A Summary of Research Findings on the Effects of Intergroup Contact

Linda R. Tropp
Department of Psychology
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Contact Information:
Director, Psychology of Peace and Violence Program
Tobin Hall, 135 Hicks Way
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003 U.S.A.

Phone: (413) 577-0934
Email: tropp@psych.umass.edu
Web: www.umass.edu/peacepsychology
Meta–Analysis of Intergroup Contact Effects

• Quantitative integration of research studies testing intergroup contact effects
  – Total of 515 studies (713 independent samples)
  – Studies conducted between 1940s and 2000
  – Data from 250,089 study participants

• Research conducted in diverse contexts
  – Contact studies from 38 different countries
  – Participants from different ages, groups, settings
  – Studies gathered from multiple disciplines
    (e.g., psychology, sociology, political science, education, social work)

(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2008; 2011; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005a; 2005b)
Does Intergroup Contact Reduce Prejudice?

Answer: YES

Greater intergroup contact is typically associated with lower intergroup prejudice

(mean correlation coefficient, $r = -0.21$)
Does Level of Generalization Matter?

Answer: Not Really

Contact typically reduces prejudice regardless of whether assessed in relation to outgroup members in contact situation, or outgroup as a whole (beyond contact situation)

(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2011)
Does Type of Contact Matter?

Answer: YES, contact as friends shows stronger effects

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Optimal conditions also show stronger effects

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Do Optimal Conditions Show Positive Contact Effects for Youth in K-12 Schools?

Answer: YES, optimal conditions show stronger contact effects among youth in schools, both for racial and ethnic contact, and contact between youth from other groups.

(Tropp & Prenovost, 2008; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011)
Does Type of Contact Matter?

Answer: YES, contact as friends shows stronger effects
Optimal conditions also show stronger effects
Importantly, contact studies tested with rigorous methods show even stronger effects

(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2011)
Contact Effects in Relation to Tests of Research Rigor

(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; 2011)
Does Group Status Matter?

Answer: YES, contact is somewhat less effective in reducing prejudice among minority groups than among majority groups

(Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005a; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011)
Does Type of Prejudice Outcome Matter?

Answer: YES, contact shows stronger effects on affective dimensions of prejudice than on cognitive dimensions of prejudice

(Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005b; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011)
How Does Contact Reduce Prejudice?

(Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; 2011)
Conclusions

• Greater intergroup contact predicts lower prejudice

• **Stronger contact effects are especially likely when**
  – studies are conducted with rigorous research procedures
  – affective dimensions of prejudice are the focus of change
  – contact takes the form of cross-group friendships
  – contact occurs under optimal conditions

• **Racial integration in schools and classrooms can play crucial roles in promoting such positive contact effects**