Contact with Counter-Stereotypical Women May Reduce Rape-Intentions and Rape-Acceptance

Taschler, M., & West, K. (2017). Contact with counter-stereotypical women predicts less sexism, less rape myth acceptance, less intention to rape (in men) and less projected enjoyment of rape (in women). Sex Roles, 76, 473 – 484. DOI: 10.1007/s11199-016-0679-x
Rape is bad

Consequences include increased likelihood of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation (Resick 1993)

In the UK, about 85,000 women report being raped each year (Ministry of Justice et al. 2013)

In the US 31.7% of male university students self-report intentions to force a woman to sexual intercourse

Brock Turner—an American college student who was jailed for only 6 months after raping

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Rape is sexist

Hostile Sexism
* Women are too easily offended
* Women seek to gain power by getting control over men

Benevolent Sexism
* Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess
* Women should be cherished and protected by men

Rape is sexist

**Hostility** towards women predicts intentions to rape ($r = .32^{**}$; Edwards et al., 2014).

Rape has been described as “logical and psychological extension of a dominant – submissive, competitive, sex role stereotyped culture” (Burt 1980, p. 229).

**Sexism** predicts rape myth acceptance (Glick and Fiske 1996; Viki et al. 2004)

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Rape myth acceptance

**Rape Myths**: stereotypical beliefs that are used to shift the burden of responsibility for rape from the perpetrator onto the victim, justifying rape and downplaying its seriousness (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994)

E.g., *“In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation”*

E.g., *“When women go around braless or wearing short skirts and tight tops, they are just asking for trouble”*

Predicts higher chance of committing rape (Edwards et al. 2014; Malamuth et al. 1991)
Rape myth acceptance

Women can internalize negative messages, including rape myths (Frese et al. 2004).

Use rape myths to deny their own vulnerability: “if sluts only get raped, I can avoid rape by being ladylike” (Lonsway and Fitzgerald 1994).

E.g., * “Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.”

Perception that rape is a sexual act rather than a violent one.

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Rape myth acceptance

* In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation

* When women go around braless or wearing short skirts and tight tops, they are just asking for trouble

Intentions to Rape

* If you could be assured that no one would know and that you could in no way be punished, how likely, if at all, would you be to rape?

Sexualization of Rape

* How sexually arousing do you think you would find being raped by someone else?

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Contact reduces prejudice

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Intergroup bias: intergroup beliefs (stereotypes), intergroup anxiety, intergroup attitudes (prejudice), intergroup behaviour (discrimination).
Contact reduces prejudice

Contact reduces prejudice

Note: Gender, Education, Religiosity, Income, Age & Dancehall included as covariates

Contact reduces prejudice

A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory

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The present article presents a meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. With 713 independent samples from 515 studies, the meta-analysis finds that intergroup contact typically reduces intergroup prejudice. Multiple tests indicate that this finding appears not to result from either participant selection or publication biases, but from more rigorous studies yielding larger mean effects. These contact effects typically generalize to the entire outgroup and emerge across a broad range of outgroup targets and contact settings. Similar patterns also emerge for samples with racial or ethnic targets and samples with other targets. This result suggests that contact theory, devised originally for racial and ethnic encounters, can be extended to other groups. A global indicator of Allport's optimal contact conditions demonstrates that contact under these conditions typically leads to even greater reduction in prejudice. Closer examination demonstrates that these conditions are best conceptualized as an interrelated bundle rather than as independent factors. Further, the meta-analytic findings indicate that these conditions are not essential for prejudice reduction. Hence, future work should focus on negative factors that prevent intergroup contact from diminishing prejudice as well as on the development of a more comprehensive theory of intergroup contact.

Keywords: Intergroup prejudice, intergroup contact, meta-analysis

Optimal contact reduces prejudice more

Optimal conditions (Allport 1954):
- equal status
- common goals
- intergroup cooperation
- institutional support from authorities

Optimal contact conditions yields significantly greater reductions of prejudice ($r = -0.287$) than non-optimal contact ($r = -0.204$), $QB (1) = 20.19$, $p < .0001$ (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Does contact reduce sexism?

No prior research that investigated the effects of contact on sexism.

- Contact between men and women is inevitable
- Men and women generally have a large number of cross-gender relationships (social & professional)

But! Women are still widely considered subordinate to men and frequently occupy lower status roles (Office for National Statistics 2013).

Most contact is unlikely to be optimal, particularly concerning equal status.

Does contact with high-status women reduce sexism, rape myth acceptance, willingness to rape, and sexualization of rape?

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Does contact reduce sexism?

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Study 1: Methods

Design: cross-sectional

Participants: 170 British men (general public)
$M_{\text{age}} = 25.44, SD = 8.56$, mostly White (104, 61.2 %)

Measures: contact (quality & quantity; West et al., 2014) with counter-stereotypical women, hostile sexism & benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), rape myth acceptance (Burt, 1980), and intention to rape women (Malamuth, 1989).

Analyses: Structural equation modeling

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Study 1: Results

Good model fit: $\chi^2(23) = 43.24, p = .006, \chi^2/df = 1.88; CFI = .98; IFI = .98; TLI = .96; RMSEA = .07,$ accounted for 18% of the variance in intention to rape

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Study 2: Methods

Design: cross-sectional

Participants: 280 British women (general public)
\[ M_{\text{age}} = 23.59, \text{SD} = 8.11, \text{ mostly White (172, 61.4 \%)} \]

Measures: contact (quality & quantity; West et al., 2014) with counter-stereotypical women, hostile sexism & benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996), rape myth acceptance (Burt, 1980), and sexualization of rape (Malamuth, 1989).

Analyses: Structural equation modeling

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Conclusions

**Contact with high-status women** predicts less **hostile sexism**, less **rape myth acceptance**, and less **intention to rape** / **sexualization of rape**.

Important: the contact in question has nothing to do with rape. Highlights rape as prejudice.

Benevolent sexism appears irrelevant. Paternalism vs. hostility?

* contact with stereotypical women? experiments? self-report?

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