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FROM INTERPERSONAL FRIENDSHIPS IN GENERAL TO CROSS-GROUP FRIENDSHIPS IN PARTICULAR: REVIEWING WHEN AND WHY THEY ARE BENEFICIAL, WHEN AND WHY THEY ARE NOT

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ABSTRACT

Interpersonal friendships are a ubiquitous feature of everyday life and epitomise our gregarious nature. Friendships hold numerous physical and psychological benefits that allow people to achieve both existential and instrumental objectives and promote overall well-being and longevity. This chapter explores the important role of friendships between members of different groups (cross-group friendships) in the amelioration of group-based prejudice and the promotion of greater intergroup understanding, cooperation, and tolerance. It begins by briefly describing the motives underlying friendship formation more generally and elaborating on the important physical and psychological benefits of interpersonal friendships. Then, drawing on the interpersonal friendship literature (which has typically explored friendship within the context of individuals who share a salient group identity – or same-group friendships), this chapter focuses on the importance of cross-group friendships for promoting more positive intergroup relations. It also discusses the processes fundamental to the development and maintenance of cross-group friendships and highlights key differences between same- and cross-group friendships along the way. It also explores the psychological and contextual factors that may inhibit the development and maintenance of cross-group friendships, as well as how these can be mitigated. Finally, this chapter considers the question of whether friendships in general (and cross-group friendships in particular) are always positive and beneficial, before concluding with suggestions for future research.

Keywords: same-group friendship, cross-group friendship, well-being, intergroup contact, intergroup relations

INTRODUCTION

Friendships are important, meaningful, and influential in people's lives (Davies, Wright, Aron, & Comeau, 2013; Klinger, 1977). This is true irrespective of gender (e.g., Fehr, 2004; Floyd, 1997a, 1997b; Walker, 1995; Wood, 2000) or age (e.g., Sullivan, 1953; Wrzus, Hänel, Wagner, & Neyer, 2013). Recognition of the value of friendships as a special type of relationship within our broader social network can be traced to the writings of Plato and Aristotle more than 2,300 years ago (see Aristotle, Ross, & Brown, 1980; Haden, 1983). More recently, the value attached to friendships has been defined in terms of the substantial investment in time that is required to establish a close friendship (Hall, 2019) and the extent to which human cognitive capacity constrains the number of close friendships we can maintain at any given time (e.g., Dunbar, 1998; Hill & Dunbar, 2003; MacCarron, Kaski, & Dunbar, 2016).

Empirical research on interpersonal friendships goes back more than a century (e.g., Monroe, 1898) and it is an area of enquiry that continues to grow (see Perlman, 2017). In this chapter I consider the importance of interpersonal friendships within the context of intergroup relations, drawing on both the interpersonal friendship literature (e.g., Fehr, 1996; Hruschka, 2010; Rawlins, 2009) and the intergroup contact literature (e.g., Allport, 1954; Dovidio, Love, Schellhaas, & Hewstone, 2017; Hodson & Hewstone, 2013). First, I review how interpersonal friendships can be distinguished from other relationships and consider the motives behind why we seek out friendships, before briefly summarising some of the key health benefits associated with friendships. Then, I review the important role of cross-group friendships for promoting more positive intergroup attitudes and intergroup relations. I also explore the role of proximity, similarity, and reciprocity in the development of cross-group friendships. I then discuss some important factors that pose a particular challenge to the development of cross-group friendships and how these can be mitigated. Finally, I consider whether friendships in general (and cross-group friendships in particular) are always positive and beneficial. I conclude the chapter with suggestions for future research.

INTERPERSONAL FRIENDSHIPS

Friendships can be distinguished from both family relationships and general peer relationships. Unlike familial relationships, friendships comprise voluntary relationships (e.g., Adams & Blieszner, 1994; Rawlins, 2009; Wiseman, 1986). While you cannot choose your family, you can choose your friends. Relative to other peer relationships, friendships are characterised by more frequent positive interactions

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(e.g., Adams, Blieszner, & de Vries, 2000; Fehr, 1996; Hartup & Stevens, 1999) and more positive evaluations (e.g., Berndt & Perry, 1986).

It is also possible to distinguish between different types of friends. For example, close friends can be distinguished from acquaintances in terms of the degree of perceived psychological closeness that is experienced (known as self-other overlap; Aron, Aron, & Norman, 2003; Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991, 2004). Intimacy, a defining feature of close friendships (Clark & Ayers, 1993; Fehr, 1996; La Gaipa, 1979; Parks & Floyd, 1996) is proportional to the degree of perceived self-other overlap between friends. Self-other overlap describes the psychological process through which individuals come to regard one another as increasingly similar to one another over time (e.g., Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, Mashek, Lewandowski, Wright, & Aron, 2004; Brody, Wright, Aron, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2008). It is facilitated by the reciprocated, voluntary sharing of personal information (or self-disclosure; Miller, 2002) between friends, the importance of which is widely recognised across cultures (Hruschka, 2010). As is highlighted in greater detail below, reciprocal self-disclosure is a critical (and defining) behavioural component of friendship development because it allows relationships with casual acquaintances to grow in intimacy and develop into close friendships.

Defining Friendship

Friendship is notoriously difficult to define – as Fehr (1996) notes, "everyone knows what friendship is – until asked to define it" (p. 5). This is as true for the layperson as it is for researchers who study friendships. The challenge of defining friendship is compounded when taking cultural variations in friendship into account (Adams et al., 2000; Bennett, 1979; Goodwin, 1999; Hruschka, 2010). Much of what we know about interpersonal friendships is derived from research predominantly undertaken in Western contexts (Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996; Goodwin, 1999). This cultural research bias in the friendship literature mirrors that of the psychology literature more generally (see Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010; Rad, Martingano, & Ginges, 2018). This is problematic because it ignores the extent to which friendships are culturally embedded and influenced by cultural beliefs and norms (Chen, French, & Schneider, 2006), and that the definition and relative importance of friendships can vary across cultures (see Adams & Plaut, 2003; Rybak & McAndrew, 2006).

The prototype approach (Davis & Todd, 1985) offers an alternative to a strict definition of friendship. This approach draws upon the most common (prototypical) characteristics of friendship to describe the nature of this special relationship. For example, Rawlins (2009) describes friendship by its (prototypical) distinguishing features as a voluntary, mutual, personal relationship between individuals who share an affective bond and regard one another as equals. The discussion in the remainder of this chapter follows from this operationalisation of friendship. I will now briefly consider two important motives behind why people are willing to make the substantial

investment in time required to develop a friendship, namely the need for acceptance and the desire for self-expansion.

Friendship Motives

People have a strong *need for acceptance and belonging* (and, consequently, avoiding loneliness; Binder, Roberts, & Sutcliffe, 2012; Nangle, Erdley, Neman, Mason, & Carpenter, 2003; Pinquart & Sörensen, 2001; Zhou, Zhao, Sun, & Ding, 2006). This is a motive that not only encourages friendship formation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) but one that is fundamental to much of human behaviour (Maslow, 1968). While family relationships can satisfy the need for acceptance to some extent, this need (and the associated needs of intimacy and companionship), which emerges during pre-adolescence, is better met by friendships (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; Clark & Ayers, 1993; Fehr, 1996; 2000; La Gaipa, 1979; Parks & Floyd, 1996). This is reflected by the fact that during pre-adolescence friendships begin to assume particular importance relative to family and other peer relationships (Bishop & Inderbitzen, 1995; Franco & Levitt, 1998; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992).

The second motive behind friendship development discussed here is the *need for personal growth*. This is described by the self-expansion model developed by Aron and colleagues (e.g., Aron & Aron 1986; Aron et al., 2003; Aron & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2001). The self-expansion motive can be satisfied by gaining access to the resources and perspectives of others within the context of friendship (Hartup & Stevens, 1997), creating opportunities to further develop social skills, personal competence, a sense of self, and increasing independence (Duck, 1983; Dusek, 1991; Ingersoll, 1989). An enhanced sense of self-other overlap is an important psychological consequence of the pursuit of self-expansion. As such, friendship intimacy is likely to increase to the extent that the friendship satisfies the self-expansion motive.

The desire for self-expansion may also explain the instrumental motives behind friendship formation – friends can offer material support (Furman & Bierman, 1984; Rawlins, 1992) that can contribute towards the achievement of personal goals (in-and-of itself an indicator of growth and development). Evidence suggests that interpersonal attraction is heightened towards those individuals who we believe can help us achieve our goals (Finkel & Eastwick, 2015) and whom we perceive to be willing to do so (Montoya & Horton, 2013a). Younger people are more likely to establish friendships for the instrumental motives of material support or access to resources than older people, because adolescence and early adulthood is a time when access to information and support is especially needed for the achievement of personal goals (e.g., Apostolou, Keramari, Kagialis, & Sullman, 2020; Carstensen, 1995).

The motives underlying the development of a specific friendship likely determine the functions the friendship will fulfil. Acceptance, companionship, reliable alliance, validation, and access to resources are only a few of the wide variety of functions that friendships can fulfil. Friendships can satisfy both the need for acceptance and

the need for self-expansion by fulfilling a range of functions (Mendelson & Aboud, 1999). As such, friendship intimacy and satisfaction depend less on the specific functions that a friendship fulfils than on the number of functions a friendship fulfils (e.g., Kao & Joyner, 2004; Koh, Mendelson, & Rhee, 2003; Mendelson & Aboud, 1999). However, friendships are associated with a wide variety of important benefits that go beyond the fulfilment of specific functions.

The Benefits of Friendships

One of the most well-documented benefits of friendships is that spending time with friends is associated with significantly greater happiness across the lifespan (e.g., Demir, 2015; Demir, Özdemir, & Marum, 2011; Okabe-Miyamoto & Lyubomirsky, 2021). This benefit speaks to the very essence of friendships - they require repeated, pleasant, intimate encounters to develop (Fehr, 2000). However, beyond happiness, friendships offer numerous important evolutionary and health-related benefits as well.

A growing body of evidence suggests that friendship is more than just a social or psychological phenomenon, but an evolutionary and biological phenomenon too (see Denworth, 2020). For example, Taylor and colleagues (2000) draw on research among non-human primates to propose that the instinct to 'tend and befriend' has evolved alongside the fight-or-flight response. This suggests that the capacity for developing strong, intimate social bonds is likely favoured by natural selection (Apostolou et al., 2020; Brent et al., 2013) because these bonds promote longevity (e.g., Berkman & Syme, 1979; De Vogli, Chandola, & Marmot, 2007; Uchino, 2006; Williams, 1966). This is supported by the meta-analytic results reported by Holt-Lunstad, Smith, and Layton (2010), which showed that the mortality risk for people with strong social relationships is reduced by as much as 50% relative to those individuals who are socially isolated. The reduced mortality risk associated with friendships is a consequence of the significant impact that friendships have on a variety of health outcomes.

In terms of physical health, stress is significantly linked to increased mortality (see Cohen, Murphy, & Prather, 2019); friendships buffer against the negative effects of stress (e.g., Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, & Bukowski, 1999; Holt-Lunstad, Uchino, Smith, & Hickes, 2007; Malcolm, Jensen-Campbell, Rex-Lear, & Waldrip, 2006). Friendships also improve stress recovery among children who have been the victims of bullying (e.g., Calhoun et al., 2014; Cowie, 2000; Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000) or who live in problematic home environments (e.g., Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit, Bates, & The Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2000). Friendships are also associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular heart disease (CHD) and improved recovery from CHD (e.g., Barth, Schneider, & von Kanel, 2010; Chin & Cohen, 2020). Regarding mental health, friendships not only promote greater happiness (as described earlier), but they also promote more positive self-esteem and psychosocial adjustment (Bagwell et al., 2005). Friendships are also capable of ameliorating

depressive symptomology among children (e.g., Brendgen et al., 2013) and adults (e.g., Bookwala, Marshall, & Manning, 2014).

There are at least three ways in which friendships can promote improved health. Firstly, friendships provide social support, which is the perceived level of emotional (e.g., love, empathy), informational (e.g., advice, suggestions), or practical (i.e., tangible) assistance available from significant others (Thoits, 2010). Social support buffers against the detrimental health effects of stress (Taylor, 2011; Turner & Brown, 2010) because it makes stressful events feel less daunting (e.g., Coan, Kasle, Jackson, Schaefer, & Davidson, 2013; Coan, Schaefer, & Davidson, 2006). As such, friendships have been described in the literature as a “behavioral vaccine” (Sias & Bartoo, 2007, p. 456).

Secondly, friends can influence healthy behaviours (Moremen, 2008) through modelling (e.g., Harvey & Alexander, 2012; the obverse is, however, also true, as discussed in further detail below) or by offering easy access to information (e.g., Baheiraei, Khoori, Foroushani, Ahmadi, & Ybarra, 2014; Goyal, Rosenkranz, Weitzel, & Buskens, 2017; Swire-Thompson & Lazer, 2020; Zhang & Centola, 2019). Both sources of influence are especially powerful within the context of friendships because they are likely to come from individuals who are trusted (Glaeser, Laibson, Scheinkman, & Soutter, 2000).

Thirdly, friendships promote improved physical and mental health because they help to reduce loneliness (Binder et al., 2012). Loneliness is associated with a variety of negative physical and mental health outcomes (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Cole et al., 2007; Pinquart & Sörensen, 2001) that pose significant health risks (House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988). For example, prolonged social isolation is stressful and can lead to a deterioration of organ functioning and to quicker aging (Berkman & Seeman, 1986) and it increases the risks of developing CHD, (Valtorta, Kanaan, Gilbody, Ronzi, & Hanratty, 2016; see also Holt-Lunstad & Smith, 2016) and depression (Cacioppo, Hughes, Waite, Hawkley, & Thisted, 2006). With these detrimental outcomes in mind, there is cause for concern about the long-term health consequences of the extended lockdowns (characterised by prolonged isolation from friends) that have been implemented to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (see for example Charoenwong, Kwan, & Pursiainen, 2020; Cohen, 2021; Okabe-Miyamoto & Lyubomirsky, 2021; Sikali, 2020).

In summary, friendships, though difficult to define, can be readily distinguished from familial relationships and more general peer relationships by prototypical characteristics (including their voluntary nature, reciprocity, intimacy, heightened affect, equal status, and necessary investment of time). We are motivated to seek out friendships to satisfy different needs, including the need for acceptance and the need for self-expansion (or personal growth) and, once established, friendships are associated with various positive physical and mental health outcomes. Below I extend the discussion of interpersonal friendships to the context of friendships between members of distinct social groups (or cross-group friendships).

Cross-Group Friendships

One of the most compelling ideas to emerge from social psychology in the 20th century is that positive intergroup contact can reduce prejudice and promote improved intergroup relations. This idea, first proposed by Allport (1954) as his 'contact hypothesis', has been rigorously tested over the past sixty-five years, and has received overwhelming support (see Dovidio et al., 2017; Lemmer & Wagner, 2015; Hewstone & Swart, 2011; Hodson & Hewstone, 2013; Vezzali & Stathi, 2017). A meta-analysis of over 500 studies (and more than 250,000 participants) undertaken by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) confirms that positive intergroup contact is reliably associated with reduced prejudice towards a wide range of target groups (including those defined in terms of sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, age, and ethnicity).

Of even greater significance, the benefits of positive intergroup contact extend much further than early theorists (or critics) may originally have envisioned. For example, contact effects have been associated with a generalised reduction in prejudice that extends beyond the original contact setting, beyond the specific outgroup exemplar that was encountered (to the outgroup as a whole), and beyond the outgroup that was encountered (to include positive attitudes towards other, potentially infrequently encountered, outgroups as well; for reviews see Boin et al., 2021; Lolliot et al., 2013; Vezzali, Di Bernardo, Cocco, Stathi, & Capozza, 2021). Moreover, recent studies suggest that positive intergroup contact also promotes increased cognitive liberalisation (e.g., Meleady, Crisp, Hodson, & Earle, 2019) and brings about changes in personality traits (such as increased agreeableness and openness to experience; e.g., Vezzali, Turner, Capozza, & Trifiletti, 2018) that may have long-lasting effects. Two independent meta-analyses of the contact literature have identified cross-group friendships as the premier form of positive intergroup contact that is associated with the strongest impact on prejudice (see Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

The Benefits of Cross-Group Friendships

Much like interpersonal friendships in general, cross-group friendships are characterised by repeated positive interactions between individuals who regard one another as equals, share common interests, and who cooperate on shared tasks (Pettigrew, 1998). It is these features that elevate cross-group friendships above more superficial intergroup interactions, such as those between co-workers or neighbours (Page-Gould & Mendoza-Denton, 2011; Pettigrew, 1997), and leave cross-group friendships ideally placed to reduce both blatant and implicit prejudice (see Hodson, Hewstone, & Swart, 2013).

Cross-group friendships are also associated with a range of positive intergroup outcomes that go beyond prejudice. For example, they can alter those intergroup emotions that are most consequential for intergroup relations. Cross-group friendships can encourage reduced feelings of intergroup anxiety (the anxiety that is experienced when anticipating future intergroup contact; Stephan & Stephan, 1985; e.g., Mendoza-Denton, Page-Gould, & Pietrzak, 2006; Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Tropp, 2008). They can also facilitate increased empathy and perspective taking for the outgroup (the ability to feel for outgroup members and to see the world from their perspective, respectively; Batson & Ahmad, 2009; e.g., Swart, Hewstone, Christ, & Voci, 2010, 2011). In post-conflict societies, contexts that offer a particularly demanding test for the promise of intergroup contact, cross-group friendships are associated with increased trust and a greater willingness to forgive – two important outcomes that contribute towards post-conflict reconciliation (for reviews see Hewstone et al., 2014; Swart & Hewstone, 2011; Swart, Hewstone, Turner, & Voci, 2011; Turner et al., 2010; Voci, Hewstone, Swart, & Veneziani, 2015). Moreover, cross-group friendships have been associated with improved health outcomes for members of minority groups (e.g., Mendoza-Denton & Page-Gould, 2008; Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, & Mendes, 2014).

Clearly, given these benefits for intergroup relations, there is value in promoting the development of cross-group friendships. However, cross-group friendships are not as prevalent as same-group friendships – they are the exception rather than the norm (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003; Halualani, Chitgopekar, Morrison, & Dodge, 2004; Kao & Joyner, 2004). Moreover, cross-group friendships are more fragile than same-group friendships (Pearson et al., 2008). They are more difficult to establish than same-group friendships and, once established, do not achieve the same level of intimacy as same-group friendships, nor do they enjoy the same degree of reciprocated maintenance behaviours as same-group friendships, making them more difficult to maintain and more vulnerable to dissolution (see Aboud et al., 2003; Binder et al., 2012; McEwan & Guerrero, 2012; Shook & Fazio, 2008a, 2008b). In the section below I consider three factors central to the development of interpersonal friendships more generally – proximity, similarity, and reciprocity – within the context of cross-group friendships.

Cross-Group Friendship Development

Physical Proximity

People are more likely to form relationships with individuals with whom they share the same social networks (Quillian & Campbell, 2003). Physical proximity allows for chance encounters between individuals and creates opportunities for them to become acquainted with one another (Easterbrook & Vignoles, 2014). Thus, it enhances the likelihood of interpersonal attraction (Blau, 1977; Priest & Sawyer, 1967; Segal, 1974) and is strongly correlated with friendship development (e.g.,

Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950; Korte & Lin, 2012; Tse, Dasborough, & Ashkanasy, 2008). Physical proximity is especially important for interpersonal attraction and friendship development between dissimilar others (Nahemow & Lawton, 1975). Herein lies its relevance for the development of cross-group friendships, where the difference in group membership can serve as a salient marker of dissimilarity.

Diversity increases physical proximity between dissimilar others, creating opportunities for intergroup contact. Research shows that individuals who live in more diverse neighbourhoods (e.g., Christ et al., 2014; Schmid et al., 2017) or who attend schools with a diverse student body (e.g., Hallinan, 1976; Hansell & Slavin, 1981; Joyner & Kao, 2000; Patchen, 1982; Sigelman, Bledsoe, Welch, & Combs, 1996) are more likely to report having cross-group friends than those individuals who live in more homogenous neighbourhoods or those children who attend schools with more homogenous student bodies, respectively. However, avoiding intergroup contact undermines the potential benefits of diversity (e.g., Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Plant, 2004; Plant & Butz, 2006; Tredoux & Dixon, 2009) and is an important obstacle to the development of cross-group friendships.

A key reason for avoiding intergroup contact is that people have more negative expectations of contact with members of other groups (outgroup members) than they do of contact with members of groups that they belong to (fellow ingroup members; Mallett, Wilson, & Gilbert, 2008; Shelton & Richeson, 2005). Reasons for these negative expectations include (among others) the prevalence of perceived ingroup and outgroup norms that discourage intergroup contact (e.g., Clark-Ibáňez & Felmlee, 2004; Pettigrew, 1991; Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner, & Stellmacher, 2007; Tropp & Bianchi, 1996), a fear of rejection (rejection sensitivity; Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002; Shelton & Richeson, 2006), previous negative intergroup encounters (Devine, Evett, & Vasquez-Suson, 1996; Stephan & Stephan, 1985), or a lack of communicative proficiency (Gareis, Merkin, & Goldman, 2011). These negative expectations (or meta-perceptions; Shelton & Richeson, 2006; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998) are associated with a reduced trust in the outgroup (e.g., Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Foddy, Platow, & Yamagishi, 2009) and the anticipation of outgroup bias (e.g., Judd, Park, Yzerbyt, Gordijn, & Muller, 2005; Robbins & Krueger, 2005).

Mistrust and the anticipation of outgroup bias increase the amount of anxiety people experience when anticipating future intergroup contact (i.e., intergroup anxiety; Stephan & Stephan, 1985, 2000). As such, people are more likely to experience anxiety when anticipating interactions with outgroup members than they would anticipating interactions with ingroup members (Dovidio et al., 2002; Plant, 2004; Plant & Butz, 2006). For majority-status group members, intergroup anxiety relates to the fear of appearing prejudiced during the intergroup interaction (e.g., Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Richeson & Trawalter, 2005; Shelton, 2003). For minority-status group members it relates to concerns about being the target of prejudice (e.g., Hyers & Swim, 1998; Vorauer, 2006). These negative expectations and intergroup anxiety can result in contact avoidance (Gaertner &

Dovidio, 1986; Plant & Butz, 2006; Mallett et al., 2008) even among those individuals who are most interested in intergroup contact (Shelton & Richeson, 2005).

Negative expectations and intergroup anxiety not only influence perceptions of anticipated contact, but also colour the initial experience of contact to the extent that any subsequent opportunities for intergroup contact are likely to be avoided. This further undermines the prospects of cross-group friendship development because the development of any friendship requires repeated, positive interactions. Negative expectations and intergroup anxiety encourage individuals to become more vigilant during initial intergroup contact for potential evidence that confirms their negative expectations (e.g., Plant, Butz, & Tartakovsky, 2008; Vorauer, 2006, 2013; Vorauer & Turpie, 2004). This heightened vigilance can make cross-group interactions cognitively demanding and draining (Pearson et al., 2008; Richeson & Shelton, 2010; Shelton, Richeson, & Vorauer, 2006; Shelton, West, & Trail, 2010b), especially during the initial interactions (see MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015). Moreover, if the outgroup interaction partner is perceived as being anxious it not only heightens the ingroup member's anxiety (stemming from their negative expectations) but the outgrouper's anxiety can be misattributed as an indication of bias (e.g., Devine et al., 1996), a lack of interest in intergroup contact (e.g., West, Shelton, & Trail, 2009), or rejection (e.g., Pearson et al., 2008; Shelton & Richeson, 2005). In any event, these attributions are made in a manner that are congruent with the negative expectations for intergroup contact (e.g., Shelton & Richeson, 2005) and can have long-lasting effects (Shelton, Trail, West, & Bergsieker, 2010a; Trail, Shelton, & West, 2009).

Negative expectancies and intergroup anxiety also increase the evaluative concerns experienced within the intergroup encounter. According to Vorauer (2006), evaluative concerns describe the value that people attach to how they are perceived (or evaluated) by others. These concerns are elevated in intergroup encounters for those individuals who lack sufficient familiarity with intergroup encounters (MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015) and who also perceive there to be meaningful differences between the ingroup and the outgroup (Vorauer, 2013). As such, the intergroup encounter becomes self-focused (e.g., Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2008; Vorauer & Turpie, 2004) with majority-group members focused on suppressing any possible prejudice (e.g., Monteith, Sherman, & Devine, 1998; Shook & Fazio, 2008a, 2008b; Trail et al., 2009) and minority-group members focusing on how competent they are in the interaction (e.g., Bergsieker, Shelton, & Richeson, 2010; Schmader, Major, Eccleston, & McCoy, 2001). Not only do these evaluative concerns lead to negative partner evaluations (Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2006), but they distract interaction partners from potentially important information that may identify areas of similarity, an important predictor of friendship development.

Similarity

People are attracted to similar others (Nahemow & Lawton, 1975; Newcomb, 1956) and similarity is regarded as an important motivator in friendship formation (Galupo, Cartwright, & Savage, 2010; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). However, it is not clear whether the similarities observed among friends are

indicative of the power of similarity in driving friendship choices or whether friends become more similar over time through mutual adaptation and socialisation (see Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000).

Montoya, Horton, and Kirchner (2008) distinguish between the influence of actual versus perceived similarity on friendship formation. They argue that actual similarity may not be as important as other factors (such as reciprocated liking, physical attractiveness, or common goals) for friendship development (see also Neyer, Wrzus, Wagner, & Lang, 2011). Montoya and Horton (2013) suggest that perceived similarity between individuals may be a stronger predictor of interpersonal attraction than actual similarity. This is supported by Van Zalk and Denissen (2015) who showed that perceived similarity (but not actual similarity) in personality traits predicts liking and friendship formation over time.

The importance of personal similarity for reducing prejudice was recognised by Allport (1954), who identified common interest as an important feature of positive intergroup contact. From the outset, however, this personal similarity can pose a significant challenge to cross-group friendship development because obvious differences in category membership can serve as a marker of dissimilarity between individuals, not least of which are relative placements along the dimension of group status (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Perceived dissimilarity between groups (and their members) is heightened under conditions of increased intergroup anxiety (e.g., Britt, Boniecki, Vescio, Beirnat, & Brown, 1996). The impact of category dissimilarity is clearly observed within minimal group experiments, where even inconsequential group memberships (i.e., group memberships that have no history or utility beyond the experimental context) elicit ingroup favouritism and outgroup bias (e.g., Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Diehl, 1990; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971). Importantly, this ingroup favouritism and outgroup bias is not elicited by perceptions of personal (dis)similarity, but rather by perceptions of (dis)similar group membership (Billig & Tajfel, 1973). The negative effect that perceived dissimilarity along category membership and group status can have on friendship development is compounded by the fact that the decision as to whether someone has the potential to be a friend (i.e., their interpersonal attractiveness) is one that is usually made relatively quickly (Rodin, 1982).

However, Gareis (2000) suggests that attitude similarity is arguably more important than cultural similarity for friendship formation. This is encouraging for the development of cross-group friendships as it suggests that cultural (or group membership) dissimilarity might not automatically disqualify someone as a friend provided there is sufficient attitudinal similarity. For example, Hall and Rose (1996) found that an awareness of racial injustices is an important factor that is taken into consideration by minority-group members when they consider becoming friends with a majority-group member.

In the face of category membership dissimilarity, self-disclosure becomes an important means through which individuals from different groups can establish whether they share any similarities (or common interests or goals) with one another (Ensari & Miller, 2002; Miller, 2002). Self-disclosure is therefore a critical feature of

intergroup contact that has ‘acquaintance potential’ (Pettigrew, 1998). However, negative expectancies, intergroup anxiety, and evaluative concerns can distract individuals from paying attention to the information being presented in the intergroup encounter, meaning that they may miss those informational cues that identify areas of potential similarity. This is illustrated by research that shows that people tend to process information being shared in same-group interactions more deeply than the information being shared in cross-group interactions (e.g., Van Bavel, Packer, & Cunningham, 2008). Negative expectancies, intergroup anxiety, and evaluative concerns can also exacerbate the impact of two (somewhat related) cognitive biases that operate in intergroup encounters, namely memory and attentional biases. The memory bias within the context of intergroup interactions is characterised by the tendency for an ingroup member to more readily recall the similarities (as opposed to dissimilarities) they share with fellow ingroup members after a same-group encounter, and more readily recall the dissimilarities (as opposed to similarities) that exist between them and an outgroup member after a cross-group encounter (e.g., Wilder, 1981). Relatedly, the attentional bias describes the tendency for an ingroup member to pay more attention to positive (as opposed to negative) information during same-group encounters, and to pay more attention to negative (as opposed to positive) information during cross-group encounters (e.g., Howard & Rothbart, 1980).

As important as perceived similarity may be for the development of interpersonal friendships, there is also evidence supporting the influence of complementarity on friendship development (e.g., Dryer & Horowitz, 1997; Hallinan & Williams, 1989; Vinacke, Shannon, Palazzo, Balsavage, & Cooney, 1988). If similarity describes why ‘birds of a feather flock together’, then complementarity explains why ‘opposites attract’. Complementarity may be especially important within the context of cross-group friendships from the perspective of the self-expansion motive. The desire for self-expansion may act as an important motivator for seeking friendships with individuals from other social groups, because they are able to provide access to new resources and different worldviews relative to those offered by fellow ingroup members (Paolini, Wright, Dys-Steenbergen, & Favara, 2016). As such, the desire for self-expansion may mitigate the impact of perceived (group) dissimilarity on interpersonal attraction within the context of cross-group friendships.

Reciprocity

The third predictor of interpersonal friendship development discussed here is the dynamic exchange that occurs in close relationships, referred to as reciprocity (e.g., Gouldner, 1960; Vaquera & Kao, 2008). Mutual interest or liking is an important predictor of interpersonal attraction (e.g., Backman & Secord, 1959; Fehr, 2000; Hays, 1988) and subsequent friendship development (e.g., Lydon, Jamieson, & Holmes, 1997). Reciprocity can manifest itself as cooperation towards a common goal, which creates a sense of interdependence and promotes friendship development (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2017). It can also manifest as the reciprocal engagement in those behaviours important for friendship maintenance (e.g., Hall, Larson, & Watts, 2011; Ledbetter, 2013; Ledbetter, Stassen, Muhammad,

& Kotey, 2010; Mattingly, Oswald, & Clark, 2011). Finally, reciprocity can manifest as the willingness to reciprocate the self-disclosure of personal information that might otherwise have remained unknown (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Miller, 2002).

As alluded to above, self-disclosure is a defining feature of intimate relationships (Fehr, 2008; Petronio, 2012) and is an essential behavioural component that facilitates the development of intimacy in intergroup encounters (e.g., Aron, Melinat, Aron, Vallone, & Bator, 1997; Davies et al., 2011; Wright, Aron, & Brody, 2008; Wright, Aron, & Tropp, 2002), creating the acquaintance potential necessary for the development of cross-group friendships (Reis et al., 2000; Turner, Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, & Cairns, 2013). According to Davies et al. (2013; see also Davies et al., 2011; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011), reciprocal self-disclosure may be the critical determinant of why cross-group friendships reduce prejudice and promote more positive outgroup attitudes.

Self-disclosure helps to identify common interests, goals, and worldviews. It allows an individual to communicate how they see the world and creates an opportunity for them to influence how others see them. As such, self-disclosure creates opportunities for empathy and perspective-taking (Davis, 1994; Duan & Hill, 1996), which are important for promoting interpersonal attraction and friendship intimacy (Galinsky, Ku, & Wang, 2005). Within the context of intergroup encounters, self-disclosure may also aid the reduction of intergroup anxiety (e.g., Page-Gould et al., 2008) and the promotion of increased trust (e.g., Turner et al., 2010; Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2007). In cross-group friendships, as with interpersonal friendships more generally, there is the expectation that the trust that is shown through self-disclosure will be reciprocated – indeed, the failure to reciprocate this trust can be detrimental to friendship development (e.g., Argyle & Henderson, 1984).

The more self-disclosure that is received the greater the likelihood that the self-disclosure will be reciprocated (e.g., Berg & Wright-Buckley, 1988; Reis & Shaver, 1988; Shelton et al., 2010a). Perceived partner responsiveness to self-disclosure (evidenced in their willingness to reciprocate the self-disclosure) is an important predictor of cross-group friendship formation (Shelton et al., 2010a). It signals the partner's willingness to invest in the relationship (Fehr, 1996; Hays, 1984; Van Dick et al., 2004) by making themselves vulnerable to the recipient of the self-disclosure, which requires a degree of trust in the recipient. The experience of negative expectations, intergroup anxiety, and evaluative concerns likely make it more difficult to initiate (or reciprocate) self-disclosure within the context of intergroup interactions, but over repeated encounters and with the development of sufficient trust, this should become easier (Gareis, 2000; Gudykunst, Nishida, & Chua, 1987; MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015).

Reciprocity (in terms of shared goals or the sharing of personal information) contributes towards satisfying the self-expansion motive and thereby facilitates the experience of greater self-other overlap. As previously discussed, self-other overlap describes the cognitive process in dyadic relationship where individuals increasingly consider one another as similar to each other (see Aron et al., 1991, 1992, 2004). As self-other overlap increases, the other is treated like the self (Aron, Mashek, & Aron,

2004). Within the context of cross-group friendships, it means that the outgroup friend is afforded the same emotional, cognitive, and behavioural benefits as would be given to a fellow ingroup member (Page-Gould, Mendoza-Denton, Alegre, & Siy, 2010; Wright et al., 2002).

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that there are various intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup processes that influence interpersonal interactions between members of different groups and subsequent cross-group friendship development (Shelton et al., 2006; West & Dovidio, 2013). Intergroup processes (such as intergroup anxiety) are likely to dominate the initial encounter between in- and outgroup strangers (see MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015). However, MacInnis and Page-Gould (2015) point out that after repeated positive encounters (especially if these encounters are with the same outgroup individual) the ingroup member should achieve a 'contact threshold', where the positive encounters begin to shift their attitudes towards the outgroup member they are encountering (see also MacInnis & Hodson, 2019). At this point, the contact encounter can be said to have achieved what Pettigrew (1998) refers to as 'acquaintance potential'. It is during this phase of 'acquaintance potential', the earliest stage of cross-group friendship development, that intrapersonal and interpersonal processes such as intimacy, trust, and self-disclosure are believed to be especially important for solidifying the development of the cross-group friendship. Intergroup processes central to the shaping of intergroup attitudes in general may then become more prominent once again as the cross-group friendship develops (Davies & Aron; 2016; see also the longitudinal model of contact proposed by Pettigrew, 1998). This suggests that the extent to which intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup processes exert their influence in intergroup encounters is likely determined by shifts in relationship intimacy (from stranger, to acquaintance, to friend, to best friend) over time.

In the next section, I consider some strategies for mitigating the potential barriers to intergroup contact and subsequent cross-group friendship development that were highlighted above. These will focus on two broad approaches, namely (1) preparing individuals for intergroup contact by lowering negative expectations and intergroup anxiety; and (2) enhancing the quality and acquaintance potential of initial intergroup encounters by reducing evaluative concerns.

Preparing for Intergroup Contact

Intergroup contact is a pre-requisite for the development of cross-group friendships (Jones, Dovidio, & Vietze, 2014). However, negative expectancies associated with contact lead to the avoidance of contact opportunities, and so the challenge remains to encourage individuals to take up opportunities for intergroup contact. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer an in-depth overview of strategies for promoting intergroup contact (for a detailed review see Kauff et al., 2021). Rather, I focus below on the potential of indirect contact (specifically extended contact), as opposed to face-to-face contact, for preparing individuals for future direct

intergroup contact (for a review see White et al., 2021). As discussed in further detail below, indirect contact can reduce the negative expectations about contact, especially when such indirect encounters are positive. This, in turn, may reduce the desire to avoid intergroup contact and may enhance the willingness for future direct intergroup contact.

The extended contact hypothesis was first introduced by Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, and Ropp (1997). It proposes that the knowledge that a fellow ingroup member has successful, positive intergroup encounters can reduce outgroup prejudice (for a review see Vezzali, Hewstone, Capozza, Giovannini, & Wölfer, 2014). This knowledge of the positive intergroup contact that is experienced by fellow ingroup members (including ingroup friends) may be gained via the self-disclosures received from an ingroup member who experiences positive direct contact themselves, or through observing positive intergroup contact between a fellow ingroup member and the outgroup. In the latter case, where extended contact takes the form of observing an ingroup member engaging in positive contact, it is termed vicarious contact. Numerous studies have shown that extended contact promotes more positive outgroup attitudes (e.g., Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006; Hodson, Harry, & Mitchell, 2009; Liebkind & McAlister, 1999). A recent meta-analysis of 248 effect sizes undertaken by Zhou, Page-Gould, Aron, Moyer, and Hewstone (2019) showed that extended contact effects are robust and independent of direct contact effects (see also Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). Indeed, a longitudinal study undertaken by Christ et al. (2010) showed that extended contact has the strongest effect on prejudice for those individuals who experience little to no direct contact themselves.

There are various pathways that have been identified that explain why extended contact reduces outgroup prejudice. Some of these pathways target the negative expectancies about contact (discussed earlier) and may explain why extended contact is especially beneficial for preparing individuals for future direct contact. For example, extended contact is associated with reduced intergroup anxiety (e.g., Wölfer et al., 2019). Individuals who report that they have friends or family members who engage in positive intergroup contact report experiencing less intergroup anxiety when anticipating future direct contact with the outgroup (e.g., Turner et al., 2007; Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008). This effect might also be explained by the (implied) presence of positive norms towards contact displayed by family and friends who have cross-group friends (a point to which I return shortly).

Extended contact has also been shown to promote increased psychological overlap between the ingroup member experiencing the extended contact and the outgroup. Fellow ingroup members are automatically included in the self (e.g., Tropp & Wright, 2001; Smith, Coats, & Walling, 1999) and because interaction partners are often treated as a single unit (Sedikides, Olsen, & Reis, 1993), extended contact promotes increased self-other overlap between the ingroup observer and the outgroup member engaged in the extended contact interaction.

Wright et al. (1997) argue that extended contact elevates the category salience of the participants who are observed engaging in contact. For this reason, extended

contact may be especially important for shifting the perceived ingroup and outgroup norms relating to contact (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). These perceived norms can relate to the acceptability of ingroup contact with the outgroup (e.g., Mazziotta, Mummendey, & Wright, 2011; Tropp & Bianchi, 2006), the extent to which the ingroup values diversity (e.g., Pettigrew et al., 2007), and the extent to which the outgroup is (or is not) interested in contact with the ingroup (e.g., Shelton & Richeson, 2005). These norms can have a profound impact on the potential for future intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 1991, 1998). From a social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorisation perspective (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), ingroup members are often aware of the prevailing group norms of their own group and of the perceived norms that prevail in the outgroup. This is especially true for those individuals for whom their ingroup identity is important (Mazziotta et al., 2011).

Returning to the important relationship between extended contact and norms alluded to above, the norms of ingroup friends (e.g., Wilson & Russell, 1996) and those of family (e.g., Clark-Ibáňez & Felmlee, 2004) may be especially important for determining cross-group friendship formation. If friends and family are known (or observed) to have positive intergroup contact (and/or outgroup friends), then this indirect contact can signal to the ingroup observer that it is normatively acceptable for them to engage in positive intergroup contact themselves. It also signals that the outgroup is perhaps not so negatively disposed towards the ingroup, and that the outgroup is more interested in intergroup contact than previously thought. By reducing intergroup anxiety, increasing the sense of shared identity with the outgroup, and by promoting more positive perceptions of ingroup and outgroup norms relating to contact, extended contact can (1) reduce the negative expectancies that often accompany the anticipation of direct contact; (2) undermine the desire to avoid intergroup contact; (3) enhance the sense of confidence that the individual can successfully engage in face-to-face intergroup contact themselves; and (4) increase the willingness to engage in future direct contact (e.g., Mazziotta et al., 2011; Turner, 2020; Turner & Cameron, 2016; see also Wölfer et al., 2019).

Enhancing the Initial Contact Experience

Friendship development requires repeated positive interactions over time. The same holds true for the development of cross-group friendships (Page-Gould et al., 2008; West & Dovidio, 2013). Unfortunately, the presence of negative expectancies leading up to the initial intergroup encounter and the presence of evaluation apprehension during the initial intergroup encounter may encourage individuals to avoid further intergroup encounters, undermining the potential to develop a cross-group friendship (MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015). One approach to enhancing the quality of the initial intergroup encounter is to structure the contact in such a manner that it reduces the influence of negative expectancies and to reduce the experience of evaluative concern. In other words, to structure the initial intergroup encounter to

maximise the overall quality of the encounter and thereby enhance its acquaintance potential (MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015; Pettigrew, 1998).

Pettigrew's (1998) longitudinal model of contact emphasises the importance of enhancing the acquaintance potential of initial intergroup encounters. This may require numerous encounters to overcome the intergroup processes (such as intergroup anxiety) that often dominate the experience of initial encounters with outgroup strangers, and to achieve a 'contact threshold' (where the positive encounters begin to impact positively on attitudes towards the outgroup member being encountered; MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015). It is once this 'contact threshold' has been achieved that the contact can be characterised as having acquaintance potential (MacInnis & Hodson, 2019; MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015).

Pettigrew (1998) suggests that category salience should be minimised as far as possible during the initial intergroup encounter so that these encounters are more of an *interpersonal* nature rather than an *intergroup* nature. This interpersonal contact allows individuals to focus on their similarities rather than their differences (Mallett et al., 2008), facilitating the development of psychological overlap between them, and reducing the experience of intergroup anxiety (Page-Gould et al., 2008). Opportunities to engage in self-disclosure to identify similarities and opportunities to cooperate on common goals serve to enhance the overall quality of these initial engagements. This is because self-disclosure promotes familiarity and allows for individuation within initial intergroup encounters, which reduces anxiety and negative expectancies (e.g., Mallett et al., 2008; West, Pearson, Dovidio, Shelton, & Trail, 2009) and improves the processing of individuating information (Ensari & Miller, 2002; Miller, 2002).

Reminding individuals that the initial encounter went better than they may have expected will further serve to enhance the quality of subsequent intergroup encounters (Mallett & Wilson, 2010) and lower the desire to avoid further intergroup contact. Subsequent positive encounters will help to further develop the sense of psychological overlap between the ingroup and outgroup member and lay the foundation for the development of interpersonal trust. Greater trust will, over time, make it possible to introduce category salience into the contact encounter, which will allow the encounters to transition from positive interpersonal encounters to positive intergroup encounters (Pettigrew, 1998). This transition to intergroup encounters, achieved by increasing the category salience of the interaction partners, is important for achieving generalised reductions in prejudice towards the outgroup as a whole (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). Moreover, it can serve to establish the presence of normative support for intergroup contact from the authorities (who are facilitating the structured contact experiences; Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003; see also Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), which is important for enhancing the overall contact experience.

A final point relating to the timing of the introduction of category salience is warranted here. Although Pettigrew (1998) recommends that category salience only be introduced after initial positive interpersonal encounters, research undertaken by Van Oudenhoven, Groenewoud, and Hewstone (1996) suggests that the timing of

the introduction of category salience in intergroup interactions (be it during the initial interactions or during later interactions) does not impact on either the positive attitudes that the interaction elicits towards the outgroup member participating in the interaction, or the generalisation of these positive attitudes towards the outgroup member to the outgroup as a whole. Taken together, it seems that the most important consideration is to ensure that category salience is introduced *early enough* in the intergroup encounters (dependent on the quality of these encounters – earlier if the initial encounters are positive and later if the initial encounters are less positive) to ensure that the positive attitudes developed towards the outgroup individual during these encounters are able to generalise to the outgroup as a whole (thereby avoiding the real risk associated with completely decategorized contact, that the outgroup exemplar is viewed as a positive exception to the outgroup as a whole, leaving the prejudices held towards the outgroup as a whole intact).

As highlighted earlier, evaluative concerns are a key feature of intergroup encounters that lower the perceived quality of these encounters and encourage contact avoidance. Evaluative concerns are likely to become more salient under conditions of high category salience. Explicitly encouraging individuals to adopt an ‘other’ focus (instead of being focused on the self) during structured contact will enable them to focus on learning new information about the outgroup partner, which is important for reducing the reliance on group-based stereotypes and reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) and can encourage the re-evaluation of what ‘we’ believe ‘they’ think about ‘us’ (i.e., the prevailing meta-stereotypes; Shelton et al., 2006; Vorauer & Turpie, 2004). Learning about the outgroup should also make future interactions feel less uncertain (Shelton & Richeson, 2005; Vorauer, 2006; Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2006), reduce fears of rejection, promote perspective-taking (Wang, Tai, Ku, & Galinsky, 2014), and boost the self-confidence experienced in intergroup encounters (e.g., Leary, Kowalski, & Bergen, 1988; Thompson, 1991; Turner, 2020; Turner & Cameron, 2016), all of which will enhance the willingness for future intergroup contact.

An important caveat here is that these beneficial effects of structured intergroup contact may be stronger for members of majority-status (advantaged) groups than for members of minority-status (disadvantaged) groups. Taylor and Fiske (1978) suggest that the group membership of minority-status interaction partners is arguably more salient for majority-group members than is the group membership of majority-status interaction partners for minority-group members because encounters with members of minority groups are more novel for majority-group members than are encounters with majority-group members for members of the minority. As such, it is likely that positive attitudes are more likely to generalise for majority-status interaction partners due to heightened salience of the minority-partners category membership (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). This may explain why, despite being significantly associated with reduced prejudice for both majority- and minority-status group members, contact effects are generally stronger for members of majority-status groups than for members of minority-status groups (for a meta-analytic review see Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005).

In summary, cross-group friendship is an important dimension of intergroup contact that is reliably associated with reduced outgroup prejudice. However, cross-group friendships hold numerous benefits for intergroup relations that go beyond prejudice reduction (including increased intergroup trust and forgiveness). Physical proximity, similarity, and reciprocity are as important for promoting the development of cross-group friendships as they are for the development of interpersonal friendships more generally. However, negative expectancies and intergroup anxiety may heighten evaluative concerns during intergroup encounters, which may encourage contact avoidance and undermine the development of cross-group friendships. Positive indirect contact experiences (such as extended contact) may assist in preparing individuals for future direct contact themselves, while structured contact that encourages reciprocated self-disclosure and an ‘other’ focus may serve to lessen evaluative concerns and enhance the overall quality and acquaintance potential of initial intergroup encounters. Below, I consider whether interpersonal friendships in general (and cross-group friendships in particular) are always positive and beneficial, before concluding with suggested avenues for future research.

Are Friendships Always Positive and Beneficial?

The preceding discussions have framed friendships in an especially positive light relative to more casual everyday encounters. However, friendships are not always experienced positively (Bushman & Holt-Lunstad, 2009; Holt-Lunstad & Clark, 2014) and ambivalent friendships can be especially harmful to our health (e.g., Bagwell et al., 2005; Campo et al., 2009; Uchino, Holt-Lunstad, Uno, & Flinders, 2001). For example, in children, lower quality friendships have been associated with increased anxiety (Greco & Morris, 2005; La Greca & Harrison, 2005; Poirier et al., 2016) and lowered self-esteem (Keefe & Berndt, 1996).

Friendships may also encourage (or exacerbate) risky and/or unhealthy behaviours. For example, the mere presence of peers (e.g., Gardner & Steinberg, 2005; Smith, Chein, & Steinberg, 2014) or even the imagined presence of peers (e.g., Moriizumi & Usui, 2020; Weigard, Chein, Albert, Smith, & Steinberg, 2014) has been shown to increase the risk-taking behaviour of adolescents in a manner that is independent of any form of pressure (a phenomenon knowns as the peer effect; Albert, Chein, & Steinberg, 2013). The peer effect is enhanced when the peer whose presence is real or implied is perceived as being less risk averse (Moriizumi & Usui, 2020).

The peer effect can operate either through selection or through socialisation. Peer selection describes the phenomenon whereby peer similarity enhances the likelihood of peer friendships. As such, peers who perceive each other as similar in terms of their willingness to take risks may be more inclined to become friends (Bauman & Ennet, 1996), and such friendships may hold an increased risk of negative outcomes. However, research also shows that friends tend to become more

similar to one another over time (Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Reis et al., 2000) through mutual adaptation, a socialisation effect. As such, delinquent behaviour may be learned (socialised) in a friendship with a delinquent peer, a phenomenon known as learned deviance (or deviancy training; Dishion, Bullock, & Granic, 2002; Dishion, Spracklen, Andrews, & Patterson, 1996; Hartup & Stevens, 1997). Friendships with deviant peers can result in reduced well-being (Pagel, Erdly, & Becker, 1987).

Social contagion among friends describes how friends can influence one another negatively through unhealthy behaviours (Christakis & Fowler, 2013) such as increased alcohol consumption (e.g., Rosenquist, Murabito, Fowler, & Christakis, 2010) or smoking (e.g., Christakis & Fowler, 2008). Depression contagion has been observed within the context of childhood and adolescent friendships (especially those of female friendships; e.g., Giletta et al., 2011; Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994). This socialisation effect related to depression may be due to co-rumination (e.g., Rose, 2002). However, Christakis and Fowler (2014; see also Rosenquist, Fowler, & Christakis, 2011) suggest that this shared depression among friends may also be the result of a selection effect; that friendships are formed between genetically similar others (for further evidence of the genetic similarity among friends in a social network see Fowler, Dawes, & Christakis, 2009; Fowler, Settle, & Christakis, 2011).

Cross-group friendships, too, have been associated with less-than-ideal outcomes, especially for members of minority-status (disadvantaged) groups. As has been described above, positive intergroup contact (and especially cross-group friendships) is reliably associated with more positive outgroup attitudes for both majority- and minority-group members. However, some studies have shown that the increased sense of similarity and perceived self-other overlap achieved between majority- and minority-status members in cross-group friendships desensitises minority-group members to the existing illegitimate group differences and structural inequalities and lowers their collective action intentions and desire for social change (for reviews see Hässler, Uluğ, Kappmeier, & Travaglino, 2021; Saguy, Shchori-Eyal, Hasan-Aslih, Sobol, & Dovidio, 2017; Saguy, Tropp, & Hawi, 2013). In other words, positive intergroup contact (some critics have suggested) may serve only to promote more positive intergroup attitudes while leaving group inequalities unchanged (see Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005, 2007).

Wright and Lubensky (2009) argue that the strategic objective of positive intergroup contact (more harmonious intergroup relations) is incompatible with that of collective action (social change). The positive outgroup attitudes elicited by positive intergroup contact are believed to undermine the very factors that are central to motivating minority-groups to engage in collective action (e.g., Banfield & Dovidio, 2013; Dixon et al., 2005, 2007; Dixon, Tropp, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2010c; Dixon et al., 2010a; Saguy, Tausch, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2009). These factors central to strengthening the collective action intentions of minorities include a strong identification with the minority-status ingroup (Stürmer & Simon, 2004; Tausch, Saguy, & Bryson, 2015), recognising illegitimate group differences (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), and anger towards the majority status group (Van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004). This concern is supported by research that shows

that, among minority-status participants, positive intergroup contact is associated with positive attitudes towards the majority-status outgroup, on the one hand, and reduced collective action intentions, on the other (e.g., Çakal, Hewstone, Schwär, & Heath, 2011; Dixon et al., 2007; Hässler et al., 2020; Kamberi, Martinovic, & Verkuyten, 2017; Saguy et al., 2009; Tausch & Becker, 2012; Tausch et al., 2015; Tropp, Hawi, Van Laar, & Levin, 2012).

However, an emerging body of research suggests that positive intergroup contact need not be incompatible with collective action intentions among minority groups (see Hässler et al., 2020, 2021). For example, cross-group friendships that allow for open engagement around (and recognition of) existing group inequalities and where the majority-status partner shows support for social change appear not to weaken the collective action intentions of the minority-status partner (e.g., Becker, Wright, Lubensky, & Zhou, 2013; Droogendyk, Louis, & Wright, 2016; Techakesari, Droogendyk, Wright, Louis, & Barlow, 2017). There is also evidence to suggest that positive intergroup contact with minority-group members (and especially cross-group friendships; see Carter et al., 2019; MacInnis & Hodson, 2019; Schussman & Soule, 2005) is crucial for encouraging majority-group members to join the minority-group in the fight against illegitimate group differences and social inequality (Reimer et al., 2017; Van Zomeren, 2019). Indeed, research has shown that high-quality positive intergroup contact (e.g., cross-group friendships) with minority-status groups predicts greater support for social change (e.g., Dixon et al., 2010b; Hayes & Dowds, 2006; Maoz & Ellis, 2008; Pettigrew, 1997; Pettigrew, Wagner & Christ, 2007) and collective action intentions among majority-status groups (e.g., Çakal, Halabi, Cazan, & Eller, 2021; Hässler et al., 2020; Hoskin, Thomas, & McGarty, 2019; Kotzur, Schäfer, & Wagner, 2019; Reimer et al., 2017; Selvanathan, Techakesari, Tropp, & Barlow, 2018; Turoy-Smith, Kane, & Pedersen, 2013). Some of the important mechanisms through which positive intergroup contact enhances the collective action intentions of majority-group members include more inclusive identification with the minority-status group (e.g., Reimer et al., 2017; Turoy-Smith et al., 2013); increased guilt, empathy, and perspective-taking towards the minority-status group (e.g., Çakal et al., 2021; Mallett et al., 2008; Selvanathan et al., 2018); and an increased awareness of their own privileged status as the majority group (e.g., Carter et al., 2019; Uluğ & Tropp, 2020).

These encouraging results counter the suggestion made by Wright and Lubensky (2009; see also Saguy et al., 2009) that the objectives of positive intergroup contact and collective action are strategically incompatible (see also Hewstone, Swart, & Hodson, 2012). Hässler et al. (2021) propose an Integrated Contact-Collective Action Model (ICCAM) that describes how (i.e., the mediators) and when (i.e., the moderators) contact may lead to enhanced (or reduced) collective action intentions for majority-status (advantaged) and minority-status (disadvantaged) groups members. This theoretical framework provides a platform for the next wave of research exploring how cross-group friendships can both improve intergroup attitudes and unite majority- and minority-group members in the common cause of pursuing social equality.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This review of the literature has highlighted several avenues for future research. More friendship research is required in contexts that are not characterised as WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic; see Henrich et al, 2010). Moreover, Perlman (2017) notes that the friendship literature is dominated by research on student samples, female participants, and/or majority-status group participants. As such, even within WEIRD contexts, the friendship literature is limited in its capacity to speak to the friendship processes of those friendships enjoyed by other social groups (e.g., the elderly, minority-status groups). If we are to truly understand the meaning found in (and attributed to) friendships, then friendship research is required in a greater diversity of contexts and among a broader variety of demographic groups and status groups.

Very little is known about how the motives for pursuing same-group friendships compare with those for pursuing cross-group friendships (Apostolou et al., 2020). Does similarity play a more important role in same-group friendships than in cross-group friendships? Does complementarity (and the desire for self-expansion) play a more important role in the pursuit of cross-group friendships than in same-group friendships? Future research can aim to shed light on these potentially different motives.

Future research might also focus on broadening our understanding of the intergroup processes involved in cross-group friendship formation, maintenance, and dissolution. For example, research could explore how the prevalence of intergroup processes during the initial intergroup encounters between strangers (see MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015) impacts on the interpersonal processes that may play a more important role in the initial stages of cross-group friendship formation (see Davis & Aron, 2016) and the intergroup processes that are believed to come to the fore again as the friendship progresses in intimacy (making the generalisation of positive attitudes possible; Pettigrew, 1998).

Research should further aim to harness both the dyadic nature of friendships and longitudinal designs to study the causal relations between friendship experiences (as reported by both partners) and outcomes (see for example West, Shelton et al., 2009). Such research could focus on the interplay between perceived and actual similarity and personality characteristics on friendship formation, friendship maintenance, and friendship quality over time.

Finally, future research should explore the relationship between intergroup contact and collective action to better understand how these two processes may work together towards achieving not only improved intergroup relations (by way of improved outgroup attitudes) but also fostering support for social change and collective action among both majority- and minority-status groups. The integrated theoretical framework offered by Hässler et al. (2021) offers a promising platform for

this research agenda, one that provides clear, testable hypotheses for both majority- and minority-status groups. Moreover, future research should heed the call made by Van Zomeren (2019) for the implementation of multi-level approaches (capable of accounting for the role of social relationships, and cultural and political systems) in the study of the interaction between intergroup contact and collective action.

Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to discuss the importance of interpersonal friendships within the context of intergroup relations. Not only do cross-group friendships enable us to fulfil our self-expansion motives, allowing us to access novel resources, ideas, and points of view, but they also hold a range of important benefits for promoting positive intergroup relations. Key considerations in the development of cross-group friendships are the twin challenges of overcoming the desire to avoid intergroup contact and enhancing the quality of initial intergroup encounters. Exposure to indirect forms of contact and structuring intergroup contact so that it reduces evaluative concerns offer two avenues for addressing these challenges. This chapter has also described how cross-group friendships are less prevalent, more difficult to establish, and more fragile than same-group friendships. However, this need not be cause for pessimism because, as the classic research on strong and weak ties by Granovetter (1973) suggests, even weaker cross-group social ties (relative to those of same-group ties) can serve as important sources of information, offer opportunities for self-expansion, and allow for learning more about the outgroup. It is the high quality embodied by the acquaintance potential of intergroup contact that should be emphasised and pursued, because it lays the foundation for the potential evolution of cross-group acquaintances into cross-group friends.

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