

Research Article

The Irony of Harmony

Intergroup Contact Can Produce False Expectations for Equality

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ABSTRACT—Positive intergroup contact has been a guiding framework for research on reducing intergroup tension and for interventions aimed at that goal. We propose that beyond improving attitudes toward the out-group, positive contact affects disadvantaged-group members' perceptions of intergroup inequality in ways that can undermine their support for social change toward equality. In Study 1, participants were assigned to either high- or low-power experimental groups and then brought together to discuss either commonalities between the groups or intergroup differences. Commonality-focused contact, relative to difference-focused contact, produced heightened expectations for fair (i.e., egalitarian) out-group behavior among members of disadvantaged groups. These expectations, however, proved unrealistic when compared against the actions of members of the advantaged groups. Participants in Study 2 were Israeli Arabs (a disadvantaged minority) who reported the amount of positive contact they experienced with Jews. More positive intergroup contact was associated with increased perceptions of Jews as fair, which in turn predicted decreased support for social change. Implications for social change are considered.

Recognizing that intergroup inequality exists and that one's group is disadvantaged within the social system is key in mobilizing members of oppressed groups to act for social change (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008; Walker & Smith, 2002). Consistent with this formulation, work on ideological coercion identifies how disadvantaged-group members' false beliefs about their social standing (e.g., denials that group-based injustice occurs, attribution of their disadvantage to internal factors) ultimately perpetuate the in-

tergroup hierarchy (Jackman, 1994; Jost, 1995; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Several explanations, including motivation to perceive the world as just (Lerner, 1980) and system justification (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), have been proposed to account for why members of disadvantaged groups sometimes fail to recognize structural inequality and their position in it. We argue that another factor that can contribute to such perceptions is positive intergroup contact, which is considered "one of psychology's most effective strategies for improving intergroup relations" (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003, p. 5).

Contact theory (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1947) posits that bringing members of opposing groups together under conditions involving cooperation, equal status, and personal acquaintance can improve attitudes toward the out-group and facilitate intergroup harmony. These conditions are met, to a large extent, through structured intergroup encounters that emphasize commonalities between the groups (Cook, 1978; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998; Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989) or through contact that occurs between friends (Pettigrew, 1997, 1998; Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007). Over the past half-century, this theory has been a guiding framework for research on reducing intergroup tension (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Dovidio et al., 2003; Pettigrew, 1998), and, indeed, there is impressive evidence that positive contact is associated with more favorable attitudes toward the out-group (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Nonetheless, recent research demonstrates that positive contact is associated not only with changes in attitudes, but also with perceptions related to intergroup inequality. For example, among Black Americans, more positive contact with Whites was shown to be related to stronger perceptions that group boundaries are permeable (i.e., perceptions that it is possible to attain high social status regardless of group membership) and to reduced support for collective action (Wright & Lubensky, 2008; see also Reicher, 2007). Similarly, among Black South Africans, contact with Whites was found to be associated with decreased support for social policies that could promote racial equality

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(Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007). The present research examined whether positive intergroup contact produces overly optimistic perceptions regarding intergroup equality among members of disadvantaged groups. Because collective action requires that members of a disadvantaged group recognize the structural inequality and feel discontent regarding their group's disadvantage (see Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren et al., 2008; Wright & Lubensky, 2008), such optimism may relax support for social action.

Psychologically, one of the main ways in which positive intergroup contact operates is by changing people's representations of two groups to a representation of one inclusive (common) group (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Accordingly, a substantial portion of research on contact has emphasized the need to promote perceptions of commonalities during intergroup encounters (e.g., Cook, 1978; Eller & Abrams, 2003; Gaertner et al., 1989). However, because focusing on commonalities directs group members' attention to intergroup similarities rather than differences, it may also distract them from attending to group differences in resources and power. Reduced attention to structural inequality, coupled with positive attitudes toward the out-group, can have consequences for group members' expectations regarding intergroup relations and hierarchy. Specifically, such outcomes may inflate perceptions of the fairness of the advantaged group among disadvantaged-group members and thus produce optimism about prospects for equality.

We therefore examined whether, beyond improving attitudes toward the out-group, positive intergroup contact would reduce group members' attention to fundamental, and often unjust, inequities between the groups and lead disadvantaged-group members to become overly optimistic about the out-group's fairness and prospects for intergroup equality. Study 1 experimentally examined the causal effect of positive intergroup contact (operationalized as a commonality-focused encounter) on disadvantaged-group members' attitudes toward the out-group, attention to inequality, and expectations of out-group fairness, as well as on advantaged-group members' intergroup orientations and resource allocation. Study 2 generalized and extended the findings specifically with respect to disadvantaged groups by examining the relation of positive intergroup contact to attitudes, perceptions of inequality and of out-group fairness, and support for social change in a naturalistic intergroup context.

STUDY 1

Study 1 was an experiment in which participants were randomly assigned to laboratory groups, with the advantaged group having control over the outcomes (extra course credits) of the disadvantaged group (Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008). Before the members of the advantaged group allocated the credits, members of the two groups interacted, having been instructed to focus on either intergroup commonalities or intergroup differ-

ences. Following the encounter, participants reported their attitudes toward the out-group and attention to group inequality. The advantaged-group members then allocated the credits, and members of the disadvantaged group indicated their expectations of out-group fairness and estimated the number of credits they would receive. This behavioral measure enabled us to examine the extent to which the disadvantaged-group members' expectations for fairness and equality were realistic.

We hypothesized that experiences of commonality-focused contact, relative to differences-focused contact, would result in more positive attitudes toward the out-group and reduced attention to inequality, among members of both the advantaged and the disadvantaged groups. In addition, we expected these outcomes to result in heightened expectations for equality among disadvantaged-group members, which might prove unrealistic when judged against the actual distribution of resources by the advantaged group. Extensive work has established the general need for members of advantaged groups to sustain power (Blumer, 1958; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Moreover, whereas members of advantaged groups may support equality in principle (a likely outcome of favorable contact), they may still be opposed to its practical implementation (Durrheim & Dixon, 2004). If the advantaged-group members would not behave in a more egalitarian manner following commonality-focused, rather than differences-focused, contact, the disadvantaged group's expectations would prove overly optimistic.

Method

Participants

Participants, who earned research credit for their psychology course, were 210 undergraduate students (126 women and 84 men, mean age = 18.64 years). Each experimental session involved a mixed-gender group of 6 students.

Procedure

In each session, participants were randomly assigned to one of two 3-person groups. To enhance group commitment, the experimenter told the members of each group that previously collected data indicated they had similar likes and dislikes. In addition, she asked them to name their group and wear same-colored T-shirts (Gaertner et al., 1989). To manipulate group power, the experimenter explained that there was another 3-person group in the next room and that the two groups would soon interact. Participants were told that, after the interaction, each group would be asked to make one of two decisions: either how to allocate 10 extra research credits between the groups or how to allocate 10 marbles between the groups. Because credits are a desired resource, the group assigned to allocate them was the advantaged group (Saguy et al., 2008), and the group assigned to allocate marbles, a commodity of little value, was the

disadvantaged group. Following this procedure, participants completed a group-power manipulation check.

Participants from both groups were then led into another room, where the intergroup interaction occurred. They were instructed to discuss three topics, each for 2 min. In the commonality-focus condition, participants were instructed to discuss things the groups had in common in the session (e.g., “similar steps the groups went through in this study”), and in the differences-focus condition, they were instructed to discuss aspects of their tasks, which was the only difference between the groups (e.g., “differences between the tasks the groups will do next”). Thus, the study involved a 2 (group position: advantaged vs. disadvantaged) \times 2 (contact type: commonality-focused vs. differences-focused) design, and each participant in the study was nested within a 3-person group, which was nested within a 6-person session.

Following the interaction, participants completed postcontact measures and performed their allocation decisions. Unless otherwise indicated, responses to all items were given on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

To test whether the manipulation of group position had the intended impact, we asked participants to indicate which decision their group would make next (“distribute 10 credits between the two groups” or “distribute 10 marbles between the two groups”) and to rate the relative power of the two groups on a scale from 1 (*my group has much more power*) to 7 (*the other group has much more power*), with 4 representing equal power (Saguy et al., 2008). To examine whether the contact manipulation worked as intended, we asked participants to respond to the two following questions: “Was the discussion focused on issues that your group and the other group share in common?” and “Was the discussion focused on the similarities between the two groups?”; responses to these questions correlated significantly, $r(208) = .56, p < .01, p_{\text{rep}} > .97$.

The measure of *out-group attitudes* included participants’ responses to the following three items: “I think that people from the other group are friendly,” “I respect the people from the other group,” and “People from the other group are caring” ($\alpha = .81$). The following item (with wording adjusted depending on the participant’s group membership) assessed participants’ *attention to the intergroup inequality* while in the contact situation: “While discussing issues with the other group, did you think of your group as having a better [for advantaged-group members]/worse [for disadvantaged-group members] position in this study compared to the other group?”

For our measure of *perceptions of out-group fairness*, disadvantaged-group members rated the extent to which they expected equitable distribution of credits, responding to the following two items: “After the discussion I feel that people from the other group may decide to distribute the credits in a way that will be fair to both groups,” and “After the discussion I expect a close-to-equal distribution of the 10 extra credits between the groups in this study,” $r(103) = .73, p < .01, p_{\text{rep}} > .97$. Disad-

vantaged-group members were also asked to indicate the actual number of credits they expected to receive by filling in the blank in the following statement: “People in the other group will probably give my group ____ credits.”

To obtain the reality against which to compare disadvantaged-group members’ beliefs, we asked participants in the advantaged group to perform the allocation decision by indicating the number of credits (from 0 to 10) they wished to distribute to their own and to the other group. The greater the number of credits distributed to the in-group, the lower the number of credits distributed to the out-group, with 5 credits to each group indicating egalitarian behavior. Members of the disadvantaged group were asked to allocate the marbles by indicating the number of marbles (from 0 to 10) they wished to distribute to their own and to the other group.

Results and Discussion

Because of potential interdependence in responses of participants, who were nested within groups and sessions, we analyzed the data using hierarchical linear modeling (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Group position was treated as a Level 2 predictor (coded as disadvantaged = 0, advantaged = 1), and contact type as a Level 3 predictor (coded as differences-focused = 0, commonality-focused = 1).

Manipulation Checks

All participants correctly identified the group that was assigned to allocate the credits. When asked to rate the relative power of the two groups, members of the disadvantaged group rated their group as low in power; their mean rating ($M = 6.34$) was significantly different from a rating of 4, which would indicate “equal power,” $t(34) = 20.35, p < .001, p_{\text{rep}} > .99$. Members of the advantaged group rated their group as high in power; their mean score ($M = 1.85$) was also significantly different from 4, $t(34) = -18.80, p < .001, p_{\text{rep}} > .99$. Also, participants in the commonality-focus condition reported discussing commonalities and similarities more than did those in the differences-focus condition ($M_s = 5.23$ vs. 3.10), $b = 2.13, SE = 0.22, t(33) = 9.82, p < .01, p_{\text{rep}} > .97$.

Out-Group Attitudes and Attention to Inequality

The expected main effect of contact type on out-group attitudes was obtained, $b = 0.55, SE = 0.13, t(33) = 4.15, p < .01, p_{\text{rep}} > .97$. Participants had more positive out-group attitudes following commonality-focused contact ($M = 5.89$) than following differences-focused contact ($M = 5.34$). This effect was not moderated by group position, $p = .11, p_{\text{rep}} = .87$.

Also as predicted, participants reported paying less attention to group inequality during commonality-focused contact ($M = 4.34$) than during differences-focused contact ($M = 5.71$), $b = -1.37, SE = 0.27, t(33) = -5.00, p < .01, p_{\text{rep}} > .97$. A marginally significant Group Position \times Contact Type interaction, $b = -0.99, SE = 0.53, t(68) = 0.53, p = .07, p_{\text{rep}} = .90$,

indicated that whereas advantaged- and disadvantaged-group members did not differ in their attention to the inequality during commonality-focused contact ($M_s = 4.31$ vs. 4.38), advantaged-group members paid more attention to the inequality than did disadvantaged-group members during differences-focused contact ($M_s = 6.18$ vs. 5.25), $b = 0.93$, $SE = 0.36$, $t(68) = 2.58$, $p < .05$, $p_{rep} > .92$.

Perceptions of Out-Group Fairness by the Disadvantaged Group

Members of the disadvantaged groups tended to expect more out-group fairness following commonality-focused contact ($M = 4.71$) than following differences-focused contact ($M = 4.04$); the effect was marginally significant, $b = 0.67$, $SE = 0.34$, $t(33) = 1.96$, $p = .06$, $p_{rep} = .91$. We further examined whether out-group attitudes and attention to the inequality mediated the effect of contact type on perceptions of out-group fairness. Controlling for contact type, out-group attitudes significantly predicted perceptions of out-group fairness, $b = 0.67$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(101) = 5.61$, $p < .01$, $p_{rep} > .97$, as did attention to the inequality, $b = -0.21$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(101) = -3.03$, $p < .01$, $p_{rep} > .97$. After controlling for the two potential mediators, the effect of contact type on perceptions of out-group fairness was reduced to nonsignificance, $b = -0.01$, $SE = 0.31$, $t(33) = -0.04$, $p = .97$, $p_{rep} = .51$. Sobel tests indicated that the indirect path through out-group attitudes was significant, $z = 3.34$, $p < .01$, $p_{rep} > .97$, and the indirect path through attention to inequality was marginally significant, $z = 1.91$, $p = .06$, $p_{rep} = .91$. Thus, the disadvantaged-group members' heightened perceptions of out-group fairness after commonality-focused, compared with differences-focused, contact were generally due to improved attitudes toward the out-group and decreased attention to intergroup inequality.

Analyses of the number of credits expected showed that members of the disadvantaged groups anticipated obtaining significantly more credits following commonality-focused contact ($M = 4.40$) than following differences-focused contact ($M = 3.56$), $b = 0.84$, $SE = 0.33$, $t(29) = 2.20$, $p < .05$, $p_{rep} > .92$.

Resource Allocation

In contrast to disadvantaged-group members' expectations, no effects of contact type (commonality- vs. difference-focused) emerged with respect to the number of credits advantaged-group members allocated to the out-group ($M_s = 3.53$ vs. 3.75 , respectively), $b = -0.22$, $SE = 0.54$, $t(29) = -0.40$, $p = .69$, $p_{rep} = .61$. There were also no significant associations between out-group attitudes and credits allocated to the out-group, $r(91) = -.16$, $p = .12$, $p_{rep} = .86$, and between attention to inequality and credits allocated, $r(91) = .12$, $p = .25$, $p_{rep} = .79$. The number of credits allocated to the out-group was significantly lower than the equality response of 5 (out of 10 credits) for both differences-focused contact, $t(29) = -3.32$, $p < .01$, $p_{rep} > .97$, and commonality-focused contact, $t(29) = -3.77$, $p < .01$, $p_{rep} > .97$, indicating that members of advantaged groups dis-

criminated against the disadvantaged groups in their actual behavior regardless of contact type. Disadvantaged-group members' allocation of marbles was also unaffected by contact type ($M_s = 5.07$ vs. 4.77 following commonality- vs. difference-focused contact), $b = 0.30$, $SE = 0.33$, $t(29) = 0.89$, $p = .38$, $p_{rep} = .73$.

Level of Accuracy

To examine whether disadvantaged-group members' expectations were accurate, we compared the number of credits they expected to receive with the number of credits they were actually allocated. We performed a 2 (contact type: commonality-focused vs. differences-focused) \times 2 (credits: expected vs. received) analysis with the latter factor as a repeated measure at the 3-person-group level. This analysis revealed a marginally significant Contact Type \times Credits interaction, $b = 1.05$, $SE = 0.58$, $t(58) = 1.83$, $p = .07$, $p_{rep} = .90$ (see Fig. 1). After differences-focused contact, there was no significant difference between the number of credits that the disadvantaged-group members expected to receive ($M = 3.56$) and the number they actually received ($M = 3.75$), $b = -0.19$, $SE = 0.40$, $t(58) = -0.47$, $p = .64$, $p_{rep} = .63$. However, after commonality-focused contact, disadvantaged-group members expected to receive more credits ($M = 4.40$) than they were actually allocated ($M = 3.53$), $b = -0.87$, $SE = 0.41$, $t(58) = -2.10$, $p < .05$, $p_{rep} > .92$. Thus, disadvantaged-group members' expectations for equality proved unrealistically optimistic after commonality-focused contact.

Discussion

Study 1 demonstrated that positive intergroup contact, operationalized as a commonality-focused encounter, can lead members of disadvantaged groups to perceive the intergroup relations in overly optimistic ways. Furthermore, improved out-

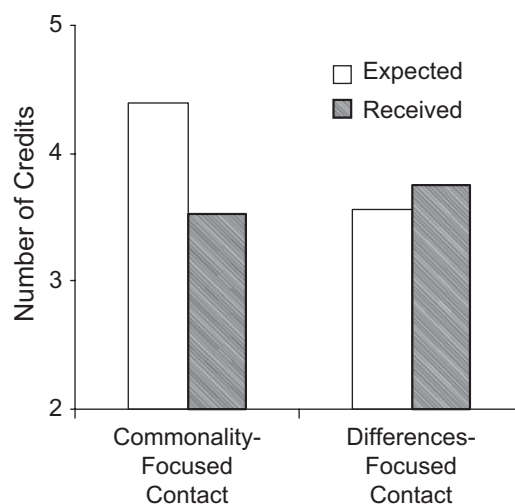


Fig. 1. Mean number of credits expected by the disadvantaged groups versus mean number of credits received from the advantaged groups, as a function of contact type (commonality-focused vs. differences-focused) in Study 1.

group attitudes and reduced attention to inequality mediated this effect.

Although the experimental nature of this study permitted causal analysis, the intergroup relations were situation based and short-lived, and therefore might not reflect processes that occur in more naturalistic intergroup contexts. For instance, members of disadvantaged groups might *initially* be overly optimistic regarding out-group fairness, but not show the same effect with repeated intergroup experiences. In Study 2, therefore, we focused on a naturalistic context, analyzing the responses of Arabs in Israel, a national minority shown to experience notable, enduring disadvantage compared with Jews (e.g., disadvantages in income and political power; Smooha, 2005).

STUDY 2

In Study 2, we surveyed Arabs in Israel and examined the relationships among positive contact with Jews, attitudes toward Jews, attention to inequality, and perceptions of the fairness of Jews. Moreover, this naturalistic context permitted us to extend Study 1 by including a measure of Arabs' support for social change toward equality. Measures were modeled after those in Study 1, but tailored to the specific nature of this intergroup context: Positive contact was operationalized as reports of cross-group friendships. Cross-group friendship embodies the structural elements of optimal contact specified by contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998) and involves a central component of common connection (Aron et al., 2004), making this measure a viable proxy for commonality-based contact in the field. Because inequality between Jews and Arabs is readily apparent and chronic in Israeli society, attention to inequality was measured as attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality, and perceived out-group fairness was operationalized as beliefs about the fairness of treatment by Jews.

We hypothesized that more positive intergroup contact would relate to stronger perceptions of Jews as fair, and that this effect would be mediated by more favorable attitudes toward Jews and less attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality. Moreover, because positive out-group orientations and reduced attention to inequality may undermine disadvantaged groups' resistance (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), and because perceptions that progress may be made through out-group fairness can reduce personal motivations for action (Zhang, Fishbach, & Dhar, 2007), we further predicted that these factors would relate to weaker support for social change among Arabs.

Method

Participants

Participants were 175 Arabs (108 female, 66 male, 1 unspecified; mean age = 30 years), all Israeli citizens. Those recruited

through their psychology class received course credit, and those recruited through snowball sampling received \$5.

Procedure

Participants completed a questionnaire, written in Arabic, about Jewish-Arab relations. The questionnaire included measures of contact, out-group attitudes, attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality, out-group fairness, and support for change. Unless otherwise indicated, responses to all items were given on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

Contact was assessed with two items: "With how many Jews are you personally acquainted today?" and "How many Jewish friends do you have today?" ($r = .67$). Responses ranged from 1 (*none*) to 8 (*more than 10*). To assess *out-group attitudes*, we asked participants to rate their feelings toward Jews on five bipolar evaluative dimensions: warm-cold (reverse-scored), negative-positive, friendly-hostile (reverse-scored), suspicious-trusting, and admiration-disgust (reverse-scored). The rating scales ranged from 1 (for the negative pole of the dimension) to 5 (for the positive pole of the dimension; $\alpha = .78$). *Attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality* was assessed with one item: "To what extent would you consider the inequality between the groups as just?" (reverse-scored). The perceived *fairness of the out-group* (Jews) was assessed with the items: "Jews generally try to be fair towards Arabs"; "I generally trust Jews"; "Most Jews would try to take advantage of Arabs if they got a chance" (reverse-scored); and "You must be wary and not rely on Jews" (reverse-scored; $\alpha = .72$).

To assess *support for social change*, we asked participants to indicate their agreement with the following three statements: "I do not see a need to support a change that will improve the position of Arabs within Israel" (reverse-scored); "I support legislation through which Arabs will be guaranteed equal work opportunities as Jews"; and "I wish that Israeli-Jews and Israeli-Arabs would be more equal in terms of resources" ($\alpha = .67$).

Results and Discussion

We conducted a path analysis using AMOS 6.0 (Arbuckle, 2005). The zero-order correlations of contact with out-group attitudes, attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality, and out-group fairness replicated the results of Study 1 (see Table 1 for mean ratings and correlations). To examine our specific hypotheses, we tested a path model with indirect paths from contact to perceptions of out-group fairness through out-group attitudes and through attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality (see Fig. 2). Drawing on collective-action research, we also specified paths from out-group attitudes, attention to inequality, and out-group fairness to support for social change. According to criteria for determining a good-fitting model (Hu & Bentler, 1999), this model fit the data very well, $\chi^2(2) = 0.831$, $p = .660$, $\chi^2/df = 0.415$, comparative fit index = 1.00, root-mean-square error of approximation = .000, p -close = .761.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of the Variables in Study 2

Variable	Correlation				Mean	SD
	1	2	3	4		
1. Contact	—	—	—	—	4.88	2.63
2. Out-group attitudes	.31**	—	—	—	2.93	0.93
3. Attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality	-.22**	-.02	—	—	4.77	2.13
4. Out-group fairness	.28**	.43**	-.15*	—	3.32	1.32
5. Support for social change	-.03	.03	.21**	-.21**	6.08	1.17

Note. Intergroup contact was rated on a scale from 1 to 8, attitudes toward the out-group were rated on a scale from 1 to 5, and the rating scales for the other variables ranged from 1 to 7.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p < .01$.

As in Study 1, there was an indirect effect of contact on perceptions of out-group fairness, mediated by out-group attitudes ($z = 3.31, p < .01, p_{rep} > .97$). Attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality did not mediate the effect of contact on perceptions of out-group fairness ($z = 1.38, p = .17, p_{rep} = .83$), although the path coefficients were consistent with the results of Study 1. The results of this analysis also extended our previous findings, showing that perceptions of out-group fairness and attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality were associated with support for social change. The indirect effect of contact on support for social change through attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality was marginally significant ($z = -1.89, p = .06, p_{rep} = .91$), which suggests that contact can reduce disadvantaged-group members' support for social change through its effects on the way they perceive the inequality. Table 2 presents results for our proposed model and for alternative models, none of which fit the data better than our proposed model. It should be noted, however, that in path analysis there are always statistically equivalent models that could fit the data equally well (e.g., a model specifying reversed causality from support for social change to contact; see MacCallum & Austin, 2000). Nevertheless, given the consistency with our theoretical reasoning and the experimental results of Study 1, which methodologically establish the order of causality, our

proposed model seems more plausible than other, statistically equivalent models.

Study 2 thus provides further support for our predictions regarding the effects of positive contact on disadvantaged-group members' expectations about out-group fairness, and it does so in a naturalistic intergroup context. It extends Study 1 by demonstrating that, although disadvantaged-group members may have generally strong motivation for social change toward equality (Saguy et al., 2008), their perceptions of the out-group as fair and of the inequality as just can, to a certain extent, relax such support. This latter finding is consistent with research demonstrating that recognizing one's disadvantage within the social system and attributing this disadvantage to external factors, typically factors related to the out-group, are key predictors of social action (Simon & Klandermans, 2001).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results of Study 1, an experiment with laboratory groups, and Study 2, a survey of an actual disadvantaged group, converged to demonstrate that, beyond improving attitudes, positive intergroup contact may also lead disadvantaged-group members to attend less to group inequality. These outcomes may both

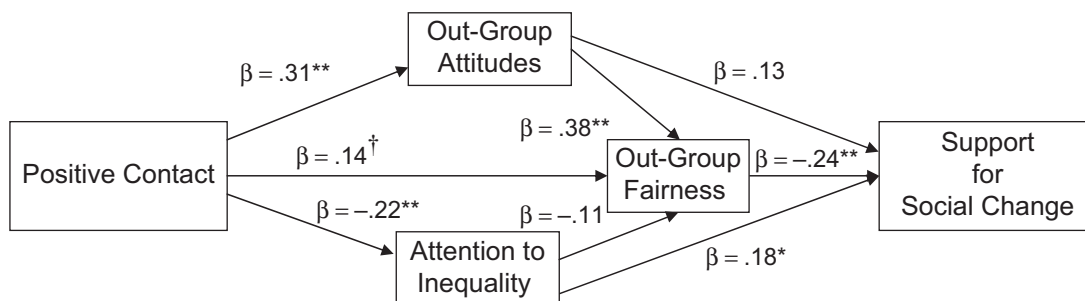


Fig. 2. Path model of the relationships among contact with Jews, attitudes toward Jews, attention to illegitimate aspects of the inequality, perceptions of Jews' fairness, and support for social change in Study 2. Significance of the paths is indicated. † $p < .09$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 2
Fit Statistics for Alternative Models of the Results in Study 2

Independent variable(s)	First mediator(s)	Second mediator(s)	Outcome variable	$\chi^2(2)$	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA	AIC
Proposed model								
Contact	Out-group attitudes, attention to inequality	Perceptions of out-group fairness	Support for social change	0.831 (<i>p</i> = .660)	0.415	1.00	.00 (<i>p</i> -close = .761)	26.83
Alternative Model 1								
Out-group attitudes, attention to inequality	Contact	Perceptions of out-group fairness	Support for social change	3.60 (<i>p</i> = .165)	1.80	.979	.07 (<i>p</i> -close = .291)	29.60
Alternative Model 2								
Contact	Out-group attitudes	Perceptions of out-group fairness, attention to inequality	Support for social change	2.81 (<i>p</i> = .246)	1.40	.989	.048 (<i>p</i> -close = .386)	28.81
Alternative Model 3								
Support for social change	Contact	Out-group attitudes, attention to inequality	Perceptions of out-group fairness	9.15 (<i>p</i> = .010)	4.56	.910	.14 (<i>p</i> -close = .036)	35.15

Note. Because the alternative models all had equal numbers of degrees of freedom, we could not perform a chi-square difference test to compare their fit (Steiger, Shapiro, & Browne, 1985). AIC = Akaike's information criterion; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation.

contribute to more optimistic expectations that the out-group will behave fairly—expectations that were associated with lower levels of support for social change among disadvantaged-group members in Study 2. Thus, because positive contact improves attitudes and blurs group differences, it can undermine the necessary conditions for collective action to occur: recognition that one's group is subordinate and external (typically out-group) attribution of one's disadvantage (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Wright & Lubensky, 2008). Furthermore, with respect to advantaged groups, changes in attitudes produced by contact might reflect mainly a commitment to equality as a principle, rather than as a reality (Durrheim & Dixon, 2004; see Jackman & Crane, 1986). Our results thus reinforce the value of considering the effects of contact on behaviors and power-related dimensions, not simply on attitudes and emotions.

We note that positive intergroup contact and intergroup harmony do not necessarily undermine efforts toward equality. The critical factor likely involves the nature of positive contact and how harmony is achieved. Whereas a sole emphasis on commonalities may deflect attention from issues of group disparities, encounters that emphasize both common connections and the problem of unjust group inequalities may promote intergroup understanding as well as recognition of the need for change (see Saguy et al., 2008). Such mixed-content encounters, through which common humanity and morality are likely to be emphasized, can both bring members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups together and perhaps motivate them to eliminate social inequities. However, it is critical, both in theory and in practice,

to recognize that intergroup harmony per se does not necessarily lead to intergroup equality.

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