

A new agenda for examining interethnic interactions amongst youth in diverse settings

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## **Abstract**

For decades, social psychological research focused on youth intergroup relations has primarily examined interactions between dichotomous groups through cross-sectional and self-report measures in single contexts, such as the school. With increasing ethnic diversification, however, it has become more difficult to capture these dynamics in a way that meaningfully reflects the behaviour demonstrated by youth in ethnically diverse settings.

In this chapter, we briefly review the existing literature on interethnic interactions amongst youth in diverse settings. We next discuss some theoretical and methodological limitations of this research, including the failure of our theoretical approaches to capture the wider social-ecology, consider more than two groups, or address the problems associated with measuring behaviour in real-world contexts. We then review the handful of studies focused on youths' behaviour in diverse contexts, as well as emerging research examining youth and behavioural trajectories when moving beyond the dichotomies of Black and White. We end the chapter by proposing a new research agenda which brings youth into context and extends theoretical boundaries by drawing on a range of innovative methods. We argue this broader approach is needed if we are to truly understand the implications of growing ethnic diversity for youth.

Young people across the globe are experiencing increasingly ethnically diverse environments - from educational settings and neighbourhoods to online platforms (Unesco World Report, 2009). In the United Kingdom (UK), for example, school statistics demonstrate that 27% of pupils in state funded secondary schools in England and Wales are of minority ethnic origin (DfE, 2015) and that neighbourhoods are diversifying (Catney, 2015). The effects of ethnic diversity, however, are hotly contested, demonstrating positive and negative outcomes for both minority and majority group members.

Generally speaking, social psychologists have been mostly concerned with the social effects of racial/ethnic diversity on young people, such as reduced prejudice and increased pro-social behaviours (e.g., Bekerman & Horenczyk, 2004; Husnu & Crisp, 2010; Maoz, 2002; Stathi et al., 2014). Ethnic diversity, however, can have further reaching effects. For example, evidence shows that diversity in the workplace can lead to increased creativity and innovation (Bassett-Jones, 2005) as well as promote learning outcomes (Denson & Chang, 2009). At the same time, however, ethnic diversity can have negative effects for youth. Researchers have observed a negative relationship between classroom diversity and self-assessed academic skills for Black students (Gurin et al., 2002) and there is evidence of negative attitudes and hate crimes in lights of diversity. In the UK, for example, 25% of the population believe that the level of prejudice and discrimination they experience has gone up since 2000 (Crease & Lader, 2014) and evidence shows that hate crimes in schools and colleges are on the rise (TES, 2017).

Given the contested nature of ethnic diversity, it is vital that we understand how to best promote intergroup relations in diverse settings. One way to do this is through encouraging individuals to engage in meaningful contact with one another, known as the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954). There is substantial empirical support demonstrating that when positive intergroup interactions occur, under favourable circumstances, prejudice will reduce

and this can therefore improve intergroup relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). We argue, however, that if we are to truly understand how to promote better community relations amongst youth, that it is vital to consider the complexity of interactions as well as adopt new methods to best capture intergroup behaviours.

In this chapter we first provide a definition of interethnic interactions, followed by a brief overview of the research and relevant theories on improving youth intergroup relations in diverse settings through interethnic interactions. We then present what we argue are the current theoretical and methodological limitations of such research. Finally, we end the chapter by proposing a new research agenda that draws on a range of innovative methods and offers new theoretical approaches to studying youth intergroup relations in diverse settings.

### **Improving intergroup relations in diverse settings through interethnic interactions**

Within the broad research literature, there is little consensus on what constitutes ethnic diversity and whether or not ethnic diversity leads to meaningful intergroup interactions. For example, some researchers focus on diversity as mere exposure to those from different ethnic groups, some as self-reported perceptions of intergroup interaction that meet the conditions of the contact hypothesis (outlined below), and others as *observed/reported* friendships (See Hewstone, 2015; McKeown & Dixon, 2017 for more information). However, the operationalization of what we understand by diversity is critically important because this impacts how we understand the downstream consequences of ethnic diversity. Evidence shows that whilst children and young people may be exposed to ethnic diversity in school, through physical co-presence with diverse peers, this may not translate into meaningful contact, or friendships (DuBois & Hirsch, 1990). Thus the success of different research activities maybe over/under estimated based on the definition of diversity and whether or not this involves meaningful interethnic interactions. In this chapter, we

consider both quantity (how often interactions occur) and quality (how positive interactions are) as reflecting what makes a meaningful (or not) interethnic interaction.

Amongst youth, simply sharing space and being in the physical co-presence of ethnically diverse others is not sufficient to ensure that meaningful intergroup interactions will occur (McKeown & Dixon, 2017). People of all ages tend to form close ties to others with whom they share characteristics, befriending people who are similar to them on a number of traits (Kupersmidt et al., 1995; Schneider, 2000). This is true of young children when it comes to race (McKeown, Williams, & Pauker, 2017) and adolescents in Northern Ireland in relation to ethno-religious identities (McKeown, Cairns, Stringer, & Rae, 2012; McKeown, Stringer, & Cairns, 2015). Although, the propinquity hypothesis posits that people tend to become friends not with those who are similar, but with those who are physically close (Festinger, 1954), improved intergroup relations would only occur when superficial contact in a shared environment evolves into meaningful interactions, evidenced through intergroup friendship formation (Echols & Graham, 2013). Understanding how to turn mere exposure into meaningful interactions is therefore vital. Although there are numerous approaches to encouraging interethnic interactions amongst children and adolescents, in this chapter we focus on two of the more popular methods: the contact hypothesis and diversity ideology.

**The Contact Hypothesis.** Intergroup contact-based research arguably stands as one of the most utilised means for investigating changes in attitudes and behaviour among youth in diverse and conflict settings. The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Brown & Hewstone, 2005) posits that positive interaction or contact between members of different social groups under certain conditions (equal status, common goals, cooperation and authority support) will have the positive effect of reducing prejudice between those groups. Under both experimental conditions and when used as an intervention in real-world settings, when the conditions of the

contact hypothesis are met, intergroup contact reduces prejudice and increases positive attitudes (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This is achieved in part because contact fosters empathy, trust, forgiveness, self-disclosure with respect to members of the other group, intentions for further contact, positive behaviour (e.g., Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Swart, Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2011; Tausch, Saguy, & Bryson, 2015), and anxiety reduction (Turner, West, & Christie, 2013). In their landmark meta-analysis on the role of contact in reducing prejudice, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found this link in adolescent samples ( $r = -.21$ ,  $k = 114$  samples,  $n = 45,602$ ) and that the effects of contact on prejudice reduction did not significantly vary for adolescent groups compared with children ( $r = -.24$ ,  $k = 82$  samples,  $n = 10,207$ ) or university students ( $r = -.23$ ,  $k = 262$  samples,  $n = 46,553$ ).

**Diversity Ideology.** Another popular approach to improving intergroup relations in applied settings, is to address how diversity is conceptualised - whether differences should be celebrated or ignored. Adopting a multicultural or polycultural approach to diversity that focuses on embracing and celebrating difference can have positive outcomes for young people (Apfelbaum, Pauker, Sommers, & Ambady, 2010; McKeown et al., 2017; see also Rattan & Ambady, 2013; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Despite some criticisms that multiculturalism might entrench bounded social categories (Brewer, 1997) and promote negative stereotyping (Wolsko, Park, Judd & Wittenbrink, 2000) multiculturalism has gained popularity in the social psychological literature as a favoured alternative to colourblind approaches where differences are minimized and ignored (Rattan & Ambady, 2013; Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Research has demonstrated that adopting a multicultural approach to difference among Dutch majority adolescents is associated with greater positive evaluation of ethnic minorities, while the same endorsement among the ethnic minority youth is associated with positive ingroup evaluation (Verkutyen, 2005). Further, reading stories to

children about embracing and celebrating difference can change behaviour (McKeown et al., 2017) and result in children being more likely to detect racial discrimination and describe events in a way that encourages teacher intervention (Apfelbaum et al., 2010). A growing body of literature demonstrates that how one thinks about diversity and difference can impact interethnic interactions (Rattan & Ambady, 2013; Rosenthal & Levey, 2010).

### **Theoretical limitations of research on youth intergroup interactions**

Despite the promises of research on promoting interethnic interactions, there are some limitations when faced with the complexities of real life contexts where multiple groups are involved and when applied to try to understand observed behaviours (c.f. Dixon, Durrheim & Tredoux, 2005). In order to capture these complexities amongst youth, we argue that a comprehensive social-ecological approach should be applied that considers the wide range of factors that influence youth interethnic interactions.

The social-ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) argues that humans are bound in social systems and that the individual should be at the centre of the study of human development and behaviour. Demonstrating the importance of a social-ecological approach to understanding complex societal processes, this model is increasingly incorporated across subfields of psychology and in settings of diversity and intergroup conflict (Betancourt & Khan, 2008; Cummings et al., 2014; Dubow et al., 2010). The social-ecological model includes an *individual's* psychological functioning, such as individual differences in personality and political ideology. Surrounding the individual is the *microsystem*, or the everyday influences of family, school, and peer groups; and then the *mesosystem* which incorporates the various sets of relations across the microsystem (e.g., influences across the family, peer, work, and school systems). The next most proximal level is the *exosystem* which is comprised of factors that indirectly influence development (e.g., community dynamics,

governmental statistics). The *macrosystem* represents the overarching institutional patterns of the culture (e.g., economic, social, educational, legal, and political systems) that shape patterns of social interaction across society. Finally, the *chronosystem* represents the transitions and changes in an individual's life over time which necessitates the collection of longitudinal data, something which is rare within the literature focusing on interethnic relations.

To date, social psychologists examining youth interethnic interactions have tended to focus primarily on the individual or group level, assessing the effects of personality or social attitudes to explain engagement in interactions. With few exceptions (cf. McKeown & Taylor, 2018; Tropp et al., 2016, for work examining school versus peer norm effects on youth attitudes and behaviours) researchers have not yet examined the role that broader social systems may play on both individual and dyadic behaviour. For example, whilst there is some research on how different microsystems (e.g. school, family, peers) influence interethnic interactions, to the best of our knowledge, little attention has been given to the mesosystem (how different levels of the microsystem interact together), exosystem (i.e., the external systems such as parents' workplace, community health provision), macrosystem (i.e., government policy, subtle messages communicated through the media), or chronosystem (i.e., changes in behaviour over time), and how these systems have influenced youth interethnic interactions.

We argue that adopting a social-ecological approach to youth interethnic interactions would enable us to better understand the complexity of these social processes as well as to develop theoretical understanding beyond the two-group paradigm. This is important because the nature of identity is complex with many young people growing up in diverse social environments where majority and minority groups are no longer binary and is, in fact, contested. Indeed, too often majority voices have dominated research papers and minorities



have been lumped together as a large uniform group, when in reality there exists a richness and complexity within this diversity (Jones & Dovidio, 2018). This is problematic because whereas the study of the majority's perspective has focused on its recognition and acceptance of the minority group, there is a need to also include the minority's perspective of the majority, along with recognition and acceptance in the minority group's own right (Shelton, 2000). A social-ecological model of youth interethnic interactions would enable a wide range of voices to be heard and researchers would be able to better examine the facilitating and inhibiting nature of various levels of the social-ecology for a wide range of majority and minority group members. This will require new methods.

### **Methodological limitations of research on youth intergroup interactions**

Reflecting the focus on the individual outlined above, the majority of research examining youth interethnic interactions has four main limitations: an over-reliance on (1) experimental/laboratory studies using (2) self-reported measures of interactions collected with cross-sectional samples at (3) single time-points. As mentioned above, the integrity of this area of research is also potentially undermined by a lack of consensus in what is meant by interethnic interactions. We more fully outline our concerns below.

### **Experimental Designs**

To date, researchers examining youths' interethnic interactions have relied heavily on experimental and/or cross-sectional designs with idealised interactions between (sometimes fictitious) dichotomous groups that arguably fail to capture the nature of youth interactions in real world settings. This is particularly true for research involving the contact hypothesis; commentators have argued that there is a huge gap between "optimal contact" which has proven to be effective in laboratory settings and the type of contact that occurs in the real world (McKeown & Dixon, 2017).

As a by-product of the over-representation of laboratory-based research in the literature, the testing and building of theory has been developed around adult samples – often first-year female university undergraduates in psychology – in what has been coined WEIRD populations (western, educated, industrialized, rich, democratic; Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010), which places the emphasis on the “majority”, often at the expense of the “minority” (Shelton, 2000). Ironically, research into interactions in diverse settings in itself is lacking in diversity. The downside is that such emphasis assumes that only one group is of interest in a two-group setting, thus limiting our understanding of the perspective of each group in their own right, considering their perspectives, culture, and everyday encountered challenges. There is a need to “check majority privilege” when designing research in ‘diverse’ settings.

### **Self-Report Measures**

Second, when examining interethnic interactions researchers have relied on self-report measures of attitudes and behaviours. This is problematic for several reasons. Most notably, it is widely acknowledged that self-report measures have an inherent weakness in that they are likely to elicit socially desirable responses. For example, 14- to 16-year-olds demonstrated no evidence of racial outgroup prejudice on explicit attitude measures, however they demonstrated a strong pro-White versus Black bias on an implicit measure of racial attitudes (Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005). In addition, responses on self-report measures, including predicting hypothetical future behaviour, are often discrepant with observed behaviour and impossible to verify (Baumeister, Vohs, & Funder, 2007).

### **Cross-sectional studies at single time points**

Finally, whilst self-report measures administered at single time points can provide valuable insights into youths’ perceptions of contact, these “snap-shots” of attitudes or

behaviour are limited in their ability to examine interethnic interactions over time. This is important intergroup behaviour is dynamic and contextual factors are important when considering the (in) effectiveness of intergroup contact in certain circumstances (Dixon et al., 2005a). Cross-sectional designs using single-points of data collection, therefore, *by definition* fail to capture the complex and dynamic processes underlying intergroup behaviour. For example, children may become more or less integrated at different times of the school year and attitudes may fluctuate depending on external events, single time point analysis would not be able to capture this complexity.

The overall consequence of the disproportionate focus on self-report measures under experimental (or natural) conditions at a single time-point with cross-sectional samples is that the effects of intergroup interactions may be over or under-estimated, limiting our understanding of everyday influences on youth attitudes and behaviour. To gain insight into what is actually happening in ethnically diverse settings, there is a need to move beyond self-report and study actual behaviour (Baumeister et al., 2007). Happily, researchers are beginning to do just that.

### **Measuring behaviour in real life contexts**

In recent years, researchers have begun to move from self-report and experimental methods toward more novel approaches to capturing behaviour. This research often focuses on people in context, moving us from the individual to microsystem level in Bronfenbrenner's model (1979). Here, we review some of these approaches as applied to the study of intergroup relations amongst adolescents, specifically focusing on micro-ecological behaviour, social network analysis, and the use of new technologies.

## **Micro-ecological behaviour**

A growing number of studies have focused on examining youth intergroup behaviour at the micro-ecological level. That is, “the level at which individuals actually encounter one another in situations of bodily co-presence” (Dixon, Tredoux & Clack 2005b, p.395). To date, the majority of micro-ecological studies have examined race relations in the U.S.A. and South Africa through the mapping of seating behaviour in a variety of everyday spaces although the number of studies using this method within the UK has grown. Below, we review the studies relevant to children and youth.

Typically, micro-ecological research has involved behavioural observation of intergroup interactions through mapping or photography. In one of the first reported micro-ecological studies, Campbell, Kruskal and Wallace (1966) mapped the racial and gender seating patterns of school children in the U.S.A. over the period of a semester. To facilitate this process, observers in the classrooms marked, on a pre-drawn map of the classroom layout, the seating arrangement and race/gender of each person on each seat in the classroom. From this information the authors conducted statistical analysis to examine the levels of segregation in the room. Using the Campbell et al. (1966) aggregation index, which the authors developed, results from this study found that school children remained racially segregated in their seating choice throughout the school year, despite being in a mixed race environment. Similar patterns of racial segregation have been observed in school settings across the U.S.A. (McCauley, Plummer, Moskalenko, & Mordkoff, 2001; Schofield & Sagar, 1977; Silverman & Shaw, 1973).

In a revival of these early studies, micro-ecological has taken a step forward to examine a greater variety of settings with a range of research techniques. These studies have primarily been conducted in South Africa amongst adult and university participants in settings including: university lecture theatres and classrooms in South Africa (Alexander &

Tredoux, 2010; Koen & Durrheim, 2010), multi ethnic cafeterias in the United Kingdom (Clack, Dixon & Tredoux, 2005), and university dining halls in South Africa (Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon, & Finchilescu, 2005; Schrieff, Tredoux, Finchilescu, & Dixon, 2010). There are, however, a few studies that have been conducted with children and adolescents in the UK context including schools (McKeown, Stringer & Cairns, 2015) and community groups (McKeown, Cairns, Stringer & Rae, 2012) in Northern Ireland as well as secondary (Al Ramiah et al., 2015; McKeown in progress) and primary (McKeown et al., 2017) schools in the UK. Results from these studies show that even in desegregated spaces, individuals remain clustered in racially or religiously similar groups whilst going about their everyday behaviour.

These studies have produced fascinating results and provide a method by which the complicated processes of real life, everyday contact can be explored. They address inherent problems with the literature by moving beyond idealised conditions of interethnic interactions, simple measures of attitudes and the focus on prejudice as a primary outcome. There are, however, some limitations of such an approach to examining youth interethnic interactions. First, there is an inherent difficulty in understanding the underlying mechanisms associated with seating behaviour (Orr, McKeown, Cairns, & Stringer, 2011). Second, for the most part seating behaviour has been analysed in isolation from other methods making it difficult to get a comprehensive understanding of interethnic interactions. There are some notable exceptions to this amongst adult samples (e.g., Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Schrieff et al., 2010) as well as amongst youth samples (Al Ramiah et al., 2015, McKeown, in progress).

### **Social network analysis (SNA)**

Attempting to move beyond contact reporting, there is a growing literature using social network analysis (SNA) as a way to capture youth friendships. SNA is a method

widely used in the social sciences to capture the potential of social networks and the different ways that individuals are creating and using them (Scott, 2012). There is evidence that using SNA in studying interethnic interactions can contribute to promoting social integration in diverse settings (Wolfer, 2015: 2016). The propinquity argument positing that people tend to make friends with those who are physically close rather than those who are similar (Echols & Graham, 2013) emphasises the role of social network analysis as a tool for analysing the probability of overcoming group differences in order to create meaningful relations. It provides a rationale for using SNA to capture two-way contacts between young people, like asking for reciprocated friendships (Munniksmä et al., 2017), to inspect positive and negative connections with others (e.g., friendships with and avoidance of others), and the effect of contextual and demographic factors on making those connections (Mouw et al., 2006). It enables examining contact dynamics through the longitudinal application of the SNA method, and disentangling indirect contact links (“friends of friends”) and available contact opportunities (i.e., proximity of contact in the direct circle of friends, within peer group, and within broader environment; Wolfer 2017).

The advantage of SNA is that it enables researchers to capture friendships, rather than contact experiences. It is worth noting, however, that SNA typically involves participants’ self-reported friendships and so the extent to which this approach actually captures behaviour could be debated. Further, as SNA usually involves participants reporting the names of peers, this can raise ethical concerns- especially when working with youth under the age of 13. It is not possible to maintain participant anonymity when using social network data in this way. And, young people do not always feel comfortable reporting on their friendship networks especially when this involves nominating negative ties.

## Using new technologies

Perhaps the most methodologically innovative work happening within the field involves the use of new technologies. Whilst the studies we present below were not conducted with youth samples, we would like to highlight the strength of these studies and their applicability to working with youth in diverse and conflict settings to better understand interethnic interactions.

The first example we would like to draw from is a study by Palazzi et al. (2016) who examined White participant's prejudice towards Black people by examining body movements during intragroup (White-White) and intergroup (White-Black) interactions in addition to implicit and explicit attitudes. In a laboratory setting, White participants were asked to wear a lightweight Shimmer GSR device which measured biometrics (heart rate and emotional arousal) whilst they engaged in two separate video-recorded interactions, one with a White peer and one with a Black peer. The combination of the GSR device and video-recording enabled the researchers to capture a range of body movements including distance and volume. The authors found a range of complex results including that participants who scored higher on implicit prejudice were more likely to maintain distance from outgroup than ingroup members. No relationships, however, were found between the implicit and explicit measures and the biometric data. While this is still a lab-based study with a single data collection point, adapting this approach to capture youth behaviour in various interethnic interaction scenarios which would inform understanding as to how social variables may influence subtle nonverbal behaviour, such as body movements.

Chanel Meyers (Meyers & Pauker, in prep) has provided another example of how new technologies can be adapted for research. As part of her Ph.D. research, Meyers developed a mobile phone app which was used amongst university participants to capture their interethnic interactions by measuring their daily exposure and interactions to racially diverse others.

Participants rated how many racially diverse others they saw, how many they interacted with, and whether they engaged in race-related conversations over the course of a week. Those that had more interactions with racially diverse friends reported feeling more comfortable with their race-related conversations. Given the prevalence of mobile phones and their wide use amongst youth, there is a great deal of potential to expand the use of such apps in the future (see also Keil, 2017 for use of mobile phone apps for intergenerational contact).

A third example comes from the work of John Dixon and colleagues who are currently using GPRS trackers to examine how Protestant and Catholic adults living in religiously segregated areas of Belfast move throughout the city. Whilst the use of GPRS tracking is common outside the psychology literature, it has been rarely applied to studying diverse interactions and through combining this approach with walking interviews, it is possible to capture the nature of how everyday space is negotiated and used (or avoided), which has implications for space and planning. Again, this work has been conducted with adults but could be easily applied to youth to examine how they use and share space with diverse others.

A final example we would like to draw on is one which uses technology as a way to empower youth, as well as to understand their experiences. PhotoVoice is a participatory photography and grassroots approach to eliciting narratives about hopes, fears, and potential for positive social change (Suffla, Kaminer, & Bawa, 2012). PhotoVoice has been widely used across various contexts including health psychology (e.g., documenting youths' experiences of their family's participation in and around issues of health and illness, Woodgate & Kreklewetz, 2012), in environmental psychology (e.g., understanding community members' experiences of their perceived neighbourhood environment, Nykiforuk, Vallianatos, & Nieuwendyk, 2011), and in social psychology (e.g., documenting community members' everyday experiences of interacting with others in their local neighbourhood in a traditionally divided city, Stevenson & Sagherian-Dickey, 2015).



Whilst PhotoVoice has not been used to capture interethnic interactions or group-level behaviour as the key outcome, it could be adapted to do so. For example, youth could be asked to report and take images of the contexts that they think inhibit and/or facilitate interethnic interactions to share with the wider community. This would contribute to a much deeper and contextually embedded understanding. It is worth noting, however, that due to the participatory nature of PhotoVoice and the use of images there may be some ethical concerns in using this method with younger children.

### **Directions for future research**

To date, research has provided much information on how individuals behave in a single controlled setting, such as the lab. With the help of new methodological approaches that often capitalise on emerging technologies, researchers are beginning to examine how behaviour unfolds in everyday life spaces, primarily in the microsystem. There is a need, however, to delve further into Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological model if we are to truly understand the dynamic nature of interethnic interactions, what influences interactions and what their consequences are. Questions still remain about how the characteristics of the larger social system (macrosystem) influence behaviour observed in the meso- and micro-systems, as well as how different microsystems interact together (exosystem) to influence behaviour during interethnic interactions. To address such questions, researchers could examine how the same person behaves across different settings (home, school, neighbourhood), or how government policy or social norms serve to influence school or community contexts and corresponding behaviour.

Another point for future research to consider is the reciprocity between individuals and context, for both majority and minority group youth. This is an important direction for further investigation because youth do not exist in isolation and take in social input from a

wide range of settings, including subtle and overt cues transmitted back and forth between youth and their parents, teachers, and friends. Further, it is plausible that moving beyond a single-time point of assessment to adopt a longitudinal approach would be insightful to discovering at which point across youth development that different parts of the social-ecology are most predictive of attitudes and behaviours. This is particularly important in interventions designed to improve interethnic relations, so that the longevity of effects can be assessed. Promising interventions for promoting diverse friendships include encouraging interactions under the conditions of the contact hypothesis or promoting social norms that place value in diversity.

These potential future directions are time-intensive but essential. Societies are diversifying and we need to know how to promote community cohesion. There is overwhelming evidence that positive interethnic interactions reduce prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Thus generating new knowledge on how to foster interethnic interactions will not only serve to enhance the quality of life for all children and youth by improving peer relations and corresponding well-being in the short-term but will also ensure the full social and economic participation of future generations in the long-term. Information gleaned from more intensive studies that move across the levels of Bronfenbrenner's model will provide important information that more accurately represents how youth negotiate their diverse and dynamic social world. In turn, as researchers and practitioners we will be in a better position to design interventions to encourage these important interactions.

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