



# Intergroup Contact Theory

# 10

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## Introduction

It has sometimes been held that merely by assembling people without regard for race, color, religion, or national origin, we can thereby destroy stereotypes and develop friendly attitudes. The case is not so simple. (Allport 1954, p. 261)

The question of how **prejudice** and intergroup conflict can be reduced has been at the forefront of the research agendas in social sciences for many years (see Paluck & Green, 2009; Tropp & Mallett, 2011; see also Wittenbrink, Correll, & Ma, Chap. 11). Not least due to the ever-increasing migration, and as a consequence more ethnically and culturally diverse societies (World Migration Report, 2017), the reduction of (ethnic) prejudice and intergroup conflict is a major challenge for public policy (Hewstone, 2009; Wagner, Christ, & Heitmeyer, 2010). Starting in the 1930s, social scientists proposed that **intergroup contact** – contact between members of different groups – provides a way to overcome intergroup tensions and conflict (for recent overviews, see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Wagner & Hewstone, 2012; for a short historical overview of intergroup contact research, see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005, Pettigrew, 2016). However, mutual contact between members of different groups is not a panacea for prejudice as already pointed out by

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Gordon Allport (1954, see the starting quote). Allport can be considered as the originator of the intergroup contact theory – in his famous and influential book *The Nature of Prejudice*, he summarized early research on intergroup contact.

The present chapter will introduce intergroup contact theory as one of the most prominent approaches to prejudice reduction within psychology (e.g., Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). In the first part, we will answer the question whether intergroup contact indeed helps to overcome prejudice and, as a consequence, intergroup tensions. Moreover, we will also focus on different forms of intergroup contact (face-to-face contact versus indirect forms of contact). In the second part, we will discuss when and how intergroup contact works. We also focus on undesirable, unintended effects of intergroup contact. Finally, we will summarize research demonstrating how intergroup contact theory can be used to develop systematic interventions aiming to reduce prejudice and, as a consequence, improve intergroup relations, ending the chapter with two examples of such interventions that has been implemented in the context of conflictual intergroup relations (i.e., in Israel and Rwanda).

#### Definition Box

**Intergroup contact:** Actual face-to-face interaction between members of different and clearly defined groups.

**Prejudice:** An attitude toward a group and its members that, like other attitudes, has a cognitive component (e.g., beliefs about a target group), an affective component (e.g., dislike), and a conative component (e.g., a behavioral predisposition to behave negatively toward the target group).

#### Box 10.1 Zooming In: Measuring Intergroup Contact and Prejudice

*Intergroup contact* can be assessed with questionnaire items measuring the quantity (e.g., “How much contact do you have with [outgroup] at your college?”) and quality of contact (e.g., “To what extent did you experience the contact with [outgroup] as equal?”) in different life domains (Islam & Hewstone, 1993; for a general overview of contact measures, see Lolliot et al., 2014). *Prejudice* can be measured with questionnaire items directly asking for a rather general affective evaluation of an outgroup (e.g., “Please describe how you feel about [outgroup] on a scale from negative to positive.”; Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997), items asking for more specific aspects of a cognitive stereotype of the outgroup (e.g., “How competent are [outgroup]?”; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002), or items focusing on behavioral intentions toward outgroups (e.g., “I would not be willing to have a sexual relationship with a [outgroup].”; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995).

#### Does Intergroup Contact Work?

In 1954, Gordon Allport reviewed early work on the effects of intergroup contact. As the starting quote of this chapter indicates, Allport was well aware that intergroup contact not always reduces prejudice; on the contrary, it sometimes even might strengthen stereotypical views of outgroups and increases negative sentiments. He therefore proposed in his famous formulation of the intergroup contact hypothesis that intergroup contact only reduces prejudice in situations that meet four optimal conditions: equal group status within the contact situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation (i.e., cooperation in working toward

common goals), and the support of authorities, law, or custom (for a more elaborated discussion of these conditions, see Pettigrew, 1998).

friendships is able to improve intergroup attitudes (for a meta-analytical review, see Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011).

### Box 10.2 Question for Elaboration

Imagine you are asked to design an intervention aiming at reducing prejudice between students belonging to different ethnic groups at a school.

Based on Allport's (1954) optimal conditions, what could an intergroup contact intervention look like?

Allport's intergroup contact hypothesis inspired a vast amount of research with a marked increase in more recent years (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011; Vezzali & Stathi, 2017). Based on their extensive meta-analytic synthesis of intergroup contact research, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006, p. 768) concluded that "there is little need to demonstrate further contact's general ability to lessen prejudice." Results of the meta-analysis revealed a mean negative relationship of  $r = -.21$  between intergroup contact and prejudice corresponding to a small to medium effect size (Cohen, 1988), although the effect was smaller for minority group members compared to majority group members (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005).

Moreover, the effect of intergroup contact was larger in samples where contact was structured to meet Allport's optimal contact conditions. This finding is important when it comes to developing intergroup contact interventions. However, even when the optimal conditions were not explicitly incorporated, contact still had a prejudice-reducing effect indicating that these conditions are not essential in order that intergroup contact shows positive effects but generally enhance the positive effects. This facilitating effect of Allport's conditions is also reflected in findings that show that especially intimate intergroup contact in form of intergroup

### Box 10.3 Zooming In: Meta-analytic Test of the Intergroup Contact Theory

In 2006, Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp published a monumental meta-analysis on intergroup contact. In general, meta-analyses statistically integrate the results of multiple studies. In this case, Pettigrew and Tropp included studies on intergroup contact up to December 2000 and analyzed the results of 515 studies with 713 independent samples leading to an overall sample size of more than 250,000 individuals. The selection of studies comprised research conducted in 38 different nations, across a variety of target groups using different methodological approaches. Not surprisingly, the study is one of the most important publications in the field and was cited more than 5000 times so far (Google Scholar, 2018). Results indicate that "contact effects typically generalize to the entire outgroup, and [that] they emerge across a broad range of outgroup targets and contact settings" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 751).

Besides providing evidence for a robust effect of intergroup contact, Pettigrew and Tropp's meta-analysis also revealed that most studies are based on cross-sectional data. Cross-sectional designs, however, limit the causal interpretability of the relation between intergroup contact and prejudice. Thus, one cannot exclude the possibility that the negative correlations between contact and prejudice found in most cross-sectional research are due to a selection bias: highly prejudiced individuals avoid intergroup contact, and unprejudiced individuals seek out contact. However, both experimental (for an overview,

see Paluck, Green, & Green, 2018) and longitudinal studies (e.g., Binder, Zagefka, Brown, & Leyens, 2009; Levin, van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003; Swart, Hewstone, Christ, & Voci, 2011) confirm the meta-analytical results showing that intergroup contact indeed affects attitudes.

Intergroup contact not only reduces prejudice but influences a wide range of outcome measures including more conflict-relevant outcomes (Hewstone et al., 2014) such as outgroup trust (e.g., Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009) and forgiveness (e.g., Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006; for a detailed discussion see Dinnick & Noor, Chap. 15). Research also demonstrated that intergroup contact is especially effective for those individuals in need (i.e., highly prejudiced individuals; Hodson, Turner, & Choma, 2017).

The prejudice-reducing effect of intergroup contact not only generalizes beyond the members involved in the original contact setting to the whole group (**Primary Transfer Effect**; see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Importantly, intergroup contact effects also generalize to attitudes toward other, *secondary*, outgroups not involved in the contact situation which is labeled as the **Secondary Transfer Effect** of intergroup contact (e.g., Pettigrew, 2009; Tausch et al., 2010).

To conclude, it is now well-established that (positive) face-to-face contact with members of other groups reduces prejudicial attitudes toward these outgroups and even generalizes toward other groups.

#### Definition Box

**Primary Transfer Effect of intergroup contact:** Generalization of positive attitudes from the encountered outgroup member to the outgroup as a whole.

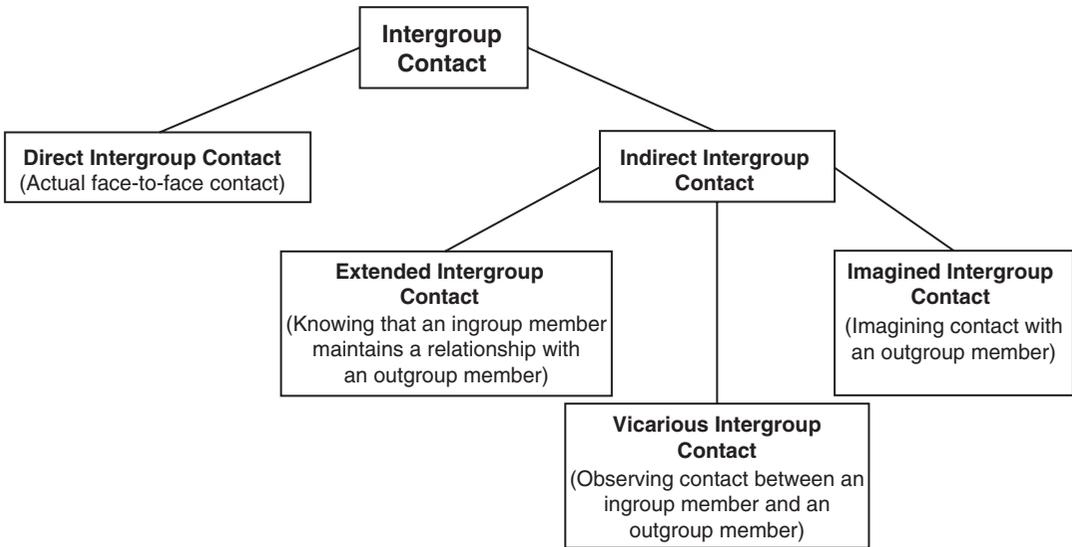
**Secondary Transfer Effect:** Generalization of positive attitudes from one outgroup to other outgroups not involved in the intergroup encounter.

## Different Forms of Intergroup Contact

Although the evidence on the effectiveness of face-to-face (direct) intergroup contact is promising, sometimes contact between group members is difficult, if not impossible (e.g., due to segregation or intense phases of intergroup conflict). Moreover, intergroup encounters are sometimes found to exacerbate intergroup bias, producing heightened stress, anxiety, or outgroup avoidance (Shelton, Dovidio, Hebl, & Richeson, 2009; Trawalter, Richeson, & Shelton, 2009). Recent work therefore suggested that even indirect forms of intergroup contact (e.g., knowledge of or perceiving contact among others or imagined contact; see Fig. 10.1) may also have a beneficial effect, but avoid the aforementioned limitations of direct intergroup contact.

The research by Wright et al. (1997) on *extended contact* is pioneering in this regard. Wright and colleagues provided first empirical evidence that mere knowledge that an ingroup member has a close relationship with an outgroup member can improve intergroup attitudes. Moreover, even simply observing or being made aware of interactions between ingroup and outgroup members (*vicarious intergroup contact*) reduces prejudice (Vezzali, Hewstone, Capozza, Giovannini, & Wölfer, 2014). A recent meta-analysis by Zhou, Page-Gould, Aron, and Hewstone (2018) strongly supported the effectiveness of extended and vicarious contact for improving outgroup attitudes. Based on 115 studies, results demonstrated a small-to-medium effect size for extended and vicarious contact ( $r = .25$ ) and that these effects are over and above direct contact experiences. Research also showed that extended contact is especially effective for people with few direct contact experiences or who live in segregated rather than mixed communities (Christ et al., 2010).

Based on the extended contact hypothesis, Christ et al. (2014) demonstrated a *contextual effect* of intergroup contact (see Blalock, 1984). They showed that living in a place in which other ingroup members interact positively with members of the outgroup reduces prejudice over and above



**Fig. 10.1** Overview of different forms of intergroup contact

one's own contact experiences and irrespective of whether one knows the ingroup members experiencing intergroup contact. In other words, even individuals who have no direct contact experience can benefit from living in mixed settings, in which other group members have positive intergroup contact. This research also underlines the importance and scope of social norms in influencing intergroup relations as we will also see later when we introduce an indirect contact intervention by Paluck (2009).

#### Box 10.4 Zooming In: Contextual Effects of Intergroup Contact (Christ et al., 2014)

Responding to calls for more attention for the social context of intergroup contact effects (e.g., Pettigrew, 2008), Christ et al. (2014) applied multilevel modelling to test a contextual effect of intergroup contact. Multilevel modelling allows for the simultaneous consideration and analysis of different levels of analysis in hierarchically structured data (e.g., survey respondents living in different neighborhoods/districts). A contextual effect of intergroup contact is defined as the difference between the effect

of intergroup contact on prejudice between social contexts such as neighborhoods (the *between-level effect*) and the effect of individual-level contact within contexts (the *within-level effect*; see Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Evidence for this contextual effect of positive contact would indicate that living in a place in which other ingroup members interact positively with members of the outgroup reduces prejudice over and above one's own contact experiences and irrespective of whether one knows the ingroup members experiencing intergroup contact. Indeed, Christ et al. (2014) found support for this assumption in five cross-sectional and two longitudinal studies. Moreover, the contextual effect of intergroup contact was partly explained by (positive) social norms (i.e., the shared beliefs about the value of ethnic and cultural diversity).

Crisp and Turner (2009) showed that even just *imagining* intergroup contact helps to reduce prejudice and prepares individuals for face-to-face intergroup contact. What is striking is the simplicity of the instruction participants receive

in imagined contact studies. The standard instruction (Crisp et al., 2009) is as follows, although variants and extensions have been used: “We would like you to take a minute to imagine yourself meeting [an outgroup] stranger for the first time. Imagine that the interaction is positive, relaxed and comfortable.” The key elements that proved to be necessary are the simulation of an interaction (first sentence of the instruction) and the positive tone of the interaction (second sentence of the instruction).

#### Box 10.5 Zooming In: Validity of Imagined Intergroup Contact Effects

The imagined contact hypothesis has inspired numerous studies, not least because of its simplicity. The empirical evidence seems to support the imagined contact hypothesis. A meta-analysis of 70 studies by Miles and Crisp (2014) found that imagined contact had a small to medium effect ( $d_+ = 0.35$ ) on a number of outcomes (e.g., explicit and implicit intergroup attitudes, behavioral intentions). However, the imagined contact hypothesis is not left without critique (Bigler & Hughes, 2010; Lee & Jussim, 2010). Moreover, in a recent large-scale replication attempt, the effects have not been supported (Klein et al., 2014). Furthermore, it is still not clear how long-lasting the effects are. There are only few longitudinal studies that tested the longevity of effects, and only among younger participants (Vezzali et al., 2015; Vezzali, Crisp, Stathi, & Giovannini, 2015). It is up to future research to get a better idea of the boundary conditions of imagined contact and to answer the question whether imagined intergroup contact is a valid means for sustainable prejudice reduction.

#### Box 10.6 Question for Elaboration

Think about situations and contexts in which imagined intergroup contact could be especially useful.

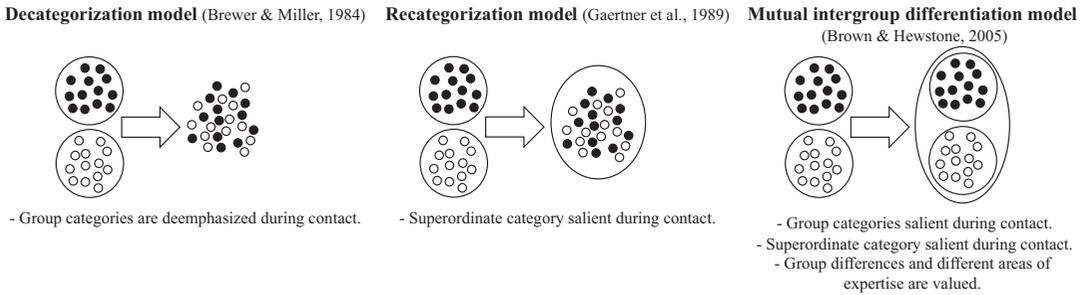
Demonstrating that even with indirect intergroup contact (knowing or perceiving intergroup contact of others or simply imagining an intergroup interaction) negative attitudes can be improved offers a number of practical applications in form of contact interventions (Brown & Paterson, 2016). For instance, portraying (positive) interactions between members of different groups provides a promising avenue to improve intergroup relations on a large scale as has been demonstrated by the work of Paluck (2009) which we will summarize in more detail at the end of this chapter. Moreover, research shows that indirect contact prepares for direct contact (e.g., Turner & West, 2012; Wölfer et al., 2019), thus helping to connect groups in conflict.

### When and Why Does Intergroup Contact Work?

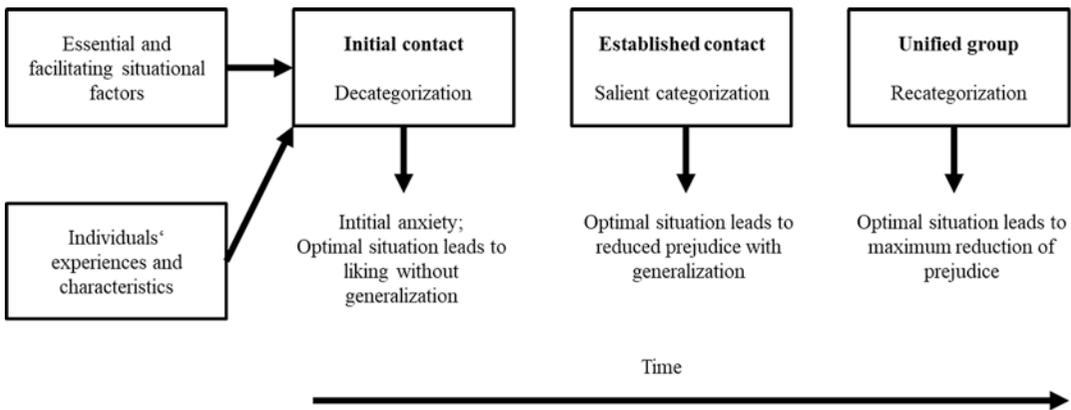
The effectiveness of direct and indirect intergroup contact in reducing prejudice and improving intergroup relations has received convincing empirical support. But research has not only focused on the question whether intergroup contact helps to reduce prejudice and therefore improves intergroup relations. There are also numerous studies that focused on the questions when and why intergroup contact works. These questions concern the moderation and mediation of intergroup contact effects, respectively (see Kenworthy, Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2005).

### Moderators of Contact Effects

Starting in the 1980s, scholar debated on the question when contact is most likely to reduce prejudice. Unlike Allport (1954) who focused on optimal conditions that facilitate intergroup contact effects, this line of research tried to identify the conditions for the primary transfer of intergroup contact effects. Different models have been proposed with differing assumptions about the cognitive representation of groups that should be salient during the intergroup encounter. While the *decategorization model* (Brewer & Miller, 1984) proposes that the intergroup interaction



**Fig. 10.2** Overview of models of cognitive group presentation during intergroup contact



**Fig. 10.3** The three-stage model of intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 1998)

should be based on an individual level by deemphasizing the group categories, the *recategorization model* (e.g., Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989) suggested to make a superordinate “we” category salient. The evidence so far, however, speaks for the *mutual intergroup differentiation model* of Hewstone and Brown (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone & Brown, 1986) that proposes that respective group memberships should be salient in the contact situation. A conceptual overview of the different models is depicted in Fig. 10.2.

Pettigrew (1998; see also Gaertner et al., 2000) in his formulation of an intergroup contact theory integrated these different models by suggesting a three-stage model in which an optimal contact experience is developed gradually (see Fig. 10.3). In the initial contact situation, decategorization and individuation (Brewer & Miller, 1984) should occur to reduce intergroup anxiety. In the next stage, the group categories

should be made salient in order to allow a generalization of the individuals’ positive contact experiences to the outgroup as a whole (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). In the last and most optimal stage with regard to intergroup relations, recategorization (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) should occur during which a perception of a common ingroup is achieved (see also Scheepers & Ellemers, Chap. 9).

**Box 10.7 Question for Elaboration**

Imagine a new group of immigrants, the Ondereans, came to your country. You are planning to have several meetings with an Onderean. Applying Pettigrew’s three-stage model, how would you try to behave during the meetings to facilitate mutual liking?

## Mediators of Contact Effects

Numerous studies examined potential mediators of intergroup contact effects (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) meta-analytically examined a subset of the studies of their meta-analysis on intergroup contact effects (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The results show that contact exerts its effect on prejudice mainly by reducing negative affect (e.g., intergroup anxiety) and by inducing positive affective processes (e.g., empathy and perspective taking), a result that was recently confirmed in a longitudinal study (Swart et al., 2011). Cognitive mediators (e.g., intergroup knowledge) seem to play a less important role.

## Undesirable and Unintended Effects of Intergroup Contact

Research on intergroup contact has not been left without critiques (e.g., Dixon, 2017). For instance, research on intergroup contact has been criticized for neglecting the outcomes of negative encounters between members of different groups (e.g., Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005). Encounters in which a member of one group is offended, threatened, or physically harmed by a member of a different group can be regarded as examples of negative intergroup contact (for more examples, see Hayward, Tropp, Hornsey, & Barlow, 2017). Although this critique is certainly justified, a discussion of the effects of negative contact is beyond the scope of this chapter in which we focus on the more common positive courses of intergroup encounters (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). However, research on the effects of both positive and negative intergroup contact is increasing in recent years (Graf & Paolini, 2017).

Moreover, Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, and Tredoux (2010) criticize that most scientific work on intergroup contact focuses disproportionately on the majority group perspective, thereby neglecting potential negative effects that contact can have for members of low-status minority groups. A number of scholars have argued that for disadvantaged groups, positive intergroup contact might actually evoke the so-called demobilizing effects: positive intergroup contact might lead

low-status minority group members to dissociate themselves from the needs of their group, thereby decreasing support for social change that would improve the situation for their group as a whole (e.g., Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Reicher, 2007; Wright & Lubensky, 2009; for a recent overview of this critical position, see Durrheim & Dixon, 2018). Indeed, Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, and Pratto (2009) demonstrated that, for low-status groups, positive contact with high-status group members increased perceptions of outgroup fairness and, as a consequence, decreased support for social change. Likewise, Dixon et al. (2007) found that Black South Africans who had White outgroup friends showed less support for anti-racism policies than Black South Africans who had no White friends (see also Tropp, Hawi, Van Laar, & Levin, 2012).

Research just started to examine conditions that lead to more positive intergroup relations without diminishing legitimate protest aimed at reducing inequality (e.g., Kauff, Green, Schmid, Hewstone, & Christ, 2016; Vezzali, Andrighetto, & Saguy, 2016). For instance, Becker, Wright, Lubensky, and Zhou (2013) demonstrated that the sedative effect of intergroup contact (i.e., reducing collective action intentions) for minority group members did not occur when the high-status individual addressed the illegitimacy of unequal intergroup relations during the contact.

However, more research is needed to identify conditions that lead to an implementation of intergroup harmony without inhibiting social change. One promising strategy seems to be to emphasize both commonalities and differences in the intergroup encounters (Saguy, Shchori-Eyal, Hasan-Aslih, Sobol, & Dovidio, 2017), a strategy that has been implemented in some variants of intergroup contact interventions as is illustrated in the direct contact intervention that Shani and Boehnke (2017) have evaluated and that we will introduce in more detail below.

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## Intergroup Contact Interventions

Intergroup contact theory provides a clear and concise guideline for interventions: individuals from different groups have to be brought in direct

or indirect contact (Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). It is therefore not surprising that many interventions for reducing prejudice are based on the intergroup contact theory (see Wagner, Christ, & van Dick, 2002). A recent meta-analysis by Lemmer and Wagner (2015) summarized the results of intergroup contact interventions aimed at reducing ethnic prejudice. In this meta-analysis contact interventions were included that (a) have been implemented under naturalistic conditions outside the lab (e.g., in school settings) and that (b) had the aim to establish direct or indirect contact between members of different groups. Moreover, since the goal of the meta-analysis was to include only those studies that provide sufficient evidence for the causal effect of intergroup contact (i.e., studies with sufficient internal validity; see also Paluck & Green, 2009), only studies were included that used a randomized posttest only with control, a pretest-posttest with control, or a pretest-posttest single group design. It is important to note that the majority of studies (i.e., 85%) included in this meta-analysis were not considered in Pettigrew and Tropp's meta-analysis (2006).

Based on the inclusion criteria, 73 studies with 129 independent comparisons have been included in the meta-analysis. Overall, intergroup contact interventions generally resulted in improved intergroup attitudes (i.e., reduction in ethnic prejudice), both immediately and up to one year later, demonstrating the effectiveness of the implementation of either direct or indirect contact forms. The estimated effect sizes can be classified as small to medium ( $\hat{\mu}_0$  between 0.23 and 0.39; Cohen, 1988). Moreover, results show that contact interventions are also effective in the context of protracted intergroup conflicts (e.g., conflict between Jewish and Palestinian Israelis, Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland). Although the effect of contact interventions was stronger for ethnic majorities, interventions were still effective for ethnic minorities.

The meta-analytic results clearly confirm that contact interventions are an effective means to reduce prejudice and, thus, intergroup tensions. Both direct and indirect contact interventions seem to be comparably effective in improving intergroup attitudes. Importantly, contact interventions

seem to be more effective than other prejudice interventions (see meta-analysis by Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014).

In the following, we will describe two contact interventions in more detail. In the first example, Shani and Boehnke (2017) examined the effects of a direct contact intervention in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the second example, Paluck (2009) tested the effects of a radio program in which positive intergroup contact was portrayed, thus providing an example for a contact intervention that implemented indirect intergroup contact.

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### An Example of a Direct Contact Intervention

Intergroup contact theory has inspired a number of planned encounters between members of groups in conflict to contribute to reconciliation. For instance, intergroup encounter interventions between Jewish and Palestinian citizens have a long history in Israel (Maoz, 2004). The conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinians is often considered as a prototype of an intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2013). Intractable conflicts are prolonged, chronic, and violent and are perceived by society members as existential, irresolvable, and of zero-sum nature (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013). Different models of planned intergroup encounters have been applied in this context (Maoz, 2004, 2011). The *coexistence model* seeks to promote positive intergroup attitudes by emphasizing commonalities and similarities between the two groups. Political issues in disagreement between the two parties are avoided. In contrast, in the *confrontational model*, group membership is made salient, and it is aimed to increase awareness among (mainly) majority members of structural barriers for equality and to empower the minority members. Programs based on the confrontational model intend to change the construction of identity of minority and majority members, making Israeli Jews more aware of their dominant role while empowering Palestinian Arabs through their direct confrontation with Israeli Jews (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004).

For both models, a number of limitations have been identified (Maoz, 2011). For the coexistence model, critiques question the focus on interpersonal interaction and on personal identities, while important issues such as the conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinians and the discrimination of the Palestinian citizens of Israel are ignored. Recent research on the sedative effect of intergroup contact, as summarized above, supports this critical view. The confrontational model has been criticized since the direct confrontation can distress and alienate Israeli Jewish participants and cause negative attitudes and distrust toward Palestinians and toward the practice of encounters (Maoz, Bar-On, & Yikya, 2007).

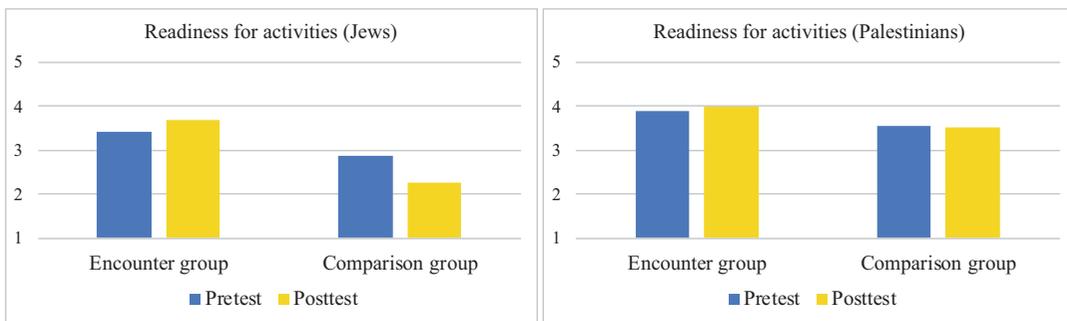
The “face-to-face” program – a mixed-model encounter program – integrates elements of the coexistence model as well as the confrontational model. Both, interpersonal and political intergroup dynamics, are addressed within this 2-day structured encounter. The program is endorsed by the Israeli Ministry of Education and is conducted as an official educational activity in cooperation with Hebrew and Arabic high schools across the country. Mixed groups of about eight to ten participants meet at neutral places and are guided by trained Jewish and Palestinian facilitators (for a detailed description, see Shani, 2015).

The encounter has two main phases aiming to gradually change from coexistence-focused to confrontational activities. On the first day, activities are implemented that aim to help participants to become acquainted with each other and to establish social relationships (e.g., talking about hobbies, their likes and dislikes). Later, the focus switches to the group level. Participants learn about similarities and differences between their cultural groups. Moreover, they discuss and confront mutual stereotypical perceptions. Thus, the activities in the first day resemble the first two stages of the three-stage model of Pettigrew (1998; see Fig. 10.3). Although most activities are preplanned, the program allows for free interactions and non-structured discussion between group members in public areas. One of the aims of the first day is the development of affective ties and mutual trust between the members of both groups.

On the second day, “the competing national and political identities” (Shani, 2015, p. 101) are discussed. That is the groups discuss topics like national identity, security, discrimination, democracy, and power differences between the groups. In other words, the activities and discussions focus on the core conflicts between the groups. Because these kinds of dialogues can be intense and evoke conflicting and complex emotional reactions among the participants, the program trainers try to reestablish a harmonious atmosphere at the end of the encounter. In fact, the encounters usually end on a positive note. That is, participants usually exchange their contact details and express a willingness to maintain a friendship with outgroup members.

Shani and Boehnke (2017) tested the effectiveness of the “face-to-face” program. Using a quasi-experimental design with two measurement points and comparing Jewish and Palestinian pupils who participated in the program with comparable pupils who did not, the authors found a significant intervention effect for the Israeli Jewish participants on measures such as readiness for outgroup contact and support for equals rights (see Fig. 10.4). Palestinian participants reported higher levels of support for inclusion after the encounter. Importantly, the intervention did not undermine the perception of intergroup disparities among both majority and minority members. In line with aforementioned findings (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), tests of mediators mainly identified affective processes as important. That is after the encounter empathy increased and hatred decreased for Jewish participants, while for Palestinian participants an increase in empathy and hope was observed.

Overall, the results demonstrate the effectiveness of mixed-model encounters, although it was more effective for Israeli Jewish than for Palestinian participants. To conclude, the “face-to-face” illustrates that direct intergroup contact interventions are able to improve intergroup relations – even in intractable conflicts. However, as Shani and Boehnke (2017) point out, it is important to develop interventions in a way that “takes into consideration the different preferences and



**Fig. 10.4** Effects of the “face-to-face” program on readiness for activities with outgroup members for Jewish (left) and Palestinian participants (right) (Shani & Boehnke, 2017). Note: Readiness for activities was measured with three items (e.g., “Indicate your interest to participate in a Jewish-Arab workshop.”) on a scale from 1 to 5. For Jews a significant interaction effect between intervention con-

dition (encounter vs. comparison group) and time (pretest vs. posttest) emerged ( $F(1, 158) = 33.09, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.17$ ). Jewish participants were more willing to engage in intergroup activities after the encounter than before the encounter ( $d = 0.32$ ). For Palestinians no significant interaction effect emerged ( $F(1, 255) = 0.79, p = .28$ )

needs of each group, and which does not shy away from dealing with the problems that shape the relations between the groups” (p. 8).

### An Example of an Indirect Contact Intervention

As outlined before, indirect contact interventions are also promising since they can be implemented with fewer resources and are therefore less costly. In addition, they can be implemented even in highly segregated contexts or contexts in which it is difficult to bring members from opposing groups together. Most importantly, when vicarious contact interventions are used, more individuals can be reached, and since social norms might be changed, the effect might be more sustainable.

Paluck (2009) conducted a study in Rwanda aiming at testing the influence of mass media (here radio) on prejudice, norms, and intergroup behavior. In 1994, during the Rwandan Civil War, members of the main majority group, the Hutu, mass slaughtered between 500,000 and 1,000,000 members of the main minority group, the Tutsi. Naturally, Rwanda is still struggling with the consequences of this genocide. Perpetrators and victims are living side by side, and, not surprisingly, the climate is dominated by distrust and mutual

devaluation. Accordingly, there are numerous attempts to improve the relation between the Hutu and the Tutsi. One of them is “New Dawn,” a reconciliation radio soap opera involving the fictional story of two Rwandan ethnic groups that can be associated with the Hutu and Tutsi communities. Characters of the radio show are portrayed as typical Rwandans wrestling with problems familiar to most of the listeners. Hence, listeners can easily connect with the characters depicted in the radio show. In Rwanda, radio is the most important form of media. As a consequence, it is likely that the program is capable of changing social norms. Although in her study Paluck (2009) didn’t approach “New Dawn” from an intergroup contact perspective, the intervention contains elements of vicarious contact. Within the soap, characters belonging to the two rival groups band together and confront leaders who support the use of violence. They cooperate across community lines and promote positive norms about intermarriage.

Paluck (2009) studied the effects of “New Dawn” within a 1-year field experiment. She sampled 12 communities from four different regions in Rwanda. Each community was randomly assigned to a treatment or a control condition. For each community, 40 participants were either exposed to “New Dawn” (treatment) or a radio health program (control). Because

Rwandans typically listen to the radio in groups, research assistants visited each community once a month and played four episodes of the respective radio program on a portable cassette player. The health program participants were asked to refrain from listening to “New Dawn.” They were promised a cassette player and tapes with all “New Dawn” episodes at the end of the study.

After 1 year, researchers went to the communities to gather different types of data – among them data from individual and group interviews as well as from behavioral observations. Results of the analyses of these data indicated that participants who listened to the reconciliation soap opera displayed more cooperative intergroup behavior, compared with participants in a control condition listening to a soap opera on health issues. Moreover, participants in the experimental group believed that current social norms were more supportive of intergroup integration and were also more trusting of the outgroup and more willing to cooperate with them, even though the participants did not show a change in their personal beliefs with regard to the program’s message about prejudice and violence.

#### Box 10.8 Zooming In: Measuring Behavior in Paluck (2009)

In her study on the effects of the radio program “New Dawn” in Rwanda, Elizabeth Levy Paluck did not only obtain data from self-report questionnaires or group discussions. Aiming at getting a broad picture of the effects of the intervention, she also gathered behavioral data. Research assistants documented group discussions in communities about how batteries and tapes for a cassette player should be shared among community members. Paluck (2009) argued that this measure “also captured spontaneous behavior that participants believed to be ‘off the record’” (p. 579).

Interestingly, in the control group, community members typically decided to

hand the items over to the village’s local authority. In the experimental reconciliation groups, however, group members often claimed that the whole group is responsible for the items or that they should vote for a member responsible of managing the items. In the experimental groups, more comments were made about the groups’ ability to cooperate and interact in the future (e.g., to continue to listen to the program together). Thus, also these behavioral data hint to the effectiveness of the intervention.

Paluck’s (2009) study illustrates that social norms regarding inclusion can be affected by observation of others’ behavior (vicarious intergroup contact). Moreover, this research also demonstrates how insights from research on intergroup contact can be translated in a relatively simple intervention that has the potential to affect a large number of individuals.

#### Summary

- Intergroup contact, that is, contact between members of different groups, is an effective means to reduce mutual prejudice and increase trust and forgiveness.
- Besides direct (i.e., face-to-face) intergroup contact, other more indirect forms of intergroup contact such as extended, vicarious, and imagined contact have been shown to be effective.
- Different types of in- and outgroup categorization are proposed as moderators of intergroup contact effects.
- Reduced intergroup anxiety and increased empathy have been shown to mediate intergroup contact effects.
- Intergroup contact interventions have been shown to improve intergroup attitudes.

## Recommended Reading

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## Guiding Answers to Questions in the Chapter

1. Q (With Box 10.2): Imagine you are asked to design an intervention aiming at reducing prejudice between students belonging to different ethnic groups at schools.

Based on Allport's (1954) optimal conditions, what could an intergroup contact intervention look like?

A:

1. Students from different ethnic groups could work together on a certain task (e.g., developing a strategy to refurbish the school building).

2. It should be made explicit that they have a common goal.
3. When working together, students must be on a par with each other, that is, they need to have the same rights and privileges.
4. Teachers and principals support them and ensure that they jointly work on the assigned task.

2. Q (With Box 10.6): Think about situations and contexts in which imagined intergroup contact is especially useful.

A:

- When opportunities for contact with outgroup members are rare (e.g., in highly segregated or conflict areas), when the number of outgroup members is small (e.g., North Korean immigrants in the USA), or when outgroup members do not participate in everyday life (e.g., inmates)
- When ingroup members are unwilling to engage in direct contact with outgroup members – either because they are strongly biased against outgroup members or because they are afraid of meeting outgroup members
- When the outcome of a direct intergroup contact situation is unclear (e.g., when a language barrier exists and challenges a functional interaction between members of different groups)

3. Q (With Box 10.7): Imagine a new group of immigrants, the Ondereans, came to your country. You are planning to have several meetings with an Onderean. According to Pettigrew's three-stage model, how should you try to behave during the meetings to facilitate mutual liking?

A:

- At first, try to encounter the Onderean on an individual level. Try to avoid thinking too much about his/her group membership. Do not refer to your group membership.
- Once primary contact has been established, acknowledge your different backgrounds

and talk about differences between your groups.

- Finally, focus on commonalities between your groups. Try to think about the Onderereans as being part of a common group (e.g., people living in your country or humans).

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