

## CONTACT BETWEEN GROUPS

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Intergroup contact remains one of the most effective methods for improving intergroup relations. This chapter outlines several important branches of intergroup contact theory and research. It begins by focusing on the simplest prediction from contact theory—that greater contact between groups will reduce intergroup prejudice. It then adds complexity by examining factors that moderate contact effects, emphasizing features of contact situations and the differing perspectives of groups that vary in status. It also discusses mediational processes that may account for the positive effects of intergroup contact. The chapter then highlights the importance of contact quality and reviews research on the moment of intergroup contact—intergroup interaction—with a particular emphasis on the roles of anxiety and avoidance. It examines the intersection of intergroup and interpersonal processes that occur in close cross-group relationships, such as friendship and romantic relationships between members of different groups. The chapter closes with suggestions for future research on several topics, including how indirect forms of contact can be of special benefit to people who do not regularly experience direct contact.

As racial integration became more widespread in the United States, researchers noted the potential for contact between racial groups to reduce racial prejudice. Following desegregation of the merchant marines, White seamen reported less

racial prejudice as they took more voyages with Black seamen (Brophy, 1945). White police officers who worked with Black colleagues were more likely to support integration of the police force (Kephart, 1957). Similar effects were observed during the integration of housing projects in the greater New York City area, where White women who lived in desegregated projects expressed more positive attitudes toward Blacks 1 year after integration (Wilner, Walkley, & Cook, 1952). These observations led Robin M. Williams, Jr. (1947) and Gordon Allport (1954) to introduce a simple yet incisive proposition: Intergroup prejudice can be reduced through interactions between members of different groups. Since then, decades of studies have demonstrated positive effects of intergroup contact across children and adults (see Chapter 7, this volume) both in the United States and around the world (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), including contact between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland (Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006; Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2009), between racial groups in South Africa (Dixon et al., 2010; Luiz & Krige, 1985; Swart, Hewstone, Christ, & Voci, 2011; Tredoux & Finchilescu, 2010), and between immigrants and the native born in many European countries (Binder et al., 2009; Gómez, Tropp, & Fernández, 2011; Pettigrew, 1997; Wagner & Machleit, 1986).

<sup>1</sup> We use the terms *minority group* and *majority group* in this chapter to be consistent with the terminology often used in the literature on divergent group perspectives on intergroup contact. We acknowledge, however, that other terms such as “advantaged and disadvantaged groups” or “dominant and subordinate groups” may be appropriate to capture the psychological factors that predict different group perspectives.

As explained in this chapter, however, although there is general support for this simple proposition, the range of outcomes achieved through contact can be quite varied and complex. Intergroup contact theory suggests that contact can reduce prejudice, but its efficacy depends on features of the intergroup context and on qualities of the intergroup relationship (Allport, 1954; Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew, 1998; Williams, 1947). Research has revealed the boundary conditions of the effects of intergroup contact; intergroup contact does not always reduce prejudice and, in some circumstances, may increase it. We therefore discuss moderators of the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice and the pathways through which contact fosters beneficial intergroup outcomes. We then turn to the moment of contact: cross-group interaction. A focus on single interactions paints a bleaker picture of the viability of intergroup contact as a method for improving intergroup relations, despite the fact that intergroup contact is essentially an amalgamation of cross-group interactions. Close relationships between members of different groups are the most favorable form of intergroup contact, and over time, such contact appears to have especially profound effects on intergroup prejudice. We discuss research evidence supporting both of these viewpoints and describe psychological processes that seem crucial to their integration.

### EFFECTS OF INTERGROUP CONTACT

The field of intergroup contact research is large and at times it can appear to yield conflicting results. Consequently, qualitative reviews of the contact literature have produced different conclusions regarding the nature of intergroup contact effects (Amir, 1969; Rothbart & John, 1985; Pettigrew, 1998). This situation prompted Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) to conduct a quantitative meta-analytic review of the contact literature. They combined statistical effects from 515 studies (713 independent samples) gathered from a range of disciplines to test the overall relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice. Their meta-analysis revealed that greater intergroup contact generally is associated with lower levels of intergroup prejudice. Moreover,

the mean effect size rises sharply for studies conducted with greater research rigor, and the strong effects observed in experimental studies of intergroup contact confirm that contact can *cause* reductions in intergroup prejudice. Moreover, 94% of the cases show that greater contact is associated with lower prejudice, and additional findings suggest that these relationships between contact and prejudice are not artifacts of participant selection or publication bias (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011).

A key question in the literature concerns how readily positive contact experiences with one out-group member will generalize to the out-group as a whole. Some theorists have argued that intergroup attitudes are unlikely to change following a positive experience with an individual out-group member because the out-group member is “subtyped” as being atypical of his or her group (Rothbart & John, 1985; Wilder, 1984). Results from the intergroup contact meta-analysis, however, showed that intergroup contact effects typically generalize beyond participants in the immediate contact situation (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011). Indeed, the generalization of contact effects appears to be far broader than what many past commentators have thought: Not only do attitudes toward specific interaction partners usually become more favorable, but so do attitudes toward the entire out-group and even out-groups not directly involved in the contact (Pettigrew, 2009; Schmid, Hewstone, Kupper, Zick, & Wagner, 2012).

Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) also found that intergroup contact was associated with less prejudice across a variety of intergroup situations and contexts (e.g., different contact settings, age-groups, geographic areas). Although the effects of contact were significant in all cases, the magnitude of the contact-prejudice effect size varied somewhat in relation to different target groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). For example, contact appears to be most effective at reducing prejudice between heterosexuals and sexual minorities, whereas contact with the mentally ill and the elderly appears to show the weakest effects on prejudice toward these groups. In sum, although there are subtle forms of variation, substantial evidence supports the basic proposition that intergroup contact can contribute meaningfully

to prejudice reduction across a broad range of groups and contexts.

## BOUNDARY CONDITIONS OF INTERGROUP CONTACT

Still, rather than assume that *any* form of contact will reduce prejudice, researchers have recognized that some forms of contact hold the potential to heighten intergroup hostility and prejudice (Hewstone, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). In particular, there are features of situations that enhance or inhibit the potency of intergroup contact. After considering these, we turn to moderators of the effects of intergroup contact, including the salience of group differences during contact and the differing perspectives of members of groups that vary in status.

### Situational Moderators of Intergroup Contact Effects

Early formulations of intergroup contact theory, such as those by Williams (1947) and Allport (1954), assumed that most intergroup contact would not reduce prejudice. They therefore emphasized how features of contact situations could encourage the potential for contact to reduce prejudice. Growing from earlier statements by Williams (1947), Allport (1954) offered what has become the most influential formulation of intergroup contact theory, one that has guided decades of research (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

Allport's (1954) "**optimal conditions**" for beneficial effects of contact. Allport proposed that contact between groups could lead to reduced prejudice if the contact situation embodied four conditions: (a) equal status between the groups, (b) common goals, (c) cooperation between groups, and (d) institutional support for the contact. The "equal status" condition has proved to be difficult to define, and researchers have conceptualized it in various ways (Riordan, 1978). From Allport's perspective, this condition is fulfilled to the extent that the groups are granted equal status within the contact situation, irrespective of differences in group status that might exist in the larger society (Cohen, 1982;

Riordan & Ruggiero, 1980; Robinson & Preston, 1976). The reasoning here is that we should attempt to achieve positive changes in intergroup attitudes by proactively altering features of the immediate social situation, rather than simply waiting for intergroup equality to be achieved in the broader social context. Other theorists, however, have stressed that groups must be of equal status coming into the contact situation to achieve real benefits of contact between groups (Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Foster & Finchilescu, 1986). To date, the majority of intergroup contact studies have examined relations between groups that initially differ in status (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005a), and these studies typically show an inverse relationship between contact and prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Moreover, studies that examine the interplay between societal-level status and status within the contact situation reveal that establishing equal status within the contact situation can be effective in reducing prejudice, even when groups initially differ in status (Patchen, 1982; Schofield & Eurich-Fulcer, 2001).

Allport (1954) also emphasized that effective contact should involve goals that are common to both groups and thus encourage cooperation. When members of different groups work together toward common goals, they tend to act in friendlier ways and support each other (D. W. Johnson, Johnson, & Maruyama, 1984) and develop positive intergroup attitudes (Aronson & Gonzalez, 1988; Walker & Crogan, 1998). In their classic "Robbers Cave" summer camp studies, Sherif et al. (1961) randomly assigned campers to two different teams that competed against each other, on the assumption that this would provoke intergroup conflict. The researchers then created a series of situations in which the groups were required to work cooperatively toward shared goals that would benefit both groups (e.g., fixing their common water supply, helping to start a truck on the way to a joint picnic). Even though relations between the groups initially had been hostile, the cooperation required by interdependence and common goals led to improved intergroup attitudes and the development of cross-group friendships.

Finally, Allport highlighted the importance of supportive institutional norms to promote positive intergroup relations. Societies and institutions

establish norms of acceptance and guidelines for how members of different groups should interact with each other (Yarrow, Campbell, & Yarrow, 1958). For example, in school contexts, greater cross-race interaction and cooperation is observed among youth from different racial groups when school administrators appear to value positive intergroup relations (Longshore & Wellisch, 1982; Schofield & Sagar, 1979) and when teachers appear to be supportive of interracial contact (Patchen, 1982). Parallel evidence for the importance of institutional support comes from studies of contact in the military (Landis, Hope, & Day, 1984), organizational settings (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006), and religious communities (Parker, 1968).

Although usually defined and considered separately, Allport (1954) and others have proposed that these conditions function best together rather than being conceived of as independent factors (Green, Adams, & Turner, 1988; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Indeed, it is likely an emergent process of interaction among the optimal conditions that amplifies the benefits of intergroup contact for prejudice reduction.

**Subjective experiences of intergroup contact.** At the same time, the traditional focus on special features of the contact situation typically has translated into a lack of focus on individuals' subjective responses to the contact. Increasingly, intergroup researchers have recognized the need to focus on the concerns and expectations that group members bring to cross-group interactions (Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Shelton, Richeson, & Vorauer, 2006; Tropp, 2006; Vorauer, 2006; see also Chapter 15, this volume). Much of this work shows that people's concerns about being rejected by out-group members contributes to their avoidance of contact and undermines their interest in future contact (e.g., Plant & Devine, 2003; Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Tropp & Bianchi, 2006) and also provokes more hostile responses when contact occurs (Butz & Plant, 2006). Little of this work, however, has examined the degree to which these concerns predict intergroup outcomes relative to Allport's conditions for optimal contact. Such research is crucial because even when attempts are made to

create optimal conditions within the contact situation, subjective perceptions of contact conditions still can vary widely among members of different groups and be guided by their preexisting views of the intergroup relationship (Cohen, 1982; Robinson & Preston, 1976).

Molina and Wittig (2006; see also Molina, Wittig, & Giang, 2004) provided a notable research example that links individuals' subjective responses to contact with Allport's (1954) situational conditions for contact. These authors examined the extent to which both the perceptions of contact conditions (e.g., equal status, interdependence, institutional support) and the perceived openness to interracial interactions among fellow students (e.g., acquaintance potential; see Cook & Sellitz, 1955; Cook, Miller, & Brewer, 1984) jointly predicted their own prejudice toward and interest in contact with other racial groups. With diverse samples of middle- and high-school students, Molina and Wittig found that perceived openness predicted significant reductions in students' own prejudiced attitudes and their greater willingness to engage in future contact. Thus, rather than reducing prejudice simply through objective conditions of the contact situation, prejudice may be reduced to the extent that we can alleviate group members' concerns and enhance their subjective feelings of acceptance within the contact situation (Tropp, 2006).

Conversely, a subjective sense of threat can enhance group members' prejudices toward other groups (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Threats may involve anticipated rejection as a group member in intergroup interaction (Stephan & Stephan, 1985), perceived differences in values or belief systems across group boundaries (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Sears & Henry, 2005), or perceived or actual conflicts in group interests (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1999; LeVine & Campbell, 1972; for an extended discussion, see Tropp & Molina, 2012). Competition over resources, as well as ongoing violence and threats of violence, also can provoke intergroup hostility and prejudice and undermine the effectiveness of intergroup contact (Amir, 1969; Corkalo et al., 2004; McCauley, Worchel, Moghaddam, & Lee, 2004). Even in such cases, positive contact often can reduce



the likelihood of further intergroup violence and promote more positive and cooperative relations between groups (Hewstone et al., 2006; Wagner & Hewstone, 2012).

### **Salience of Group Membership in Contact Settings**

Another approach to thinking about situational influences on contact focuses on the salience of group membership during contact. Group membership salience may be introduced into the contact situation in a variety of ways. Experimental studies have induced group membership salience by manipulating the perceived typicality of group members (Brown, Vivian, & Hewstone, 1999, Study 1; Ensari & Miller, 2002, Study 1; Wilder, 1984), by reminding people about group membership before an interaction (Ensari & Miller, 2002, Study 2; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; van Oudenhoven, Groenewoud, & Hewstone, 1996), or by repeatedly referring to group membership during the interaction (Brown, Maras, Masser, Vivian, & Hewstone, 2001; Brown et al., 1999, Study 2). Additionally, other studies have examined the role of dispositional tendencies toward awareness of group membership in intergroup contexts (e.g., Mendoza-Denton, Page-Gould, & Pietrzak, 2006; Pinel, 2002). Despite these diverse ways of conceptualizing group salience, findings from these studies converge on similar conclusions.

Because the salience of group membership itself may hinder the quality of the contact experience, Brewer and Miller (1984; see also N. Miller, 2002) note that an emphasis on group differences, particularly in the early stages of intergroup contact, can lead to greater tension and perceptions of conflict between groups. On the other hand, Hewstone and Brown (1986; see also Brown & Hewstone, 2005) have contended that broader shifts in intergroup attitudes will result only when positive contact experiences with an out-group member are recognized as intergroup in nature. That is, if individual members of different groups interact with one another, the interaction should yield broader generalized changes in intergroup attitudes only to the extent that they are thinking of each other in terms of group membership and are aware that their part-

ner is an out-group member. In line with this view, Brown, Hewstone, and others have documented greater generalization of positive intergroup attitudes when group membership salience is heightened during contact (Brown, Eller, Leeds, & Stace, 2007; Brown et al., 1999; van Oudenhoven et al., 1996; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Taking these results together, it seems that emphasizing group differences early in the intergroup relationship may be especially threatening (Islam & Hewstone, 1993), whereas recognizing group differences at a later point in the relationship might help to build cross-group intimacy and understanding (see Nagda, 2006; Tropp, 2008).

Recognizing the merits of both of these approaches, Pettigrew (1998) proposed that they be integrated into a sequential perspective. During the initial stages of intergroup contact, group membership should be minimized to help reduce intergroup tension and facilitate group members' efforts to get to know one another. Once contact is established and cross-group relationships have begun to develop, group membership should be emphasized so that positive shifts in attitudes resulting from the contact can generalize to the out-group as a whole. Importantly, the sequential perspective benefits from its integration of theoretical principles associated with both camps (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; N. Miller, 2002) and from its attention to group members' subjective experiences as intergroup relationships continue to evolve (Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Tropp, 2006).

Other variables also can influence how we interpret and respond to group membership salience in intergroup settings. For example, we may not want to be perceived on the basis of our group membership if we expect to be rejected or treated differently (Frey & Tropp, 2006), but we may wish to have our group membership acknowledged if our group's experiences tend to be disregarded or overlooked (Eggins, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2002; Tropp & Bianchi, 2007). Thus, while group membership salience is important for generalizing positive outcomes from intergroup contact, close attention also must be paid to how the salience is established and subjectively experienced by group members in the intergroup context.

## Group Representations in Intergroup Contexts

Another issue relevant to the salience of group membership concerns the degree to which members of different groups recognize their shared membership in a common in-group (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Gaertner, Dovidio, and their colleagues have conducted numerous studies in laboratory and field settings showing the benefits of establishing a common in-group identity for improving intergroup attitudes (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989; Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994; Gaertner, Dovidio, & Bachman, 1996). When members of initially distinct groups are induced to perceive themselves and others as part of a common in-group, their attitudes toward former out-group members become more positive because of the same processes that lead people to have positive attitudes toward members of their own groups (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Esses, 2008). Perceiving a common in-group also can promote cooperation and prosocial behavior across former group boundaries (Dovidio et al., 1997) and enhance people's willingness to engage in contact with former out-group members (Gómez, Dovidio, Huici, Gaertner, & Cuadrado, 2008).

Depending on the relative salience of group memberships, however, the representation of a common in-group may be difficult to achieve or maintain when groups come into contact (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009). For example, groups may not always agree on the characteristics that define the common in-group (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999). Moreover, because of asymmetries in status, group members may not feel that the characteristics of all groups are represented adequately in the common in-group (Devos & Banaji, 2005), leading members of lower status groups to feel as if they are being subsumed within a broader social category that does not reflect them (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000).

As such, people often seek to maintain their original group identity together with a more inclusive common in-group identity (Dovidio et al., 2008). This *dual identity* is possible because the two identities usually operate at different levels. One can be a French Canadian or Scottish American without

any conflict between the two identities; indeed, in societies that readily accept such dual identities, this category may become a recognized subgroup of its own. Gaertner and Dovidio (2000, p. 50), however, cautioned that while dual identities can further intergroup harmony, they also can intensify the salience of separate subgroup identities in times of intergroup conflict—as violent outbursts in Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia demonstrate.

Still, members of different status groups often have different views regarding the preferred representations of intergroup relations (Dovidio et al., 2009; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Members of dominant, higher status groups typically show stronger preferences for minimizing group differences and emphasizing common ties among groups within a single superordinate category (e.g., “We are all Americans, rather than Blacks and Whites”; Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). By contrast, even though they also may appreciate commonalities, members of lower status groups typically prefer relations in which group differences are explicitly acknowledged and valued (Verkuyten, 2005). For example, native-born Dutch tend to prefer assimilation of immigrants to the host culture, whereas immigrants prefer to become part of the dominant (host) culture while retaining their original cultural identity (van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998; Pfafferott & Brown, 2006; Verkuyten, 2006). Similarly, Blacks in the United States tend to endorse multicultural ideologies that appreciate distinct racial identities more than colorblindness, whereas Whites tend to endorse colorblindness to a greater extent (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kafati, 2000; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson, & Casas, 2007).

## Intergroup Contact Among Groups That Differ in Status

It is perhaps not surprising then that asymmetries in preferences for and perceptions of intergroup relations could translate into distinct responses to intergroup contact among members of different status groups. Some research suggests that both dominant and subordinate groups generally prefer social integration (contact) over separation, and the more these groups prefer integration, the more positively

their perceive relations between their groups and the more positive their attitudes are toward each other (Zagefka & Brown, 2002). At the same time, other work indicates that there are some important differences in the predictors of interest in intergroup contact among members of dominant and subordinate groups. For example, Tropp and Bianchi (2006) examined predictors of interest in intergroup contact among Black and White respondents in the United States. Among White respondents, greater interest in intergroup contact was predicted by the extent to which they personally valued diversity; by contrast, among Black respondents, greater interest in intergroup contact was predicted by the extent to which they perceived that Whites value diversity, and this effect remained significant even after controlling for perceived racial discrimination and prior friendships with Whites. Similar findings were obtained by Zagefka, González, and Brown (2011) among indigenous Mapuche respondents in relation to non-Indigenous Chileans: The more the Mapuche respondents perceived non-Indigenous Chileans to prefer social integration, the more they expressed interest in intergroup contact. Gómez et al. (2011) also observed that although perceiving that in-group members support contact predicted greater interest in intergroup contact among both immigrant and native-born respondents in Spain, perceiving that out-group members support contact was an especially important predictor of interest among immigrant respondents.

Taken together, these findings suggest that members of subordinate, lower status groups attend carefully to cues from the dominant group indicating whether they are likely to be rejected or accepted (Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002), and they may become less inclined toward contact to the extent that they anticipate rejection from the dominant group (cf. Chapter 19, this volume). As an example of this trend, experimental research has shown that exposure to even a single expression of prejudice from a White person can inhibit the extent to which Latino and Asian American participants would be willing to engage in contact with that White person, or with White people in general (Tropp, 2003). Similarly, J. D. Johnson, Ashburn-Nardo, Spicer, and Dovidio

(2008) found that the more Black participants anticipated discrimination from Whites, the less likely they were to empathize with and help a White person in need.

Anticipated or experienced prejudice and discrimination may help to explain why positive contact effects tend to be weaker among members of subordinate groups than among members of dominant groups, as found in meta-analytic research (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005b) and longitudinal field research in three European countries (Binder et al., 2009). Findings from a U.S. national survey replicated these findings and also showed that while positive contact effects are typically observed among White Americans, such effects are significantly weaker among Black Americans who perceive a great deal of racial discrimination (Tropp, 2007).

Differences in group status also may account for why, when contact between groups does occur, members of subordinate groups are especially likely to value an acknowledgment of group differences (Eggins et al., 2002) and seek to address status inequalities (Maoz, 2011), whereas members of dominant groups tend to feel more threatened by discussions of group difference (Trawalter & Richeson, 2008; Tropp & Bianchi, 2007). As such, members of dominant and subordinate groups often have different concerns about intergroup contact (Devine & Vasquez, 1998; Shelton et al., 2006; Tropp, 2006) and bring different goals to intergroup interaction (Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010; Nadler & Shnabel, 2008). In turn, these differences can contribute to divergent views on the status of group relations and the effectiveness of contact as a means to improve relations between their groups (Dovidio, Saguy, West, & Gaertner, 2012; Saguy, Tropp, & Hawi, 2012).

### Intergroup Contact as the Moment of Interaction

This emphasis on cues to which group members attend has been complemented by a recent focus on the *moment* of contact, in the form of cross-group interaction (see Chapter 15, this volume). At a fundamental level, cross-group interaction is intergroup contact. Nonetheless, intergroup contact traditionally has been viewed in an amalgamated sense and

measured as composite histories of intergroup experiences that vary across individuals (e.g., Blascovich et al., 2001; Brown et al., 2007; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Page-Gould, Mendes, & Major, 2010; Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Tropp, 2008; Paolini, Hewstone, Cairns, & Voci, 2004; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). By contrast, research on cross-group interaction typically involves one-time social interactions between out-group strangers and tends to find that cross-group interactions are more subjectively negative and physiologically stressful than same-group interactions (e.g., Mendes, Blascovich, Hunter, Lickel, & Jost, 2007; Mendes, Gray, Mendoza-Denton, Major, & Epel, 2007; Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, Alegre, & Siy, 2010; Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Shelton, Richeson, & Salvatore, 2005; see also Chapter 15, this volume). This differential focus partially may explain why there appears to be a discrepancy between what we know about the effects of intergroup contact and the moment of cross-group interaction.

As discussed previously, meta-analytic findings from hundreds of studies show that, in general, intergroup contact improves intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). These findings, however, are seemingly at odds with reliable findings that cross-group interactions tend to be wrought with anxiety and threat (Amodio, 2009; Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 2000) and involve miscommunication (Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2006), feelings of inauthenticity (Shelton et al., 2005), and depletion of cognitive resources (Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Richeson & Trawalter, 2005; Richeson et al., 2003; Richeson, Trawalter, & Shelton, 2005). In a seminal paper, Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, Lickel, and Kowaj-Bell (2001) measured White participants' cardiovascular activity while playing a parlor game with either a Black or a White partner. Participants who were assigned to a cross-group partner exhibited a pattern of physiological stress responses consistent with physiological threat (increased heart rate paired with constriction of the blood vessels and reductions in blood circulated by the heart), whereas participants assigned to an in-group partner exhibited patterns consistent with physiological challenge (increased heart rate paired with dilation of the blood vessels and increases in

cardiac output; see Blascovich, Mendes, Tomaka, Salomon, & Seery, 2003).

Such research has revealed the bleaker side of intergroup contact, although individual differences also play a key role in predicting negative experiences during cross-group interactions (Britt, Boniecki, Vescio, Biernat, & Brown, 1996; Page-Gould et al., 2008; Plant & Butz, 2006; Plant & Devine, 2003; Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 1989, 2000; Trawalter, Richeson, & Shelton, 2009; see also Chapter 15, this volume). In line with this view, while Blascovich et al. (2001) observed that physiological threat was more common in cross-group dyads than in same-group dyads, this was not the case for people who reported a high degree of past intergroup contact: White participants who had more prior contact with Black Americans were just as likely to respond with physiological challenge during cross-group interactions as during same-group interactions. Thus, other work indicates that past contact experiences often can facilitate more positive contact experiences in the future (Page-Gould, 2012; Page-Gould, Mendes, & Major, 2010; Paolini et al., 2004), implying that the relationship between past contact and the quality of cross-group interaction involves a reciprocal process. Toward the goal of reconciling what we know about the moment of cross-group interaction and the broader efficacy of intergroup contact, we briefly review the literature on intergroup anxiety and avoidance in the sections that follow.

## INTERGROUP ANXIETY

In 1985, Walter and Cookie Stephan noted that people were more anxious about interacting with out-group members than with in-group members (Stephan & Stephan, 1984, 1985). This observation has now been replicated with a host of convergent measures of anxiety, ranging from self-reported anxiety (Britt et al., 1996; Stephan & Stephan, 1985) to anxious behaviors (Dovidio, Hebl, Richeson, & Shelton, 2006; Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002) and physiological stress responses (Amodio, 2009; Mendes, Gray, et al., 2007; Page-Gould et al., 2008). Intergroup anxiety is more than just social anxiety, although the two are related



(Plant & Devine, 2003). Anxiety during cross-group interactions is almost always compared with anxiety during same-group interactions to take into account effects due to generalized anxiety during social interactions.

Although intergroup anxiety is a reliable and robust phenomenon, not everyone experiences it. Two primary theoretical frameworks have been used to predict who will become anxious during cross-group interactions. One framework is the stress and coping model of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), applied to cross-group interaction by Trawalter et al. (2009). According to this model, a person will experience stress or anxiety during cross-group interactions to the extent that they view cross-group interactions as being more demanding than they can handle. Trawalter et al. argued that any predisposition toward viewing cross-group interactions as taxing will predict greater intergroup anxiety.

A second approach highlights the role of psychological threat—both actual and perceived—as a fundamental component of intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). As the most obvious culprit, prejudice is a strong predictor of intergroup anxiety and perceived threat posed by the out-group (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Prejudiced people are more likely to perceive cross-group interactions as demanding (Dovidio et al., 2002; Trawalter et al., 2009), to be preoccupied with concerns about how they are seen by their partner (Amodio, 2009; Vorauer, 2006; Vorauer, Hunter, Main, & Roy, 2000; Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001), and to spend more cognitive resources trying to make the interaction go smoothly (Richeson & Shelton, 2003, 2007; Richeson et al., 2003). The typical targets of prejudice, however, also experience anxiety during cross-group interactions to the extent that they expect to be rejected on the basis of their group membership (Mendoza-Denton, Downey et al., 2002; Page-Gould et al., 2008; Pinel, 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 1989; Tropp, 2003). Additionally, and somewhat ironically, people who have little prior contact with out-group members also are more likely to react viscerally to cross-group interactions (Blascovich et al., 2001; Mendes, Blascovich, Lickel, & Hunter, 2002). As such, the people whose attitudes have the most potential for positive change also

are the least inclined to have the kinds of cross-group interactions that would support this change. Thus, it seems that intergroup anxiety is best considered in a person-by-situation framework (Britt et al., 1996), as some people are especially likely to become anxious in the context of cross-group interactions.

### Approach and Avoidance Tendencies

Intergroup anxiety is of particular interest because of the dynamic relationship that exists between specific contact experiences and interest in future intergroup contact. The more anxious people feel during cross-group interactions, the less likely they are to seek out or engage in subsequent cross-group interactions (Butz & Plant, 2011; Dovidio et al., 2006; Plant & Butz, 2006; Plant & Devine, 2003). This creates a negative feedback loop whereby a negative intergroup experience contributes to a generalized sense of intergroup anxiety, which in turn predicts fewer and lower quality cross-group interactions in the future (Paolini, Hewstone, Voci, Harwood, & Cairns, 2006). This creates a barrier to intergroup contact because people without prior contact experience are more likely to have negative cross-group interactions (Blascovich et al., 2001) and thus will be likely to avoid future contact. Conversely, there appears to be a complementary positive feedback loop whereby people with prior contact experience are likely not only to report more positive intergroup attitudes but also to have more positive cross-group interactions and inclinations toward future intergroup contact (Levin, van Laar, & Sidanius, 2003; Swart et al., 2011; Tropp, 2003). Related findings also show that people with prior contact experience are better able to recover physiologically following stressful cross-group interactions (Page-Gould, Mendes, & Major, 2010). These trends may help to explain why intergroup contact generally has a positive effect on intergroup attitudes and other intergroup outcomes despite the tendency for cross-group interactions between strangers to provoke intergroup anxiety.

Moreover, when anxiety during cross-group interactions is effectively reduced, people tend to seek out more cross-group interactions in daily life. Page-Gould et al. (2008) experimentally examined

the effects of having positive, friendly cross-group interactions on anxiety and initiation of future cross-group interactions. Ethnic minority and majority participants (Latina and White) were paired with either a same-group or cross-group partner for three meetings, during which they participated in “friendship-building” exercises based in cooperation, common goals, and self-disclosure (see Wright, Aron, & Tropp, 2002). Before the meetings, participants’ initial implicit prejudice was assessed (using methods developed by Lane, Banaji, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2007) as well as their sensitivity to being rejected on the basis of ethnic group membership (see Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002). Salivary cortisol was used to assess participants’ stress responses both before (baseline) and during the meetings. Among participants who were highly sensitive to group-based rejection, those paired with a cross-group partner peaked in cortisol reactivity following the first meeting, indicating greater stress responses at the initial stages of cross-group interaction. But their stress responses attenuated by the third meeting, such that they showed comparable hormonal levels to participants less sensitive to group-based rejection and to participants paired with a same-group partner. Moreover, subsequent diary data showed that those paired with a cross-group partner reported lower levels of anxiety in subsequent daily diaries than those paired with a same-group partner. And especially among those initially high in prejudice, participants were more likely to initiate cross-group interactions in their daily lives after being paired with a cross-group partner than with a same-group partner. Thus, even among those who initially may be the most anxious about intergroup contact, experiencing a series of positive, friendly cross-group interactions can lower stress and anxiety in intergroup contexts and encourage a greater willingness to engage in future intergroup contact.

Together, these findings suggest that when the time course of contact is taken into account, the seeming discrepancy between the research literatures on cross-group interactions and intergroup contact dissipates. Specifically, when interacting with out-group strangers, people who have had little prior contact are likely to find these encounters

more stressful, threatening, and unpleasant than people who have had prior contact experiences. Yet even among those who have had little prior contact, a few positive experiences with members of an out-group can go a long way in shifting people’s responses to cross-group interactions and promoting greater interest in future cross-group interactions.

### Processes Underlying Intergroup Contact Effects

The findings on positive cross-group interactions not only mesh well with those obtained in the broader literature on intergroup contact but also provide converging evidence regarding processes that underlie contact effects. Much of the early contact literature presumed that prejudice primarily is driven by ignorance of other groups (Stephan & Stephan, 1984); as such, it was believed that intergroup contact experiences would reduce prejudice because it allowed people to learn more about members of other groups. Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) used their meta-analytic data to examine this process and, consistent with earlier theorizing, their results showed that greater knowledge about out-group members does significantly mediate the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice. Additional meta-analytic findings and subsequent research, however, have suggested that affective processes (see Chapter 10, this volume), such as anxiety reduction and empathy, play especially important roles in accounting for the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice.

### Anxiety Reduction and Empathy as Mediators

In a much-cited paper, as mentioned earlier, Stephan and Stephan (1985) drew attention to the arousal of anxiety that grows from perceiving threat during intergroup contact. Research inspired by their analysis has demonstrated reliably that intergroup contact reduces intergroup threat and anxiety (Blascovich et al., 2001; Page-Gould et al., 2008; Paolini et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998; Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst, 1999; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Particularly strong evidence has come from Blascovich et al. (2001). In a laboratory setting, they showed that interaction with physically stigmatized

partners caused threat and anxiety responses measured physiologically, behaviorally, and subjectively but only among participants without prior contact experiences (Blascovich et al., 2001). Meta-analytic findings further revealed that anxiety reduction emerges as a much stronger mediator than knowledge of the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Voci and Hewstone (2003) also have demonstrated that anxiety is particularly likely to mediate the relationship between contact and prejudice when group salience is high and members of the different groups are aware of the cross-group nature of the interaction (see also Brown & Hewstone, 2005).

Additional work has examined the role of empathy as a possible mediator of the relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice, inspired by the work of Batson and his colleagues (Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997; Batson, Lishner, Cook, & Sawyer, 2005; Batson, Polycarpou, et al., 1997). Positive intergroup contact has been shown to predict native Italians' empathy toward immigrants (Voci & Hewstone, 2003) and Protestants' and Catholics' empathy toward each other in postconflict Northern Ireland (Vonofakou et al., 2008). Meta-analytic work has shown that empathy is a strong mediator of the contact-prejudice relationship, and one that functions largely independently of intergroup anxiety (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). To study these effects longitudinally, Swart et al. (2011) conducted a three-wave study of Black high school students in South Africa. They found that positive contact in the form of cross-group friendships at Time 1 predicted lower anxiety and greater empathy at Time 2, and greater empathy in turn predicted more positive intergroup attitudes at Time 3. Further support for the role of empathy was provided by Todd et al. (2011); using experimental procedures and codings of nonverbal behaviors, they found that taking the perspective of others can promote approach-oriented tendencies and more positive cross-group experiences with out-group members.

Although more research is needed to understand the interplay between these processes, it appears that intergroup contact typically reduces prejudice by increasing knowledge about the out-group, and even more strongly by decreasing anxiety about

cross-group interaction and increasing people's ability to empathize with out-group members.

### Quality and Intimacy of Intergroup Contact

In addition to focusing on possible mediators through which contact effects emerge, recent work has emphasized how the quality and intimacy of intergroup contact can enhance the potential for prejudice reduction. Growing from Allport's (1954) earlier specification of optimal conditions for contact, contact quality typically has been operationalized in terms of the subjectively assessed presence of these features—for example, that the contact feels cooperative and friendly, and that members of the different groups are treated as equals (e.g., Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Dixon et al., 2010). Many contact theorists, however, also have stressed the importance of intimacy as a marker of high-quality intergroup contact (Amir, 1969; Paolini et al., 2004; Pettigrew, 1998; Wright, Brody, & Aron, 2005; Wright et al., 2002).

Rather than delineating which criteria may improve the quality of intergroup contact, most researchers instead have focused on the predictive utility of contact *quality* rather than contact *quantity* (the amount or frequency of intergroup contact). Although intergroup contact typically reduces intergroup prejudice, a growing body of research indicates that the mere quantity of intergroup contact is limited in its ability to predict intergroup attitudes as compared with contact quality. For example, Islam and Hewstone (1993) surveyed Muslim and Hindu businessmen in Northern India with an interest in *how much* contact they had with members of the other group and *how they felt* during that contact. They found that the mere quantity of contact did not significantly predict intergroup attitudes, whereas contact quality predicted reduced prejudice, less intergroup anxiety, and lower perceptions of out-group homogeneity. Complementary findings were obtained by Tropp and Pettigrew (2005b). Distinguishing between White Americans' reported numbers of Black acquaintances and Black friends, these authors found that having Black friends predicted significantly more positive feelings toward Black Americans in general, while having Black

acquaintances did not significantly predict intergroup attitudes beyond what could be accounted for by having Black friends. These research examples highlight that not all types of intergroup contact are equal, and it is high-quality intergroup contact that is particularly effective in reducing intergroup prejudice.

### Close Cross-Group Relationships

Given these positive effects of high-quality, cooperative, and intimate forms of contact, increasing research attention has been directed to understanding how close cross-group relationships can aid in prejudice reduction. Close relationships that form across group boundaries represent an ideal form of intergroup contact and a powerful interpersonal mechanism for improving intergroup relations (Pettigrew, 1998; Wright et al., 2002). Although the quality of close cross-group relationships do not necessarily differ from close same-group relationships (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003; Schofield, Hausmann, Ye, & Woods, 2010), enhanced closeness between members of different groups can have a profound effect on intergroup attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. Examples of close cross-group relationships include cross-group friendships and cross-group romantic relationships, although other close relationships also exist between members of different groups (e.g., cross-race mentorship).

### Cross-Group Friendship

As Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey (2002) eloquently noted, "Friendship is bonding capital, but when that friendship is multiracial, it is also bridging capital" (p. 270). Cross-group friendship—close, platonic friendship between members of different social groups—remains one of the most potent forms of intergroup contact for prejudice reduction (Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011). Indeed, Pettigrew (1998) proposed that the potential for friendship in any given contact experience should be added as a fifth optimal condition for contact, and some have gone so far as to say that friendship potential is the *only* necessary condition for contact to improve intergroup relations (e.g., Wright et al., 2005).

Recent research speaks to the many intergroup benefits to be gained from cross-group friendship. People with cross-group friendships typically have

more positive intergroup attitudes (Davies et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), lower intergroup anxiety (Levin et al., 2003; Paolini et al., 2004; Wright et al., 2002), and greater perceptions of heterogeneity among out-group members (Emerson et al., 2002; de Souza Briggs, 2007). Importantly, similar intergroup effects are observed whether people report on the number of their cross-group friendships, the percentage of out-group members in their friendship network, their closeness to their out-group friends, or the amount of time they spend with their cross-group friends (Davies et al., 2011).

The causal effects of cross-group friendships likely work in both directions. Longitudinal research has demonstrated both that friendships with out-group members predict reductions in intergroup prejudice and that people who are less prejudiced are more likely to develop friendships with out-group members (Binder et al., 2009; Levin et al., 2003). Other work has suggested that people who are less prejudiced or have low intergroup anxiety are more likely to approach out-group members than are people who harbor negative intergroup attitudes or expectations (Dovidio et al., 2002; Plant & Butz, 2006; Plant & Devine, 2003; Plant, Butz, & Tartakovsky, 2008). Experimental research, however, also shows that the development of a new cross-group friendship causally reduces prejudice (Wright et al., 2005; Wright et al., 2002) and intergroup stress and anxiety (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Wright et al., 2002). Thus, cross-group friendships not only reduce intergroup anxiety and prejudice, but in turn, increase approach tendencies in intergroup contexts and further enhance opportunities for cross-group friendship.

Moreover, cross-group friendships appear to be most effective in shifting intergroup attitudes among people who are least inclined toward relationships with out-group members. For example, cross-group friendships are especially likely to reduce prejudice among people high in social dominance orientation and authoritarianism (Dhont & van Hiel, 2009; Hodson, 2008; Hodson, Harry, & Mitchell, 2009) and low in support for diversity (Adesokan, van Dick, Ullrich, & Tropp, 2011). Thus, even among those who may be most resistant to cross-group



relationships, friendship contact with out-group members can yield meaningful reductions in intergroup prejudice.

Furthermore, people who have close cross-group friends seem to be particularly resilient to negative intergroup experiences. For example, Paolini et al. (2004) found that cross-group friendship predicted lower intergroup anxiety and prejudice among Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, even in samples in which most participants had experienced the death or serious injury of a loved one due to cross-community conflict. Similarly, with samples of ethnic minority participants in the United States, Tropp (2003) observed that even among those who had been exposed to prejudice against their group, greater numbers of cross-ethnic friendships corresponded with lower intergroup anxiety and greater interest in future intergroup contact. Most recently, Page-Gould (2012) followed the daily social interactions of an ethnically diverse sample in Toronto, Canada, to identify intergroup approach and avoidance tendencies after interethnic conflict. Although most participants avoided cross-group interactions after an intergroup conflict, people with close cross-ethnic friends specifically approached out-group members for social support after experiencing an interethnic conflict. This process of seeking support from a cross-group explained the lack of avoidance after conflict.

Cross-group friendships may facilitate such approach-oriented tendencies through more than one mechanism. On the one hand, as suggested previously, it may be that reductions in anxiety about interacting with members of other groups are achieved sufficiently through cross-group friendships to encourage greater interest in further contact (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Paolini et al., 2004). On the other hand, it could be that motives for self-expansion drive people to seek relations with members of other groups (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001; Wright et al., 2005). As applied to close, cross-group relationships, self-expansion theory posits that we seek to expand the self by incorporating the characteristics of close others into our own sense of self and, as such, we should identify with the perspectives and concerns of our cross-group friend's social group (Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe,

2001; Wright et al., 2002). Convergent data strongly support this view. For example, people with cross-group friends are slower to classify their friend's social group as nondescriptive of themselves, and this association of an out-group with the self fully mediated the relationship between cross-group friendship and adaptive hormonal responses during interactions with out-group strangers (Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, et al., 2010). In a large-scale longitudinal study of school children's intergroup attitudes, Turner et al. (2008) also demonstrated that cross-group friendships reduce prejudice through a greater inclusion of the out-group's identity in the self. As such, it appears that cross-group friendship reduces prejudice through at least two key mechanisms: (a) by improving the quality of future contact experiences, thus amplifying the efficacy of intergroup contact; and (b) by encouraging people to adopt the perspectives and identities of groups of which one's close cross-group friends are members.

Despite the powerful effects of cross-group friendships, many barriers remain to the formation and maintenance of these relationships. Because cross-group interactions are harder to navigate (Butz & Plant, 2006; Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2006), any individual interaction should be less likely to lead to friendship simply because of the increased likelihood that something could go awry. Indeed, the potential for cross-group friendship may be sabotaged before a cross-group interaction even begins, as people tend to overestimate how anxious they will feel during the interaction, which leads to avoidance and less interest in cross-group friendship (Mallett, Wilson, & Gilbert, 2008). Maintaining these relationships is difficult because cross-group friendships are more likely to dissolve during the initial stages than same-group friendships (Aboud et al., 2003; Hallinan & Williams, 1987).

Still, as with same-group friendships, proximity is a major factor in the formation of close cross-group friendships. A predominant theory of cross-group friendship formation states that the more opportunities a person has for intergroup contact, the more cross-group friends he or she will have (Blau, 1977; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987a, 1987b; Quillian & Campbell, 2003). In support of this idea,

students are more likely to have greater proportions of cross-ethnic friends in their friendship networks as their school's student population becomes more ethnically diverse (Quillian & Campbell, 2003). Similarly, growing up in racially diverse neighborhoods is a strong predictor of openness to interracial ties (Yancey, 2002) and predicts greater interest in racial integration later in life (Wood & Sonleitner, 1996). Contextual factors that covary with racial and ethnic diversity—such as long-standing patterns of integration or segregation—also covary with the likelihood of forming cross-group relationships (Yancey, 2002).

### Cross-Group Romantic Relationships

Relative to the growing body of work on cross-group friendships in the intergroup relations literature, cross-group romantic relationships primarily have been studied among researchers in the close relationships area. As such, much of what we know about cross-group romantic relationships focuses on the quality of those relationships themselves (e.g., Gaines et al., 2006; Gurung & Duong, 1999; Troy, Lewis-Smith, & Laurenceau, 2006). Nevertheless, studies of cross-group romantic relationships in the realm of intergroup relations show that these relationships deeply affect the ways in which people respond to out-group members. For example, cross-sectional research demonstrates that cross-group romantic relationships are associated with a host of positive intergroup attitudes (Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998). In experimental research, Olsson, Ebert, Banaji, and Phelps (2005) conditioned a fear response to White and Black faces among a sample of White adults and observed how quickly the fear response could be extinguished. Overall, it took longer to extinguish fear responses conditioned with Black faces than White faces, but only for people who never had dated interracially in the past. These findings imply that people who have had cross-group romantic relationships are less likely to associate out-group members with danger or threat.

From a relationships perspective, close cross-group romantic relationships largely resemble same-group romantic relationships in relationship quality and satisfaction (Gurung & Duong, 1999; Leslie & Letiecq, 2004; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998;

Troy et al., 2006), levels of secure attachment and accommodation (Gaines et al., 1999; Troy et al., 2006), and socioemotional support and affection (Gaines & Henderson, 2002; Vaquera & Kao, 2005) and even in the qualities that are considered desirable in a prospective mate (Gurung & Duong, 1999; Yancey & Yancey, 1998).

Nonetheless, despite good relationship quality, barriers certainly exist to the formation of cross-group romantic relationships. Both adolescents (Edmonds & Killen, 2009) and college students (Mills, Daly, Longmore, & Kilbride, 1995) often perceive that their families will not approve of cross-group partners, particularly when they believe that their parents are prejudiced (S. C. Miller, Olson, & Fazio, 2004). Ironically, however, it seems that these perceptions are incorrect. In one study, college students who had introduced their romantic partners to their parents were asked about their parents' approval of the relationship. With a large sample of participants, the authors found that those in cross-race romantic relationships reported equal levels of approval from family and friends as those in same-race relationships (Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998). The anticipation of social disapproval is essentially an intergroup affective forecasting error (Mallett et al., 2008; Wilson & Gilbert, 2003) that may inhibit the initial formation of cross-group romantic relationships. In line with this view, most cross-group romantic relationships develop once people have moved away from their hometown and family (Aldridge, 1978; Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, & Simonson, 2008). It is conceivable that the anticipation of disapproval may dampen the perceived viability of a cross-group romantic partner as a long-term mate, but these results suggest that once a cross-group romantic relationship has been formed, people may find more familial support than they would have expected.

These latter findings address the perceived and actual responses of family and close others to cross-group romantic relationships. Evidence on the responses of strangers tells a less optimistic story. As a dire example, ethnic minority individuals in interracial romantic relationships are four times more likely to be victimized by a hate crime than other ethnic minority individuals (Perry, 2002). Similarly,

ethnic minority women in physically abusive interracial marriages are more likely to be blamed for their victimization (Harrison & Esqueda, 2000). Although friends and family may be more likely to support cross-group romantic relationships than most people would expect, considerable resistance to the formation and maintenance of this intimate form of intergroup contact still exists at a broader societal level.

### EXTENSIONS OF THE CONTACT HYPOTHESIS

In light of the structural and psychological barriers that often preclude the development of close cross-group relationships, researchers have sought to identify alternate, indirect approaches through which intergroup contact can promote positive intergroup outcomes (Dovidio, Eller, & Hewstone, 2011). Such extensions of intergroup contact research are especially useful and effective when opportunities for direct contact between groups are limited or unlikely (see Christ et al., 2010; Crisp, Husnu, Meleady, Stathi, & Turner, 2010).

#### Extended Contact

Perhaps the most widely recognized expansion of contact research is the work on *extended contact*. Wright and colleagues (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997; Wright et al., 2002; Wright et al., 2005) have shown convincingly that intergroup attitudes can be improved merely by knowing that a member of one's own group has a close cross-group friendship. This hypothesis was predicated on observations from the integration of U.S. housing projects in the 1950s. A year after integration, researchers observed that the intergroup attitudes were improved not only among the White women who had made Black friends but also among the *White friends* of White women who had made Black friends, even if they had not made Black friends themselves (Hamilton & Bishop, 1976). The causal nature of these effects was never tested formally, however.

Wright et al. (1997) addressed this gap in the literature using a rigorous experimental approach. Following in the tradition of Sherif et al. (1961),

they created competition between two groups of randomly assigned participants who thought their groups had been formed on the basis of similarity. After intergroup hostility had been established through a series of competitive games, the participants observed one member of their in-group (an actor) complete a puzzle task with a member of the out-group (also an actor). Depending on condition, the participants observed the actors react in one of three ways: (a) in a friendly manner (e.g., they hugged and greeted each other as if they were preexisting friends), (b) in a neutral manner (e.g., they were polite but not necessarily warm), or (c) in a hostile manner (e.g., they acted as if they were preexisting enemies). Compared with the hostile and neutral conditions, participants who observed a friendly interaction between a member of their in-group and an out-group member rated the out-group more positively and allocated more resources to out-group members. The authors concluded that merely observing a positive relationship between an in-group member and an out-group member can increase positive feelings toward that out-group. These effects have since been replicated in many different contexts, including in tests of Germans' attitudes toward foreigners (Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner, & Stellmacher, 2007), British children's attitudes toward refugees (Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006), and cross-community attitudes between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland (Paolini et al., 2004).

Some current research focuses on *why* extended contact is effective at improving intergroup attitudes. It appears that extended contact operates through different mediational processes than direct contact. In line with the mechanisms proposed by Wright et al. (1997), two independent large-scale studies have shown that perceived in-group norms, perceived out-group norms, and intergroup anxiety play major roles in the relationship between extended contact and prejudice reduction (Gómez et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2008). Moreover, perceived out-group norms represent a particularly important pathway through which extended contact improves intergroup attitudes and expectations among minority group members (Gómez et al., 2011). Altogether, the work on extended contact

offers an optimistic prospect for broad changes in intergroup attitudes. Because positive effects of cross-group friendship can extend beyond the immediate friendship, positive attitudes toward other groups may increase exponentially within social networks as cross-group friendships are formed.

### Simulated Intergroup Contact

In another recent approach, Crisp, Turner, and colleagues hypothesized that simply imagining positive intergroup contact is sufficient for improving intergroup attitudes. This *simulated contact* has been shown to improve prejudice against other ethnic groups (Stathi & Crisp, 2008), the elderly (Turner & Crisp, 2010; Turner, Crisp, & Lambert, 2007), other religious groups (Turner & Crisp, 2010), and sexual minorities (Turner et al., 2007). Thus, even though the simulated contact literature is relatively young, the finding already has been replicated repeatedly across multiple intergroup contexts. It seems that simulated contact is especially promising as a prejudice-reduction intervention because it can be used in contexts in which direct intergroup contact is either infeasible or impossible (Crisp & Turner, 2009). Although more research is needed to demonstrate the longevity of these effects and the extent to which simulated contact actually can contribute to positive intergroup outcomes once actual contact occurs (see Crisp & Turner, 2009), recent work does show that imagining positive contact with an out-group member enhances people's confidence about future intergroup interactions (Stathi, Crisp, & Hogg, 2011).

This approach fits within a broader emerging area of research concerning people's expectations for intergroup contact and how these expectations might be altered to promote more positive orientations toward intergroup contact. For example, Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, et al. (2010) manipulated the cognitive accessibility of positive cross-group relationships by randomly assigning participants to describe either a cross-race friend (high accessibility) or same-race friend (low accessibility) before imagining themselves interacting with an unknown out-group member. Participants in the high-accessibility condition reported significantly more positive expectations for interacting with the

unknown out-group member. Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, et al. (2010) then tested whether similar effects would emerge in the context of a novel cross-group interaction. Using the same procedures, participants were assigned randomly to describe a cross-group or same-group friend, after which they were introduced to an unknown out-group member for an unstructured interaction. Both before and after the interaction, saliva samples were collected from participants to assess their hormonal stress responses as well as their ability to recover from stress responses. Findings once again showed that participants who described a cross-group friend (high-accessibility condition) had more positive intergroup orientations than those who described a same-group friend (low-accessibility condition), and the accessibility manipulation predicted greater hormonal balance during the novel cross-group interaction. In line with other work on simulated contact (Crisp & Turner, 2009; Stathi et al., 2011), these findings strongly suggested that encouraging people to envision positive cross-group experiences before interaction can facilitate more positive intergroup experiences during intergroup interaction.

### CONCLUSION

The vast literature on intergroup contact reviewed in this chapter offers many key insights from the past several decades as well as many prospects for new research questions to be considered over the coming decades. Drawing on hundreds of studies, including ones with experimental, longitudinal, and meta-analytic research designs, we can see that the positive effects of intergroup contact on prejudice reduction are undeniable. Nonetheless, this body of work clearly indicates that not all forms of contact are equally effective in reducing prejudice. High levels of anxiety, threat, or conflict during cross-group interactions are likely to fuel avoidance of intergroup contact, whereas cultivating close, meaningful relationships across group boundaries is most likely to reduce prejudice, ease anxiety, and enhance a greater willingness to engage in future intergroup contact.

We therefore believe that researchers should explore further the dynamic nature of intergroup



contact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), not only to identify dynamics within specific cross-group interactions (e.g., Shelton et al., 2006) but also to integrate the literatures on intergroup contact and cross-group interaction more fully. Such an approach could enhance our understanding of how broader relations between groups shape specific cross-group encounters and, conversely, how individuals' cross-group experiences inform broader interpretations of intergroup relationships. Recently, our field has taken important steps in this direction, showing how negative contact experiences can enhance the salience of group membership, thereby prolonging conflict between groups (e.g., Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010), whereas positive contact can encourage more cross-group interactions (e.g., Page-Gould et al., 2008) and help to offset the detrimental effects of intergroup conflict and other negative intergroup experiences (e.g., Hewstone et al., 2006; Tropp, 2007). More work in this area is needed to develop a more thorough and productive integration of these research literatures, which can mutually inform each other.

Focusing on the dynamic nature of intergroup contact serves as an important reminder that intergroup relationships—at both the individual and societal levels—change over time. Just as there is the potential for greater closeness and lower anxiety with greater intergroup experience (Binder et al., 2009; Levin et al., 2003; Page-Gould et al., 2008; Wright et al., 2002), there is unfortunately a potential for initially positive intergroup contact to go awry as group members encounter obstacles, difficulties, or miscommunications over the course of their relationship (e.g., Pearson et al., 2008; Shook & Fazio, 2008). New sources of threat also may emerge as populations shift and changing social landscapes provoke new dimensions of suspicion or competition between groups (e.g., Olzak, 1992; Quillian, 1995). Thus, we echo the recommendations of many intergroup scholars (e.g., Hewstone, 2003; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Wagner & Hewstone, 2012) who stress the need for longitudinal studies of intergroup contact effects that consider the broader societal conditions in which contact occurs.

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