

Interrogating the Process and Meaning of Intergroup Contact: Contrasting Theoretical Approaches

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ABSTRACT

To address the dearth of research on the process and meaning participants make of intergroup contact in settings of intractable conflict, Israeli, Palestinian and US youth were randomly assigned to conditions of dialogue-based contact rooted in distinct social psychological theories. Over a 2-week period, participants completed diaries containing surveys of psychological experience and space for free reflection. US youth reported lower levels of engagement, social identity salience and positive mood relative to Israelis and Palestinians. Qualitative data revealed a pattern of detachment and dissatisfaction among US youth. Compared with participants in a recategorization condition, participants in a mutual differentiation condition of dialogue reported lower levels of self-consistency and higher levels of intergroup differentiation over time, suggesting the effectiveness of this approach to initiate a process of self-reflection and intergroup distinctiveness. Palestinian participants in the mutual differentiation condition reported higher levels of empowerment and positive mood throughout contact relative to all other participants, suggesting the effectiveness of this approach to challenge power asymmetries and its positivity for the low-status group. Results are discussed in terms of innovative methodological approaches to study intergroup processes in contact settings. Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Key words: intergroup contact; process; social identity; meaning; Israeli–Palestinian conflict; youth; adolescence

Since its introduction in the mid-20th century as a social psychological tool to reduce prejudice and conflict (e.g. Allport, 1954), the idea of intergroup contact has captivated the imagination of social scientists, policy makers and the public at large. Mounting empirical evidence suggests that contact effectively reduces prejudice between groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, 2011). In spite of the allure of contact and the evidence to support its effectiveness in many settings, four important empirical issues remain unaddressed.

First, can contact be productive when the basic conditions of equal status, institutional support and common goals are not met? There are many well-intentioned efforts to bring

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feuding groups together in the absence of these conditions, yet most contact research has tended to focus on situations in which the basic conditions for optimal contact are satisfied (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005). Second, what is the process and experience of an intergroup encounter that includes a third party? Limited research suggests that the presence of a third party influences the process of intergroup encounters (Ben Hagai, Hammack, Pilecki, & Aresta, 2013; Rouhana, 1995; Rouhana & Korper, 1997). However, systematic empirical work on the tri-group encounter among Israeli, Palestinian and American youth is virtually non-existent. Third, what psychological processes actually occur in contact that may facilitate or inhibit prejudice reduction? Because the vast majority of contact research studies *outcome*, rather than *process* (Pettigrew, 1998), we know surprisingly little about how contact makes participants feel, what meaning they make of the experience and what challenges contact brings to their psychological sense of security (Dixon et al., 2005). Finally, how do distinct *paradigms* of contact influence psychological processes and outcomes? As contact programmes have evolved, they have embraced different methodologies to try to effect particular psychological processes.

For example, in Israeli–Palestinian contact programmes, at least two types of dialogue facilitation have come to dominate encounters (Maoz, 2011). The *coexistence*, or *recategorization* (RC), approach seeks to facilitate dialogue in which participants come to identify as members of a new group with a superordinate identity and is modelled upon common in-group identity theory (e.g. Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Participants are conceived as unique individuals who will challenge stereotypes and monolithic views of the other. The *confrontational*, or *mutual differentiation* (MD), approach to contact between Israelis and Palestinians emphasizes the idea that, when groups in conflict come together, they vie for power and status within the encounter. That is, the contact setting closely replicates the setting of conflict, and individuals represent the interests of their group rather than themselves as distinct individuals (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004; Suleiman, 2004). In spite of the proliferation of these distinct methodological approaches within Israeli–Palestinian contact settings (Maoz, 2011), there has been no research that systematically compares the process and outcome of such efforts.

The current study represents a preliminary attempt to address these gaps in knowledge about intergroup contact. First, we compared how the experience of contact differs as a function of nationality. That is, we examined whether the experiences of Israeli, Palestinian and American youth over the course of intergroup contact differed in a systematic way. Second, we compared how the experience of contact differs as a function of the contact paradigm employed. Specifically, we examined the extent to which the disparate categorization goals of the paradigms were reproduced by the participants. Lastly, we examined the interaction of nationality and contact paradigm on the experience of contact. In other words, we analysed whether the experience for certain national groups changes as a function of the contact paradigm employed. To adequately address the process participants in contact actually experience and the meaning they make of contact, we used a strategy inspired by the experience sampling method (ESM; Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1983). Hence, we obtained both quantitative and qualitative self-reports of experience throughout a 2-week contact programme. This approach allowed us to examine changes over the course of the contact programme while giving us an opportunity to hear the experiences of participants in their own words.

How does the experience of contact vary by nationality?

Israelis, Palestinians and Americans inhabit distinct social ecologies of development. Although Israelis and Palestinians share the collective experience of existential insecurity (Hammack, 2009b, 2010, 2011; Pettigrew, 2003), they occupy distinct roles in the conflict. Jewish Israelis, for example, represent the occupying society of Palestinians (in the case of Palestinians residing in the occupied territories) and the majority relative to the Palestinian minority living in Israel. This role has implications for the social and psychological development of Jewish Israelis (Halperin, Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Rosler, & Raviv, 2010; Bar-Tal & Schnell, 2013). By contrast, Palestinians in Israel face discrimination and subordination within a state defined as Jewish (Rabinowitz & Abu-Baker, 2005). Palestinians in the occupied territories remain stateless inhabitants of territory subject to military occupation for over 45 years, and their social and psychological development is characterized by collective frustration, humiliation and loss (Giacaman, Abu-Rmeileh, Hussein, Saab, & Boyce, 2007).

Although the experiences and relative statuses of Israelis and Palestinians are asymmetric, they share the common experience of intractable conflict. Both societies are subject to an 'ethos' of conflict (Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin, & Zafran, 2012) that highlights the salience of national identity and uses strategies of delegitimization to vie for power and status in the international community (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007; Oren, Bar-Tal, & David, 2004). Both societies promulgate narratives that frame intergroup relations in mutually exclusive terms with regard to history, identity and legitimacy (Hammack, 2008, 2011). Thus, there is reason to believe that the basic psychological experience of Israelis and Palestinians in intergroup contact might be similar in terms of factors such as identity salience and perceptions of threat.

In contrast to Israelis and Palestinians, Americans inhabit a stable liberal democracy in which an ethos of multiculturalism and respect for diversity generally thrives, in spite of historic and continuing ethnocentrism and racism (Citrin, Sears, Muste, & Wong, 2001; Hollinger, 2006). Because the tri-group encounter focuses on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, it seems likely that contact will be less salient and less psychologically challenging for American youth compared with Israeli and Palestinian youth.

- H1 Contact will be more salient and more psychologically challenging for Israeli and Palestinian youth, compared with American youth.

We hypothesized that this distinction would be apparent in self-reports of identity salience, engagement, mood and threat/insecurity, as well as in qualitative diary entries.

How does the experience of contact vary by paradigm?

Our second question addresses the gap in knowledge of processes associated with particular paradigms of dialogue-based contact. The two paradigms of contact addressed in this study were modelled on distinct social psychological theories about the relationship between contact and social action. The RC paradigm seeks to foster a sense of commonality among participants, resulting in the development of a superordinate (common in-group) identity and the internalization of cosmopolitan values associated with coexistence (e.g. Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). The premise of the RC approach is that cognitive representations are transformed from two groups to one group (Gaertner, Mann, Dovidio, Murrell, & Pomare, 1990). These psychological transformations, in turn, are expected to motivate

individuals to work for social change in the interest of peace and coexistence. Almost all empirical work on RC, however, has occurred in laboratory settings or in societies concerned primarily with issues of pluralism and multiculturalism (e.g. Eller & Abrams, 2004; for review, see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), rather than societies engaged in intractable conflict (except see Cehajic, Brown, & Castano, 2008).

The MD paradigm seeks to foster a sense of distinction among participants, who are conceived as group representatives in the encounter rather than unique individuals. The MD paradigm is rooted in social identity theory, developed in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s, and is concerned with developing a theoretical account of group life and processes (e.g. Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Rather than a cognitive process of RC, the MD paradigm seeks to activate a process of MD in which group members come to see social categories as distinct rather than overlapping (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). This sense of distinction is intended to encourage the mutual recognition of national identities—the primary problem underlying the Israeli–Palestinian conflict—and the internalization of social justice values related to equality and fairness. These psychological transformations, in turn, are expected to motivate individuals to work for peace and social change by challenging identity non-recognition.

Our second hypothesis is grounded in the idea that the MD paradigm explicitly seeks to accentuate the salience of national identity and intergroup differentiation. In addition, the paradigm is intended to present a greater psychological challenge to participants, given its confrontational nature and its desire to facilitate a deep psychological process of critical self-reflection about issues of power, identity and social justice.

- H2 Compared with participants in the RC condition, participants in the MD condition will report higher levels of identity salience, intergroup differentiation and negative psychological experience, but lower levels of self-consistency from day to day.

Does the MD condition more effectively challenge intergroup power asymmetries?

Although Allport (1954) originally argued that equal status between groups was a necessary condition for effective intergroup contact, scholars have increasingly recognized that equal status is often unattainable in contact because conflicts are characterized by power asymmetry (e.g. Rouhana, 2004; Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008). The goal of more recent critical approaches to intergroup contact has been to explicitly challenge the power asymmetries that exacerbate conflict, particularly when the more powerful party does not explicitly recognize the asymmetry (e.g. Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004).

The Israeli–Palestinian case is a good example of this type of intergroup encounter. Although Jewish Israelis represent the more powerful party in contact, possessing majority status within Israel and the role of occupier vis-à-vis Palestinians who reside in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, they view themselves as surrounded by hostile parties and thus possessing lesser power in terms of human capital in the Middle East. Bar-Tal and Antebi (1992) referred to a ‘siege mentality’ among Jewish Israelis as a collective psychological response to this situation.

Previous research thus suggests that, when Israelis and Palestinians engage in intergroup dialogue, the existing power dynamics are largely reproduced in the encounter (Suleiman, 2004). However, little research has systematically varied the *paradigm* of dialogue facilitated in order to see whether a particular form of dialogue-based contact might more effectively challenge existing power asymmetries. Recently, Pilecki and Hammack (in press) found that Jewish Israeli and Palestinian youth engage in a consistent pattern of

competitive victimization when discussing history regardless of the facilitation paradigm used. The MD paradigm, particularly as developed and put into practice in Israel at the School for Peace, is explicitly intended to empower the lower status group in the encounter (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004). But no research has systematically investigated whether the paradigm is indeed successful in this regard.

- H3 Compared with all other participants, Palestinians in the MD condition will report higher levels of empowerment throughout the encounter.

We hypothesized that the MD paradigm would more effectively challenge power asymmetries, resulting in higher self-reports of empowerment among Palestinian participants in this condition.

Our aims were chiefly concerned with description of the psychological process and meaning-making associated with intergroup contact, interrogating how process and meaning varied as a function of factors like nationality and dialogue facilitation paradigm. To reduce the gap among theory, research and practice, we opted to conduct the study in the field in an existing contact intervention. Unlike in laboratory experimentation, our field experimental approach was less concerned with identifying unidimensional causal factors associated with particular experiences than in describing those experiences themselves as they emerged *in situ* (Cook & Shadish, 1994). These aims allowed us to blend deductive and inductive approaches and to mix quantitative and qualitative methods in ways infrequently employed in laboratory settings. Our aims were hence descriptive and critical with regard to existing practice in the field, rather than concerned with testing the ‘effectiveness’ of a particular intervention to achieve some outcome.

METHOD

Field site

Our field site for the current study was a contact programme in the US, the mission of which is to foster coexistence between Israeli and Palestinian youth and to educate American youth about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. During the 2-week programme, youth from Israel and the West Bank resided with host families in a suburban US community and spent the entirety of their days together. The structure of a typical day consisted of a 2-hour dialogue session, lunch and an afternoon social activity.

Participants

Youth were recruited through secondary schools and community organizations in Israel, the US and the Palestinian territories.¹ The primary criterion for programme selection was English proficiency (the common language of all three groups). Otherwise, programme organizers attempted to recruit a group of youth that was diverse and representative in terms of ideology, religion and sex.

Twenty-eight youth participated in the programme and the research, with a median age of 16 years. Participants included 12 Americans (five Christian, two Jewish, four Muslim

¹East Jerusalem and the West Bank only; the Gaza Strip was not included because of mobility restrictions.

and one mixed religious identity), seven Jewish Israelis, seven Palestinians from the occupied territories (one Christian and six Muslim) and two Palestinian citizens of Israel (one Christian and one Muslim). This sample is non-representative of the larger populations of Israeli, Palestinian and American youth, given their interest in pursuing contact. Given the academic and language proficiency qualifications necessary to participate in the programme, they tend to represent youth of higher social status. Yet it is important to note that our research interest is precisely in the population of youth who seek such opportunities for dialogue and not in the general population of Israeli, Palestinian or American youth. Thus, the use of a non-representative sample is appropriate, because we aim only to generalize to youth motivated to pursue intergroup contact.

Procedure

The research design represented a field experiment occurring within the setting of an existing contact intervention. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two dialogue conditions (RC versus MD), with consideration to balance demographic factors and separate previously acquainted youth. Both groups were facilitated by one Jewish and one Palestinian facilitators. Facilitator teams were trained in either a standard conflict resolution approach emphasizing RC principles in the US (RC facilitators) or a social psychological approach emphasizing MD in Israel (MD facilitators). To ensure that facilitators conducted dialogue sessions in accordance with the general categorization goals of the respective paradigms, we used ethnographic methods (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Each session was directly observed by at least one of the authors who simultaneously recorded field notes. Analysis of field notes and dialogue transcripts by the first two authors confirmed that facilitator interventions were distinct in the two conditions. For example, facilitators in the RC condition consistently emphasized interpersonal relations, commonalities and interlocutors as individuals, rather than group representatives. By contrast, facilitators in the MD condition consistently emphasized group identity and power dynamics within the contact setting and in the conflict itself, and they emphasized interlocutors as group representatives, discouraging discussion of commonalities across identity groups. We provide illustrative evidence of the distinction in dialogue conditions in the succeeding text.

Our ethnographic analysis of the dialogue sessions examined the extent to which facilitators' conduct reflected the theoretical frameworks that informed each condition. We discovered that, within the MD condition, facilitator interventions were characterized by reflections on intergroup dynamics within the session, thus emphasizing participants as group representatives rather than individuals. Their interventions encouraged participants to confront difficult topics. For example, in one session, facilitators commented that participants were avoiding talking about the conflict by emphasizing points of commonality among them:

Facilitator 1 (F, Jewish)

I wonder what's the, what's the purpose of this, like... why are we kind of running around? Are we running away from this to talking about our issues here? ... Don't we have things to talk about? We're kind of talking about Egypt's and, Egypt and Syrian borders, and interests, etcetera?

Facilitator 2 (F, Palestinian)

Again... just... my voice to your voice, Facilitator 1... Maybe it's after yesterday's session and the tension and the frustration after yesterday, and all of this started with an attempt to talk about

common things.... Also, I...add my voice to your voice, Facilitator 1, about...talking about Arab countries... I see it also as part of making the atmosphere nicer, and maybe it's easier to deal with this thing...that has nothing directly to do with the [conflict].... Maybe...it just helps to make, to make it easier for the group.

In this excerpt, the facilitators reflect that the content of the dialogue had been moving to issues about which the parties agree (e.g. a critique of neighbouring Arab countries). Consistent with the MD approach, facilitators encouraged participants to confront difficult, divisive issues (rather than to discuss issues on which they likely agree) so that the goal of addressing the identity, power and structural relations that underlie the conflict can be reached.

In contrast, facilitators in the RC condition interjected often during the dialogue to reiterate statements made by participants or to cultivate points of agreement among groups. For example, the Jewish facilitator encouraged participants to recognize the legitimacy of both Jewish Israeli and Palestinian claims to the land:

Facilitator (M, Jewish)

Okay, what I'm asking you is, is it possible that both the Palestinians and the Israelis have very strong arguments as to why the land is theirs? Is it possible that not only the Palestinians, in your case, not only the Palestinians, but also the Israelis, have arguments that are strong for why the land should be theirs? Okay. What do people think? Is it possible?

In this statement, the facilitator attempts to foster agreement among participants that both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians have legitimate claims to the land. By encouraging Palestinians to recognize the claims of Jewish Israelis and vice versa, the facilitator urges participants to focus on common interests rather than to confront one another on divisive issues of power and identity. In doing so, the facilitator intervention contributes to the overall aim to construct a common identity within the dialogue space that is distinct from the negatively interdependent, mutually exclusive Jewish Israeli and Palestinian identities that exist within the conflict (Kelman, 1999; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). This process reflects the overarching goal of RC.

Consistent with field experiments in general, we were more concerned with participant response to an existing intervention than isolating a unidimensional causal mechanism (Cook & Shadish, 1994; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). In other words, our aims were to describe processes associated with existing interventions in the field, rather than to fully attribute those processes to the interventions themselves in causal terms, because 'pure' isolation cannot occur in field experimentation (Cook & Shadish, 1994). Because field experimenters sacrifice full control of the interventions studied for their more naturalistic occurrence, the standard for field experimentation to ensure the integrity of the intervention is close monitoring (Cook & Shadish, 1994). Our ability to conduct ethnographic observation of each session allowed us to monitor the extent to which the interventions maintained their distinction.

Consistent with practice in existing contact encounters, facilitators were granted autonomy to develop the agenda for the dialogue sessions over the 2-week period. In the RC condition, dialogue topics centred on (in order) introductions and ice breakers, establishing rules for dialogue, cultural differences, identity, dialogue group cohesion and agenda, history, violence, personal life stories, peacebuilding and mock conflict resolution. In the MD condition, dialogue topics centred on (in order) introductions and ice breakers, establishing rules for dialogue, culture, identity, power, history, violence and dialogue process reflections.

To capture the psychological experience of contact and the meaning participants were making of the encounter, we used an ESM strategy in which participants completed self-report diaries throughout the encounter. Diaries contained a quantitative self-report measure (refer to the succeeding text) and a section in which participants were asked to write freely about their thoughts and feelings at the moment of administration. Diaries were completed in the native language of the participant (i.e. Hebrew for Jewish Israelis, Arabic for Palestinians and English for Americans). A total of 26 diary entries per participant were obtained across the 2-week period, resulting in a total of 728 observations.

Measures

Social identity salience was measured using original items and items adapted from Phinney's (1992) measure of ethnic identity. Participants rated on a 10-point scale (transformed from a four-point scale for items from the Phinney measure) their level of agreement with statements such as 'My (Israeli/Palestinian/American) identity is important to me' and 'I have a lot of pride in my (Israeli/Palestinian/American) identity and in the accomplishments of the (Israeli/Palestinian/American) people.' There were 14 items in total ($\alpha = .93$).

Differentiation was measured through an adapted version of the Inclusion of Other in Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). The Inclusion of Other in Self Scale is a single-item pictorial measure of interpersonal closeness with established psychometric properties used in research on close relationships. Our adaptation involved changing the interpersonal nature of the measure to an intergroup formulation (Figure 1). Respondents indicated by circling one of six diagrams their level of closeness to the out-group at the moment of report. Conceptually, low levels of intergroup closeness represent high levels of intergroup differentiation. For ease of interpretation, we reverse coded this item such that high scores represent high levels of differentiation (and low levels of intergroup closeness).

Positive mood was measured by a five-item scale commonly used in ESM research (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2000). Respondents rated on a 10-point scale their level of agreement with the following statements: 'I feel happy', 'I feel strong', 'I feel active', 'I feel proud' and 'I feel sociable' ($\alpha = .86$).

Anxiety was measured by a four-item scale including the following items: 'I feel nervous', 'I feel threatened', 'I feel unsafe' and 'I feel safe' (reverse coded; $\alpha = .64$).

Engagement was measured by a seven-item scale commonly used in experience sampling research. Sample items included 'I am able to concentrate' and 'I feel involved' ($\alpha = .85$).

Empowerment was measured by a five-item scale including items such as 'I feel empowered' and 'I feel in control' ($\alpha = .79$).

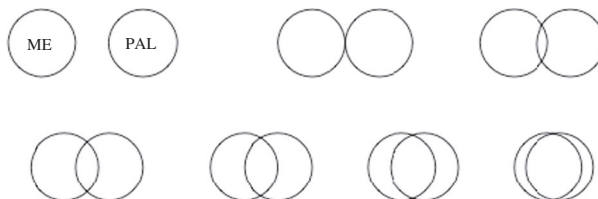


Figure 1. Differentiation measure (adapted from Aron et al., 1992). Participants are asked to respond to the question: which of the following pictures best represent the way you feel right now about your relationship with a [Palestinian/Jewish Israeli]?

Self-consistency was measured by response to a single item, which read 'I feel similar about myself today as I did yesterday.'

Threat/insecurity was measured by a six-item scale, which included items such as 'I feel threatened' and 'I feel insecure in who I am and what I believe' ($\alpha = .76$).

Qualitative data coding

Because research on psychological experience and meaning-making during actual contact settings has never been examined through the use of the diary method, we used an inductive strategy for the coding of entries. We conducted a line-by-line analysis consistent with grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) in which the goal was to identify emergent categories of experience and meaning. Our initial analysis resulted in the generation of 103 categories, which were then reduced to a total of 43 categories, which could be classified in three larger process-related factors: *emotion*, *intergroup process* and *personall/interpersonal process*. The final codes are listed in Appendix (Tables A1–A3) with operational definitions and examples from the raw data. Individual diary entries could contain multiple categorical codes. All diary entries were coded by the first two authors, who conducted their analyses independently and then met to establish consensus on all codes. Consistent with grounded theory procedures and interpretive approaches to qualitative data analysis, validation was secured through an iterative consensus process, rather than calculating a reliability statistic (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Mishler, 1990; Rennie, 2000; Tappan, 1997). In this approach, credibility of interpretation is achieved through the use of multiple coders achieving consensus (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999) through triangulation of data (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley, 2000).

Analytic strategy

To address our research questions with the quantitative data, we used hierarchical linear modelling (HLM; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). HLM is a preferred method of analysing repeated measures data as it can statistically accommodate the nesting of data. Separate equations are specified for both the within-person (level 1) and between-person (level 2) levels of data. This approach allows for the study of inter-individual differences in intra-individual variability. For the within-person variables at level 1, the outcome variable is regressed on within-person predictors such as time. The level-1 parameters are then used as outcome variables regressed on level-2 predictors. An additional advantage of HLM is that maximum likelihood estimation accurately estimates parameters with missing data. All analyses were conducted using HLM software (version 6.06; Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, & Congdon, 2004).

RESULTS

Findings are reported in three sections. Analyses related to each of our three research questions are presented, merging both quantitative and qualitative findings. For tests of differences between groups that include both nationality and dialogue condition differences, two dummy variables were entered into the same test of a given outcome. For example, we hypothesized differences between national groups and dialogue conditions in the

Table 1. Results from hierarchical linear modelling analyses

	Coefficient	SE	<i>t</i>	95% CI
ID salience				
Nationality	-2.03**	0.61	-3.34	[-3.07, -1.26]
Dialogue group	-0.43	0.63	-0.68	
Mood				
Nationality	-1.70**	0.50	-3.40	[-2.73, -0.67]
Dialogue group	0.20	0.50	0.40	
Threat/insecurity				
Nationality	0.66	0.42	0.157	
Dialogue group	-0.04	0.44	-0.10	
Engagement				
Nationality	-1.31**	0.46	-2.88	[-2.26, -0.36]
Anxiety				
Dialogue group	0.28	0.38	0.73	
Self-consistency				
Dialogue group	-1.65*	0.69	-2.39	[-2.85, -0.43]
Differentiation ^b				
Dialogue group	0.55	1.09	0.50	
Time	-0.03†	0.02	-1.80	[-0.07, -0.01] ^c
Dialogue group X time	0.05	0.02	1.82	[0.00, 0.11]
Empowerment ^a				
Dialogue group	2.34***	0.57	4.11	[0.40, 2.82]
Time	-0.02	0.01	-1.44	
Dialogue group X time	0.03†	0.02	1.73	[0.00, 0.06]

Note: CI = confidence interval.

^aThis test compares Palestinian youth in the MD group to all other participants.

^bThis includes only non-American youth.

^cThis reflects a 90% confidence interval.

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

† $p < .10$

prediction of identity salience. For this test, one dummy variable representing group differences by nationality was included, and one variable representing group differences by dialogue condition is included at level 2.

Level 1:

$$\text{Identity Salience} = \beta_{0i} + e_{ij}$$

Level 2:

$$\beta_{0i} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{Nationality}) + \gamma_{02}(\text{Dialogue Group}) + \zeta_{0i}$$

where β_0 is the average level of identity salience for each participant, γ_{00} represents the grand mean of identity salience, γ_{01} and γ_{02} represent the group effects for

American versus non-American youth and dialogue group, respectively. For some outcome variables, differences in average reports were only hypothesized for one of the level-2 variables. In these cases, only one level-2 coefficient appears in the table. For tests of differences between groups for differentiation and empowerment, time was included in the model, as it was expected that it would take some time for these differences to emerge in contact. For these models, both time and the time by group interaction were also included as predictors, and the intercept represents the end of the recording period.

Research question 1: nationality

The first set of results reports tests of differences between American and non-American youth. The results for these hypotheses are presented in Table 1. Estimating averages for each participant over the entire recording period, three significant differences between American and non-American youth emerged. Consistent with our hypothesis, American youth reported lower levels of identity salience ($\gamma = -2.03$, $SE = 0.61$, $t = -3.34$, $p < .01$) and less engagement ($\gamma = -1.31$, $SE = 0.46$, $t = -1.31$, $p < .01$). American youth also reported lower levels of positive mood ($\gamma = -1.70$, $SE = 0.50$, $t = -3.40$, $p < .01$). No significant difference between national groups was found for anxiety or threat/insecurity.

The qualitative data shed light upon these findings from the quantitative self-report data. Two conditions guided our interpretation of the qualitative data. First, we limited our analysis to variables that emerged in at least 5% of a group's diary entries. Second, we limited our interpretation of between-groups differences to cases in which the proportional difference between two groups was two times or more.

Table 2 summarizes the differences in category emergence between US and non-US diary entries. Our analysis of the qualitative data revealed that US youth experienced the intergroup contact process negatively along two major dimensions we label *detachment* and *dissatisfaction*.

In terms of detachment, US diary entries contained more entries reflecting participation and/or withdrawal from the contact process. Namely, *disengagement* (10.4% of US entries versus 4.8% of non-US entries), *engagement* (10.1% vs 3.4%), *exhaustion* (16.9% vs 8.5%) and *isolation/marginality* (5.2% vs 1.7%) emerged more frequently among US diary entries than in the diary entries of other groups. It is noteworthy that although our HLM analysis revealed that US youth were less engaged than non-US youth, entries reflecting *engagement* were nevertheless more prevalent in US diaries. This discrepancy may be because our qualitative analysis was able to examine engagement on multiple dimensions—for example, *engagement*, *disengagement*, *exhaustion*, and *isolation/marginality*—that were otherwise not measured in closed-ended responses. In other words, the issue of participation versus withdrawal for US youth in relation to the dialogue process may be more nuanced and complex than we initially expected.

Dissatisfaction within US diaries was typified by entries noting the relative lack of 'progress' made towards a peaceful resolution during contact. Statements suggesting *need/hope for agreement* (7.8% vs 0%), and *frustration* (7.1% vs 1.4%) emerged more often within US diary entries than in other diaries. For US youth, the perceived failure of Jewish Israelis and Palestinians to come together was problematic. A US male in the RC condition reflects the *futility/helplessness* of many US youth: 'This was a

Table 2. Frequencies and percentages of codes from US diary entries compared with all diary entries

Codes	US ^a		Other ^b		Codes	US ^a		Other ^b	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Intergroup processes					Emotions				
Achievement/ accomplishment (group)	2	0.6	2	0.5	Anger	15	4.9	19	4.6
Challenge (intergroup)	4	1.3	5	1.2	Confusion	19	6.2	14	3.4
Competition for third-party support	3	1.0	1	0.2	Disappointment	6	1.9	7	1.7
Delegitimization	0	0.0	2	0.5	Disgust	0	0.0	1	0.2
Differentiation from in-group	3	1.0	7	1.7	Embarrassment	7	2.3	0	0.0
Disengagement	32	10.4	20	4.8	Emotional	1	0.3	3	0.7
Empowerment	0	0.0	2	0.5	Empathy	7	2.3	3	0.7
Engagement	31	10.1	14	3.4	Exhaustion	52	16.9	35	8.5
Failure to meet expectations	0	0.0	3	0.7	Fear/anxiety	65	21.1	12	2.9
Futility/helplessness	11	3.6	5	1.2	Frustration	22	7.1	6	1.4
In-group identity salience	2	0.6	15	3.6	Hunger	10	3.2	2	0.5
Intergroup comparison	11	3.6	6	1.4	Intensity	8	2.6	5	1.2
Intergroup convergence	7	2.3	14	3.4	Negative mood	49	15.9	29	7.0
Intergroup divergence	21	6.8	35	8.5	Numbness	2	0.6	2	0.5
Isolation/marginality	16	5.2	7	1.7	Positive mood	94	30.5	143	34.5
Learning (out-group)	10	3.2	5	1.2	Security	2	0.6	0	0.0
MD rhetoric	1	0.3	1	0.2	Personal and interpersonal processes				
Need/hope for agreement	24	7.8	0	0.0	Achievement/ Accomplishment (personal)	5	1.6	15	3.6
Neutrality	3	1.0	0	0.0	Challenge (personal)	1	0.3	1	0.2
Paternalism towards out-group(s)	2	0.6	5	1.2	Interpersonal relationships	29	9.4	56	13.5
RC rhetoric	5	1.6	14	3.4	Learning (self)	7	2.3	5	1.2
Realization of power asymmetry	0	0.0	3	0.7					

Note: MD, mutual differentiation; RC, recategorization.

^a*N* = 308.

^b*N* = 414.

completely worthless day. ...The conversation didn't go anywhere. It seems the Palestinians nor the Jews have a clear idea of what they want. I feel as though we are farther from a solution than ever.'

Given this overall pattern of results, it is not surprising that both *fear/anxiety* (21.1% vs 2.9%) and *negative mood* (15.9% vs 7.0%) emerged more in the diaries of US youth than in other diaries. A US female in the MD condition wrote after one particularly intense session, 'I felt so scared in the past 15 minutes when everyone was yelling at each other. I felt like at any second someone could have been punched. I just feel disappointed in my group today.'

Research question 2: dialogue paradigm

Consistent with our hypotheses, youth in the MD group reported lower levels of self-consistency across the recording period compared with youth in the RC condition ($\gamma = -1.65$, $SE = 0.69$, $t = -1.65$, $p < .05$). Thus, participants in the MD condition were more likely to report feeling day-to-day changes in how they thought of themselves than participants in the RC condition.

Also consistent with our hypotheses, results suggest that at the end of the recording period, youth in the RC condition were becoming less differentiated ($\gamma = -0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = -1.80$, $p < .10$), whereas youth in the MD paradigm were becoming more differentiated ($\gamma = 0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 1.82$, $p < .10$). Thus, there is evidence to suggest that the two paradigms begin to achieve their theoretical goals with regard to differentiation by the end of the contact experience. No significant differences between the dialogue conditions emerged for identity salience, anxiety, threat/insecurity or mood.

Analysis of the qualitative data sheds further light upon these findings indicating differential process and meaning of contact based on dialogue paradigm. Responding to the confrontational nature of the dialogue indicative of the MD paradigm, diaries from the MD condition contained more entries reflecting *fear/anxiety* (14.1% vs 7.7%), *confusion* (6.6% vs 2.8%) and *frustration* (5.4% vs 2.6%), as shown in Table 3. For example, reflecting *fear/anxiety*, a female Palestinian in the MD condition wrote, 'I was happy with how things were going yesterday, but I'm afraid that things won't be all right [today].' This pattern of negative psychological experience may account for the fewer instances of *engagement* among MD diary entries (4.2%) relative to RC diary entries (8.0%). That is, participants may have chosen to engage less with the confrontational dialogue indicative of the MD paradigm.

Research question 3: nationality, dialogue paradigm, and power

Our third research question considered whether the MD paradigm was more likely to empower the lower status group than the RC paradigm, thus presenting a greater challenge to existing power asymmetries than the RC approach. We hypothesized that, over the recording period, Palestinian youth in the MD condition would report higher levels of empowerment compared with all other youth in both conditions. This hypothesis was supported by the significant mean difference between Palestinian youth in the MD condition and the rest of the participants at the end of the recording period ($\gamma = 2.34$, $SE = 0.57$, $t = 4.11$, $p < .001$). There was also a trend for a significant group by time interaction, suggesting that the Palestinian youth in the MD group were increasing in reported empowerment over the recording period ($\gamma = 0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 1.73$, $p < .10$; see Figure 2).

Analysis of the qualitative data comparing Palestinian diary entries from the MD condition to all other groups revealed that the interaction of paradigm and low status

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages of Codes by Paradigm

Codes	MD ^a		RC ^b		Codes	MD ^a		RC ^b	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Intergroup processes					Emotions				
Achievement/ accomplishment (group)	2	0.6	2	0.5	Anger	19	5.7	15	3.9
Challenge (intergroup)	3	0.9	6	1.5	Confusion	22	6.6	11	2.8
Competition for third-party support	0	0.0	4	1.0	Disappointment	7	2.1	6	1.5
Delegitimization	1	0.3	1	0.3	Disgust	0	0.0	1	0.3
Differentiation from in-group	8	2.4	2	0.5	Embarrassment	2	0.6	5	1.3
Disengagement	20	6.0	32	8.2	Emotional	3	0.9	1	0.3
Empowerment	1	0.3	1	0.3	Empathy	3	0.9	8	2.1
Engagement	14	4.2	31	8.0	Exhaustion	35	10.5	52	13.4
Failure to meet expectations	0	0.0	3	0.8	Fear/anxiety	47	14.1	30	7.7
Futility/helplessness	11	3.3	5	1.3	Frustration	18	5.4	10	2.6
In-group identity salience	8	2.4	9	2.3	Hunger	4	1.2	8	2.1
Intergroup comparison	4	1.2	13	3.4	Intensity	7	2.1	6	1.5
Intergroup convergence	8	2.4	13	3.4	Negative mood	39	11.7	39	10.1
Intergroup divergence	24	7.2	32	8.2	Numbness	4	1.2	0	0.0
Isolation/marginality	13	3.9	10	2.6	Positive mood	114	34.1	122	31.4
Learning (out-group)	4	1.2	11	2.8	Security	1	0.3	1	0.3
MD rhetoric	0	0.0	2	0.5	Personal and interpersonal processes				
Need/hope for agreement	15	4.5	9	2.3	Achievement/ accomplishment (personal)	9	2.7	11	2.8
Neutrality	0	0.0	3	0.8	Challenge (personal)	1	0.3	1	0.3
Paternalism towards out-group(s)	3	0.9	4	1.0	Interpersonal relationships	34	10.2	51	13.1
RC rhetoric	3	0.9	16	4.1	Learning (self)	2	0.6	10	2.6
Realization of power asymmetry	0	0.0	3	0.8					

Note: MD, mutual differentiation; RC, recategorization.

^a*N* = 334

^b*N* = 388

resulted in a unique experiential process for Palestinian youth (Table 4). Palestinian diary entries from the MD paradigm contained notably fewer instances of *exhaustion* (3.9% of MD Palestinian entries versus 13.2% of all other entries) and *interpersonal relationships*

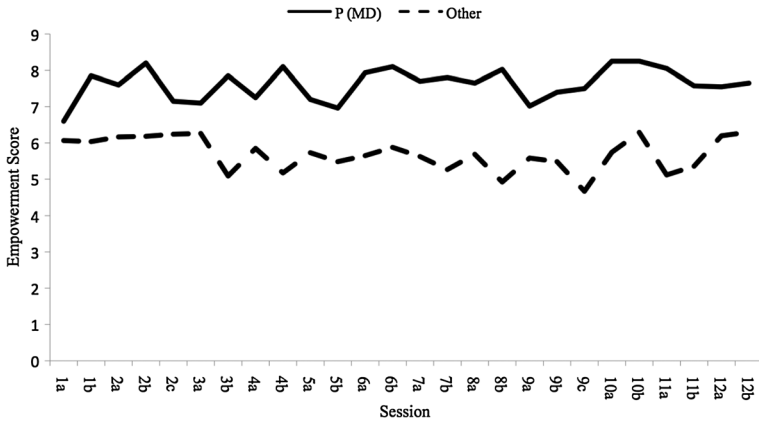


Figure 2. Mean empowerment scores of Palestinians in mutual differentiation group compared with all other participants.

(5.9% vs 12.9%), while containing more entries reflecting *positive mood* (43.1% vs 31.1%). Our previous analysis of qualitative data across dialogue conditions revealed that negative emotions such as *fear/anxiety* and *confusion* were more prevalent in the diary entries of youth in the MD group. In contrast, diary entries of Palestinian youth in the MD group were more likely to reflect energy—as shown by the fewer instances of *exhaustion* found in Palestinian diaries—and *positive mood*.

In other words, the confrontational nature of MD dialogue was not experienced negatively for the Palestinians. For example, a Palestinian male in the MD condition described in one diary entry, ‘The debate between the Israeli group and the Palestinian group intensifies every day, and it makes things more exciting.’ Moreover, the relative lack of entries reflecting *interpersonal relationships* in comparison with other groups demonstrates that Palestinians responded to the decreased emphasis on the formation of cross-group friendships that distinguishes the MD paradigm from the RC paradigm.

The theme of *engagement* emerged less among Palestinian diary entries in the MD condition (2.9%) in comparison with all other diary entries (6.9%). The pattern of positive psychological experience emerging from the Palestinian diary entries in the MD condition suggests that participants would be more likely to report *more* engagement than less in comparison to other groups. This finding may nevertheless be due to the increased presence of *engagement*-related entries among US diary entries as a whole (10.1%), which may have inflated the proportion among non-Palestinian, MD condition diaries.

DISCUSSION

Social psychologists have long advocated intergroup contact as a strategy to reduce the prejudice that fuels hostility and conflict between groups (e.g. Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). A gap among theory, empirical research and practice has emerged, however, in recent years and called into question assumptions about contact theory and its utility to address issues of inequality, which lie at the core of acrimonious intergroup relations (Dixon et al., 2005). On the one hand, some scholars and practitioners

Table 4. Frequencies and percentages of codes from Palestinian diary entries from the mutual differentiation group compared to all other diary entries

Codes	MD ^a		RC ²		Codes	MD ^a		RC ²	
	n	%	n	%		n	%	n	%
Intergroup processes					Emotions				
Achievement/ accomplishment (group)	1	1.0	3	0.5	Anger	5	4.9	29	4.7
Challenge (intergroup)	1	1.0	8	1.3	Confusion	8	7.8	26	4.2
Competition for third-party support	0	0.0	4	0.6	Disappointment	3	2.9	10	1.6
Delegitimization	0	0.0	2	0.3	Disgust	0	0.0	1	0.2
Differentiation from in-group	2	2.0	8	1.3	Embarrassment	0	0.0	7	1.1
Disengagement	8	7.8	44	7.1	Emotional	0	0.0	4	0.6
Empowerment	1	1.0	1	0.2	Empathy	1	1.0	10	1.6
Engagement	3	2.9	43	6.9	Exhaustion	4	3.9	82	13.2
Failure to meet expectations	0	0.0	3	0.5	Fear/anxiety	8	7.8	69	11.1
Futility/helplessness	1	1.0	15	2.4	Frustration	0	0.0	29	4.7
In-group identity salience	5	4.9	11	1.8	Hunger	2	2.0	10	1.6
Intergroup comparison	1	1.0	16	2.6	Intensity	1	1.0	12	1.9
Intergroup convergence	0	0.0	22	3.5	Negative mood	11	10.8	68	11.0
Intergroup divergence	6	5.9	50	8.1	Numbness	1	1.0	3	0.5
Isolation/marginality	2	2.0	21	3.4	Positive mood	44	43.1	193	31.1
Learning (out-group)	3	2.9	12	1.9	Security	0	0.0	2	0.3
MD rhetoric	0	0.0	2	0.3	Personal and interpersonal processes				
Need/hope for agreement	0	0.0	24	3.9	Achievement/ accomplishment (personal)	4	3.9	16	2.6
Neutrality	0	0.0	3	0.5	Challenge (personal)	0	0.0	2	0.3
Paternalism towards out-group(s)	0	0.0	7	1.1	Interpersonal relationships	6	5.9	80	12.9
RC rhetoric	1	1.0	18	2.9	Learning (self)	0	0.0	12	1.9
Realization of power asymmetry	0	0.0	3	0.5					

Note: MD, mutual differentiation; RC, recategorization.

^aN=102.

^bN=620.

have embraced a *coexistence* approach to contact, which emphasizes RC of groups into a shared, superordinate identity as the solution to multiculturalism and identity pluralism (Maoz, 2011). At the core of this master narrative of intergroup relations is the idea of

sameness or *commonality* across groups (Hammack, 2009a). Others have embraced a *confrontational* approach, which explicitly seeks to deal with issues of inequality and historical grievance among lower status groups (e.g. Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004), emphasizing mutual recognition of distinction as a core value among members of diverse groups (Maoz, 2011). At the core of this master narrative is the idea that groups possess histories of domination and hegemony, which influence present-day relations and must be addressed to achieve a change in the status quo.

Our study examined distinctions in psychological experience of these divergent theories of contact and intergroup relations in a field experiment with members of groups actively engaged in an intractable conflict (Israelis and Palestinians). We aimed to contribute to theory development within social psychology, while also seeking to unite theory and practice. We sought to interrogate the process and meaning of contact using multiple methodological strategies and to respond to calls for more study of actual contact experiences using methods that can provide ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) of what occurs in these settings (Dixon et al., 2005). Our quantitative and qualitative analyses converged to reveal three key findings.

First, contact participants from a third party in a place of relative privilege with regard to psychological security experienced a divergent set of psychological challenges, which call into question their role. In our study, the experience of intergroup contact for American participants was profoundly negative in comparison with experience reported by Jewish Israeli and Palestinian participants. Second, our quantitative analyses revealed that, over time, the experiential process reported by participants began to reflect the categorization goals of the respective contact conditions. Namely, by the end of contact, intergroup differentiation was lower within the RC condition and higher within the MD condition. Our qualitative analyses revealed a difference in experiential process between conditions. Diary entries in the MD condition were more likely to contain entries reflective of *negative* psychological experience (e.g. *confusion*, *frustration*, and *fear/anxiety*) than diary entries in the RC condition. Finally, examining the interaction between group status and contact condition, we found that confrontational contact appears to more effectively empower low-status groups than contact intended to foster RC and interpersonal friendship. Although our analyses showed that the experiential process of participants in the MD condition was negative, our examination of diary entries in the MD condition nevertheless revealed that confrontational contact was experienced positively for Palestinian participants.

These findings represent preliminary knowledge claims that would benefit from larger scale projects with more participants and more contact conditions. Our study is nevertheless an important first step in addressing three critical yet under-investigated areas within an expansive literature on intergroup contact. Addressing questions about the process and meaning of intergroup contact in settings of actual intractable conflict, our study reveals the influence of group status and contact paradigm—as well as their interaction—on the experience of intergroup contact. In the remainder of the Discussion section, we review these three major findings, link them to the broader literature and offer implications for theory and practice in intergroup contact.

The experience of third-party groups: privilege and dissatisfaction

Although contact efforts have traditionally emphasized the primary parties in conflict or acrimony, third parties have increasingly been involved in such efforts, under the

assumption that a third party may positively influence the dynamics of intergroup contact. Such perspectives stem from the idea that third parties often serve conciliatory or legitimizing functions in settings of conflict or aggression (e.g. Ben Hagai et al., 2013; Levine, Taylor, & Best, 2011). The role of the third party has been extensively discussed in the literature on interactive problem-solving, but in those instances, the third party serves an explicit mediational role (e.g. Kelman, 2010; Rouhana, 1995; Rouhana & Korper, 1997). By contrast, numerous contact programmes now involve third parties as active participants not explicitly expected to mediate but to facilitate cooperation and enhance the positive dynamics of the contact setting. No research has yet to closely investigate the psychological distinctions in process and meaning that occur for primary versus non-primary (i.e. third-party) actors in a contact setting.

Our findings revealing major distinctions in process and meaning for American versus non-American youth call into question the inclusion of American youth in such contact efforts. American youth reported an overall negative experience with the dialogue process. We interpreted this negative experience along two dimensions: *detachment* and *dissatisfaction*. We contend that these experiential dimensions emanate from the privileged, third-party status of US youth within the dialogue context. For US participants, being part of a group that is not directly involved in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict means that participation in the dialogue process is a matter of choice that is not likewise available to Israeli and Palestinian youth. This detachment was not entirely a product of privilege, however. As a third party detached from the context of conflict, American youth reported feeling either marginalized from the dialogue or that they had no right to speak about matters with which they had no personal experience. As a possible means to resolve these feelings of detachment and isolation, some American youth assumed a mediating role between Israelis and Palestinians that nevertheless became a source of frustration when discussions between Israeli and Palestinian youth became heated and contentious.

Although previous research has examined the role of third parties in either reproducing asymmetrical power relations (e.g. Rouhana & Korper, 1997) or facilitating intergroup dialogue (e.g. Ben Hagai et al., 2013; Ross, 2000), we are unaware of any previous research that documents the experiential process of third-party groups during contact. Our findings suggest that, counter to presumed ideas about the potential beneficial role of a third party that pervades much of the literature in conflict and dispute resolution, the experience of American youth in intergroup contact with Palestinians and Israelis is characterized by a pattern of negative psychological experience and disengagement. It is noteworthy that our study occurred in the context of an existing contact intervention in which the role of US youth was not necessarily clear. Future studies might systematically vary the role that third parties are instructed or encouraged to assume. It is possible that, in the absence of unambiguous guidance, our US participants were confused and frustrated about their roles and hence experienced negative psychological states as a result.

The experience of contact: coexistence versus confrontation

Intergroup contact emerged out of concern for harmonious and just social relations in a post-war period in which historical forces of hegemony were being called into question across the world (e.g. racism, colonialism; Allport, 1954; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003). As US social psychology increasingly came to emphasize issues of social cognition,

however, the idea of power and inequality at the core of theories of social relations became less central to contact theory. Instead, the role of contact to effect individual psychological factors (e.g. attitudes) or interpersonal relations became central. As such, contact theory as promulgated in the US continues to be largely modelled upon the notion that reducing individual prejudice and stereotypes holds the key to social and political change (e.g. Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011), whereas scholars in conflict settings are increasingly integrating social identity theory's concern with power and social structure into their studies of contact (e.g. Cakal, Hewstone, Schwär, & Heath, 2011; Saguy et al., 2008; Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009).

Our study compared two competing approaches to dialogue within intergroup contact rooted in social psychological theories (see also Pilecki & Hammack, in press). Our intent was not to provide a definitive answer to which of these competing approaches is more valuable in a conflict setting or which achieves some particular outcome that can be causally isolated to the contact paradigm. Rather, we sought to examine whether the psychological experience participants reported was consistent with the categorization goals of the two paradigms. Addressing this empirical gap within the literature, our findings suggest that indeed participant experience varies as a function of dialogue paradigm. The MD approach appears more likely to initiate identity exploration and differentiation compared with the RC approach. Yet analysis of participant diaries revealed that the MD approach creates more fear, anxiety and confusion for participants. The finding that participants in the RC condition reported less intergroup differentiation suggests that participants respond to this approach in a way that is consistent with its categorization goals.

Although the MD approach is more psychologically challenging for participants, such a challenge may be beneficial to individuals in the long term as they critically interrogate the role of their group in the exacerbation and maintenance of conflict (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004). Because the RC approach does not explicitly deal with power asymmetry and issues of inequality, it may inadvertently reproduce the status quo and actually serve the interest of the higher status group (Hammack, 2009a, 2011). If identity is not critically addressed but rather taken as given in such encounters, the rhetoric of conflict may be insufficiently challenged (Bekerman, 2009a, 2009b). Thus, even though the processes activated by the RC approach initially appear more positive, it may in fact contribute to the narrative stalemate of conflict (Hammack, 2011). Because our study examined process and meaning only over the 2-week duration of contact, we cannot make claims about the long-term impact of these distinct contact models on the outcomes of interest. Future studies would benefit from a longitudinal design in which cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes are tested for participants in distinct paradigms of dialogue-based contact.

The experience of low-status groups: confrontation and empowerment

In order to more critically examine the role of the two approaches to influence process and meaning, we examined distinctions between the low-status group in the MD condition and all other participants, because the MD approach explicitly aims to empower the low-status group. Hence, we hypothesized that Palestinians in the MD condition would actually report higher levels of empowerment and *positive* psychological experience than other participants. In other words, the interpretation of MD dialogue as potentially psychologically negative depends upon the relative status of groups. Our findings supported this

hypothesis, revealing that the negative psychological experience of the MD condition was restricted primarily to Jewish Israelis and US participants.

Given the centrality of power, status and asymmetry in conflict, it is somewhat surprising that studies of intergroup contact have addressed psychological empowerment for low-status groups. The results of our quantitative and qualitative analysis showed that low-status groups may benefit psychologically from confrontational in which they can effectively represent their group's interests. This finding suggests that the experience of intergroup contact is a function of both the paradigm employed *and* group status. This finding also supports other studies, which suggest that confrontational contact more closely speaks to the needs of low-status groups in contact (e.g. Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004; Kamans, Otten, Gordijn, & Spears, 2010; Maoz, 2000a, 2000b; Rouhana, 2004; Rouhana & Korper, 1996, 1997; Saguy et al., 2008; Suleiman, 2004; Tileaga, 2006). Contact modelled upon a confrontational approach in which issues of power and historical grievance are directly addressed in intergroup dialogue may more effectively challenge existing power asymmetries by empowering members of the low-status group than contact modelled upon an RC approach. This finding directly supports the model developed and in practice at the School for Peace in Israel designed to facilitate a critical awareness of power asymmetry among the dominant majority in Israel (Halabi & Sonnenschein, 2004).

Contact practitioners must make an explicit choice about the social and psychological processes they seek to activate—a choice that has implications for the extent to which the status quo is implicitly supported or explicitly challenged in intergroup dialogue. Our qualitative analyses revealed that although diary entries reflecting interpersonal relationships—the formation of which is a goal indicative of the RC paradigm—were common among other groups, this theme was noticeably absent from Palestinian diary entries within the MD condition. Rather, Palestinian entries within this condition were more likely to reflect energy and positive mood. Thus, although an RC approach may evoke more positive mood states or instil a narrative of commonality among majority, high-status or third-party group members, a confrontational approach may activate psychological processes that benefit low-status groups and thus more directly challenge the status quo of inequality.

Strengths and limitations

This study was limited by its semi-naturalistic design, conducted in an existing contact encounter of relatively short and unsustained duration. Because the study occurred in the field rather than the lab, we were limited by the degree of control we had over factors such as recruitment and actual dialogue content and structure. Our desire to closely link our study to existing practice in the field with actual members of groups in intractable conflict, however, led us to design and conduct the study. We do not make causal claims with regard to the distinction in dialogue conditions, because like all field experiments we had limited ability to control all aspects of the intervention (Cook & Shadish, 1994; Shadish et al., 2002). Our aim was rather to offer a descriptive and critical analysis of the dialogue process and practices deployed in an existing intervention in the field.

The naturalistic design may be interpreted as both a limitation and strength, however, and the fact that we were able to integrate an experimental design within an existing contact intervention was a strength of the research. Thus, our findings can be more clearly linked to existing practice in the field with groups engaged in actual intractable conflict, as opposed to the rarefied conditions of the laboratory and its reliance on artificial conditions

of conflict (Dixon et al., 2005). However, our commitment to conducting the study in the field limited the number of participants we could recruit and the number of experimental conditions we could examine. Future studies might adopt elements of our design with larger samples and more dialogue conditions, given that other paradigms beyond the RC and MD conditions exist in practice (Maoz, 2011).

Another strength of the study was its grounding in social psychological theory and systematic investigation of the relative process and meaning of contact based in distinct paradigms of dialogue-based contact. The emphasis on process and meaning, particularly through a qualitative data analytic lens, responds to calls for new directions in contact theory and empirical research (Dixon et al., 2005). Although most contact research continues to be conducted using exclusively quantitative survey measures, we integrated a repeated measures survey design with a qualitative approach that allowed participants to speak freely about their experiences. Our multi-method approach therefore allowed us to uncover general trends emerging within each condition, while also permitting us to examine how these trends were experienced *in vivo* by the participants engaging in contact. This multi-method approach speaks to the growing recognition within social psychology that qualitative methods play a central role in theory development and amplify the relevance of our discipline for real-world application (Hammack, 2008).

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Definitions and examples of emotion codes

Code	Description	Example
Anger	Statements that reflect anger, being 'mad,' irritation, annoyance and/or aggravation	'I'm angry because there was a lot of disrespect going on in this session' (<i>F, Palestinian, MD group</i>)
Confusion	Statements that reflect confusion	'I feel comfortable, with a little bit of confusion and I hope to improve myself and to talk and defend my homeland' (<i>F, Palestinian, RC group</i>)
Disappointment	Statements that reflect disappointment in self and/or others	'I was disappointed because the Palestinians don't want peace as much as they want a cease fire' (<i>M, US, RC group</i>)
Disgust	Statements that reflect disgust and/or revulsion	'I heard a Palestinian talking about how the place of a woman is "on the floor" and how the whole Israeli army should be killed and in general the opinions I heard from the Palestinians really repulsed me and at the moment I feel a great repulsion' (<i>F, Jewish Israeli, RC group</i>)
Embarrassment	Statements that reflect embarrassment and/or awkwardness	'Today we shared major events in our lives. The Palestinian ones were really heartbreaking and I felt embarrassed/ashamed of my carefree American life' (<i>F, US, RC group</i>)
Emotional	Statements in which an unspecified emotional reaction is described (e.g. 'I am feeling emotional right now')	'The session was really emotional, I have all these thoughts and pictures running through my head' (<i>M, Jewish Israeli, MD group</i>)
Empathy	Statements that reflect empathy	'I felt sad for the loneliness that Arab Israelis suffer' (<i>F, Palestinian, MD</i>)
Exhaustion	Statements reflecting fatigue and/or tiredness	'I feel so tired. I wish I could sleep now' (<i>F, Palestinian, RC group</i>)
Fear/anxiety	Statements that reflect fear, anxiety, nervousness, worry, discomfort and/or a sense of being scared	'I don't feel like this is going to be a good day. I hope I'm wrong, but I'm pessimistic and stuff' (<i>F, Palestinian, MD group</i>)
Frustration	Statements that reflect a feeling of frustration towards self and/or others due to their perceived obstruction in pursuing a goal	'This session was very frustrating, no one got to talk, and we went around in circles' (<i>F, US, RC group</i>)
Hunger	Statements that reflect a feeling of hunger	'I feel hungry' (<i>M, US, RC group</i>)
Intensity	Statements that reflect a feeling of being overwhelmed and/or describe a high level of intensity within the group	'There was a really intense discussion with the Palestinians, the Arab Israelis. It was hard' (<i>F, Jewish Israeli, MD group</i>)
Negative mood	Statements that reflect an unspecified negative mood	'I feel sad right now after our discussion. There were a lot of tears and sad stories and I just feel really

(Continues)

Table A1. (Continued)

Code	Description	Example
Numbness	(e.g. I feel bad), depression, sadness, defeat and/or trauma Statements that reflect numbness and/or a lack of emotional reaction	bad and sad/upset right now' (<i>F, US, MD group</i>) 'I really just feel empty and want to get out of here. I was hurt that some people regretted coming here but I respect their feelings' (<i>F, US, MD group</i>)
Positive mood	Statements that reflect and unspecified positive mood (e.g. I feel good), happiness, fun, pleasure, excitement and/or a sense of feeling positive, great, comfortable and/or satisfied	'I'm happy because I interact with all the participants and befriend them' (<i>M, Palestinian, MD group</i>)
Security	Statements having feelings of security	'We played many new games today to get to know each other better and it was really fun. I feel much more secure and comfortable with the people in my group (<i>F, Jewish Israeli, MD group</i>)

Table A2. Definitions and examples if intergroup process codes

Code	Description	Example
Achievement/ accomplishment (group)	Statements that express that the group has achieved a goal; group may refer either to the in-group or the dialogue group as a whole	'We started our first dialogue session, and I think it was successful...' (<i>M, Palestinian, MD group</i>)
Challenge (intergroup)	Statements that note a challenge that confronts the dialogue group	'It was a very difficult session!' (<i>F, Palestinian-Israeli, RC group</i>)
Competition for third-party support	Statements that express that a third party supports the in-group or out-group	'This was really hard. Each side is obviously struggling and I feel like they are both trying to convince Americans to agree with them' (<i>F, US, RC group</i>)
Delegitimization	Statements that negatively categorize the out-group in an extreme manner	'Each group presented the conflict the way they view it...the facts they presented aren't true at all and they were speaking like Nazis!' (<i>M, Jewish Israeli, RC group</i>)
Differentiation from in-group	Statements that reflect a decrease in connection with one's in-group (e.g.	'I just can't stand some (not all) of the opinions and behaviors

(Continues)

Table A2. (Continued)

Code	Description	Example
Disengagement	criticism of in-group narrative) Statements that reflect a sense that one is not a part of dialogue process, bored, detached, avoidant and/or instances of self-focus in which content is completely unrelated to session	of the Jewish Israelis' (F, Jewish Israeli, MD group) 'I just do not want to be here. I hate my [dialogue group]. Not the people just together as a group. And I just feel kind of down because of other stuff going on in my life right now.' (F, US, MD group)
Empowerment	Statements that reflect a growing sense of power and/or confidence vis-à-vis the out-group	'We had an intense [session] this morning and I think [we were] able to express our opinions, and back them up better than the Israeli side. You can see that we're able to convince a lot of them of some new points' (M, Palestinian, RC group)
Engagement	Statements that reflect a sense that one is a part of dialogue process as well as activity and/or energy towards participation in the session	'We had so much fun, and I'm so happy with my group. Wow! This is amazing. We're getting to know each other, which is interesting.' (F, Palestinian, MD group)
Failure to meet expectations	Statements that describe a sense that one is not meeting the expectations of others	"[Another Jewish Israeli participant] told me I don't meet her expectations" (M, Jewish Israeli, RC group)
Futility/happiness	Statements that reflect the sense that one's actions and/or the actions of the group cannot make an impact	'...I feel useless. I couldn't speak at all, and I remained silent the whole time, and this is something very sad for me' (F, Palestinian, RC group)
In-group identity salience	Statements that reflect an increased connection with the in-group and/or the perception of pressure to represent one's group	'I saw how much hatred was in [the Palestinian] eyes, and how they talk, and it only made me think that the Jews really should just stay in Israel, and I realized how important the army is, and that there's no one to talk to' (F, Jewish Israeli, RC group)
Intergroup comparison	Statements in which a comparison between the in-group and another and another group is made (e.g. comparing absence of conflict with own experience; recognition of privilege)	'When I went yesterday to the amusement park and I saw people in the United States happy, I realized how serene their life is, and I felt difference' (M, Palestinian, RC group)
Intergroup convergence	Statements that describe groups as coming together and/or describe the overall	'Today in the activity we talked and worked together and there wasn't a moment where I thought about who was Israeli and who

(Continues)

Table A2. (Continued)

Code	Description	Example
	dynamics of the group as cooperative	was Palestinian. We're exactly the same people, with the same thoughts and feelings' (<i>F, Jewish Israeli, MD group</i>)
Intergroup divergence	Statements that describe groups as moving farther apart; statements that note intergroup tension and/or attribute intransigence to another group	'There was a very stormy argument about shared historical events. The Palestinians Arabs are so extremist and completely self-centered!' (<i>F, Jewish Israeli, MD group</i>)
Isolation/marginality	Statements that reflect a feeling of being out of place, being imposed on by situation and/or being under siege (e.g. everyone is against you)	'I feel like a third wheel in this entire program' (<i>M, US, RC group</i>)
Learning (out-group)	Statements that reflect that one has learned about another group	'I achieved my goal yesterday in knowing more about Jewish culture' (<i>M, Palestinian, MD group</i>)
MD rhetoric	Statements that reflect the mutual differentiation (Hewstone & Brown, 1986) of groups	'It was a pretty big shock to see the disparities in how each side learns history and what they know...It's more accurate to say that you can really see the differences between how history is taught and what is taught on each side' (<i>F, Jewish Israeli, RC group</i>)
Need/hope for agreement	Statements that express the need for an agreement to be reached and for progress to be made towards peace; also, any goal-oriented statements including those that express hope	'I am constantly challenging my own thoughts and ideas as I hear other perspectives. I hope everyone can learn to respect each other's ideas' (<i>F, US, MD group</i>)
Neutrality	Statements that express the need for an agreement to be reached and for progress to be made towards peace; also, any goal-oriented statements including those that express hope	'I'm frustrated that a lot of people refuse to listen to each other and especially that some people are trying to 'keep score' and get the Americans on their side. I did not come here to pick sides. I'm here to learn' (<i>F, US, RC group</i>)
Paternalism towards out-group(s)	Statements in which judgement is passed on other groups and/or suggestions made towards another group from a position of presumed knowledge/expertise	'They're brainwashed and we're never going to reach an understanding' (<i>F, Jewish Israeli, RC group</i>)
Realization of power asymmetry	Statements that note a power asymmetry that exists between groups	'I realized today more than ever that Israel has a lot more power when facing the Palestinians,

(Continues)

Table A2. (Continued)

Code	Description	Example
RC rhetoric	Statements that reflect the recategorization of groups within a superordinate identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000)	especially from their point of view' (F, Jewish Israeli, RC group) 'Today I felt that all the group was one. Each of us shared with the others something personal and something important in their lives, and there was a lot of mutual respect and sympathy among the members, and this was really beautiful' (F, Palestinian-Israeli, RC group)

Table A3. Definitions and examples of personal and interpersonal process codes

Code	Description	Example
Achievement/ accomplishment (personal)	Statements that express that one has achieved a personal goal at some point during participation in dialogue	'I feel confused, but I felt a little bit good inside myself because I spoke, even if it was just a little bit' (F, Palestinian, RC group)
Interpersonal relationships	Statements that reflect the importance of forging friendships with out-group members despite acknowledged intergroup differences; statements that emphasize interpersonal friendships/interpersonal connections	'I have a real friendship with some of the Palestinian people, despite our differences in opinion' (F, Jewish Israeli, RC group)
Learning (self)	Statements that describe the extent to which one has attained greater knowledge about himself/herself	'After the discussion I realized that I need to be more open minded' (F, Jewish Israeli, MD group)
Personal challenge	Statements that describe a challenge that must be overcome	'Yesterday for part of the day I felt really good about myself and part of the day I felt really bad, and I'd like to feel good about myself all day so I'm still deliberating about how I can make this happen' (F, Jewish Israeli, RC group)