

## Dual identities in intergroup contact: Group status and size moderate the generalization of positive attitude change

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### Abstract

To explore the effects of various categorization strategies on intergroup bias within and beyond a contact situation, two experiments were conducted involving groups of different size and/or status that worked together on a cooperative task. Three categorization strategies (decategorization, recategorization, and dual identity) were compared, and bias was measured through symbolic reward allocations to people who were and were not actually encountered. In Experiment 1 ( $N = 129$ ), we varied group size (minority or majority) and found that it affected bias within the contact situation—minority groups were more biased than majority groups. All of the categorization strategies limited bias and they did so equally well. Outside the contact situation, however, only the recategorization and dual identity strategies limited bias. In Experiment 2 ( $N = 156$ ), we varied both group status (low or high) and group size. Both of these variables affected bias within the contact situation—high status groups were more biased than low status groups, and minority groups were again more biased than majority groups. Once again, all three categorization strategies limited bias and they did so equally well. Outside the contact situation, however, an interaction among the independent variables was observed. For *minority* groups, only the dual identity strategy limited bias, but none of the categorization strategies limited bias for *majority* groups.

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Modernization has drawn people everywhere into larger and more complicated networks of interaction and exchange. The resulting increase in intergroup contact has had both positive and negative outcomes for social relations (Allport, 1954; Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998). An important analysis of the conditions that are most likely to produce positive outcomes was Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis. Allport proposed that equal status contact, intergroup cooperation, the potential for personal relationships, and institutional support were all necessary for reducing bias. Much research has confirmed these predictions (Pettigrew, 1998). A recent meta-analysis by Pettigrew and Tropp (In press) revealed that contact in itself may be helpful, and that the impact of

contact is significantly greater when most or all of the conditions identified by Allport are present.

The optimism associated with the Contact Hypothesis must be tempered by an acknowledgement of the complexity of intergroup relations. Even advocates of the hypothesis have criticized it on theoretical and practical grounds (Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998). Two issues are especially interesting to us. One issue is the difficulty of making any attitude change produced by the contact experience generalize from the outgroup members who were actually encountered to the outgroup as a whole (Cook, 1978; Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Another issue is that most research has focused on changing the attitudes of the majority group towards the minority group, rather than vice versa (Cohen & Roper, 1972; Sigelman & Welch, 1993). This focus may have obscured potentially important effects of group size and status on contact outcomes. In our research, we thus chose to study generalization in the effects

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of intergroup contact in contexts where groups of unequal size and status cooperated with each other under different conditions of category salience.

In the past 20 years, several theoretical models of how intergroup contact reduces bias have been proposed. The “Decategorized Contact Model” (DCM), proposed by Brewer and Miller (1984), starts from the fact that merely categorizing people into groups is enough to produce intergroup bias (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). This suggests that reducing the salience of categorization should weaken intergroup bias. Because categorization often leads to perceiving ingroup and outgroup members in homogeneous or stereotypical terms (Wilder, 1986), decategorization (achieved through the formation of personal relationships during intergroup contact) should lead to more individuated perceptions of others. This should enhance the potential for group stereotype disconfirmation (Brewer & Miller, 1984).

Although several studies have provided support for the DCM (see Bettencourt, Brewer, Croak, & Miller, 1992; Bettencourt, Charlton, & Kernahan, 1997; Brewer, Weber, & Carini, 1995), it has at least one problem. When people are completely decategorized, generalization of positive attitudes is unlikely to occur, because there is no psychological link between the people who were encountered in the contact situation and their fellow outgroup members (Ensari & Miller, 2002; Rothbart & John, 1985; Vivian, Hewstone, & Brown, 1997). Moreover, positive interpersonal interactions with particular outgroup members may be viewed as “exceptions to the rule,” which also limits generalization (Allport, 1954; Weber & Crocker, 1983).

The “Common Ingroup Identity Model” (CIIM), proposed by Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, and Dovidio (1989) and recently reformulated by Gaertner and Dovidio (2000), argues that bias is reduced when people recategorize one another so that the ingroup and outgroup(s) are subsumed into a more inclusive superordinate category. Changing group boundaries allows some of the cognitive and motivational processes that contributed to biases initially to be redirected toward the development of more positive intergroup relations. In this way, erstwhile outgroup members are perceived as members of a common ingroup, which inhibits intergroup differentiation and bias along the original lines. The CIIM has been supported by both laboratory experiments and field studies (see Dovidio, Gaertner, Isen, & Lowrance, 1995; Dovidio et al., 1997; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998; Gaertner et al., 1989; Gaertner et al., 1999), but it has problems as well. First, generalization is often weak—the reduction in bias produced by recategorization rarely extends beyond the contact situation (for exceptions, see Dovidio et al., 1997; Gonzalez & Brown, 2003). Second, a common ingroup identity may not be politically or psychologically feasible, if people must abandon identities that are important to them (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000b; Huo, Smith, Tyler, & Lind, 1996; van Oudenhoven, Groenewoud, & Hewstone, 1996).

The “Mutual Intergroup Differentiation model” (MIDM), proposed by Hewstone and Brown (1986) and

later reformulated by Vivian et al. (1997) and Brown and Hewstone (2005), suggests that equal status contact between salient groups cannot reduce bias when those groups are threatened by contact, as when they differ in strength. The focus of this model differs from both the DCM and the CIIM, in the sense that the latter models involve the dissolution of existing group boundaries. But groups need to maintain some salience for their members—this facilitates generalization because ingroup and outgroup members are more likely to be seen as representative of their groups. Thus, the contact situation should be perceived by participants as one in which groups have different experiences and expertise that they bring to the situation (Brown & Wade, 1987; Hewstone & Brown, 1986; Vivian et al., 1997). A weakening of group boundaries can also create negative feelings (by threatening the distinctiveness of the groups), so the MIDM argues that group divisions should be maintained on dimensions that seem equally important to group members (e.g., division of labor in pursuing a superordinate task). Consistent with social identity theory, intergroup contact under these conditions should not threaten group members (Brown & Wade, 1987; Deschamps & Brown, 1983). The MIDM thus predicts that intergroup bias is reduced best when groups are encouraged “to recognize mutual superiorities and inferiorities, and to accord equal values to dimensions favoring each group” (Hewstone, 1996, p. 334; Turner, 1981). This model has received support in several studies (see Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Brown, Vivian, & Hewstone, 1999; Brown, Maras, Masser, Vivian, & Hewstone, 2001; Gonzalez & Brown, 2002, 2003; Maras & Brown, 1996; Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). Keeping group boundaries salient during contact, however, may create intergroup anxiety and ingroup bias (Greenland & Brown, 1999; Islam & Hewstone, 1993) if the contact situation does not meet the optimal conditions suggested by Allport (1954).

In an effort to overcome these problems, a “Dual Identity” (DIM) model has recently been proposed (Dovidio et al., 1998; Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman, & Anastasio, 1994; Gaertner et al., 1999; Gonzalez & Brown, 2003; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a, 2000b). This model claims that it is possible to reap the benefits of a common ingroup identity (recategorization), and to generalize those benefits beyond the contact situation, by creating a superordinate social identity while maintaining distinctive group identities during contact. In effect, the model represents a rapprochement between the CIIM and the MIDM. A dual identity approach is especially valuable when one group (the majority) is larger than the other (the minority). Minority group members may resist a superordinate identity if accepting that identity means that their own distinctiveness will be lost. Group diversity is recognized when everyone has dual identities, all within a shared social framework (Brown & Wade, 1987; Deschamps & Brown, 1983; Dovidio et al., 1998; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a, 2000b; van Leeuwen, van Knippenberg, & Ellemers, 2002).

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