FRIENDSHIP AS RESPECT AMONG SECOND GENERATION YOUTH

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Friendship is key to the struggle for recognition, rights, solidarity, all parts of relational citizenship and social networks, and is often taken as *prima facie* evidence of social capital (Honneth 1995, Kingwell 2000, Hébert et al. 2003, Coleman 1990). Friendship requires mutual recognition and its imperative governs the reproduction of social life, according to Honneth, who draws upon Mead's social psychology and Hegel's early premise that practical identity-formation presupposes intersubjective recognition as part of his theorization of a struggle for recognition. Two tasks are central to this claim: the mapping of forms of recognition in such a way as to check these against empirical data, thus identifying the social experiences that generate the pressure for a subjective process of mutual recognition; and the negative equivalents for the corresponding relations, i.e., the denial of recognition. Types of denigration and insult constitute denials of recognition, whereas emotional relationships of familial love, friendship, where love is taken broadly, and legal recognition and approval constitute three forms of recognition. Furthermore, Honneth considers social esteem to be essential to the development of legal recognition and human rights. Political and economic analysts, however, consider social networks to involve trust between citizens and between citizens and the state, the latter being a relationship that must be built (Putnam 2002, MacKinnon 2007). Of particular interest then are the understandings of familial love and friendship among Canadian second generation youth, whose struggle for recognition encompasses identification as Canadians *and* as members of parental groups of origin.

Forms of understanding of familial love and friendship are discussed here, drawing from in-depth interviews with eight second generation adolescents residing in Calgary who were born in Canada and whose parents, one or both, were born elsewhere.[1]

We discuss these youth's understandings of recognition in terms of five themes: respect, friendship qualities, support for learning, links to emotional closeness and the lack of recognition, represented in Figure 1 below. For each sub-theme, a selection of quotes is presented in alphabetical order according to their self-selected code names.

Table 1
Self-ascribed characteristics of selected second generation youth in Calgary

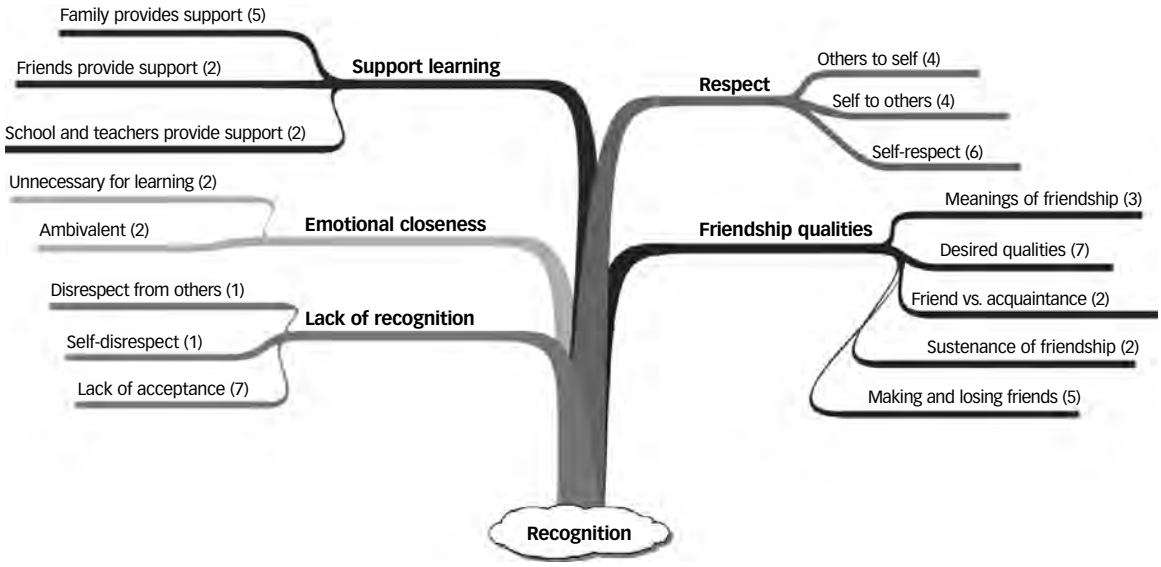
Code name	Gender	Ethnicity	Religion
Barbie	F	Vietnamese	Buddhist
Batman	F	Irish-Egyptian/Scottish	None
Chiquita	F	Mexican-Mennonite	Christian
Lue Rue	F	Lebanese/Syrian	Christian
Anonymous	M	Welsh/Canadian	None
Captain Crack	M	Blackfoot/White-British-Romanian	Christian/none
Gonzo	M	English/Canadian	None
Ramel	M	Libyan	Islam

Respect

One of the main findings is that friendship is deeply connected to respect. Interview results suggest that second generation youth clearly value their association with peers at school and family members because they experience a sense of respect. The mutuality of respect appears to be tri-directional: from others to self, from self to others, and self-respect.

Six themes illustrate *how others respect them*: by accepting them, by being there for them, by showing them they care, by respecting their decisions, by protecting them from danger and through trust and honesty.

Figure 1
Recognition in five themes in the interviews with second generation adolescents in Calgary, with indications of the number of occurrences noted for each sub-theme



> I think everyone is giving respect in a different way. My sisters, like my younger sisters, it is because I am older and like they respect me because I have been through more things than them. My brother respects me because I hope to graduate next year and do something like what he is doing, opening his own business now. They [parents] respect me because I know what I want and I am trying real hard to get it. And compared to my other sister who wanted to go to school before she got married but, well, I don't know what happened, but she got married and then she stopped going to school and then she didn't even work for a long period of time and then she had kids. (Barbie)

> If they know like something bad is going to happen or they have a certain feeling about someone that I just met and they will tell me stuff just to keep me safe. And if I was in a bad situation, they would help me out. Um, they respect my decisions. (Lue Rue)

> Well, it's tough to explain, like let's say you got hurt right? And you are at home sick or whatever, and they come visit you. And they tell you, "hey let's do this on the weekend." (Ramel)

Asked how they show *respect to others*, many treat others the way they want to be treated, which is a fundamental moral principle, the "Golden Rule," referring to the ethics of social reciprocity. These youth help those in need, are fair and nice to family and friends, protect friends from harm, listen to others, exchange views and understand the beliefs and feelings of others.

> By doing the exact same thing. I respect their family and their things and their privacy and everything about them. Like my friend Ariel, I can talk to her about anything and everything and just like, her parents are wonderful and I respect them. (Batman)

> Well, when they want to talk, I let them talk. And when they ask for an answer I give them one. And then, basically with my friends, respect goes two ways. They show respect by sharing their mind after I share mine. I also show them respect by helping them when they need help and such. (Anonymous)

> They will show me respect and stuff, like my parents and stuff. And when people show you respect you tend to show them respect too. Like someone who was even this smart would probably do the same thing. And so you show them respect. I try to show them equality more so than respect. But with friends, it is kind of a weird respect because friends fight all the time and even beat the…out of each other and then call it a day. What it comes down to with friends is that you can pretty much, it is not equality, you can do anything to each other like even beat each other and what not, love each other, but the bottom line is that you would save that person from harm and protect them and that sort of thing and the love is there. That is the bottom line. (Gonzo)

Self-respect is explicated by the participants in terms of good deeds, avoiding harm, having confidence in

oneself and by the principle of respect-as-privilege embedded in many interviews.

> Well, I think I do respect myself enough. About three to four years ago I had really low self-esteem because people didn't really treat me as well as my friends would….But then, all of that stopped on the way to where I am now. As a story, my friends always stuck up for me because I couldn't stand up for myself, but then when I saw one of my friends getting picked on, I decided I was going to help them because they helped me. It made me feel proud, of both of us, I guess. Well [now], I don't really demand respect. I give respect and I receive it. (Anonymous)

> Respect, through parents and teachers, it is privileges and trust and that sort of thing. (Gonzo)

> Yes, I respect myself.…Because I am not afraid to be who I want to be. I have the kind of attitude like, if you don't like me, it's your problem. I am going to do what I am going to do. (Ramel)

Friendship qualities

Desired qualities in a friend, the meaning of friendship, the difference between friend and acquaintance, the sustenance of friendships, making and losing friends were all themes of great interest, as illustrated below in the elaborated statements from second generation participants.

> I look for people who are friendly, understanding and who, maybe, are not completely different than me. I like people who understand where I am coming from and I understand where they are coming from. I guess just understanding each other very well, yeah, I think that is it. [On making new friends two years ago after move to Calgary], so the first day I kind of picked my way around a few groups and like, whoever was nice to me, I asked if I could eat lunch with them and if I didn't really like what they stood for and their values, then I kind of didn't hang out with them very much after that, even though I remained in touch with them and still talked to them and I wasn't completely excluding them. And so after I drifted around from group to group and kind of just decided what I liked and did not like. Then I met a few people in my outdoor ed. class that I did not want to be with, then I met a few people and they invited me to work with them and I found I enjoyed them and I liked the people who are involved in their group and that is the group I hang out with now. (Chiquita)

Second generation youth clearly value their association with peers at school and family members because they experience a sense of respect.

> A friend is someone who you know. Someone you would go to help whenever they need help; someone who would help you when you need help. I think that a friend can be anything they want to be as long as they are there for you. A friend can be cowardly or brave, small or tall, fat or skinny, and they could all be your friend as long as they remain your friend. I think the basic difference is that an acquaintance you get to know over time, but a friend you will know over time. I try to talk with my friends as much as I can and I also make sure that I give them what they give me in return. Yes, it goes two ways. If I want to make a new friend on my own, I would at least exchange friendly talk with, between them. Something like the usual, "hello" in the middle of the hallway and then gradually to up from that to talking in the lunch room and stuff like that. (Anonymous)

> To be a friend means to listen. To be a friend means for them to be able to tell you something and you not go telling every one about it. To be a friend means intelligent with what they say and to listen. To be a friend...like people who laugh and have an all around good time. Qualities...humour and trustworthiness. I don't go for looks or for brains. I just look for somebody who I think would be a trustworthy person and who would be really funny. [In order to sustain friends] be nice. Don't go mouthing off and shooting off your mouth and then expecting your friends to help you the next day or something; just all around not being a jerk. (Captain Crack)

> I think being a friend is probably trusting, like you have got their trust and that sort of deal. But it also means you can tell them "no" or tell them to "shut up," tell them what they are doing is wrong and that they are being an idiot. That is kind of what it means to be a friend, being brutally honest. I look for a sense of wit, a quest for knowledge, as in not being closed-minded. And probably not the same tastes because that makes for good conversation. How do I maintain my relationships? Mostly through contact; that is the easiest way. We are always contacting each other. With some friends you can do it by phone and stay in contact, but a lot of times you go do stuff with each other. Making new friends is mostly through other friends. Old friends are hard to keep up because people change a lot but it is starting to settle down a bit, so I'll probably keep these friends. But friends I made back in Grade 3, I don't really see any more because we have changed and are so far apart. And so it can

be location, likes and dislikes, and it can be something as simple as not liking the same kind of movies, so you don't talk to each other over the summer, then the next year you lose touch. And it is also hard to rekindle those relationships. (Gonzo)

Support for learning

Learning is the central task of school-based adolescents, and the role of persons in their social networks is of major concern to learning. These second generation adolescents claim that friends and family support their learning and that this support is manifested through motivation and advice, but do not specify "help with joint homework preparation," as do other Canadian youth.

> My family and friends support my learning. I think they just support my learning by just being a part of my life. Yeah, because they are interacting with me as much as I am interacting with them and because they are making my experience fruitful. I am actually making progress in my life. (Anonymous)

> Most of my friends support my learning. They kind of make me want to show up for school in the morning because some days I just want to go back to my house and go back to bed for another two hours. But they are too funny to miss, so I just show up. And my aunt and uncle, Victor and Sheryl, they support my learning by encouraging what I do. They do support me because they give me lectures on how if I get an education now, that life will be so much easier for me later. (Captain Crack)

> My family definitely encourages my learning and whatnot. Yeah, people like my friends, they encourage general knowledge but not so much school learning. The teacher on here is Mr. Goudreau, he is definitely encouraging. But, yeah, friends are the knowledge people, and friends and teachers are the school learning people. (Gonzo)

> Yeah, my brother [supports my learning]… Because of what he gives me, how he explains it, I interpret it different than I would from my parents. My parents give me clothes, you know, they want be to be happy because when I am happy, I will obviously want to do good for them, right? You know, and make them proud… (Ramel)

Links to emotional closeness

Asked if the persons who supported their learning are emotionally close to them, most responded positively; however, the second generation were not in as full agreement, with two dissenters and two ambivalent participants, all without much elaboration, as this was deemed to be fairly obvious.

> No, I wouldn't say that. Because my friends to me are the same thing, and my parents want me to do good in school, but they don't really say anything, and my sisters, they have their own school so they have that to worry about. My family is to me like competition. Who supports my learning the most? I would say my brother, my boyfriend and my brother's ex-girlfriend. (Barbie)

> Um, it depends on the person. Like even though you are emotionally close to them, there are some that are more than others, for example, my father does but William doesn't. Well, actually, Will does support my learning but he is not as involved in my life in learning, he is just some guy I know that I am really good friends with. (Batman)

Acceptance among peers, in the family and in the community is of major importance among the participants, yet second generation participants are adamant about casting aside those who do not accept them.

Lack of recognition

Occurrences of a lack of recognition take three forms: generalized disrespect against women, specific disrespect from a family member or friend and a more frequent lack of acceptance from others. One second generation participant mentions the impact of prejudice against women, which recognizes women only as sexualized objects and focuses on guarding herself against this form of disrespect:

> Don't sell my body, that would be the main thing. That is the very, very main thing. I just think that virginity is very important and so I am not going around giving other guys pleasure when it is going to wreck my body and my reputation and stuff like that. I mean, like the media right now, just sort of like, gives you a state of mind or like, whatever, everything is just sex-oriented, like everything is about sex, especially against women. Yeah, I just hate it. I don't like it. (Lue Rue)

Self-respect also diminishes when lack of recognition occurs within the family and network of friends, as one second generation adolescent explains:

> Well, it is not that he [father] doesn't respect me, it is just that he doesn't really recognize

> me….He tells me to think creatively, and I still don't know what that means. Well, I figure that if I want to get respect from him, I have to find the answer myself. (Anonymous)

Acceptance among peers, in the family and in the community is of major importance among the participants, yet second generation participants are adamant about casting aside those who do not accept them. Acknowledging that no one is obliged to like another, these youth do not tolerate those who do not respect them as persons or esteem their achievements or qualities.

> If they know you and understand you and they like you for who you are, then that is great. But if they don't give you a chance and they are all snobby and stuff like that, and they think you are all snotty and prep., I guess, and that when they don't see you as a good person, then I think that is their loss. I don't think that they have to like you or anything. (Barbie)

> Well, people have to like you if you are going to go anywhere. The important people like the ones who have the decision making power that can control your future... (Captain Crack)

> That is just who I am though. I am just like, "If you don't like me, that is your problem!" Yeah. (Ramel)

This lack of moral respect is particularly galling for these youth, who see its immorality as central to the problematic treatment by those who fail to appreciate them as persons.

Conclusion

In our analysis of recent youth data, we demonstrated that recognition is lived as forms of respect among friends and family and within social networks, and that these are foundational to supported learning. In other words, that respect generates trust. Conversely, the lack of recognition is experienced as disrespect. The analysis reveals that the latter value the respect and support of family and peers. These youth are very clear and articulate on what friendship qualities matter to them, on the multidirectional nature of the relationships of respect/disrespect between themselves and others and on a principled respect as key to supported learning and recognition.

Moreover, this analysis provides empirical support for Honneth's theorization on the struggle for recognition as based on forms of respect and the lack of recognition as disrespect. The participants have understood that it is secure emotional love between family members and between friends that is fundamental to mutual recognition and caring. Such love allows persons to be free, as a general principle, for it is upon such social esteem that legal recognition can be ascribed and human rights awarded to generalized others. Thus, such nuanced understandings of friendship make legal relationships possible among citizens as equals and between citizens and the state. Such understandings impact on public policy making, including educational policy, for the long-term integration of new Canadians. Friendships are essential to well-being, successful participation in school and society, integration, human rights and citizenship.

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