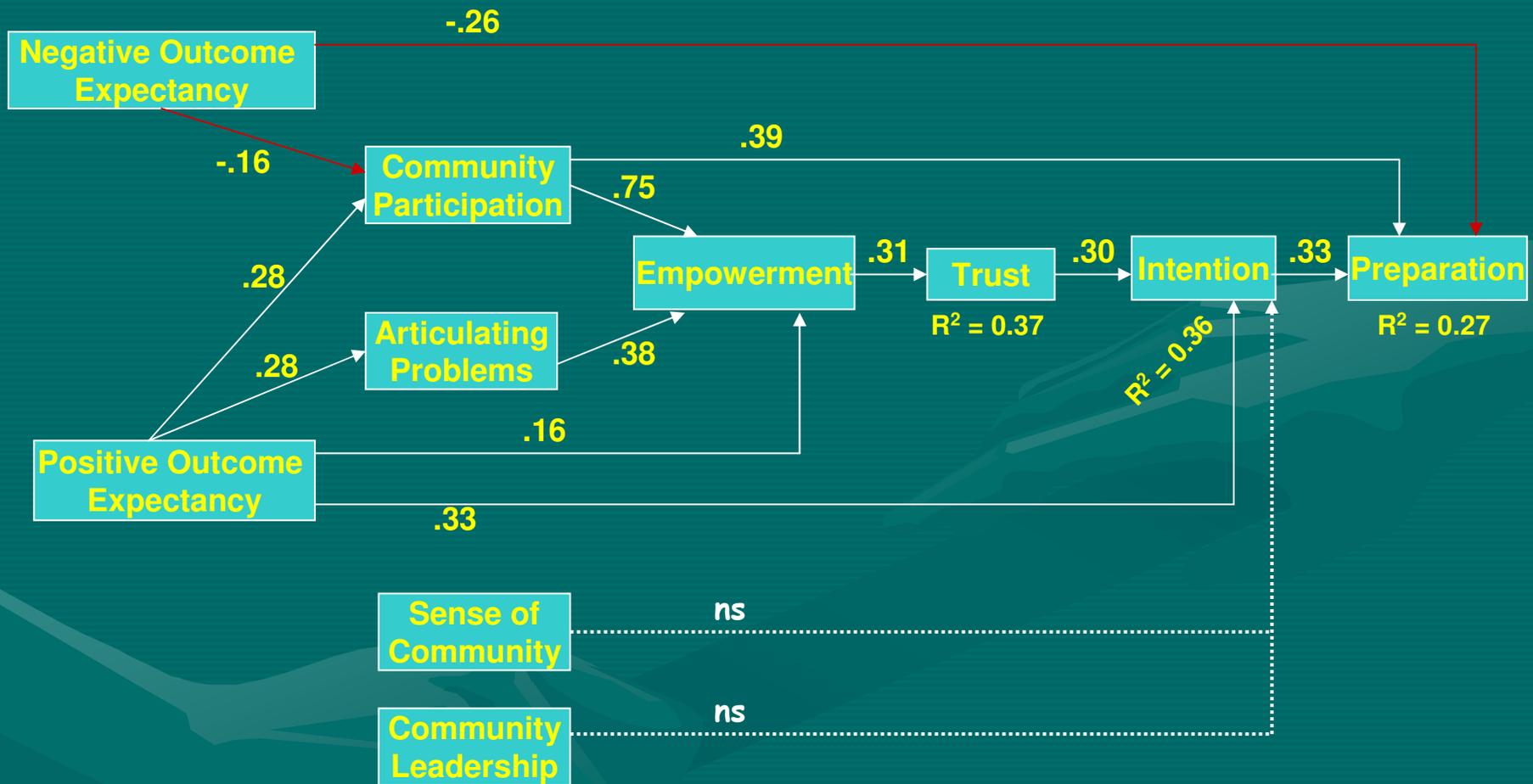
Articulating Problems
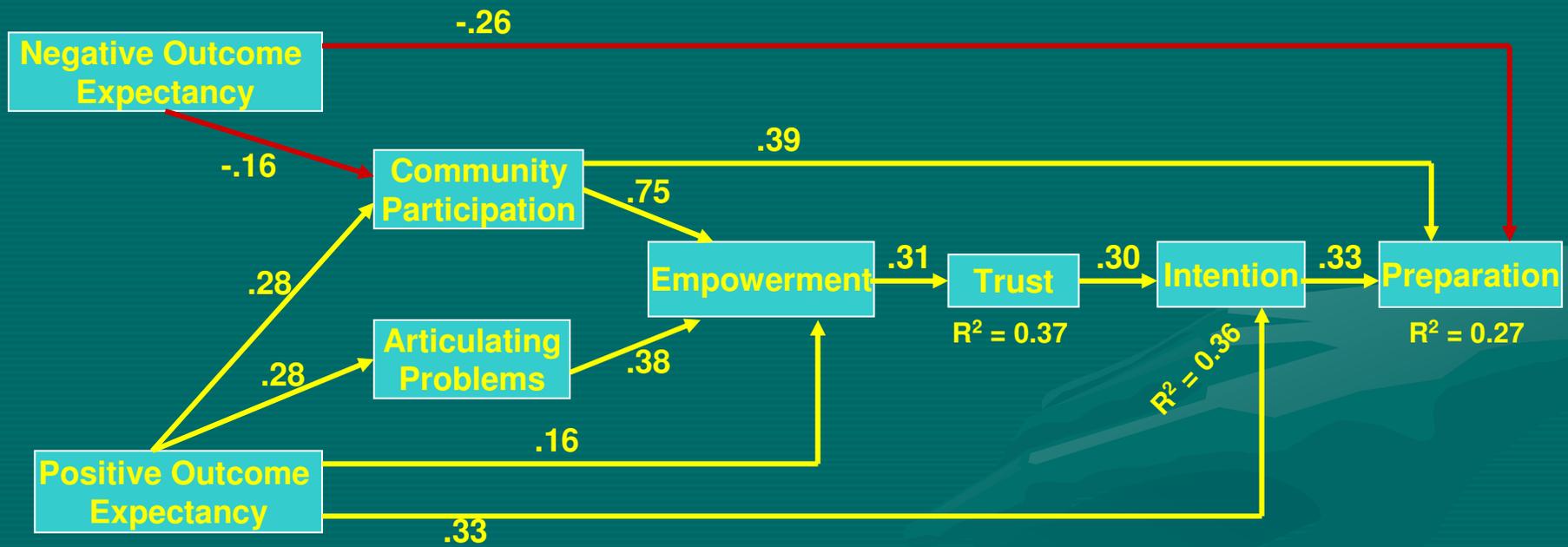
Eng & Parker (1994)

Quality of information

- Degree to which sources of information act in ways that meet needs and expectations of those seeking it
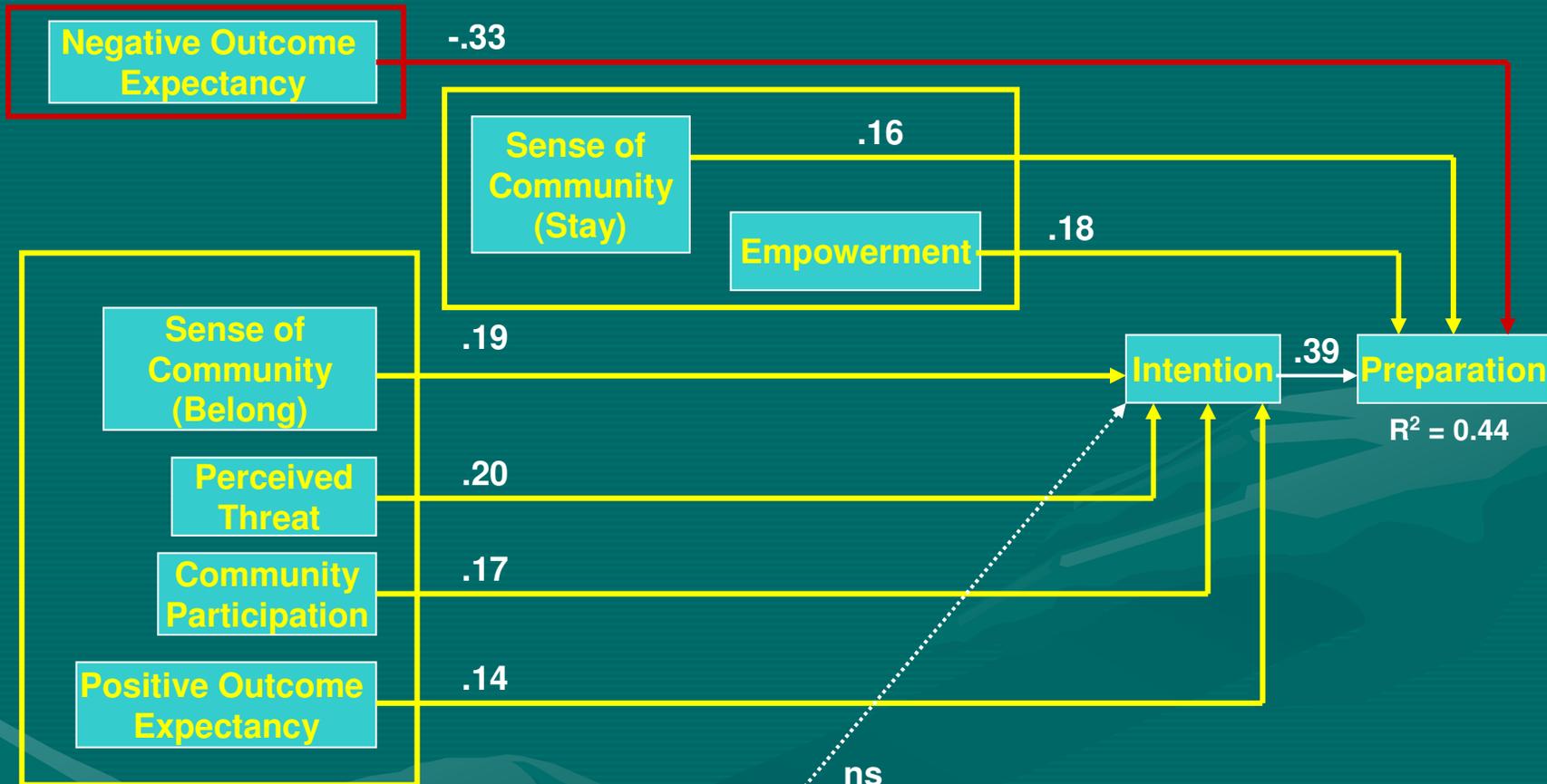
Empowerment

Eng & Parker (1994)

Speer & Peterson (2000)

Paton, McIvor & Johnston (2007)

Negative Outcome Expectancy

Community Participation

Articulating Problems

Positive Outcome Expectancy

Empowerment

Trust
$R^2 = 0.37$

Intention
$R^2 = 0.36$

Preparation
$R^2 = 0.27$

-.26

-.16

.28

.28

.39

.75

.31

.30

.33

.38

.16

.33

Paton, McIvor & Johnston (2007)

Negative Outcome Expectancy

-.33

Sense of Community (Stay)

.16

Empowerment

.18

Sense of Community (Belong)

.19

Perceived Threat

.20

Community Participation

.17

Positive Outcome Expectancy

.14

Intention

.39

Preparation

R² = 0.44

ns

Trust

Prior, Paton & Cottrell (2007)

bushfire CRC

Conclusions

Modelling preparation process

- **assess communities & direct resources**
- **return on investment**

Some people <u>decide not to</u> prepare

Others are predisposed to act, but need support and guidance

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Paton, Smith & Johnston (2005)

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'Preparing' and 'Not Preparing' are discrete processes

- **Need separate strategies**

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Paton & McClure (2007)

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Conclusions…

Support and guidance…from communities and agencies
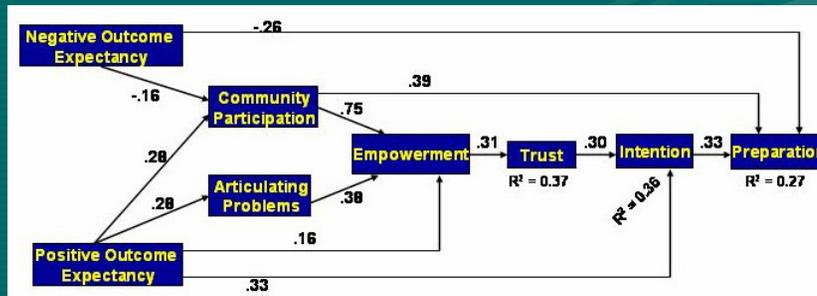
Strategies involve a mix of
- **information provision**
- **community relationships & competencies**
- **community empowerment & engagement**

Paton (2000; 2005; 2007a,b)

Conclusions…

Trust…important facet of engagement

- **Influenced by level of information available within community**
- **Increases in importance following adverse outcomes**

Once lost, it is very difficult to regain

Paton & Bishop (1996)
Paton, Millar & Johnston (2001)
Poortinga & Pidgeon (2004)

Conclusions...

When agencies engage and empower communities about hazards & their mitigation

- levels of trust,
- satisfaction with communication,
- risk acceptance,
- willingness to take responsibility for their own safety, and
- ability to confront hazard consequences

all increase