A Longitudinal Analysis of The Effect of Intergroup Contact In A Peace Dialogue Program

Juliana Schroeder & Jane Risen

In Conjunction with Seeds of Peace
The Seeds of Peace Model

- One of the largest peace dialogue programs
- Teenagers from conflict regions in the Middle East and South Asia
- Annual 3-week summer camp held in Maine (USA)
  - Neutral-setting intervention
Research Questions

• Can contact between groups (Israelis and Palestinians) longitudinally predict attitude change toward the other side of the conflict?
  - Tests “Intergroup Contact Theory” among antagonistic groups

• Will any attitudinal changes created during camp remain after participants return to their respective countries within the conflict region?
  - Addresses the “Re-Entry Problem”
Measuring The Effect of Camp

1. Pre-Camp survey
2. Post-Camp survey
3. Follow-up survey (6-9 months after camp)

5 years of data collection (2010-2014).

Sample questions from surveys

1. Measure of “friendship” with the outgroup:
   “Think of the people at camp to whom you feel most close. To make sure you are thinking of specific people, please list their initials below. … You can list people in any delegation. After you list them, indicate which delegation each person is part of by checking the appropriate box.”

2. Positive attitudes toward the outgroup:
   Validated psychological measures such as –
   How do you feel about people from the other side of your conflict? (1=Very negative; 7=Very positive)
Results

Does attending camp improve attitudes toward outgroup?

• Yes (in all 4 years, 2010-2013).
Results

Does making contact with an outgroup member predict attitude change?

- Yes (in all years we measured this, 2010-2012).
Results

Does the attitude change fade after re-entry?

• Somewhat – but residual positivity remains (in 2011 & 2012).

![Graph showing positivity levels over time for Israelis & Palestinians from 2010 to 2013.](https://example.com/graph)
Results

2012 Positivity
Israelis & Palestinians

- 2012 (n=81)
- 2012 completed follow-up (n=45)

2011 Positivity
Israelis & Palestinians

- 2011 (n=76)
- 2011 completed follow-up (n=41)
Summary of Findings

• Dramatic & consistent changes in outgroup attitudes from pre-camp to post-camp in support of Intergroup Contact Theory.

• Attitudes toward outgroup campers generalized to all members of the outgroup and outgroup friendships predicted attitude change at camp.

• Re-entry causes attitude erosion but some positivity still remains.
Future Directions

• Network analysis

• Comparison groups:
  • Applicants & national samples

• Interventions to promote friendship formation

• Spread of attitude change
  • Siblings
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For more information, please contact: jschroeder@chicagobooth.edu