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Editor
Joan G. Miller

ISSBD Newsletter
Department of Psychology
New School University
New York, NY, USA
email: millerj@newschool.edu

Associate Editor
Xinyin Chen

ISSBD Newsletter
Department of Psychology
University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada N6A 5C2
email: xchen@uwo.ca



Research on Friendship Among Children and Adolescents: Findings, Problems and Future Directions

Introduction

Xinyin Chen

Department of Psychology, University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
e-mail: xchen@uwo.ca

and

Joan G. Miller

Department of Psychology, New School University
New York, N.Y., USA
e-mail: millerj@newschool.edu

Friendship represents a significant phenomenon in most, if not all, societies. Developmental researchers have been interested in the friendships of children and adolescents for several decades.

However, the progress that researchers have made in this area does not seem to match their tremendous effort. There are some major, perhaps fundamental, theoretical and methodological issues that impede our understanding of the nature and significance of friendship. For example, what are the social, behavioral and psychological features that define friendship? How do different aspects of friendship, such as the availability of friendship, the characteristics of friends and the quality of friendship, independently and interactively contribute to individual socio-emotional and cognitive development? How is friendship overlapping with and distinct from other aspects of peer relationships, such as overall popularity and peer group affiliation at the conceptual and empirical levels? How can we assess friendship, particularly the quality of friendship, in a meaningful as well as scientifically reliable manner? Although a construct that involves a dyadic relationship, friendship has been treated mostly as an individual level variable. How can we analyze friendship as a social or interpersonal context for development? Finally, cultural norms and values may exert significant influence on the formation, function and organization of friendship. What are the similarities and differences in the friendships of children and adolescents across cultures? And, what are the processes by which cultural factors play a role in the development of friendship? The aim of this Special Section is to provide a forum for researchers to discuss some of these issues, and, from a long-term perspective, to inspire further interest in research on the friendships of children and adolescents.

The contributors to this Special Section include leading scholars from different countries. The discussion taps

various aspects of friendship, including structural and functional dimensions/components of friendship, relations between friendship and other social relationships such as parent-child attachment, developmental stages and patterns, and contextual constraints on friendship processes. The authors propose several major questions that are relevant to scientific inquiry in this area. The authors also offer opinions about the current status, problems and future directions of work in this area, and more importantly, suggest specific strategies to reach these goals. We hope that discussion of these issues will continue and eventually help us to better understand the complex phenomenon of friendship.

On the Study of Friendship in Childhood and Adolescence: A View from the Bridge(s)

Ruth Sharabany

Department of Psychology, University of Haifa
Haifa, Israel
E-mail: ruthsh@psy.haifa.ac.il

Barry H. Schneider

School of Psychology, University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
E-mail: barry@uottawa.ca

The nature of personal relationships has been for centuries the domain of philosophy and literature. In the 1970s,

friendship began to appear more frequently in the behavioral-science literature as a sub-category of general peer acceptance that was to be measured with sociometrics. Interest then shifted to the deeper and more interdependent levels of relationships in general and friendship in particular. It was during that period that the nature of friendship was debated and defined within the behavioral sciences by virtue of the combined efforts of psychologists (social, developmental, clinical), sociologists, and communication scholars. Moreover, researchers began to look at relationships as the backdrop for other social phenomena, such as health, social cognition, and emotion regulation, and to speculate as to their origins, be they societal, familial, sociological, or physiological.

Building Blocks of Friendship

Ladd and Kochenderfer (1996, p. 329) proposed classifying the features of friendship as dimensions of processes (such as self disclosure, conflict resolution) and dimensions of provisions (such as security, trust). Some of the common dimensions are: self-disclosure, understanding, forming and maintaining an attachment bond, seeking exclusiveness in a friendship, as well as spending time, trusting, helping and relying on a friend for help. Although empirical results seem to indicate that friendships can be described in terms of a global continuum consisting of general positive and negative features, so far the discriminant validity of multiple dimensions is lacking (Berndt, 1996, p.355). These claims from within the field of the friendship of children deserve further scrutiny in light of wider theory and empirical findings suggesting that positive and negative processes in relationships function independently and not as opposites (Reis & Gable, 2003). To complicate matters further, these dimensions may vary by gender: Many boys will not confide in their best friends, perhaps because of competition in the relationship (Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

“Relying on a friend for help”

Friendship on the Map of Social Relationships

There have been several attempts to classify social domains in very broad categories. For example, Bugental (2000) identified five such domains specialized by

evolutionary processes: two of these are the attachment domain, focused on protection, and the reciprocity domain (the other three are mating, dominance, and group relations). Each domain has its own algorithm, which is the behavioral procedure that is effective for achieving goals or solving problems. Friendship seems to fit into the “reciprocity” domain because it involves interaction among equals. The developmental sequence of closeness to parents, then friends and then to opposite-sex friends and romantic partners seems to indicate potential overlap. Moreover, we can identify processes, such as separation protest, that characterize close friendships but mirror parent-child relationships.

Friendship, How Many Theories do We Need?

At this point it is hard to imagine a unified theory about friendship. Out of a multitude of theories of social development, at present two seem to be used most often and to be most promising for the future. Bio-ecological developmental theory (Bronfenbrenner, in press) emphasizes repeated meaningful interactions, encompassing individual and biological differences. It maps the contexts of friendships within larger systems, such as culture and cohort-specific generation. We can identify proximate environments such as school and neighborhood, and the effect of relationship on relationship. The overall structure of the theory consists of: (a) several levels (macro, meso, micro); (b) interactions affecting the individual both on the same level and between levels; (c) recursive, reciprocal interactions; (d) the individual’s own biological endowment, personality, etc., brought into the interactions with the social world; and (e) the assumption that the individual creates his/her own environment.

Putting friendship in the context of other relationships is congruent with ecological theory. There seems to be rearrangement, continuity, and change in the dimensions of closeness, intimacy, and other aspects of autonomy, and distance in the balance between friends and parents (Collins, 1997). There appear to be parallels between closeness with parents and intimate friendship with peers (Sharabany, 2000). While ecological theory encompasses both the individual and the context, a specific theory of development and individual differences is complimentary. Attachment theory helps to trace the personal history of relationships, its path to attachment styles, and hence to interaction styles based on the internal working models of relationships and their representations (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2003). Also, in middle childhood and adolescence, there is a correlation between security of attachment to parents and nature of close friendships (Schneider, Atkinson & Tardif, 2001).

Attachment theory offers concepts relating to the individual: influences of caregiver, of history, and of events relating to security. Internal working models of relationships are used as both a general and a modified style, adapted to different relationships, and a theory of individual differences. These two theories, bio-ecological and attachment, offer privileged vantage points for the friendship researcher separately, but are much more useful when combined.



The friendship road—from past to future.



Are We Trying to Understand Friendship Through only a Single Paradigm?

Research findings in any area are moderated by methodology and measurement. As noted by Furman and Simon (1999, p.93), "Conscious and less conscious representations of relationships do not correspond very highly to one another, seemingly because of defensive processes, with self report - more conscious, interview - less conscious" There is a new measure of the Core Relational Theme (CCRT), in which the participants report the events of social interactions. This technique has been used widely in clinical studies. It examines individuals' central relationship patterns (their motivations, desires, or wishes, their perceptions of others' responses to them, and their own responses to both of these). It is an indirect measure, in that the pattern of relating is inferred by the researcher and is not directly reported by the participants. It seems a promising tool for studying matches and mismatches of pairs of friends. Qualitative methods are relatively neglected though not unknown. A book by Apter and Josselson (1998) with interviews about friendship of girls is a treasure of future hypotheses to be investigated quantitatively. It opens for us a window to view a wide range of interactions within a single relationship. Also, it offers a better vista of the embeddedness of one's relationships (e.g., best friend) in the network of other relationships (e.g., family, peers, romantic partner, etc.).

"friendship as a unified construct applicable across stages of development"

The Developmental Process: Are there Stages, or Age-Appropriate Characteristics of Friendship?

The normative and critical features of friendship depend on the age of the individual. Howes (e.g., 1989) maintains that friendship begins in early childhood when, although unable to articulate the intimate bond they have with their friends, preschoolers do associate preferentially with certain individuals and display distress when their friends are not there. Later on, beginning in early adolescence, closeness and intimate self-disclosure become the defining characteristics of close friendship (Berndt, 1981). Furthermore, individuals become able to describe their friendships and the intimacy within them. Although these important developmental differences might make it appear otherwise, they should not and do not interfere substantially with the specification of friendship as a unified construct applicable across stages of development.

There are also important developmental differences in the roles of friends and in how these roles complement those of other peers, parents, and other adults. Based on Sullivanian thinking, there have been significant strides towards formulating stages characterized by qualitative changes in the functions of friendships and of other close relationships (Buhrmester & Furman, 1986). The transition from childhood to adolescence consists of expansion and diversification of networks of significant others, in that intimacy and romantic relations deepen (Collins & Laursen, 2004). Further delineation of this nature may be possible. For example, parents may continue to be the main providers of some attachment-related needs throughout adolescence (providing functions of secure base, and being targets of

separation protest), while friends assume the role of Safe Haven (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994)

Culture as Context for Friendships

Overall, there are great similarities in the reports of friendships in various cultures; however, there are also a few notable differences. Despite the possibilities that the functions of friends are not identical in all societies, and that children's behavior with friends differs across cultures, enough data do exist to indicate, at the most fundamental level that children around the world regard friendship as an intimate relationship based on reciprocal personal commitment. Some functions of friendships may apply to all cultures. For example, friendship may afford a protective environment in which one can discuss topics that are prohibited or would be considered deviant in discussions with other people (Krappmann, 1996). Krappmann (1996) suggests that friends may help each other to deal with the shortcomings and dissatisfactions that result from the nature of the social and economic structure of the surrounding society, whatever that social or economic structure may be. Although social organization may not diminish children's basic need for friends or the quality of their friendships, cultural differences may exist in terms of people's expectations of their friends.

In certain collectivistic cultures, the extended family may provide much of the supportive role that friendship assumes in North America. One might suspect that people need friends much less in those societies than in places where individuals must form voluntary relationships with friends in order to receive the social support that they need in moments of stress. However, a society characterized by rich family life does not have to be a society characterized by impoverished social life with peers. It could also be argued that strong bonds with kin do not preclude high-quality relationships with others (Kirchler, Pombeni, & Palmonari, 1991), and that the high-quality interaction style learned in relating with one's kin might even be generalized to other close relationships. Collectivistic cultures may restrain the scope or depth of dyadic intimate friendship. For example, in a comparison of Chinese and Canadian children, the former showed reduced acceptance of best friend (Chen & Rubin, 1992). In this and other cross-cultural work, it is imperative to move from showing that differences exist to making explicit the specific parameters of culture that are directly implicated in the characteristics of friendship, such as degree of overlap between the family network and the friendship network.

Friendship in Today's World: Bringing Knowledge Up to Date.

Research in this field has burgeoned in the past twenty years, the questions and topics deserve a review article. However, some relatively unexplored frontiers remain. Hopefully, scholars in the future will expand the boundaries of current research on friendship in several ways, making bridges to studies of **adult friendships**, and to researchers of adult friendship; making bridges to other **disciplines** (e.g., sociology, communication, education); and finding creative ways to integrate **clinical** theory, reports, and data. A few examples of relatively less explored issues are the following:

1. Friendships in multi-age groups – moving out of the classroom peer group into neighborhoods; studying reciprocal friendships of adults with children;
2. The impact of common new family structures on friendships: providing children with new models of relationships. Impact of relationships among biological and integrated parents, new family structures and the transitions. Impact of old family structures – impact of grandparents.
3. Linking friendship processes with brain science, and other bio-aspects of behavior; identifying processes promoting and suppressing long-lasting relationships.
4. Using theory-driven interventions for applying both known principles and concepts and processes promoting friendship, as well as new concepts – as experiments in manipulating and discovering how they work and in mapping the social skills necessary for friendship maintenance. Interventions for healing friendship breakups may be helpful.
5. Employing longitudinal case studies of specific dyads of friends, examining the effects of aspects of developmental change, maturational process, the effect of synchronic vs. non-synchronic processes on the nature of the relationships.
6. Using multiple measures, on different levels, beyond “validating”, trying to integrate and understand the same phenomenon simultaneously from the multiple perspectives. An example is using simultaneous observations of interaction of friends, their comments, and perceptions of this interaction, as well as more general perceptions of the same friendship.
7. Finally, studying the impact of electronic communication on friendships: strengthening existing friendship by adding channels; forming new friendships only on line; enabling transient “train mates” friendships – in depth, short lived, etc.

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Three Things to Know about Friendship

Kenneth H. Rubin

Department of Human Development, University of Maryland,
College Park, Maryland, USA
E-mail: krubin@umd.edu

Theorists propose that friendships are essential in the lives of children, adolescents, and adults. For example, in his oft-cited treatise on the interpersonal theory of psychiatry, Sullivan (1953) posited that the concepts of mutual respect, equality, and reciprocity developed, not from peer relationships in general, but rather from such “special” relationships as chumships and friendships. Sullivan also wrote that with increasing age, peers, especially chums, aided each other in developing mature understandings of cooperation, competition and social roles such as deference and dominance. And during preadolescence, children gained a more complex understanding of social relationships as the concepts of equality, mutuality, and reciprocity became central to their own close friendships. Once acquired *between friends*, these concepts were thought to be extended to other relationships.

Contemporary researchers draw on Sullivan’s (1953) writings in citing the specific “services” that friendships contribute to the human condition. For example, friendships in later childhood and early adolescence serve to (1) offer consensual validation of interests, hopes, and fears; (2) bolster feelings of self-worth; (3) provide affection and opportunities for intimate disclosure; (4) promote the growth of interpersonal sensitivity; and (5) offer prototypes for later romantic, marital, and parental relationships. In more recent years additional functions of friendships have been outlined. Friendships have been thought to provide (1) support, self esteem enhancement, and positive self evaluation; (2) emotional security; (3) intimacy and affection; (4) instrumental and informational assistance; and (5) companionship and stimulation (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998). Generally speaking, perhaps the most important function of friendship is to offer children an extra-familial base of security from which they may explore the effects of their behaviors on themselves, their peers, and their environments.

Of course, one doesn’t require reference to theorists or social scientists to understand the force of friendship. Writers, poets, lyricists, even athletes have waxed lyrical on the significance of friendship. Take for example the following quotations:

- ❖ “Friendship is the hardest thing in the world to explain. It’s not something you learn in school. But if you haven’t learned the meaning of friendship, you haven’t really learned anything.” – **Muhammad Ali**
- ❖ “The proper office of a friend is to side with you when you are in the wrong. Nearly anybody will side with you when you are in the right.” – **Mark Twain, 1898**

- ❖ “What is a friend? A single soul dwelling in two bodies.” – **Aristotle**
- ❖ “Friendship can only exist between persons with similar interests and points of view.” – **August Strindberg, 1886**
- ❖ “The essence of friendship is entireness, a total magnanimity and trust.” — **Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1841**
- ❖ “You just call out my name, and you know wherever I am, I’ll come running to see you again. Winter, spring, summer, or fall, all you have to do is call and I’ll be there.” – **Carol King** (from the song, “You’ve got a friend” – a paean to friendship for those of the “Baby Boomer” generation.)

“the concepts of equality, mutuality and reciprocity become central to their own close friendships”

But what is it about friendship that is truly significant for children and adolescents? I propose that there are at least three essential questions we must address in any study of the putative significance of friendship. The questions are:

- ❖ *Does the existence of a friendship in the life of a child or adolescent make a difference in whatever it is that we are studying?* For example, will merely having a friend make a difference insofar as the individual’s felt security, self-esteem, and behavioral and emotional adjustment are concerned?
- ❖ *Does it matter who the child’s or adolescent’s friend happens to be?* For example, if the functions of friendship are to provide support, enhance the partner’s self-esteem, promote the growth of interpersonal sensitivity, can the child’s or adolescent’s friend simply be anyone?
- ❖ *Does it matter if the quality of the child’s or adolescent’s friendship is relationally rich or impecunious?* Relatedly, does it matter if friendship quality is objectively appraised as rich or poor, or whether the friendship is evaluated through the eyes of the beholder?

This essay is not the proper venue for a review of literature on the topic of friendship. Rather, it provides this writer an opportunity to set a mini-agenda for research on the topic of friendship. In this regard, minimal reference will be made to the extant literature.

Question 1: Does the Mere Existence of a Friendship in the Life of a Child or Adolescent Make a Difference in Whatever it is That We are Studying?

Does everyone need at least one friend? Is friendship necessary for adaptive social and emotional development? More specifically, does merely having a friend allow the “services” and functions of friendship to be met?

Perhaps the best place to start in addressing this question is to examine what happens when children interact with their friends. In general, individuals of all ages engage in more complicated social activity, talk, task orientation, cooperation, negotiation, prosocial (altruistic) activity, positive affect, and effective conflict management during social interactions with friends than non-friends. Friends are more responsive to each other than are non-friend dyads. And friends, as compared with non-friends, make more use of negotiation and disengagement, relative to standing firm, in their resolution of conflicts. In terms of conflict outcomes, friends are more likely to have equitable resolutions. The differences described above suggest that children do view

friendship as a unique context, separate and qualitatively different from their experiences with non-friends.

If the interactions between friends differ from those of non-friends, does it mean that those children who are altogether lacking in friendship fail to develop the abilities to (a) cooperate with others; (b) recognize when helping, sharing, and caring are required; and (c) negotiate equitable ends to interpersonal conflict? These seem important questions to address. Moreover, one could argue that not all friendships provide opportunities for the development of social and emotional skills. And one might also argue that these skills are better developed at some ages (of the child) than others. For the child who is lacking in friendship, it would seem important to know *when* the effects of friendlessness can first be observed, whether the effects of friendlessness are *cumulative*, and whether the presence of a friend at a given time when friendlessness has been a pattern in the past can make a difference.

On another note, Question 1 should alert the researcher to the possibility that not all children are in equal need of friendship. Research on individual differences in temperament or personality suggests that children are more or less sociable and more or less person- or object-oriented. In the case of unsociable, object-oriented children and adolescents, will a friendship truly matter in establishing or maintaining a strong sense of self-worth or a trajectory of social and emotional normalcy? Those researchers who have studied the putative “protective” or mediational role that friendship presence plays in mid-to-late childhood and early adolescence have yet to address this issue (e.g., Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, and Bukowski, 1999). Perhaps then, friendship matters more for some than others. Who those “others” are remains to be answered.

Lastly, it is commonly reported that approximately 65-75 percent of children and young adolescents have at least one friend (e.g., Howes, 1983; Parker and Asher, 1993). Assuredly, it cannot be the case that the remaining 25-35 percent of “friendless” children are presenting with, or are at risk for future psychological problems. And it is highly likely that many of these “friendless” children actually have a best friend who is not attending the same school at which data were collected (e.g., the best friend may live in the same neighborhood or participate in the same play group, or be active in a highly meaningful artistic or athletic group); but this raises a methodological issue that is beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice it to suggest that if friendship matters, it should certainly be studied in all milieus within which the child or adolescent spends meaningful time.

Question 2. Does it Matter Who the Child’s or Adolescent’s Friend Happens to Be?

Thus far, researchers have suggested that children are attracted to, and become best friends with others who resemble them racially, behaviorally, emotionally, attitudinally, and developmentally (Aboud & Mendelson, 1998; Rubin, Lynch, Coplan, Rose-Krasnor, & Booth, 1994; Vitaro, Tremblay, Kerr, Pagani, & Bukowski, 1997). Aggressive children are more likely than non-aggressive children to have other aggressive children as best friends; shy children are more likely to have shy children as best friends;

victims are best friends with other victims; girls (boys) are more likely to have girls (boys) than boys (girls) as best friends.

Given that homophily appears to be the rule rather than the exception, one must ask whether having a best friend who is aggressive, or shy, or victimized serves to amplify extant difficulties or whether the friendship serves, in some way, as a protective factor. There are relatively few *developmental* studies which allow conclusions to be drawn about the exacerbating or sheltering or developmentally augmenting roles of friendships of those whose best friends deviate from the norm in some characteristic manner. Thus, it would seem useful for researchers to examine the ages at which the behavioral characteristics of the best friends begin to matter insofar as relationship quality and individual outcomes are concerned. And with regard to age of friendship partner, it would also seem worthwhile investigating whether a friendship comprising an older and younger partner can prove advantageous or dangerous. As individuals enter adolescence and the high school years, mixed-age friendships become increasingly normative. Yet, there are virtually no studies on this topic!

Lastly, there has been very little research on the topic of friendship competence. Who are the children who become the best of best friend partners? Who are the children demonstrating supportiveness, responsiveness, trustworthiness, and positive affect in their friendships? Are these children equally effective across all partner characteristic types? Can a truly competent best friend serve as an ameliorative agent for a less well-endowed partner? If so, when can such dyadic pairings best demonstrate positive growth and development? These are all questions that currently require our attention.

Question 3. Does it Matter if the Quality of the Child’s, Adolescent’s, or Adult’s Friendship is Relationally Rich or Impecunious?

The answer to this question seems obvious. Certainly, a friendship that offers most of the services of friendship noted above, and offers those services well, should aid both interpersonal and individual growth and development — perhaps even across the lifespan. Remarkably, there are few data (e.g., Berndt, 1999; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996) on this topic. Furthermore, the data that do exist are most often drawn from the *perceptions* of the friendship members. This raises the issue of whether it is objectively appraised and observed friendship quality that best captures the meaningfulness of the relationship to each partner, or whether it is subjectively appraised friendship quality from the perspective of each partner in the friendship dyad that represents the most significant index.

If one’s friendship is objectively viewed as insensitive, unresponsive, conflict-laden, emotionally vacuous, or interpersonally impoverished, and if the individual views the relationship as supportive, trusting, fun, and generally worthwhile, what are we left with? I suppose that it all depends on the questions being asked. If, for example, we are interested in friendship longevity, the objective appraisal may prove more advantageous. If we are interested in the significance of friendship for self-worth and internalized

“possibility that not all children are in equal need of friendship”



thoughts and feelings of well-being, the latter may suffice. However, the subjective appraisal of friendship quality as “good” when it is not may have negative consequences for both partners. And one would have to ascertain whether both partners view the relationship in the same way. If *both* partners view the friendship as “good” when it is not, the relationship may become increasingly dangerous to each partner (as in an abusive relationship or a bully-victim relationship or a dominance-submissive relationship); ultimately, the partners may come to believe that all relationships should resemble the best friendship thereby leading to future dysfunctional relationship formation and quality. If one partner views the friendship as “good,” but the other perceives it to be less than acceptable, the relationship is not likely to be stable and the interactions between individuals may prove less-than-positive.

The bottom line is that researchers must begin to examine qualitative aspects of friendships relations both objectively as well as intrasubjectively, and in the case of the latter, it would make sense to capture the views of *both* partners – especially if one is interested in assessing *relationship* quality. Researchers who are assessing relationship quality from the perspective of a given *individual* must understand precisely what it is that they are measuring.

Conclusions

In this brief essay, I have indicated that there are at least three central questions that require the attention of researchers who are interested in the study of friendship. Needless to say, there are many other questions worth posing. For example, do children’s conceptions of friendship develop in the same ways in different cultures? Does friendship matter more in some cultures than in others? In collectivistic cultures within which relationships form the very basis for developmental growth, are friendships of greater significance than in cultures espousing values of independence, individualism, and inter-individual competition?

I have purposely neglected to offer views on the significance of friendship among adult and “senior” populations. Given that this is an area I have not studied, any bon-mots on the matter must simply be viewed as “opinions.” But having witnessed many people of my generation lose a parent, or a spouse, it has become of some interest to me to ask whether qualitatively rich friendships can buffer the surviving partner from emotional and social difficulty. Clearly then, the field of friendship research will be guided by far more than the three questions I have posed. But at least, we have a starting point!

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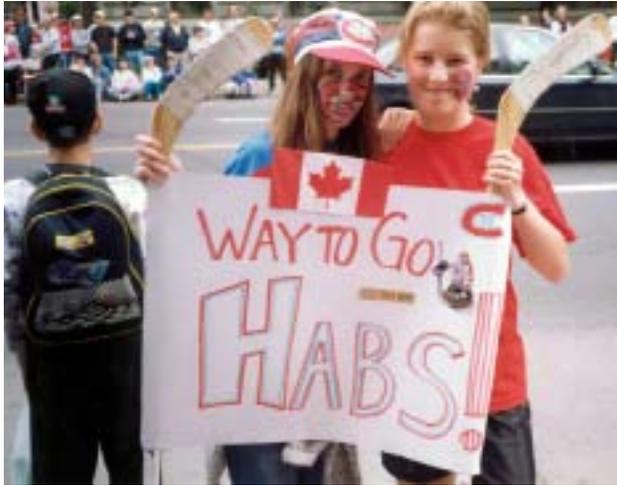
Research on Children’s and Adolescents’ Friendships: Four Old and New Questions that Deserve our Attention

William M. Bukowski

Department of Psychology, Concordia University

E-mail: william.bukowski@concordia.ca

The study of friendship has been a constant component of the literature on social development. Starting with Monroe’s (1898) paper on the features that distinguish children’s view of their friends from the view of other peers, developmental psychologists have been interested in the features and effects of children’s relationships with their friends. In parallel to the overall increased interest in the effects of relationships on development, the study of friendship has been most active in the past 20 years. Compared with the study of the parent-infant relationship, which has been largely guided by well developed concepts such as those taken from attachment theory, the inspiration for research on friendship has been less closely tied to specific theories. Instead research on friendship has been motivated by broad ideas taken from a diverse set of theories, such as social learning theory and Sullivan’s (1953) interpersonal model of development. The ideas taken from these theories have been the basis of many studies. One naturally wishes that these studies would have provided clear and comprehensive answers to the most challenging questions about friendship and its effects on development. Nevertheless, the literature on friendship remains somewhat sporadic and many of even the most



One does need a sociometric measure to know that these two supporters of the Montreal Canadiens are good friends.

basic questions have not been addressed in a thorough and rigorous manner. In this commentary, I point to four basic questions about friendship that need attention. They are: (a) what is friendship and how should it be measured?; (b) what accounts for attraction?; (c) does friendship promote or result from well being? and (d) why do aggressive friends protect at risk children from victimization by peers? For each of these questions I try to point quickly to what we know, what we do not know, and how we can get answers to the questions we need.

Question 1: What is Friendship and How Should it be Measured?

Nearly every study of friendship asks at least two of the following three questions in its assessment of friends (Hartup, 1995, 1996). The first is (a) is a child part of a friendship?, and (b) what is the friend like? and (c) what are the characteristics of the friendship relation? The second and third of these three questions are typically asked only when a positive answer has been given to the first. This practice allows researchers to first see if a child has a friend and then to see what the friendship is like. Typically, the assessment of whether a friendship exists is operationally defined as whether any of a child's friendship choices are reciprocated using either a restricted or generous criterion (i.e., whether all choice or just the first two or three should be used). The attraction of this definition is its simplicity: no one seems to oppose the implicit notion that reciprocated liking is a basic defining feature of friendship. But this simplicity may be the definition's weakness. In so far as children are likely to differ from each other in their motivations and criteria for liking, the operationalization of friendship becomes fuzzier than what we might want it to be. This problem is compounded by the fact that the criteria that children may use to define a friendship may differ from the processes and characteristics that are ascribed to friendship in the theoretical accounts of Sullivan and others. Moreover, it is conceivable that there may be many forms of friends, each valuable in its own way. The use of friendship quality scales (e.g., Parker & Asher, 1993; Bukowski, Hoza, & Boivin, 1994) may help us resolve some of these problems. So far, though, no one, to my knowledge, has created a system that defines friendship in a richer and more

interesting manner than simply assessing reciprocated liking. A creative solution is needed.

Question 2. What Accounts for Attraction?

Studies of interpersonal attraction between peers during childhood have been remarkably sparse. To be sure, there has been a seemingly endless number of studies of the factors that influence how much a child is generally liked by others. Nevertheless, we still know remarkably little about the reasons why one particular child is drawn to a specific peer. The two major models of attraction have either emphasized general patterns of attraction or have emphasized the importance of similarity on a dyadic level. The use of similarity as a model of attraction has attracted some attention (e.g., Hamm, 2000) but the model has not been pushed very hard or analyzed very carefully. This inattention is surprising given the ease with which similarity between peers can be studied, especially by exploiting the advantages of modern day statistical techniques such as multilevel modeling.

Researchers who want to study similarity as a process underlying attraction can benefit from a largely neglected set of studies conducted nearly 30 years ago that inadvertently took a developmental perspective. Duck (1973) showed that the role of similarity varied across the stages of a relationship. In a study of young adults, similarity on personality traits seemed to be most important for friends who had just met each other relationships while similarity on more fundamental characteristics, such as the use of particular social constructs, was more important for friends who had been acquainted for a longer time. An implicit feature of Duck's interpretation of these findings is that the features that initially bring people together will differ from the features that keep them together. A further implied point of these findings is that the dimensions on which similarity matters for friendship may vary with age. Gottman's (1983) report that the achievement of common ground is critical for the formation of friendship during early childhood referred mostly to activities. Perhaps as children grow older and the processes of person perception become more powerful and more prominent, friends may need to find common ground in how they think about others. In this way the importance of similarity as a factor underlying friendship may vary with age as well as across the course of a relationship.

Interest in the processes of attraction is not due only to theoretical concerns. In so far as the friendship context can have important negative repercussions for a child's subsequent behavior on dimensions such as aggression, knowing the processes that bring children into friendships is critically important for the development of effective interventions. Without knowing why some children are drawn to particular peers who may have a negative effect on them, preventing the formation of these friendships will be difficult.

Question 3. Does Friendship Promote or Result From Well Being?

The wording of this question is actually part of the problem. A strong motivation for studying friendship is the argument taken from Sullivan and others that friendship promotes well being. Although there is evidence that measures of friendship are correlated with measures of well being, well



known interpretive problems prevent us from knowing if one “causes” the other or if this association is spurious. Tom Berndt, in his time honored paper on the features and effects of early adolescent friendship (Berndt, 1982), points out that just as it is likely that having a friend will contribute to one’s sense of well-being, it is equally likely that having a positive view of one’s self increases one’s attractiveness and facilitates friendship. Perhaps due to the desire to focus exclusively on the effect of friendship, the possibility (or probability?) that a pattern of reciprocal causality exists between friendship and adjustment appears to have been overlooked. The neglect of this topic surprises me given the large number of people who have longitudinal samples that include measures of friendship and measures of well being. The path analysis needed to examine these patterns hardly seems to present many challenges. A paper based on this analysis would interest many readers. I hope someone gives us an answer soon (and I hope they send the paper into the IJBD!!).

“is friendship more important for some children than for others?”

Of course the answer to these questions is just the beginning of a larger project. Is friendship more important for some children than for others and which characteristics or conditions moderate its importance? Does well-being mediate (i.e. explain) the association between family environments and adequate functioning with peers? The association between friendship and well-being is likely to be complex and friendship is likely to interact with other variables. Brave researchers will happily and profitably pursue these important questions.

Question 4. Why do Aggressive Friends Protect at Risk Children from Victimization by Peers?

Some findings are hard for us to accept as people because they contradict our values or our impressions of how people ought to live their lives. Consider a finding from a well done study of the conditions that affect whether friendship will protect an at risk child from victimization by peers. Hodges, Malone, and Perry (1997) reported that the protective effects of friendship were stronger when an at risk child’s friend was high in externalizing rather than low in such problems. Hodges et al. provide a plausible explanation of this result, specifically that children may hesitate to victimize a child if the child has a friend who might fight back. The “difficulty” with this finding is that it implies that the best policy for an at risk child is to befriend a bully.

Perhaps there is another explanation that diminishes the emphasis on aggression and increases our understanding of how friendship functions within the broader peer system. The explanation offered by Hodges et al. attributes the protective effect of friendship to a characteristic of the friend per se. An alternative explanation is that the effects associated with the friend’s externalizing problems may be a proxy for the friend’s status in the group. Recent research has shown that leadership or status in the peer group is related to aggression (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004). Specifically, high status children, who are likely to control the functioning of the group, are known to show elevated levels of aggression. In so far as victimization is known to be related to processes of group functioning, it is conceivable

that the protective effect of friendship does not result from the friend’s level of aggression but is instead due to the friend’s status or leadership role in the group.

The exploration of this hypothesis would not only expand our understanding of how individual, dyadic and group processes work together to affect an outcome but it would provide a clearer (and more palatable?) answer to the question of what kind of friend an at risk child should seek.

Summary

The point of departure for these comments is the claim that even though friendship has been studied by developmental psychologists for more than a century, clear answers are not available to many of our most basic questions such as how we should measure friendship, what explains attraction, how friendship and well being are inter-related, and why friendship should protect at risk children from victimization. These questions deserve empirical scrutiny and the subsequent development of theory. Without clear answers to them, friendship research will remain just a few steps beyond the 1890’s.

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A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Friendship Research

Monika Keller

Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin

E-mail: keller@mpib-berlin.mpg.de

Research on friendship has been a concern of developmental psychology during the past three decades. My discussion of this topic will be focused on reasoning about friendship as a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that must be studied in cultural and interdisciplinary context.

Friendship: Development in a Historical Perspective

Friendship is a relationship that has existed across historical times in all types of societies. In developmental psychology, Piaget's classical distinction between voluntary and symmetrical peer- and friendship relationships and the asymmetrical and—due to its biological nature—compulsory parent-child relationship is still valid. However, given the multiplicity of friendship conceptions and functions that friendship has served in different societies, only core aspects of the distinction between these two types of relationships seem to be universally valid while others vary across time and societies (Beer, 2001; Pahl, 2000). Far from being voluntary, friendships in the past were at times highly regulated, contained an asymmetrical structure or were constituted as a blood relationship resembling kinship. On the other hand, historical changes have brought about in the Western world more symmetrical parent-child relationships and modalities of interaction that were traditionally reserved as a characteristic of friendship. This is the reason why some researchers have voiced doubts about the idealization of the two types of relationships. A better understanding of the complex interconnections between friendship and societal conditions therefore seems necessary.

Friendship: Development in a Cross-Cultural Perspective

Many studies of children's understanding of friendship expectations and conceptions have documented age-related regularities in the course of development. However, most of these studies have been performed in Western countries. Therefore it is a question for future research to find out what core characteristics of friendship are and what varies in different societies.

Given the numerous studies on moral development from a cross-cultural perspective, the neglect of friendship as a topic of cross-cultural research is astonishing. While there are cultural similarities in the concept of friendship in different societies, there are also cultural differences in the meaning and function of friendship (Krappmann, 1996). We have but little knowledge of the meaning of friendship in non-Western

industrialized societies and in more traditional societies. Given that societies are not homogeneous, the definition of friendship varies further within societies and according to gender. It seems that only in (modern) Western societies close friendship is a personal relationship mostly free from societal influence. The question can be raised whether the notion of emotional intimacy, that is so characteristic especially for adolescent friendships in Western cultures, is typical for other types of societies as well. In subsistence economies, where the distribution of resources is not guaranteed, the help of others is needed and friendships are more instrumentally oriented towards material exchange (Beer, 2001). Similarly, it is a question whether, or how, the concept of relationship autonomy (Selman, 1980) comes to be established in less individualistic Asian societies (Keller, 2004).

A Developmental and Cross-Cultural Research Project

My colleagues and I have studied the development of expectations in parent-child and friendship relationships in cultural context. The same age groups from childhood (7 and 9 years) to adolescence (12 and 15 years) and young adulthood (19 years) were interviewed individually in different Western societies and in China, using cross-sectional (former West- and East Germany, Russia, USA, Japan), longitudinal (Iceland) and both cross-sectional and longitudinal (China) comparisons (Keller, 1996, 2003; Keller, Edelstein, Schmid, Fang & Fang, 1998). We assessed friendship conceptions in general and in reasoning about a morally relevant friendship dilemma that could be interpreted in different ways. A protagonist (self) must decide whether to keep a promise to a best friend or to accept an interesting invitation from a third child who is new in class (Selman, 1980). Participants had to define the problem, reason about a choice and its alternative, about the consequences of choices for self and others, and about strategies to compensate for (negative) consequences.

Our findings reveal a complex interaction of development, domain and content of reasoning and culture. Both Western and Chinese participants used prototypical stage-related arguments referring to playing and sharing at the first level, helping and supporting at the second level, trust and intimacy at the third level, and autonomy and integration of friendship in a wider system of relationships at level four. However, culture influenced the developmental dynamics in the emergence of levels in different topics of general and situation-specific reasoning (Keller, 2003; Keller & Wood, 1989), as well as content aspects of reasoning in the friendship dilemma: While there are many similarities in the meaning and function of friendship, different societal conditions also give rise to different salencies of certain aspects of friendship and of the dilemma-situation. Consistent with our knowledge of Chinese culture and socialization (Bond, 1996), Chinese participants emphasized the moral quality of close friendship and the connection of friendship and society more than Western participants did and were more altruistic towards the third person. Western participants focused predominantly on interaction qualities and promise-keeping and, in particular, in late adolescence on relationship intimacy (Keller, 2004, Keller et al., 1998).

“cultural differences in the meaning and function of friendship”



Interestingly, cultural differences in the content of social and moral reasoning about choices were greater during childhood than in adolescence when close friendship was equally important for Western and Chinese adolescents. This greater similarity may be due to universal biological and social factors in puberty. The time-lagged longitudinal comparison in China documents that societal changes and radical modernization processes during the past two decades have indeed influenced the interpretation of the action dilemma (Keller, Edelstein, Gummerum, Fang & Fang, 2003). While Chinese participants in the cross-sectional study were more altruistic compared to the Western participants, the longitudinally assessed participants became more similar to Western participants in their emphasis on personal hedonistic interests. Overall, these findings reveal direct societal influence on personal relationships. A task of future research is to further disentangle the complex relationship between development, culture and historical time.

Friendship and Moral Development in a Cultural Perspective

Friendship has frequently been characterized as a special moral relationship that fosters moral goodness in persons (Blum, 1980; Bukowski & Sippola, 1996). It is seen as a special relationship in which children come to understand and to emotionally share the perspective of another person. Adolescence in particular is seen as an important phase in which a moral self is established (Keller, 2004; Keller & Edelstein, 1991; Youniss, 1980).

The fact that children become increasingly more sensitive to moral aspects of friendship has mostly been treated as a developmental phenomenon. But as our own and other research in moral development has shown (Keller, 2004), there are individual and cultural differences in sensitivity to the moral aspects of relationships and situations. This is particularly important when complex situations have to be interpreted, and choices have to be made in situations that involve conflicting motives, such as selfish or other-oriented motives. This raises questions about the nature of the relationship between general knowledge about friendship expectations (friendship ideology) and the situation-specific and motivated use of this knowledge in situations of choice or moral conflict. A person may have a conception of friendship—how it ought to be—and still act differently in a specific situation. Friendship research may face the same problems here that have troubled research on moral development and moral action.

While being morally sensitive in friendship, persons may be morally insensitive to persons outside of their group of close relationships. We know little about friendship in authoritarian groups, such as right wing (Edelstein, in press) or child soldier groups, in which obedience to rigidly defined group norms may have little in common with the personalized symmetrical relationship structures that are assumed to foster moral development. We also have to understand more how friendships can become deviant from moral standards, what provides protection against deviant norms and how persons acquire the capacity to resist such deviation. In Kohlberg's (1984) theory of moral development

the integration of the self in close relationships represented a developmental stage that must be superseded in order to establish a morality of equal rights. It may be a task of future research to integrate the morality of friendship with a universal morality that is at the heart of the concept of human rights and a concept of personal autonomy that characterizes a moral self (Blasi, 1993).

Conclusion

Recently, a further discipline has entered the field of friendship research. Studies with primates have revealed reciprocity behavior that is similar to friendship interactions. It will be a fascinating task to explore similarities and differences in humans and primates relationships (Silk, in press).

My comments should have made it clear that friendship is a relationship that results from both social and personal conditions. In order to understand friendship it must be studied as a diverse and multifaceted phenomenon among psychologists, sociologists, historians, anthropologists and even biologists.

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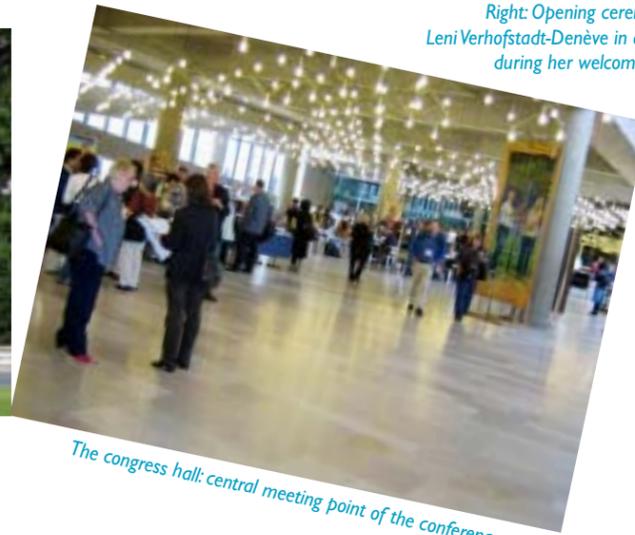
Introductory speech from the ISSBD president: Rainer Silbereisen



Poster hall: More than 200 posters a day with ample possibility to discussions



The congress centre in the green



The congress hall: central meeting point of the conference



Right: Opening ceremony: Leni Verhofstadt-Denève in action during her welcome talk



Wonderful music by Yanna Penson (13 year) playing Mozart, Schubert and Chopin during the opening ceremony



Above: Caroline Braet and Marcel Van Aken, organizers of a successful pre-conference on Developmental Psychopathology



Left: Happy Avshalom Caspi and Ken Rubin after Avshaloms' keynote lecture



Suman Verma (in traditional Indian outfit) relaxing after her keynote speech



Left: Humans can learn from primates in the strategies to solve social conflicts. Scientific presentation by primatologist Frans de Waal



Left: More than 1300 participants from 53 countries; here Leni addressing the audience in the opening ceremony



Behind the scenes: the editors of the "ISSBD Daily Mirror"- journal



A walk through the colourful botanic garden linking the two conference-sites.



Discussion groups during the successful "scientific get together" meetings



Relaxing coffee breaks in between the lectures (with sweets and saxophone music)

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Process Approaches to Children’s Friendships: What We Know and Where We Are Going

William A. Corsaro
 Department of Sociology, Indiana University
 Bloomington, Indiana, USA
 E-mail: corsaro@indiana.edu

Most research on children’s friendships takes either an outcome approach (friendships viewed as static entities over time) or a process approach (friendships regarded as socially constructed through collective actions) (Winterhoff, 1997). The outcome assumption articulates well with traditional models of human development, which stress the individual child’s movement from immaturity to adult competence.

While not in opposition to the outcome approach, in the process approach, friendship formation “involves recognizing its developmental fluidity *along with* its genesis as a socio-culturally promoted construction and explaining its temporal flow within the main current (system) of socio-culturally promoted activities and skills (Winterhoff, 1997, p. 227).

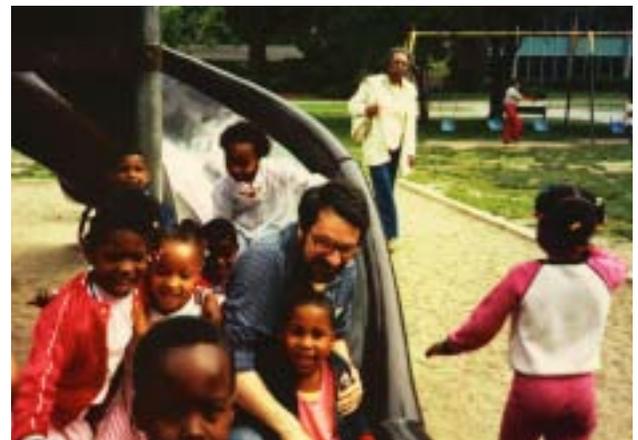
“The process approach has generated a rich tradition of research on children’s friendships”

The process approach has generated a rich tradition of research on children’s friendships in psychology, sociology and anthropology (Adler & Adler, 1998; Corsaro, 2003; Goodwin, 1990; Rizzo, 1989). Here I summarize contributions, challenges, and new directions for the process approach by focusing on three main areas of research: studies of early peer relations and friendships; comparative studies of friendship processes across class, race, gender, and cultural groups; and the making and keeping of friendships over time and across transitional periods in childhood.

Early Friendships

When children’s friendships actually begin is an open question. However, we do know that toddlers engage in routines that demonstrate shared emotional satisfaction. Lokken (2000) provides examples of Norwegian toddlers making music together and a “bathroom society,” what she calls a toddling style. In the bathroom society, several toddlers bang plastic cups, boats, and their hands simultaneously on a bench in the bathroom. Then they rise to sit on the bench next to each other, and then simultaneously rest their chins in their hands, leaning forward on the bench. Sandra sings “Oh we are us.” “We are us,” Lisa sings, after a tiny pause, and to a different tune. Lokken notes that although, “the ‘We’ was uttered by Sandra and confirmed by Lisa, the communal, playful actions, vocalizations, and smiles in general were part of this piece of ‘music’ performed by the four children, living through a ‘We’ in vivid present” (Lokken, 2000, p. 540).

Corsaro and Molinari (1990) identified a similar routine among Italian toddlers in which they arranged and then walked on top of small chairs from one part of a room to another in a child care center. The play took on embellished variations over the school year and gave the children a sense of control in the setting as the teachers allowed this normally seen “misuse” of the chairs to occur as long as the children were careful in their play.



Bill Corsaro and Some Friends



The simple participant structure of these play routines corresponds to a central value of peer cultures: doing things together. Adults, including some child researchers, tend to view children's activities from a "utility point of view," which focuses on learning and social and cognitive development. Young children do not know the world from this point of view. "For them," notes Strandell, "the course of events of which they are part has as an immediate impact on their existence as children here in space and now in time" (1994, p. 8). It is for this reason that we adults seldom truly appreciate the strong emotional satisfaction children get from producing and participating in what seems to us to be simple repetitive play.

When children are somewhat older (between three and five) they not only engage in shared routines of this type, but also talk about friendship. Shared play is verbally marked with the oft heard phrase "We're friends, right?" References to friendship can also be used to dissuade other children not involved from trying to enter the play "You're not our friend" or to control the nature of shared play via threats to friendship, "If you don't play over here where I am, I won't be your friend" (Corsaro, 2003).

We see then through both shared action and talk that friendship among preschool children is closely tied to shared actions. Friends are kids you play and share with and such sharing and disputes over how to share are strongly emotionally laden. However, we also know that ecological features of preschool settings are very important in early friendships. In some settings where children spend long periods of time together even children as young as five years old develop highly sophisticated conceptions of friends as someone who cares about and supports another (Corsaro, 1985). There is a clear need for research on children in a wider range of settings beyond the typical preschool class of 18 or 20 children to more intimate settings in homes and play groups to understand more fully young children's participation in and understanding of friendship processes.

Comparative Studies of Friendship Processes

Most comparative work on friendships in children has focused on gender differences in friendships. Much of the research has found gender segregation emerging around age five and nearly complete segregation by from ages six through 10 (Adler & Adler, 1998, Maccoby, 1999). According to Maccoby (1990), gender segregation begins when girls prefer same-sex playmates because boys become less responsive to girls' input and suggestions as they age and therefore are less compatible for sustained play. Thorne (1993) also found a good deal of gender segregation among elementary school children and related the findings to differences in play preferences and to the fact that both boys and girls were often teased for playing with the opposite sex. However, Thorne did find consistent exceptions to segregation and that certain children (both boys and girls) played with the opposite sex. They also engaged in what Thorne calls borderwork in which the play itself both challenged and reinforced gender differences.

Other studies challenged the findings of gender separation by arguing that most studies are based on American white, middle class children. Goodwin (1990) found a good bit of cross-gender play among African-

American elementary school children. Studies in other cultures support Goodwin's findings (see Aydt and Corsaro, 2003, for a comparison of Italian, African-American, and American white children and Evaldsson, 1993 for a study of Swedish children). These researchers argue that to appreciate the complexity of children's friendships we have to take seriously the social situations in which friendship and skills develop. When we do so, we see how the gender structure and size of the group, the amount of time a group of kids share their lives, the nature of the preschool and elementary school curriculum, and the social and cultural values of the group and of the wider society are all related to children's friendships. However, it is not easy or advisable to try to pull these factors from their social moorings and try to measure in some way how they affect children's friendships. Instead, we need to appreciate the situated nature of friendship processes, make ourselves part of these situations, and see, feel and try our best to understand what kids' friendships are like in a wide variety of social and cultural circumstances.

Making and Keeping Friends

Just as it is important to study and understand children's friendship processes in a variety of children's social and cultural spaces, it is also important to investigate friendship processes over time. Most research on children's friendship processes conducted in child care settings, preschools, and elementary schools is longitudinal, in that groups of children are observed and interviewed over a period of several months and often the entire school term. As a result, it is possible to trace how particular friendships are cultivated, nourished, and, in some cases, ended. It is also possible to document the nature of differentiation in the groups studied by identifying the development of clique structures in friendship groups.

However we know much less about how children make and keep friends over key transition points in their lives. Transition points often reflect children moving from one educational institution to another, for example, from preschool to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, and so on. Most research has been on children's transition to kindergarten in the United States, and this work primarily focuses on children's overall adjustment to formal schooling and seldom considers friendship processes.

In work on Italian children, Corsaro and his colleagues (Corsaro, Molinari, Hadley & Sugioka, 2003) carried out a longitudinal ethnography of a group of preschoolers' transition to elementary school. In most Italian preschools children stay together in the same group with the same teachers for the entire three years of preschool. This fact was important in the children's and teachers' production of a highly integrated community. This community was evident in the lack of status differentiation in the peer culture: most of the children played with a wide range of peers. Although there was some gender separation in the children's play contacts in preschool, this division was developed much less fully than those described in studies of kindergarten-age in the United States. Italian elementary schools are structured like preschools, with children joining a group with two teachers and remaining in that group usually with the same teachers for all five years of elementary school. The preschool

"We have to take seriously the social situations in which friendship and skills develop"

children studied by Corsaro et al. (2003) joined one of four first grade classes and the research involved observations and interviews over the entire period of elementary school.

In the four first grade classrooms and in the peer culture in general, Corsaro et al (2003) saw similarities, extensions, and divergences in friendship processes in relation to the preschool. For the most part, the individual classroom and peer cultures were differentiated more strongly by gender and status as the children went about keeping old friends and making new ones. Yet this differentiation was buffered in at least three of the classes by elements of the Italian early education system. The practice of keeping children together in the same group with the same teachers, as well as the emphasis placed on discussion and negotiation, worked against rigid boundaries and exclusive friendship groups (Corsaro et. al, 2003, p.288). Over time in elementary school, differentiation in friendship groups increased somewhat in all classes in second to fourth grade, with stronger friendships within individual classes. However, by fifth grade friendship groups were less differentiated by gender and status and there were many more friendships across the four classes. These results differ from research on elementary school children in the United States which found more differentiation in friendship groups over time in the schools (Adler & Adler, 1988).

More studies of children's transitions from one educational institution to another are needed. Yet, many children have to move from one school to another at the same level of education due to family re-location for a variety of reasons including: upward or downward economic mobility; demands of parental occupation; and divorce and other family instability. Children from lower social economic backgrounds are more likely to experience such relocations. Frequent moves plus other family challenges can negatively affect their friendships and academic performance (Rosier, 2000). Adults enjoy the freedom to maintain and extend friendship contacts beyond the particular activities and locations that initially brought them together. Young children, however, often lack the control over their lives that would allow them to take advantage of these opportunities. Clearly more research is needed on how children's friendships are influenced by dislocations over which they have little, if any, control.

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COMMENTARY: Intervening to Promote Friendship: Experimental Tests of Hypotheses about Fundamental Skills and Processes

Steven R. Asher

Department of Psychology: Social and Health Sciences
Duke University, Durham, NC, USA
E-mail: asher@duke.edu

and

Kristina L. McDonald

Department of Psychology: Social and Health Sciences
Duke University, Durham, NC, USA
E-mail: kistina.mcdonald@duke.edu

The authors of these fascinating essays direct the field toward important unanswered research questions about friendship. Here, we will highlight a research paradigm that has been particularly neglected in prior studies; namely interventions designed to better understand fundamental processes while simultaneously helping children who have friendship problems. There is still considerable wisdom in Kurt Lewin's dictum that one of the best ways to understand a phenomenon is to try to change it. We recommend intervention research not only for humanitarian reasons, but also because such research can provide experimental tests of hypotheses that heretofore have only been studied correlational. Through the use of experimental paradigms, in which children are randomly assigned to intervention versus appropriate comparison conditions, hypotheses can be tested about the role of specific skills and processes in the domain of friendship. We believe that the essays in this Newsletter can inform future intervention efforts in significant ways.



The Case for Intervention

As essay authors note, friendship offers children various benefits. Besides providing companionship, validation, opportunities for self-disclosure, emotional security, reliable alliances, and help, friendship appears to buffer children against various socio-emotional problems. Children with reciprocated friendships have higher self-esteem than children without friends (e.g. Bishop & Inderbitzen, 1995) and are less lonely (Parker & Asher, 1993; Renshaw & Brown, 1993). Furthermore, children with behavior patterns or family circumstances often associated with being victimized are less likely to be victimized if they have friends (Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, & Bukowski, 1999; Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2000). Children with friends and children with high quality friendships (e.g. higher levels of aid and validation and less conflict) report less loneliness (Parker & Asher, 1993), greater liking for school (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996), and better school adjustment (Ladd & Price, 1987). In sum, the existing developmental-descriptive research on friendship sends a strong message that children who lack friends or who participate in lower quality friendships may well be a group at risk who could benefit from direct intervention aimed at improving their peer relationships.

What Friendship Skills and Processes should be Emphasized?

Interestingly, peer relationship interventions to date have been almost exclusively focused on promoting peer acceptance rather than on friendship. Furthermore, even in the many social skills interventions that succeed in promoting improved peer acceptance, gains in friendship participation do not result (for reviews, see Asher, Parker, & Walker, 1996; Bierman, 2004). Although the rationale for intervening to promote friendship is clear, a major consideration involves deciding on the skills or processes that should be targeted in a friendship intervention. In their essay, Sharabany and Schneider advise that interventions should be theory-driven and apply both known principles as well as test new concepts about the skills and processes that are involved in friendship. In an initial attempt to formulate a conceptual frame for friendship intervention, Asher et al. (1996) proposed 10 distinct social tasks that children need to be proficient in if they are to be successful in making and keeping friends. Evidence concerning the relevance of two of the ten tasks (conflict management and helping) comes from recent research in which children's task specific strategies and goals were found to predict friendship participation and friendship quality, controlling for children's level of peer acceptance (Rose & Asher, 1999; 2004). Keller's conceptualization of friendship as a moral domain could greatly inform the content of a social tasks curriculum. For example, even how children respond to the task of initiating a relationship has a moral aspect, and the relevance of moral development to tasks such as resolving conflict or forgiving a friend's transgression is easy to see.

Rubin and Bukowski, in their essays, offer ideas that may suggest a very different way of conceptualizing the focus of friendship intervention. They point to evidence that homophily (similarity) is an important consideration in friendship formation and maintenance. This implies that children could be helped by carefully arranging group composition or by teaching children to pursue similar others as friends. It is possible, though, that homophily may not be as strong an influence as the actual

behavioral transactions that take place between two people. Furthermore, it may be the ability to create a *perceived similarity* (the shared perception that two people are on "the same wave length") that may be more critical than the extent to which people match on certain measurable features (cf Gottman's, 1983, research on how children come to find "common ground" and "hit it off"). Just as social skills hypotheses can be tested experimentally, so too could hypotheses about the role of homophily.

The Role of Culture and Context

The authors of the current essays emphasize the importance of culture and social context in the study of friendships. It is a mistake to assume that all friendship tasks are culturally universal or that they apply equally across a variety of contextual circumstances or, for that matter, stages of a relationship. For example, as Corsaro's essay implies, the need to master the task of friendship initiation may become less critical when children stay with the same classmates over a five-year elementary school career. Not all cultures require children to cope with the regular comings and goings of a highly mobile society or a school that regularly "shuffles" group membership. Monika Keller's essay also speaks

to the need to conceptualize friendship tasks in a cultural context. As she notes, going back to Piaget, there is a general view that friendship is a voluntary relationship. Emphasizing the voluntary nature of friendships may lead researchers to emphasize processes such as conflict management that if not handled well could lead to friendship dissolution. However, in some cultures and historical circumstances friendships may be more obligatory, making certain friendship tasks less central. Indeed, it is possible that even within societies that emphasize the voluntary nature of friendship, friendships reach a stage where the parties feel such a strong sense of obligation that the need to faithfully carry out certain tasks thereby diminishes. For example, honoring the principle of equity and reciprocity between friends may become less important when people are in long-term, highly committed friendships.

The Role of Motivation

Additionally, when planning interventions it is important to consider the point made by both Bukowski and Rubin that not all children may be equally motivated to have friends. It would be important to examine whether the effects of intervention vary as a function of children's motivation or interest in friendship. Work in progress suggests that there is considerable variability in responses when children are asked whether they would like help with peer relationship problems (Asher & Paquette, in preparation). Data on children's desire for help also raises an interesting ethical dilemma concerning the appropriateness of friendship interventions for children who are not especially interested. Should we think of teaching friendship skills like we do reading, namely that everyone gets reading instruction in school regardless of their interest? Or is friendship instruction more like an enrichment curriculum that children should select freely?

Intervention Research to Test the Risk Hypothesis

In this commentary we have suggested that friendship interventions could provide *experimental* evidence concerning the relevance of specific skills and processes to friendship formation or maintenance. Intervention also has a role to play in testing the widespread view that having friends is a protective factor and that

"...children who lack friends or who participate in lower quality friendships may well be a group at risk"

lacking friends is a risk factor. In his essay, Bukowski raised a key issue concerning the direction of causality between friendship and well being. If friendship leads to well being and not just the reverse, facilitating children's success at friendship should improve their odds of having satisfying and productive lives. This type of critical experiment has yet to be conducted.

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“Research on children's friendships is still somewhat scattered”

analytic work of Peter Blos on the role of peers in adolescents' individuation process, through Harry Stack Sullivan on the provision that peer relations and friendships may offer; to symbolic interactionists such as Cooley and Mead, who assumed that persons use other persons' views to define themselves. In addition, cognitive developmentalists such as Piaget, Vygotsky and Selman stressed the importance of peer relations and friendships and Bandura in his social learning theory emphasized the way that peers may model and reinforce a person's behavior.

In the three contributions on which this commentary is based, Sharabany and Schneider, Corsaro, and Keller build upon these theories and, at the same time, all make clear that, despite this long history and recent attempts (e.g., Furman, 1993), research on children's friendships is still somewhat scattered and lacks coherence. A comprehensive framework seems to be what the authors in this special issue call for.

A heuristic perspective that has always seemed useful to me is Robert Hinde's (1997; see also Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998) description of various levels of social complexity. In this perspective, six levels are described (psychological processes, individual behaviors, interactions, relationships, groups and society) that continually influence each other. In addition, these levels are embedded in the physical environment and the socio-cultural structure. Framing research on friendships in this multi-level perspective could account for several of the issues that the contributors to this special issue mentioned.

For example, several of the issues that Sharabany and Schneider mention at the end of their contribution refer to the combination of various levels, particularly to linking friendships with individual behavior or psychological processes (e.g., with brain science) or within broader contexts (such as new family structures, or culture). Similarly, Keller's remarks on the importance of reasoning about friendships and the relation with moral development refer to the interaction of the individual level with dyadic or relationship levels, whereas her focus on cross-cultural research again fits with studying the levels of society of socio-cultural structure. Corsaro's attention to process approaches to the development of children's friendships over time may point to the importance of individual factors (the individual being the central element in the making of new friendships and the ending of others), and his demand for comparative studies is consistent with the remarks that Sharabany and Schneider, and Keller make regarding the issue of culture.

Applying a multi-level perspective to research on friendships could also guide several new directions in research on children's friendships. Two of these directions will be described in more detail here. The first concerns the role of temperament or personality in friendships (thus, interactions between the level of psychological processes and individual behaviors with children's interactions and relationships). For example, Asendorpf and van Aken (1999) found predictive value of personality types in children's peer relations: children who were described as under-controlled in kindergarten continued to show more aggression towards their peers during elementary school, whereas children described as overcontrolled were increasingly shy towards their peers. Recently, several instances of person x environment interactions were shown, in which relationships with peers seem to buffer the negative effects

COMMENTARY: Levels of Social Complexity in Peer Relations and Friendships

Marcel van Aken¹

Department of Developmental Psychology
Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands
E-mail: M.A.G.vanAken@fss.uu.nl

Research on peer relations in general and friendships in particular has known a long history of theorizing, ranging from the psycho-

1 For technical reasons, only the articles by Sharabany/Schneider, Corsaro, and Keller were forwarded to the author for this commentary – Editors



that a child's temperament or personality might have on problem behavior (van Aken, van Lieshout, Scholte & Haselager, 2002). In terms of the levels of social complexity, such research interactions between multiple levels may lead to certain developmental outcomes.

A second new direction in research on children's friendships applies an evolutionary framework (see, e.g., Hawley, 1999). Here, it is assumed that dominance hierarchies within peer groups are beneficial for the group through a reduction in antagonism and a better distribution of scarce resources. Also, functioning in a peer group and in dyadic friendships is assumed to be important for developing insight into the needs and motivations of others, which might be useful during the reproductive phases of the life span. Again, in terms of the levels of social complexity, this research places research on peer relations and friendships in a broader context of society and socio-cultural structure.

In sum, the three contributions give a rich picture of what research on children's friendships has achieved until now, and what represent desirable directions to pursue in the future. In this commentary, I tried to describe how Hinde's heuristic perspective on various levels of social complexity can be used in summarizing findings, and in planning the research agenda in this field.

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COMMENTARY: The Cultural Context of Friendships

Doran C. French

Department of Psychology, Illinois Wesleyan University
Bloomington, IL, USA

E-mail: dfrench@iwu.edu

In this commentary on these far reaching and valuable papers, I will touch upon four themes that are relevant to understanding the diversity of friendship across the world. Corsaro argues that friendships need to be understood as these are situated within an

ecological and developmental context, a point raised across contributors. Peer groups constitute the most proximal context for friendships, and it is likely that the considerable worldwide differences in peer experience affect the nature of these relationships (Brown, Larson, & Saraswathi, 2002).

1. How Important is it to Have Close Friends?

Rubin asks about the importance of having a friend, a question that could also be reframed to focus on cultural differences in the importance of friends. The importance of friendship is likely to differ across cultures.

Keller questions whether friendships are universally based on personal choice as families and others may exert considerable control over these relationships. Sharabany and Schneider point out that in some cultures, strong family relationships may result in children having little time or other resources to devote to friends. Furthermore, the strong focus on friendships among North American youth, particularly during adolescence, may be, in part, a function of the quest for autonomy and identity, a concern that may be much less salient in other cultures (Schneider, 1998). Finally, in some cultures, it may be particularly important to develop intense specific friendships, whereas in others, the focus may be more on achieving integration and acceptance within a larger social group (French, Bae, Pidada, & Lee 2004).

2. Are the Qualities of Friendship Similar Across Cultures?

Keller suggests that little is known about the meaning of friendship in different cultures, and even intimacy may not be a universally salient feature of friendship. In societies in which intimacy is an important feature of friendship, it is undoubtedly true that the meaning of intimacy varies substantially (French et al., 2004). For example, in Korea, intense intimacy implies a level of shared emotion and understanding for which no corresponding concept exists in English. Other qualities that are also likely to vary across cultures include the relative salience of instrumental aid, enhancement of self-worth, and conflict. In addition to comparing mean differences in friendship qualities across cultures, Rubin suggests that researchers might profit from asking questions about within-culture links between aspects of friendship (e.g. intimacy) and social competence (see Ogbu, 1981).

3. How Best to Study Friendship?

Each of the contributors offer suggestions about methods to study friendship. Corsaro suggests observing how children participate in "friendship" interactions. Keller uses children's responses to friendship dilemmas and assesses how children integrate friendship with moral reasoning. Rubin advocates comparing objective and subjective views of friendship and assessing the views of each party to the relationship. Sharabany and Schneider argue for the increased use of qualitative methods. The diversity of these views suggests that researchers are far from developing a consensus about how best to assess friendship and that there is currently a healthy search for new methods to assess these relationships.

Three issues appear particularly relevant for researchers seeking to study friendship cross-culturally. First is the need to give careful thought to measurement. Sharabany and Schneider suggest that more attention needs to be paid to discriminate validity of the various measures used to assess qualities of friendship, and

Bukowski argues for developing a more differentiated view of the topology of friendship than can be accomplished using reciprocal liking criteria. Second, is the need to use multiple-methods and multiple sources of information. Each of the available measures to study friendships have associated error attributable to method and source of information. Currently, it appears the only way to address this problem is to assess convergence of results across different measures (Weisz, Chaiyasit, Weiss, Eastman, & Jackson, 1995). Finally, it appears important to supplement efforts to explore abstract features of friendship obtained from such measures as questionnaires, friendship quality ratings, or thematic friendship measures with assessments focusing on actual behavior. It is important to assess children's companions and activities, assessments that may be obtained using methods such as diaries and experience sampling, as well as the observation measures advocated by Corsaro.

4. Where Do We Go from Here?

As Sharabany and Schneider note, there is a need for a theory to explain friendship across cultures. Several of the authors have referred to individualism/collectivism as a model explaining cultural variation in friendship. But the salience of friendship appears to vary considerably across collectivist cultures (French et al., 2004). This provides further evidence of the diversity of collectivist cultures, the imprecision and conceptual difficulties associated with this model in general (Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002), and the inadequacy of this model for explaining friendship variation.

The lack of a comprehensive theory can serve as a challenge to researchers to obtain the type of data that will eventually make theory development possible. Assessment of peer experience in the context of family and other relationships, exploring differentiation of the friendship network, and assessing friendship with multiple measures will facilitate this effort. Particularly important is the need to obtain information from diverse societies (e.g., South America, India, and Africa). Fortunately, the contributors to this section and others are undertaking such work.

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Location: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Contact: mweiner@aps.Washington.dc.us

Website: convention@aps.Washington.dc.us

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Website: www.icp2008.de



Notes from The President

Since I last wrote a great deal of progress has been made in our quest for a publisher that will not only publish the Society's journal, the International Journal of Behavioral Development (IJBD), its Newsletter, and produce the Membership Directory, but who will also provide services such as support to the Membership Secretary (collecting membership dues, tracking membership subscriptions and issuing reminders, etc) and to the Editor of IJBD (by providing a sophisticated web-based system for manuscript handling from submission to final editorial decision). A book series will also be included in the deal. As can be seen from previous Notes, discussions with the two publishers who came up with the best offers have been long and hard. The Steering Committee was kept informed at all stages and finally we were in a position to put all before the Executive Committee (EC) when it met at the start of the Ghent Biennial Meetings in early July. The two offers were presented by representatives of the respective publishing houses (current publisher and the new contender) and were followed by a discussion of both offers by the EC. Both offered basically a doubling of the income for the years to come, although the calculations were based on somewhat different growth-rate forecasts. At the end of the discussion, a preference was expressed for one of the offers (for obvious reasons I can give no further details at this stage). I was asked by the EC to seek clarification concerning a few issues related to the positioning of IJBD within the publisher's portfolio and print attractiveness but also to proceed with negotiations related to the points of a possible contract ready for a final decision.

Since the EC meeting I have been in contact with the publisher and have recently received a detailed response to the issues raised. I have also received very helpful input from Members of the EC – for which many thanks. I have subsequently arranged for Verona Christmas-Best (with whom I have worked on ISSBD and IJBD matters for some years now) to visit the publisher's offices in the UK on a fact-finding mission and to talk to the people who would be involved both from the publishing side and from the service side. Hopefully by the time you read this the matter will be concluded and I'm sorry that the information I can give at this time is still necessarily somewhat vague. However, the long process will pay excellent dividends in the end, in that the Society will be more appropriately remunerated for its Journal (which has continued to increase in international standing - as reflected in an impact factor of over 1.00 reported for 2002, i.e. for issues 24 and 25 published in 2000 and 2001) and will receive much needed support for its management activities at no cost to the Society.

The other major event on which I can report is of course the Biennial Meetings that took place in Ghent, July 11 – 15, 2004. These were a resounding success, as I'm sure you'll agree if you were there – and a record number of 1,305 people were! Ghent is a wonderful medieval city, easily accessible from abroad, and the fee structure was affordable. Congratulations and grateful thanks, therefore, to Leni Verhofstadt-Deneve and her team for all their hard work in organizing a congress that offered a high-standard program with many highlights. The Society was also able to attract more than 40 new members as a result of the Meetings, which is of vital importance to our future. All in all, a wonderful achievement.

The ISSBD officers and EC met for a full day before the Meeting and worked on a long Agenda (the minutes of which will be published in the next Newsletter). Many of the issues covered are highlighted in the remainder of these Notes, and

were shared with the membership at the General Business Meeting towards the end of our time in Ghent. I would just like to add that the newly formed EC (including the new members according to the last elections, i.e. Andrew Collins, Arnold Sameroff, and Marcel van Aken) had a good start – decisions were made after lively discussions, were most often unanimous, and took place in a cordial interpersonal climate.

One important issue discussed by the EC was the next Meetings that will take place in Melbourne 2006. Since receiving the first draft proposal, my office and I have been highly involved with the Congress Organizer, Ann Sanson, and her colleagues both concerning general planning issues but especially with regard to questions related to the budget. The latest amended budget was put before the EC by Ann Sanson together with a presentation of the general proposal and an overview of what Melbourne has to offer. The EC discussed and approved the budget, the proposed fee structure (very similar to Ghent, i.e., also including incentives for new members to join on the occasion of the Meeting), and a loss/gain sharing scheme. All this was based on material that Fred Vondracek, our acting Treasurer and Membership Secretary and I had negotiated with Ann and her colleagues during the period leading up to the EC meeting. Work is now going ahead to establish and fine-tune the various committees that will oversee the proposal being turned into reality. Overall, I think we can look forward to a valuable meeting - Melbourne looks the perfect place to go and it isn't too early to start making your plans to be there! (Information on this event can be accessed via the ISSBD Webpage - www.issbd.org)

The Meetings in 2008 will take place in Wuerzburg, Germany, close in timing to the International Congress of Psychology, to be held in Berlin. Anne Petersen, who started her term as President-elect at the end of the Ghent meetings will work closely as liaison with Wolfgang Schneider, the local organizer.

Related to congress planning - following on from my experiences in preparations for the 2006 Congress in Melbourne, I found a need for the Society to have detailed guidelines to assist would-be congress organizers in understanding what will be expected of them, the nature of their involvement, the role and limit of responsibility of the Society, and, in particular, the financial arrangement for any profit or loss the Congress might make. To this end, I have embarked on writing draft guidelines for those wishing to submit proposals to organize future congresses, for the general work required in relation to this, and for a formal contract between ISSBD and would-be organizing bodies.

As you will no doubt be aware, besides the Biennial Meetings, regional workshops are regularly organised under the auspices of ISSBD. They underpin one of the Society's most important functions (to extend the outreach of scholarship in human development) and are something of which it is justifiably proud. I am writing these Notes, having just returned from the 6th African Regional Workshop entitled 'HIV/AIDS and the African Youth: Theory, Research and Practice with Youth in Peer Education, Families and Communities', and which ran from July 25 to July 31. For a workshop to be held in Africa was long overdue. Earlier plans never came to a successful conclusion for many different reasons, not least because there was a lack of any real local support. However, this time we were lucky enough to find someone willing and able to take on the task and our grateful thanks go to Bame Nsamenang, Theresa Tschombe, and Jacques Philippe Tsala Tsala who together with colleagues in Cameroon and with support from the University of Yaounde succeeded in reversing this trend. It therefore makes me

continued on next page

Notes from The President continued

especially happy to be able to report that the workshop was a resounding success.

Some 40 senior scholars and young researchers, and students gathered in Yaounde, Cameroon, for a five-day event. Other international organizations joined in as co-sponsors, and I counted participants from about 10 African countries, particularly Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and others. I was happy to see that ISSBD's culture- and context-sensitive model of human development, and the expertise of many members in applied issues was deemed very relevant by the audience. I gave an overview of dynamic contextualist life-span / life-course approaches and additionally reported about relevant research projects. We gained some 20 new members who have unique insights to offer concerning health promotion under highly complicated (and very under-funded) circumstances. Expertise is especially required concerning the interface of normative and maladaptive development, and concerning the design of analysis of non-randomized field trials. I'm sure that overall our investment was worthwhile (see a report by the local organizers in this issue of the Newsletter).

One other workshop that is at the beginning of the planning stage and which was confirmed by the EC meeting in Ghent is to be held in Moscow in 2005. From the Moscow side this will be overseen by Tatiana Yermolova of the Russian Academy of Education in Moscow and her colleagues. Such a workshop had been suggested by Ken Rubin some time ago with a tentative idea of focusing on emotion regulation. Since taking over as President, and in conjunction with Ken Rubin, I made some suggestions that broadened the topic to include issues relevant to social change and adjustment, and also recommended increasing the institutional representation and support. Tatiana supported this proposal, as did the EC. Ken Rubin and Avshalom Caspi will help us with preparations.

Seen against a backdrop of the dual role of self-regulation particularly in times of precarious social change, I saw it as of particular relevance to enable scholars of human development in countries undergoing rapid social and political change (e.g., Russia) to draw from the best of research on self-regulation within a dynamic paradigm of human development in social context. More specifically, I felt that the content of such a workshop needed to cover conceptual models of developmental regulation under conditions of social change, emotional and behavioral regulation (with a particular emphasis on the adjustment problems of adolescents and young adults), and include the design of prevention programs to optimize self-regulation.

Still with regional workshops in mind, I can also report that in 2005 it is hoped to hold a workshop in the Near East region on

'Chronic exposure to catastrophic war experiences and political violence'. Following discussions between myself and Avi Sagi-Schwartz, particularly concerning rationale and potential location, a proposal for such a workshop was put before the EC. This workshop aims at discussing the role of risk and protective factors in determining the debilitating and damaging effects of chronic catastrophic experiences on the future well being of children and their families, and the extent to which such children may themselves become a source of threat to our society, in light of their likelihood to exhibit heightened aggression, violence, and revenge seeking. Further information and a Call for Participation will appear in the Newsletter.

Re financial affairs of the Society – I have been in regular contact with the Society's Acting Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Fred Vondracek, who has been involved in strenuous activities on behalf of the Society, in particular, to optimize the Society's financial affairs and to bring related administrative procedures up to date. Thanks also to Brett Laursen (a former Treasurer and Membership Secretary) for his help in these matters. Our total assets are in the order of 620K US\$. Note that some earlier financial commitments for ISSBD activities are not yet withdrawn, and we will also spend a considerable sum of money on workshops planned for the near future. At any rate, our finances are very healthy so that (consequently) there will be no dues increase and we will be able to increase our activities while depending less on outside funding (although we will nevertheless try to attract additional funding in order to have a better outreach and higher visibility).

Related to issues of finance, membership has also been at the forefront of discussions engaging myself and other members of the Society. Membership is, after all, the life-blood of the Society and, as such, must attract all our concern. Currently we have about 1100 members (middle of year count), including a high stability over the last decade (this is contrary to what was expected by some due to the decline in department budgets etc.).

Before I close I have to thank all my colleagues in ISSBD and at my home institution, and also want to mention with thanks and respect the ongoing support of the German Science Foundation (DFG) that enables me to undertake so many of my travels without having to resort to any ISSBD funds.

Finally, I hope this finds you having enjoyed a well earned summer break (or whatever the season is with you). As always, I have enjoyed serving you and our field, and please remember I and my office are happy to hear from you if you feel there is anything with which we can be of help. (email: rainer.silbereisen@uni-jena.de)

Rainer K. Silbereisen, Ph.D.

POSITION OPENINGS

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The University of Maryland Department of Human Development announces a new 5-year National Institutes of Health (NIH) Graduate Training Program in Social Development. This award provides pre-doctoral support for graduate training in the area of social development. Research topics within social development include biological bases of social and emotional behavior, peer relationships, parent-child relationships, attachment, emotional development, social-cognitive development, moral development, motivation, social goals, intergroup

relationships, father involvement, early childhood policy, civic engagement, and cultural influences on development. Core faculty include: N. Cabrera, N. A. Fox, M. Killen, K. H. Rubin, J. Torney-Purta, K. Wentzel, A. Wigfield. Affiliates include: M. Bornstein, K. Burgess, J. Cassidy, D. Crystal, B. Jones-Harden, D. Phillips, and S. Suomi. Students interested in information about the training grant program should contact Dr. Melanie Killen (Director), email: mkillen@umd.edu, or Dr. Kenneth Rubin (Co-Director), email: krubin@umd.edu. Students interested in information regarding admission to the doctoral program should look at our web site at: <http://www.education.umd.edu/Depts/EDHD>.

Brief Report on the Sixth ISSBD International Africa Regional Workshop, Yaounde, Cameroon, July 25-31, 2004

From July 26 2004, for four days of intense work, 105 participants at the Sixth ISSBD International Africa Regional Workshop held in Yaounde, Cameroon, examined different aspects of *HIV/AIDS and the African Youth: Theory, Research and Applications with Youth in Peer Education, Families and Communities*, the theme of the workshop. The participants, who came from Germany, the US and 7 African countries, including the host country, listened keenly to and critically discussed 27 presentations, 10 of which were by foreign participants; the rest by Cameroonians. The formats for the presentations were as follows: one invited lecture, twenty-two symposia, one workshop, two roundtable discussions, one conversation hour, one poster session by adolescent peer educators and a training session for young scholars. There was also a business meeting, for which the most prominent agenda item was a membership drive for the ISSBD. This resulted in twenty-two (22) new members, who all paid their registration fees. There are prospects for student members if the ISSBD Steering Committee would approve the proposed student membership fee of USD 8.00 for the Africa Region. The hope is that the new members will be retained.

The workshop offered an unprecedented opportunity to African researchers, policymakers, practitioners, HIV/AIDS workers, peer educators and young people living with

HIV/AIDS to interact, share perspectives and experiences as well as exchange concerns and best practices in the cooperative learning forum of a Workshop. Participant assessment estimated that the workshop was overwhelmingly positive. This reinforces participants' verbalizations that they found the workshop enriching and worthwhile and that it "breaks new grounds" in the behavioral and cultural approach to the control of HIV/AIDS.

Although the theoretical perspectives in interventions were not so obvious, the research and practice reported highlighted the gaps between conceptualization, empirical issues, policy implications and the actual state of the field. This helped to illuminate fresh insights into the potential linkages between different HIV/AIDS arenas that could be pursued to improve research and HIV/AIDS interventions. Coordination is a major practical problem.

After musing over how to handle the proceedings of the workshop, participants suggested two possible outlets to the organizers: (i) publication of summaries following specific guidelines, as Workshop Proceedings and (ii) publication of a peer reviewed volume from papers that would satisfy the standards and criteria of the peer review process.

The resolutions of the workshop, among other things, acknowledged support and deeply appreciated the ISSBD. It also acknowledged Cameroon's Ministry of Higher Education, the University of Yaounde 1, the host of the workshop. It equally appreciated Cameroon's National AIDS Control Committee, UNICEF-Cameroon, GTZ-Cameroon as well as Mrs. Anne Musonge and Professor Victor Annoma Ngu for moral and material support. Participants interpreted the attendance of the Workshop by the ISSBD's President, Prof. Rainer Silbereisen, as support for the Africa Region and his commitment to the global study of behavioral development. While applauding ISSBD's support, participants wished to see it continue in the next Africa Regional Workshop and involvement of African psychologists and young scholars in the Society's scientific agenda.

The Workshop called for bids (to be addressed to the ISSBD) for the 2006 Africa Regional Workshop.

Prof. Therese M. Tchombe
Prof. A. Bame Nsamenang

Workshop Chair
Workshop Coordinator



Participants and Guests at the Opening Ceremony of the Sixth ISSBD Workshop in Yaounde, July 26, 2004

15th Biennial International Conference on Infant Studies Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, 8 - 11 July 2006

The International Conference on Infant Studies (ICIS) will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre in Brisbane, Australia in 2006 on 8-11 July. It should be a memorable and beautiful meeting. The ICIS has coordinated with the ISSBD meetings, which will be held in Melbourne, Australia on 3-6 July 2006. July is wintertime in Australia (that's why they call it "Down Under") and this is the ideal season to visit the Great Barrier Reef (perfect swimming weather), which is deservedly one of the natural wonders of the world!

Papers, posters, symposia, a daily keynote address, debates, etc. will be included in the program along with fantastic and fresh Australian seafood, wonderful wines, and magnificent scenery. If you have not been to South Bank (Brisbane), you will find the location exciting (world class art gallery, museum, parklands including a kid-safe beach, casino, clean and safe city location, restaurants galore, and river shuttles and boats). You are sure to enjoy these meetings, as would the whole family.

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

Richard E. Tremblay is the recipient of one of the two Molson Prizes awarded in 2004 by The Canada Council for the Arts. In awarding this prize, the jury wrote, "The jury unanimously selected Professor Richard Tremblay for the 2004 Molson Prize in the Social Sciences and Humanities for his research on the development of violent behavior from early childhood to adulthood and for his contribution to our understanding of education and its role in moral and social development. Considered one of the world's most accomplished developmental psychologists, his contributions to research on education through the creation of large longitudinal studies on human development have provided stunning insights into the development of violence during early childhood, leading the way for future generations studying human development." Two Molson Prizes, worth \$50,000 each, are awarded every year to distinguished Canadians, one in the arts and the other in the social sciences or humanities. The prizes recognize the recipients' outstanding lifetime contribution to the cultural and intellectual life of Canada.

Richard Tremblay is professor of pediatrics, psychiatry, and psychology and is a Canada Research Chair in Child Development at the University of Montreal. For the past 20 years, he has conducted a program of longitudinal studies on the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children from conception to adulthood. One of his major focuses has been the study of the development and prevention of antisocial behavior. As founding director of an interdisciplinary research center, funded by three universities (Laval, McGill and Montreal), one of his primary goals is to integrate genetic, environmental, behavioral and brain research in understanding socialization processes. With partners from across Canada and funding from Health Canada, he has recently created the Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, a center whose mandate is to disseminate the best available knowledge on early social and emotional development, especially to policy makers and service providers. Widely published, Professor Tremblay is the author of more than 200 articles, 70 chapters and 11 edited books, with his work translated into multiple languages.

Editorial

Editor

Joan G. Miller

Correspondence Address:

ISSBD Newsletter
 Department of Psychology
 New School University
 New York, NY 10003, USA
 email: millerj@newschool.edu

Associate Editor

Xinyin Chen

ISSBD Newsletter
 Department of Psychology
 University of Western Ontario
 London, Ontario
 Canada N6A 5C2
 email: xchen@uwo.ca

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