Intergroup conflict is often exacerbated by exaggerations of the differences between one group's values/opinions/beliefs and another's; facilitating dialogue and communications about the similarities between the values/goals, etc. of the two groups may decrease or eliminate the desire for violence against the outgroup.

100

General Description of the Literature:

The current hypothesis is derived from psychology, and mostly from Keltner, Robinson, and Chamber's work. The main sources relating to theoretical and empirical research involving the hypothesis are peer-reviewed journal articles in top-tier psychology journals. The research shows clear empirical support for the idea that groups exaggerate the differences between their opinions and values and their opponents'. The literature does not test any hypothesis regarding how this information may facilitate dialogue or how these exaggerated differences may be reframed in more accurate ways in order to reduce or alleviate intergroup conflict. However, the quality of the literature testing the hypothesis that group differences are seen as greater than they actually are is high and this finding has been replicated many times.

Detailed Analyses

100: *Intergroup conflict is often exacerbated by exaggerations of the differences between one group's values/opinions/beliefs and another's; facilitating dialogue and communications about the similarities between the values/goals, etc. of the two groups may decrease or eliminate the desire for violence against the outgroup.*

Summary of Relevant Empirical Evidence: Members of partisan social groups often exaggerate how much their own opinions differ from those of their rivals, which was shown across all studies. Research testing this often surveys participants who a priori have a strong partisan view point (i.e,. either strongly pro-life or strongly pro-choice) and then ask them to estimate their own attitudes as well as the attitudes of the opposing group on several social issues, in addition to making several evaluative judgments about their own and the rival group's attitudes. Research has found, in a variety of domains (e.g. abortion (Chambers and Melnyk 2006), politics (Chambers and Melnyk 2006), the Western Canon debate (Robinson and Keltner 1996), government budget cuts (Keltner and Robinson 1996), the Howard Beach incident (Robinson, Keltner, Ward and Ross 1995)), that although opposing partisans' attitudes usually shared some common ground, participants thought that their differences with their opponents were absolute. Further, the research done by Chambers (Chambers, Baron, and Inman 2006; Chambers and Melnyk 2006) extended previous research by showing that partisans perceive more disagreement with their rivals about values that are central to their own sides' ideological position than those that are central to their rivals' position and that perceptions of disagreement about the partisans' own central values are what predicts partisans' global evaluations of members of the outgroup (e.g., disliking, trait stereotypes, perceived similarity). Lastly, research by Chambers and colleagues (ibid.) provides support that partisans believed their adversaries were motivated by an opposition to the partisans' own core values rather than by promotion of the adversaries' core values

.

Empirical Support Score: 0 = No empirical support (for or against the hypothesis)

Applicability to Influencing VEOs: N/A However, it is theoretically plausible that narrowing or alleviating the misperceptions of group attitudes and goals should influence how groups view and react to each other.

Applicability Score: Moderate Confidence – Empirical results are derived from alternative contexts, but you have some degree of confidence that they apply similarly to the context of influencing VEOs.

Bibliography:

Chambers, John, Robert Baron, and Mary Inman. 2006. "Misperceptions in Intergroup Conflict: Disagreeing About What We Disagree About." *Psychological Science* 17: 38-45.

Chambers, John, and Darya Melnyk. 2006. "Why Do I Hate Thee? Conflict Misperceptions and Intergroup Mistrust." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 32: 1295-1311.

Dawes, Robyn, David Singer, and Frank Lemons. 1972. "An Experimental Analysis of the Contrast Effect and Its Implications for Intergroup Communication and the Indirect Assessment of Attitude." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 21: 281-295.

Keltner, Dacher, and Robert Robinson. 1996. "Extremism, Power, and the Imagined Basis of Social Conflict." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 5: 101-105.

Keltner, Dacher and Robert Robinson. 1997. "Defending the Status Quo: Power and Bias in Social Conflict." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 23: 1066-1077.

Robinson, Robert and Raymond Friedman. 1995. "Mistrust and Misconstrual in Union-management Relationships: Causal Accounts in Adversarial Contexts." *International Journal of Conflict Management* 6: 312-327.

Robinson, Robert and Dacher Keltner. 1996. "Much Ado about Nothing? Revisionists and Traditionalists Choose an Introductory English Syllabus." *Psychological Science* 7: 18-24.

Robinson, Robert, Dacher Keltner, Andrew Ward, and Lee Ross. 1995. "Actual versus Assumed Differences in Construal: 'Naive Realism' in Intergroup Perception and Conflict." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68: 404-417.

Thompson, Leigh. 1995. "'They Saw a Negotiation': Partisanship and Involvement." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 68: 839-853.

Thompson, Leigh, and Janice Nadler. 2000. "Judgmental Biases in Conflict Resolution and How to Overcome Them." In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, edited by Morton Deutsch and Peter Coleman, 213–235. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.