

Cultural encapsulation of children's friendships: A manifestation of prejudice or pride?

Encapsulamiento cultural en las amistades de los niños: ¿Una manifestación de prejuicios o de orgullo?

Barry H. Schneider¹, Yusuf Malik² & Stephen J. Udvari³

^{1,2}University of Ottawa,³University of Toronto

Abstract

The overarching purposes of this paper are to consider the ways in which friendship between children and adolescents can be understood and to offer suggestions for how schools can facilitate such friendship. The paper begins by providing some general perspective on the immigrant experience. It continues with some basic definitions of friendship and culture. The history of research on intercultural friendship is considered next, in both quantitative terms – the extent of intercultural friendship– and qualitative terms –the different features of intercultural and intracultural friendship. The paper concludes with the author's views about how intercultural friendship should be best understood and with suggestions for how to encourage it.

Keywords: Immigration, intercultural friendship, school, children, adolescent

Resumen

Los dos grandes objetivos que persigue este trabajo son, por un lado, considerar las variadas maneras en las que la amistad entre niños y adolescentes puede ser entendida y, por otro, proponer sugerencias acerca de como las escuelas pueden facilitar tal amistad. El artículo se inicia con una perspectiva general sobre la experiencia de la inmigración. Continúa con algunas definiciones de lo que entendemos por amistad y cultura. El siguiente apartado trata sobre la historia de la investigación en amistad intercultural, tanto en términos cuantitativos –la importancia de la amistad intercultural– y cualitativos –las diferentes características de la amistad intercultural e intracultural. El artículo finaliza con el punto de vista del autor sobre como la amistad intercultural debe ser entendida y con algunas sugerencias sobre como fomentarla.

Palabras clave: Inmigración, amistad intercultural, escuela, niños, adolescentes

Mahatma Ghandi is quoted as saying that no culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive. His Indian successor Jawaharlal Nehru is quoted as saying that culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit. Wise as the leaders of probably the world's most diverse country were, they failed to resolve many of the conflicts among the cultural groups in their country. Writing at a time of great international conflict, a very prolific member of the mental-health community, Jacob Moreno, pioneer of sociometry, insisted that cultural conflicts cannot be solved at the macro-level but can be resolved at the level of interpersonal relationships (Moreno, 1953). His technique of psychodrama is based on getting individuals to take on new roles in their interpersonal relationships, and, thereby, increasing their understanding of themselves and others. This technique has been applied widely to relationships between insiders and outsiders. In the context of this paper, the outsiders are generally children and adolescents from immigrant communities; the insiders are children of the majority host culture.

The overarching purposes of this paper are to consider the ways in which friendship between children and adolescents can be understood and to offer suggestions for how schools can facilitate such friendship.

The paper begins by providing some general perspective on the immigrant experience. It continues with some basic definitions of friendship and culture. The history of research on intercultural friendship is considered next, in both quantitative terms – the extent of intercultural friendship and qualitative terms – the different features of intercultural and intracultural friendship. The paper concludes with the author's views about how intercultural friendship should be best understood and with suggestions for how to encourage it.

Immigration changing the populations of host countries

Recent years have seen tremendous and unprecedented migration of peoples around the world. According to the Migration Policy Institute, an authoritative non-governmental agency that compiles information about migration in all countries, there are well over 400 million immigrants worldwide, with over half of them in the 10 countries with the largest immigrant populations. It is very probable that more people have migrated from one country to another in the past 100 years than in the entire previous history of the world. In the country that has received the highest single number of immigrants, the

United States, immigrants constitute 13% of the population. The proportion is of course much higher in the country that has received the highest number of immigrants per capita, which is Canada; Canada has over 7 million immigrants, 21% of its total population of 34 million. Spain is the country with the ninth highest number of immigrants of any country in the world, with over six million immigrants, about the same as France and the U.K.

Although characteristics of the peoples involved in immigration do vary, there are some general trends that can be supported statistically. Immigration generally brings people from societies in which there is greater emphasis on collectivism than there is in the host country and in most cases a more hierarchical authority structure. Beyond that, there are many differences among immigrants. Some emigrate voluntarily from their home countries, hoping to secure somewhat better opportunities for themselves; others are driven by oppression, war and poverty. Some immigrants are highly educated; many others are not (Arends-Toth & van den Vijver, 2009; Berry & Sam, 1997). Immigrants often gravitate to large cities in which there are other immigrants from the same country.

Host countries vary in terms of how they regard the cultures of immigrants.

There is a difference between the *melting pot* approach in the United States, in which the single collective culture is supposed to reflect some combinations of the cultures it is composed of, and the multiculturalism policy of Canada, which provides for the maintenance of distinct cultures within the country. The term *integration*, used often in Europe, is defined in the dictionary as a process in which elements are combined to form a whole; this concept is alien to the multiculturalism of such countries as Canada. The idea of intercultural friendship seems logically to be more of an inherent part of a process of integration or of the creation of a melting pot than a feature of a multicultural society, where some encapsulation of different cultures can be expected.

What is friendship?

The concept of friendship is being increasingly banalized in the era of Facebook. In counterpoint with their peer relations in larger groups, children form close friendships. According to many philosophical writings as well as the findings of studies on what children expect of their friends, intimacy is the feature that distinguishes a close friendship from relationships with other peers. This is traced most clearly

in a book on friendship by the Spanish philosopher Juan Enralgo (1989). Children and adolescents also expect their friends to keep secrets, to provide social support at times of difficulty, to take their side against third parties and to resolve disagreements equitably and with minimal conflict. Children typically become friends with children they encounter at school, in their neighborhoods or in leisure activities, in other words, children who are available to enjoy common pastimes. However, according to the principle of homophily, it is often a shared characteristic that cements the friendship. This may be a physical characteristic, particular talent or strength, or a psychological or behavioral characteristic such as aggression or shyness. At the most basic level, forming a friendship with another person of the same culture is a manifestation of the homophily principle.

Psychologists once believed that children were incapable of close friendship until their cognitive development reached a stage at which they could understand how other children's thinking about a situation was different from their own. However, careful observational studies have revealed that children as young as two or three years form emotional attachments with friends long before they can verbalize any description of

their friendships. At all ages, girls and women are more oriented to relating in intimate ways to close friends than are boys and men. However, boys and men also enter into close friendships that are important to them (Benenson, Apostoleris & Parnass, 1997; Bukowski, Newcomb & Hartup, 1996; Howes, 1988; Schneider, 2000).

Many of these features of friendship may vary by culture. Thus, one factor that may affect the ethnic diversity of an adolescent's friendships is whether different cultures vary in their idea of friendship. Krappmann (1996) noted in a review of the literature on cross-cultural differences in children's understanding of friendship that children in almost all societies have very similar concepts of friendships as a supportive, intimate relationship. Similarly, Wissink, Dekovic, and Meijer (2009) found no difference in trust and frequency of contact between the friendships of Dutch, Turkish, and Moroccan adolescents. However, Schneider (1993) suggested that due to their dissimilar social framework, different cultures have different expectations of friends. This is supported by Schneider, Fonzi, Tani, and Tomada's (1997) findings of significantly less conflict and more stability in the friendships of Italian adolescents than Canadian, and also by Benjamin's and Schneider's (2001) findings that adolescent friendships

in Taiwan displayed less conflict, but were more seriously threatened by conflict, than those in Canada. The difference may be that Italian and Taiwanese cultures are more collectivistic, while Canadian culture is more individualistic.

There are many discovered differences in social norms between collectivist and individualist cultures that may relate to the formation and maintenance of close, stable friendships. Members of a collectivistic culture may tend to communicate in a manner that is subtle, indirect, highly contextual, and relatively non-expressive (Bruneau & Ishhii, 1988; Hall, 1976). There are also clear distinctions drawn by members of collectivistic cultures between distant and close relations such as casual versus good friends (Chang & Holt, 1991). People from collectivistic cultures employ less self-disclosure with all relational partners, including close friends (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1983; Won-Doornink, 1985). Meanwhile, Aristotle and Kant considered self-disclosure and mutuality as characteristics of the ideal friendships (Veltman, 2004). Members of individualistic cultures are generally observed to be more direct in their communication styles, have greater interpersonal distance between their conversation partners, and tend to be socialized more toward independence

(Gudykunst et al., 1996). These habits could be perceived as aggressive by members of a collectivistic culture who see directness and independence in relations as signs of confrontation and coldness, and so might hinder formation of friendships. Also, minority groups from cultures that emphasize interdependence (e.g., Mexican Americans) tend to be relatively more cooperative than European American children (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). LeTendre (1996) found that East Asian children and adolescents are pressured to favour harmony and avoid competition, but must balance this with pressure for scholarship and success in work and school. Non-Asian friends may not understand or empathize with these diverse pressures, and so these friendships may not provide closeness and support the way culturally similar friends could.

In some cultures, including many societies from which immigrants to Western countries originate, parents and teachers have a great deal to say about whom children befriend and what friends can do. In some societies, cousins and other relatives are so close that they can be considered almost friends. It is sometimes found that friendship is not as strong or intimate in very family oriented societies as in other countries, as in some research from Indonesia (French, Lee & Pidada, 2006). However, in other

societies where family ties are strong and where adults and their institution regulate children's lives very extensively, friendship has a specific function as a refuge for confidentiality and any thoughts of non-conformity (Schneider, Lee & Alvarez-Valdivia, in press).

Friendship: Not always a good thing

In philosophical writings, friendship is always admirable and desirable, as it usually is in the social worlds of children, adolescents and adults (Veltman, 2004). However, there is also the "dark side of friendship" – friendship as a negative influence, friendships that lead to delinquency and substance abuse, friendships that may harm the individuals involved. Sometimes, parents regard children from other cultural groups as negative influences and dissuade their children from becoming members of those groups. An example is the Comorian community of Marseille, who were studied by Alles-Jardel, Schneider and Boutry (2002). Immigrants from the Comoros Islands are known for their valuing of education and achievement, which differentiates them from many members of the other African Muslim communities with whom they share the poorer neighborhoods of Marseille.

For that reason, Comorian parents actively dissuade their children from becoming friends with non-Comorian children and adolescents from "la rue".

What is culture?

There are cultural differences in much more than the understanding of friendship. Table 2 displays a number of major definitions of culture.

Selected definitions of culture

- Center for Advanced Research in Language Association, University of Minnesota
"Culture is defined as the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group."
- Hofstede, G. (1984). National cultures and corporate cultures. In L.A. Samovar & R.E. Porter (Eds.), *Communication Between Cultures*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
"Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one

- category of people from another.” (p. 51).
- Kluckhohn, C., & Kelly, W.H. (1945). The concept of culture. In R. Linton (Ed.). *The Science of Man in the World Culture*. New York. (pp. 78-105).
“By culture we mean all those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit,
 - Lederach, J.P. (1995). *Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
“Culture is the shared knowledge and schemes created by a set of

Table 1

Percentages of Cross-Ethnic and Cross-Racial Friendships among U.S. Minority-Group Adolescents Participating in a National Health Study (n=33256). Source: Kao & Joyner, 2006 (by permission, John Wiley and Sons)

Ethnic Group	% Same Group	% Different Ethnic Group, Same Race	% Different Ethnic Group, Different Race
Mexican	58	24	18
Cuban	56	18	26
Puerto Rican	60	22	18
Central American	56	21	23
Chinese	67	23	10
Filipino	68	24	80
Japanese	83	10	70
Indian	58	20	22
Korean	68	15	17
Vietnamese	63	24	13

people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing, and responding to the social realities around them” (p. 9).

- Parson, T. (1949). *Essays in Sociological Theory*. Glencoe, IL. “Culture...consists in those patterns relative to behavior and the products of human action which may be inherited, that is, passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes” (p. 8).

As is evident from these and many other definitions, culture goes far beyond the superficial features of different societies. It involves people’s shared understanding of the world around them. Hence, children of different cultures may bring from their cultural heritages very different ways of understanding most events they encounter together. This may limit the common perspective on things that friends usually share.

Immigrant families often (but not always) take pride in their cultures of origin. In many cases, they try to maintain their cultures in spite of the pressure to assimilate into the host culture. Immigrant children face many challenges in learning to function in both their cultures of origin and the host culture. This involves *code-switching*, learning to move seamlessly from the thinking, values, and expectations of the different cultures that they

encounter in different aspects of their daily lives – school, home, and community (Auer, 1995).

Cultural identity refers to the individual’s identification with his or her own culture. It is one aspect of the emergence of individual identity over the course of development. In multicultural societies such as Canada, cultural identity among immigrant children and adolescents is clearly correlated with psychological adjustment. This is true in more homogeneous societies as well, although simultaneous identification with the host culture may make the immigration experience less stressful (Costigan, Koryzma, Hua & Chance, 2010). Cultivating friendships with members of the same cultural group is one clear way of achieving and maintaining cultural identity. This was demonstrated directly in an interesting study in the Netherlands conducted with children of Dutch and Turkish origin. Verkuyten (2007) demonstrated that in-group favouritism in friendship choice was associated with the collective self-esteem of each cultural group.

These European findings mirror a heated debate that has gone on for the past 25 years among African-American scholars. The late Professor John Ogbu of the University of California at Berkeley used the term “oppositional identity” to describe the cultivation of

African identity that is crystallized by not participating in activities that are valued by Whites and cultivating an intra-ethnic social circle (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). In disagreement with the value of this oppositional identity, other scholars, armed with empirical data, have discovered that pride in one's one culture is associated with more favourable views of members of other cultures, not with negative views (Phinney, Ferguson & Tate, 1997). It has also been argued by many scholars that the ability to form friendships with people of other cultures provides preparation for success in school, and then in work, in multicultural societies (e.g., Laframboise, Coleman & Gerton, 1993).

Intercultural Friendship: History, Theory and Reality

Interest in the study of intercultural friendship, especially inter-racial friendship, became an important focus of interest following the racial desegregation of schools in the Southern United States. Achieving racial equality in schooling was the official reason for the Supreme Court's decision in 1954 declaring that separate schools for black and white pupils were not acceptable under the law; segregated schools were completely eliminated by 1970.

Many educationalists and social scientists hoped that the desegregation of schools would break down color lines in interpersonal relationships as well. Allport's (1954) influential social contact theory was invoked in fostering hope that the increased contact between members of the different races would result in the end of prejudice. According to social contact theory, the best antidote to prejudice is regular, positive contact with members of the other group. Extended to friendship, the theory posits that regular positive contact will lead to friendships that cross racial and cultural lines.

However, racial desegregation was followed by an informal, unplanned process of racial resegregation. Although they were enrolled as pupils in the same schools, African American and Americans of European origin did not often become each other's friends. At the time, prejudice surely accounted for at least some of the skittishness by children in their relations with pupils of the other races.

Sixty years later, racial encapsulation persists. Table 3 contains more recent data from a nationwide study of adolescents in the U.S. As shown, very few close friendships cross ethnic and cultural lines, and even fewer cross racial lines. This is by no means an isolated finding. an overwhelming number of studies of children's

friendship patterns indicate a high degree of ethnic/racial encapsulation (Boulton & Smith, 1996; Durojaiye, 1969; Hallinan & Williams, 1989; Khmelkov & Hallinan, 1999; St John, 1964; Thirkell & Worrell, 1989). Ueno (2009) suggested that racial encapsulation occurs because youth receive greater acceptance of their racial backgrounds from same-race friends than cross-race friends. Studies conducted in the United States indicate that greater inter-ethnic contact (as in a more diverse school) increases the probability of a child interacting with members of different ethnic groups and of developing intergroup ties at the personal level (Hallinan & Smith, 1985; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987b; Joyner & Kao, 2000). However, even taking inter-ethnic contact into account, Kawabata and Crick (2008) found differences among ethnic groups in the degree of ethnic encapsulation in the friendships of elementary school students from the American Midwest. In a study of elementary-school students in Montreal, Aboud, Mendelson, and Purdy (2003) found an even greater degree of same-race preference than that shown in similar American studies. Studies from Great Britain similarly confirm a pattern across the school years of racial encapsulation in friendship (Boulton & Smith, 1996; Durojaiye, 1969; Jelinek & Brittan, 1975). Research on

this issue is currently being conducted in Barcelona by Professor Ibis Alvarez and her colleagues.

Documenting patterns of racial encapsulation even further, many studies indicate that even when schoolchildren do form friendships with children of other cultures; those friendships are very often limited to the school settings. Only sometimes do friends of different cultures share extracurricular activities; even less frequent is bringing to one's home a school friend of a different culture (Dubois & Hirsch, 1990). Studies from both Germany and Canada indicate that a cross-ethnic friendship is not likely to last as long as a friendship with a fellow member of the same group (Feddes, Noack & Rutland, 2009; Schneider, Dixon & Udvari, 2007).

Recent research in Western Europe has illuminated some of the peer group processes associated with the ethnic encapsulation of children's friendships. Shocking findings in a recent study from Northern Italy indicated that children in elementary school, four to seven years old, who formed friendships with members of the African minority community in their classrooms, did so at the cost of a decline in their own popularity with their peers (Castelli, De Amicis & Sherman, 2007). A recent longitudinal study conducted in Germany with

German and Turkish students revealed that many of the benefits of inter-ethnic friendship depends on whether or not the peer group regards inter-ethnic friendship as normal (Feddes, Noack & Rutland, 2009). Another perspective on peer group process that influences inter-ethnic friendship is offered by Eisenberg and her colleagues (2009), who, based on their work on inter-ethnic friendship in Indonesia, suggested that children turn to members of out-groups for friendship when they are rejected by their own group.

To this day, most researchers view friendships as indicative of tolerance, and thus, inter-ethnic friendships as mechanisms to increase integration and engender positive attitudes towards other races and cultures (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003). That said, similarity has been found to be paramount in formation of friendships (French, Pidada, Denoma, McDonald, & Lawton, 2005), and race is a salient factor (and possible dissimilarity) for children as young as three years of age (Clark & Clark, 1947).

Another perspective on the nature of inter-ethnic friendships could emerge from a focus on majority-minority status and in-group vs. out-group effects. Eisenberg and Sallquist (2009) suggested that children turn to members of out-groups for friendship when they are rejected by their own

group. Thus, children with inter-group friendships may be more poorly adjusted, lack in social skills, and have poorer friendships than children with more in-group friendships. This, and nothing to do with culture, could explain why inter-ethnic friendships have often been found to be more superficial and transient than intra-ethnic friendships.

Cognitive processes have also been associated with racial encapsulation in adult friendship; the same processes may apply to children and/or adolescents. People are known to have expectations for how they will be perceived by their partners in a conversation, which may vary by culture. In a social-psychology experiment conducted with university students, Wout Murphy and Steele (2010) assessed participants' expectations prior to conversation. If a Black student was going to converse with a White student, the Black student expected to be perceived positively only if the White student in question was known to have an inter-racial network of friends. No such effect was evident in the expectations of the White students. Jaasma (2002) asked elementary-school studies to describe a positive experience and a negative experience with a member of a cultural group other than their own. A common theme in the descriptions of negative experiences is the fear of

not being understood by members of other cultures.

The School Context and Intercultural Friendships

Some of the processes associated with the cultural encapsulation of friendship choice have nothing to do with culture. Hamm, Brown and Heck (2005) call for a revision of Allport's social contact theory, which maintains that positive social contact between groups results in reduced prejudice. They call for greater attention to contextual factors, including school factors. They note that members of minority and immigrant groups are often behind in basic academic subjects. In many schools, this means that they are assigned to classes for pupils of lesser academic ability. Therefore, they will not have contact with successful fellow pupils of the host culture. If members of immigrant groups do not speak the language of the host country well, they will have difficulty engaging in the supportive conversation that is a major feature of friendship.

Some Canadian schools and universities have found that students of immigrant backgrounds do not enjoy the same extracurricular activities that members of the host culture do. At the University of Toronto, for example, it

was discovered that immigrant students do not often participate in Canadian football, which is similar to American football. European football or soccer, however, appeals to many Canadians of both immigrant and Anglo-Western European cultural background.

Within schools, friendship circles may be based on socioeconomic status, which may be a more powerful predictor of friendship choice than immigrant status. Indeed, one of the very few studies in which adolescents were found to have as many friends with other cultural groups as their own was conducted in a neighborhood in Toronto populated by recent immigrants from different parts of the world who engaged in very similar types of work (Smith & Schneider, 2000).

A competitive goal structure in a school environment is thought to inhibit intercultural friendship. Schopler and his colleagues, working with adults, established that interactions with members of another ethnic group are dramatically more competitive than interactions with one's own group (Schopler et al., 1993). This "discontinuity effect" discussed in social psychology literature is based on the assumption that competitiveness with a member of an out-group is beneficial to one's own group (Insko et al., 1988). However, in a more cooperative classroom,

competitiveness need not bring benefits to anyone, as discussed in the following sections.

Children Relate Differently to Intra-Ethnic and Cross-Ethnic Friends: An Observational Study

Relatively little research attention has been devoted to the ways in which children relate differently to friends of their own cultural group and to friends from other ethnic groups. One method of studying the quality of friendships is by having the friends rate the quality of their relationships in questionnaires. We are aware of three studies in which this has been applied to comparisons of intra-ethnic and cross-ethnic friendships, all from Canada. In two of the studies, cross-ethnic friendships were rated as lower in intimacy than intra-ethnic friendships (Aboud, Mendelson & Purdy, 2003; Schneider, Dixon & Udvari, 2007). The exception, once again, is the study mentioned earlier by Smith and Schneider (2000) who found little cultural encapsulation of friendship in a Toronto area where there were many recent immigrants of similar economic status.

We have recently completed the analysis of data from one of the very few studies in which the interactions of inter-ethnic and cross-ethnic friends were observed directly. We wanted to

see in particular whether competition would occur between friends who were of different cultural background even when there was no immediate benefit in either competing or cooperation. Based on the literature, we hypothesized that, even in the absence of any incentive, there would be more competition between inter-ethnic friends than friends of the same ethnic group.

The participants were 390 early adolescents (206 males, 184 females) selected from two English-speaking junior high schools. One school was in Montreal, the other in Toronto, both in mostly middle-class neighbourhoods. Grade 7 is the first year of junior high school; the typical Grade 7 student is 13 years old. Their cultural origins were Anglo-Western European, 126 participants; East Asian, 87; Central Asian, 53; Middle Eastern, 43; Southern European, 42; Eastern European, 13; and 22 pupils could not be classified.

Each participant was asked to declare which pupils he or she considered to be close friends from a roster of participating students at his or her school. Next, participants were asked whether any of these were the participant's best friend in the whole world and, if not, who the participant's best school friend was. Dyads were formed on the basis of these nominations, pairing participants who

had indicated reciprocally that they were best friends in the whole world.

We used a task developed by Butler (1989). The dyads of friends were provided with a complicated graphic image, and given the prohibitively difficult task of reproducing it on a sheet of paper. The task was chosen as something inherently enjoyable, fairly difficult, and novel enough that participants would have no prior experience on which to base their performance. Experimenters told participants that they wanted to see how well they could perform the task independently, though were informed that they were allowed to look at their friend's work. After 5 minutes,

participants were asked to stop, after which point the dyad was separated and each child individually interviewed by the experimenters. Interviews typically lasted 10 minutes, with discussion centred on asking the participants why they looked at their friend's work. Participants were shown part of the video, particularly moments when they glanced at their friend's work. They were then reassured that it was all right, and reminded it was allowed for them to look at their friend's work. They were then asked to discuss why they did so. The results are displayed in Table 4. Please note that the reasons provided to explain the glances are more important than the data on the

Table 2

Number of Glances and Reasons Given for them by Gender and Ethnic Composition of the Dyad (Dyad Means)

Scale	Co-Ethnic Friendship		Inter-Ethnic Friendship	
	Male (n=110)	Female (n=92)	Male (n=80)	Female (n=72)
Average number of glances	5.7 (2.0)	4.3 (3.9)	6.0 (2.3)	4.7 (3.1)
Mastery Reason (%)	74	37	58	18
Comparison Reason (%)	45	29	61	45

number of glances and that the total percentage can be greater than 100 because children may have glanced at their friend's work both in order to compare their relative performances and to find out how to do the task

As shown in the table, our hypothesis about social comparison was confirmed: Both boys and girls explained their glances at the work of friends of different cultural background in terms of comparison. When they glanced at the work of a friend of the same culture, it was explained as an attempt at finding out how to do better

Adaptive Value of Both Inter-Ethnic and Cross-Ethnic Friendships: A Proposition

In conclusion, we believe that inter-ethnic and cross-ethnic friendships are useful to children and adolescents in different ways. Given the many similarities in the ways that members of the same culture think, it is inevitable that many friendships will be between members of the same cultural group. This appears to facilitate cultural identity, which we see as a positive thing. Ethnic encapsulation does not necessarily indicate prejudice although it can be a product of prejudice in some situations, which schools should strive to avoid.

At the same time, inter-ethnic friendship provides the opportunity for intensive positive contact with a member of another group. Befriending a member of another cultural group provides preparation for competent social functioning in a world where many societies are becoming increasingly multicultural.

Therefore, we propose that, once a child has proven capable of finding friends from within his or her cultural group, he should be encouraged to make at least one good friend from another culture. This is inspired from the literature on same-sex and cross-sex friendships (see Kovacs, Parker & Hoffman, 1996). In that literature, it has been found that children who cannot form a friendship with a member of the same sex are at risk for maladjustment. However, assuming that a child already has a friendship with a child of the same sex, also having a friendship with a member of the opposite sex is correlated with adjustment and maturity.

How Schools Can Help

There are many ways in which schools can help facilitate harmonious intra-ethnic and cross-ethnic friendships. The first is by including in the curriculum and school calendar material designed to help pupils

understand each other's cultures. Another important school factor is a cooperative environment, avoiding competition between members of different cultures wherever possible. This can be accomplished by means of avoiding competition in general. As well, members of the host culture can be paired with immigrant children as a way of both providing help and facilitating positive contact.

Other aspects of the schooling of immigrants may indirectly facilitate inter-cultural understanding and inter-cultural friendship in indirect

ways. This includes the provision of specific help for immigrant children in academic areas and in the host language.

In these ways, schools can help pupils take small steps that will help them live and work better in tomorrow's multicultural societies. Perhaps civil wars between rival ethnic groups in such places as the former Yugoslavia and far too many other places would be fewer if the potential soldiers had friends of the ethnic groups that became their enemies.

References

- About, F. E., Mendelson, M. J., & Purdy, K.T. (2003). Cross-race peer relations and friendship quality. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 27*, 165-173.
- Allès-Jardel, M., Schneider, B. H., & Boutry, V. (2002). Friendship and attitudes toward school among children of two Muslim communities in Marseille. *Early Education and Development, 13*, 153-166.
- Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Arends-Toth, J., & van de Vijver, F. J. R. (2009). Cultural differences in family, marital, and gender-role values among immigrants and majority members in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Psychology, 44*, 161-169.
- Auer, P. (1995). *Code-Switching in Conversation, Language, Interaction and Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Benenson, J. F., Apostoleris, N. H., & Parnass, J. (1997). Age and sex differences in dyadic and group

- interaction. *Developmental Psychology*, 33, 538–543.
- Benjamin, W. J., Schneider, B. H., Greenman, P. S., & Hum, M. (2001). Conflict and childhood friendship in Taiwan and Canada. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 33(3), 203-211.
- Berry, J. W., & Sam, D. L. (1997). Acculturation and adaptation. In J. W. Berry, M. H. Segall, & C. Kagitcibasi (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology*, Vol. 3. (2nd ed., pp. 291-326), Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Boulton, M. J., & Smith, P. K. (1996). Liking and peer perceptions among Asian and white British children. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 13(2), 163-177.
- Bruneau, T., & Ishii, S. (1988). Silence and silences in cross-cultural perspective: Japan and the United States. In L. Samovar & R. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural communication: A reader* (pp. 310-319). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Bukowski, W., Newcomb, A., & Hartup, W.W. (1996). *The company they keep*. New York: Cambridge.
- Butler, R. (1989). Interest in the Task and Interest in Peers' Work in Competitive and Noncompetitive Conditions: A Developmental Study. *Child Development*, 60, 562-570.
- Castelli, L., De Amicis, L., & Sherman, S.J. (2007) The Loyal Member Effect: On the Preference for Ingroup Members Who Engage in Exclusive Relations With the Ingroup. *Developmental Psychology*, 43(6), 1347-1359.
- Chang, H., & Holt, R. (1991). More than a relationship: Chinese interaction and the principle of kuan-hsi. *Communication Quarterly*, 39, 251-271.
- Clark, K. B., & Clark, M. K. (1947). Racial identification and preference in Negro children. In T. M. Newcomb & E. L. Hartley (Eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (pp. 169-178). New York: Holt.
- Costigan, C. L., Koryzma, C. M., Hua, J. M., & Chance, L. (2010) Ethnic identity, achievement, and psychological adjustment: Examining risk and resilience among youth from immigrant Chinese families in Canada. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 16, 264-273.
- Dubois, D. L., & Hirsch, B. J. (1990). School and neighborhood friendship patterns of Blacks and Whites in early adolescence.

- Child Development*, 61, 524-536.
- Durojaiye, M. O. A. (1969). Race relations among junior school children. *Educational Research*, 11, 226-228.
- Eisenberg, N., & Fabes, R. A. (1998). Prosocial development. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) & N. Eisenberg (Vol. Ed.). *The handbook of child psychology. Vol. 3: Social, emotional, and personality development* (5th ed., pp. 701-778). New York: Wiley.
- Eisenberg, N., Sallquist, J., French, D. C., Purwono, U., Suryanti, T. A., & Pidada, S. (2009). The relations of majority-minority group status and having an other-religion friend to Indonesian youths' socioemotional functioning. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(1), 248-259.
- Entralgo, J. (1989). *Sobre la Amistad*. Madrid: Austral.
- Feddes, A.R., Noack, P., Rutland, A. (2009). Direct and Extended Friendship Effects on Minority and Majority Children's Interethnic Attitudes: A Longitudinal Study. *Child Development*, 80(2), 377-390.
- Fordham, S., & Ogbu, J. (1986). Black Students' School Success: Coping with the "Burden of 'Acting White'". *The Urban Review*, 18, 176-206.
- French, D. C., Lee, O., & Pidada, S. U. (2006). Friendships of Indonesian, South Korean, and U.S. youth: Exclusivity, intimacy, enhancement of worth, and conflict. In X. Chen, D. C. French & B. H. Schneider (Eds.), *Peer relationships in cultural context* (pp. 379 – 402). Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- French, D. C., Pidada, S., Denoma, J., McDonald, K., & Lawton, A. (2005). Reported peer conflicts of children in the united states and indonesia. *Social Development*, 14(3), 458-472.
- Gudykunst, W., & Nishida, T. (1983). Social penetration in Japanese and North American friendships. In R. Bostrom (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 7* (pp. 592-610). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.
- Hallinan, M. T., & Smith, S. S. (1985). The effects of classroom racial composition on students' interracial friendliness. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 48(1), 3-16.
- Hallinan, M. T., & Teixeira, R. A. (1987). Opportunities and constraints: Black-white differences in the formation of

- interracial friendships. *Child Development*, 58(5), 1358-1371.
- Hallinan, M., & Williams, R. (1989). Interracial friendship choices in secondary-schools. *American Sociological Review*, 54(1), 67-78.
- Hamm, J. V., Brown, B. B. (2005). Bridging the ethnic divide: Student and school characteristics in African American, Asian-Descent, Latino and White Adolescents' Cross-Ethnic Friend Nominations. *Journal of Research in Adolescence*, 15, 21-46.
- Howes, C. (1988). Peer interaction of young children. *Monograph of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 217.
- Insko, C.A., Hoyle, R. H., Pinkley, R. I., Hong, G., Slim R., Dalton, G., et al., (1988). Individual-group discontinuity: The role of a consensus rule. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 24, 505-519.
- Jaasma, M. (2002) 'Friendship: The Core Value for Sixth Graders Engaged in Interethnic Encounters', *Communication Education*, 51, 152 - 167.
- Jelinek, M, M., & Brittan, E. M. (1975). Multiracial education I: Interethnic friendship patterns. *Educational Research*, 18, 44-53.
- Joyner, K., & Kao, G. (2000). School racial composition and adolescent racial homophily. *Social Science Quarterly*, 81(3), 810-825.
- Kao, G., & Joyner, K. (2006). Do Hispanic and Asian adolescents practice panethnicity in friendship choices? *Social Science Quarterly*, 87, 972-992.
- Kawabata, Y., & Crick, N. R. (2008). The role of cross-racial/ethnic friendships in social adjustment. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(4), 1177-1183.
- Khmelkov, V. T., & Hallinan, M. T. (1999). Organizational effects on race relations in schools. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(4), 627.
- Kovacs, D.M., Parker, J.G., & Hoffman, L.W. (1996). Behavioral, Affective, and Social Correlates of Involvement in Cross-Sex Friendship in Elementary School. *Child Development*, 67, 2269-87.
- Krappmann, L. (1996). Amicitia, drujba, shin-yu, philia, Freundschaft, friendship: On the cultural diversity of a human relationship. In W.M. Bukowski, A.F. Newcomb, & W.W. Hartup (Eds.), *The company they keep: Friendship in childhood and adolescence* (pp. 19-40). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- LaFramboise, T., Coleman, H. L. K., & Gerton, J. (1993). Psychological impact of biculturalism: Evidence and theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, *114*, 395-412.
- LeTendre, G. (1996). Youth and schooling in Japan: Competition with peers. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, *41*, 103-136.
- Moreno, J. (1953). *Who Shall Survive?* New York: Beacon.
- Phinney, J.S., Ferguson, D.L., & Tate, J. D. (1997). Intergroup attitudes among ethnic minority adolescents. A causal model. *Child Development*, *68*, 955-969.
- Schneider, B. H. (2000). *Friends and Enemies*. London: Arnold/Oxford.
- Schneider, B. H., Dixon, K., & Udvari, S. (2007). Closeness and competition in the inter-ethnic and co-ethnic friendships of early adolescents in Toronto and Montreal. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *27*, 1-24.
- Schneider, B. H., Fonzi, A., Tani, F., & Tomada, G. (1997). A cross-cultural exploration of the stability of children's friendships and predictors of their continuation. *Social Development*, *6*, 322-339.
- Schneider, B. H., Lee, M. D., & Alvarez-Valdivia, I. (in press). Adolescent friendship bonds in cultures of connectedness. In Laursen, B., & Collins, W. A. (in press). *Relationship pathways: From adolescence to young adulthood*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schneider, B.H. (1993). *Children's social competence in context*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Schopler, J., Insko, C.A., Graetz, K.A., Drigotas, S., Smith, V.A., & Dahl, K. (1993). Individual group discontinuity: Further evidence for mediation by fear and greed. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *4*, 419-431.
- Smith, A., & Schneider, B. H. (2000). The interethnic friendships of adolescent students: A Canadian study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *24*, 247-258.
- St. John, N. H. (1964). De facto segregation and interracial association in high school. *Sociology of Education*, *37*(4), 326-344.
- Thirkell, B., & Worrall, N. (1989). Differential ethnic bias in bengali and white children. *Educational Research*, *31*, 181-188.
- Ueno, K. (2009). Same-race friendships and school attachment: Demonstrating the interaction between personal

- network and school composition. *Sociological Forum*, 24(3), 515-537.
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision, UN database, (New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2009). Available at <http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=1>
- Veltman, A. (2004). Aristotle and Kant on self-disclosure in friendship. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 38, 225-239.
- Verkuyten, M. (2007). Ethnic in-group favoritism among minority and majority groups: Testing the self-esteem hypothesis among preadolescents. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 37, 486-500.
- Wissink, I., Dekovic, M., & Meijer, A. (2009). Adolescent friendship relations and developmental outcomes ethnic and gender differences. *Journal Of Early Adolescence*, 29(3), 405-425.
- Won-Doornink, M. (1985). Self-disclosure and reciprocity in conversation: Cross-national study. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 48, 97-107.
- Wout, D.A., Murphy, M.C., & Steele, C. M. (2010). When your friends matter: The effect of White students' racial friendship networks on meta-perceptions and perceived identity contingencies. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46, 1035-1041.

Barry H. Scheneider es Catedrático de Psicología en la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Ottawa (Canada), donde ha estado enseñando desde 1981. Alcanzó el grado de doctor en Orientación psicológica en la Universidad de Toronto en 1977. Su principal área de interés: las relaciones interpersonales entre niños con problemas de externalización e internalización, incluyendo el diseño de intervenciones para la mejora de sus relaciones.

Stephen J. Udvari es Doctor en Desarrollo Humano y Psicología Aplicada en la Universidad de Toronto. Además de su interés en las áreas de la motivación, el alumnado con sobredotación y la competencia, también está interesado en la conexión existente entre el logro académico y el desarrollo social del niño.

Yusuf Malik. Licenciado en Psicología, University of Ottawa, Canada. Medical Student, University College Cork, Ireland (UCC). Sus áreas de interés se centran en iniciativas de salud pública.

Fecha de recepción: 17/1/2011

Fecha de revisión: 21/2/2011

Fecha de aceptación: 4/4/2011