

Budding Multiculturalism or Veiled Indifference?

Inter-Group Contact Among Immigrant and Native-Born Adolescents in Small-Town Canada

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Abstract

Drawing on qualitative research examining the integration experiences of immigrant adolescents in a small city (Fredericton population 50,535) and rural town (Florenceville-Bristol population 1,500) in New Brunswick, Canada, this article presents daily encounters between young immigrants and their native-born peers. It argues the citizens of Florenceville-Bristol are able to compensate for the absence of formal programming for immigrant youth by finding creative ways to communicate with the immigrant adolescents, recognizing their strengths and abilities, and including them in activities and structures where they would have the best fit. It concludes that cross-cultural interaction in our daily lives brings a more positive multicultural experience to communities when Allport's (1954) four necessary conditions for contact to result in the reduction of prejudice are met.

Keywords: *immigrant adolescents; integration; contact hypothesis; English language learning; social networks*

Introduction

Our society is built on a frenzied level, our patience is low, and we are not necessarily willing to take the five or ten extra minutes to listen to someone try to communicate in a broken second language. My experience is that we are not really willing to do that. And the worst part is, that individual may speak the language, but even the slightest accent seems to grind at our patience [Jason, Fredericton] (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 35).

People generally feel that most of the business of life can go on with less effort if we stick together with our own kind. We trust and make contact with “ingroupers” because they are convenient, and making contact with “outgroup members” are a strain (Allport 1954: 18). It is easy to become insular, we want to only talk to people whom we know. We tend to ignore newcomers because it requires extra effort and it requires us to step out of our comfort zone. In the literature on immigration and multiculturalism it is therefore often assumed that the more diverse a community becomes, the less inclined its members will be to develop close ties with fellow community members who are of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds (Reitz & Banerjee 2007; Putnam 2007; Alesina & La Ferrara 2002). So how necessary is contact between cultures? How does the act of cross-cultural interaction in our daily lives bring a more positive multicultural experience to communities? How can the impatience toward immigrants expressed above by Jason, a native-born resident of a small Canadian city, turn into the patience and enthusiasm expressed below by Brandon, a native-born resident of a small Canadian rural town?

They are such nice people and we tried so hard to talk to them even when they didn't speak any English. It was hilarious when we all tried to communicate at first. We all would smile and point and we would play charades and make signs with our hands and faces. When that

didn't work we tried dictionaries. Sometimes I will write the word down in English for them to look at, and well, [pause] that doesn't help much but I try (Brandon, Florenceville-Bristol) (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 62-63).

Drawing on research examining the integration experiences of immigrant adolescents in the sparsely-populated Atlantic province of New Brunswick, Canada, this article presents daily encounters between young immigrants and their native-born peers in a small city and rural town. The article contends that, despite many attempted refutations across the decades since 1954, Gordon Allport's Contact Hypothesis is still relevant in today's multicultural societies, especially societies where immigration from non-European source countries is a relatively new phenomenon. In responding to the question: "How does the act of cross-cultural interaction in our daily lives bring a more positive multicultural experience to communities?," the article concludes that multiculturalism is more beneficial to a community when Allport's four necessary conditions for contact are met. The research summarized here is based on qualitative data collected through interviews, focus groups, and non-participant observation over an eleven-month period in 2008-2009 with thirty-three immigrant adolescents, ten native-born adolescents, and forty-two other volunteer participants, including members and staff of community organizations, immigrant adults, and native-born adults in Fredericton (population: 50,535) and Florenceville-Bristol (population: 1,500) New Brunswick. The complete research findings have been published in monograph form by McGill-Queen's University Press (Wilson-Forsberg 2012). This article does not attempt to reproduce the detailed methods and findings of the research, but rather it elaborates on the theme of cross-cultural interaction that is alluded to in the published book and organizes summaries of the research evidence around that theme.

Budding Multiculturalism in Small-Town Canada

Over the last twenty-five years, the total number of international migrants doubled and this strong growth trend is expected to amplify over the next fifty years (Goldin, Cameron, & Balarajan 2011: 213). World migration patterns have resulted in multicultural societies where people of diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds must live, work, and interact together. In Canada, the core principles of multiculturalism: respect for cultural diversity, equality, and anti-discrimination were legally consolidated with the Multiculturalism Act of Canada in 1988. Since its inception, multiculturalism has served as a national framework for government policy to accommodate diverse cultures for discourses on the construction of Canadian society. Initially conceived as a way of accommodating those Canadians who were not members of the two founding nations (British and French), the policy has evolved to take on board the arrival of increasing numbers of immigrants from ethnically diverse (non-Anglo, non-Caucasian) backgrounds. In Canada: (a) ethnic minorities are expected to become active members of the receiving community, yet simultaneously maintain distinct ethnic identities; (b) the dominant culture is willing to move over and make space for difference; (c) ethnic minorities have the right to identify with the culture of their choice (Fleras 2009); and (d) in the words of Augie Fleras "ethnic minorities must be treated equally (the same) as a matter of routine regardless of their difference, but should be treated equally (differently) precisely because of their difference when the situation arises (Fleras 2009: 15)." The application of multiculturalism across a broad range of institutions and activities has been widely regarded as successful. But, this Canadian success story is largely an *urban* success story.

New Brunswick has not practiced multiculturalism to the same degree as the urban centres of central and western Canada. Since the end of the Second World War, the largely rural Atlantic Provinces have attracted few immigrants. While 20 per cent of Canadians are foreign-born (and 50 per cent of Torontonians are foreign-born), the percentage in Atlantic Canada is between 1 and 3 per cent. Immigration to New Brunswick has increased since the province put more emphasis on the Provincial Nominee Agreement, which allows Canadian provinces to recruit and select prospective immigrants based on provincially-designed labour market criteria. Along with highly skilled provincial nominees, New Brunswick receives government-sponsored refugees, and temporary foreign workers and foreign students. At the time of data collection Fredericton was home to approximately 350 immigrant adolescents. My study of the community involved the participation of twenty adolescents who immigrated to Fredericton largely as the dependents of provincially nominated and refugee parents.

Together these teens represented a variety of cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds from several source countries. The thirteen immigrant adolescents interviewed and observed in Florenceville-Bristol were from a relatively homogeneous group of middle class families. With the exception of two international students from South Korea, eleven were the adolescent children of provincially nominated parents from Colombia, India, Mexico, and Moldova. All but the two Korean teens had at least one parent working at the McCain Foods, Ltd. Global Technology Centre.

I anticipated that my research would show an urban-rural divide in New Brunswick on the policy and programming related to immigration. I assumed that a town as tiny as Florenceville-Bristol would have limited experience with multiculturalism, and few or no policies and programs targeted at immigrants. The literature, after all, led me to believe that rural Canada, and Atlantic Canada in particular, lacks the capacity to attract and integrate immigrants (Samuel 2005; Reimer 2007; Bruce 2007), as well as the ability to retain its young adult population (Conrad 1993/1997; Savoie 2006; Corbett 2007). Yet, although Florenceville-Bristol does not have the formal policies and programs for immigrant adolescents that a city the size of Fredericton is able to deliver, the residents of Florenceville-Bristol compensate for this absence by generally being more involved in their settlement and integration than the residents of Fredericton. Their ability to find creative ways to communicate with the immigrant adolescents, recognize their strengths and abilities, and include them in activities and structures where they would have the best fit, assist the adolescents in finding a sense of belonging to the community. There are a number of factors behind this finding, but the biggest one appears to be Allport's Contact Hypothesis.

The Contact Hypothesis

In his 1954 book *the Nature of Prejudice*, Gordon Allport proposed that, under certain conditions, bringing together individuals from opposing groups could reduce inter-group prejudice. Allport's interest in the nature of contact and prejudice reduction stemmed from his observation that black and white ex-servicemen seemed to have less prejudice towards each other than those who had not experienced a (somewhat) integrated military during the Second World War. In the field of race relations, the hypothesis is a corollary of the stereotyping theory – that one dislikes Jews or blacks because one has been socialized into holding simplistic, false, and derogatory opinions about them. If such opinions are false, then the experience of interacting with these people should presumably tend to correct them (Ray 1983).

Support for the contact hypothesis is most often associated with John W. Berry and Rudy Kalin's work on acculturation in Canada (Berry & Kalin 1979; Kalin & Berry 1994; see also Guimond, Palmer, & Bégin 1989; Palmer 1991; Kymlicka 1998; Kazemipur 2006), and Yehuda Amir's research on inter-ethnic contact in Israel (Amir 1969; Amir & Garti 1977; Amir, Bizman, & Rivner 1973 as cited in Ray 1983), but the early evidence was American (Brophy 1946; Kephart 1957; Meer & Freedman 1966; Bradburn et al 1971; Cook 1978; Stephan and Brigham 1985; Pettigrew 1986), and American studies are still largely supportive of the hypothesis (Pettigrew 1997; Eley & Grigor-Suny 1996; Andrisin Witting & Grant-Thompson 1998; Miller 2002). For over four decades, the contact hypothesis has been a staple of social scientists' accounts of prejudice and discrimination (Forbes 1997: 70) and has exerted a significant influence on political debate and policy development across the United States and Canada (Connolly 2000: 170). In recent decades, it has generally been treated as an empirical hypothesis, tested in a variety of ways, and frequently vindicated, despite apparently contrary trends (Forbes 1997: 70). Arguably, its popularity can, in part, be understood in terms of the simplicity of its message: that inter-group contact reduces prejudice and existing stereotypes (Connolly 2000: 170).

Inter-group Contact between Immigrant and New Brunswick-Born Adolescents

Although not a large urban centre, data collected in Fredericton suggest that there is little purposeful contact between the city's established residents and the immigrant adolescents who participated in my research. The immigrant adolescents emphasized not being seen or heard by their New Brunswick-born

peers. They claim that their peers do not talk to them, they are not included in their peers' activities, and any effort to befriend their peers rests solely with them. As immigrants, the teens feel it is their responsibility to change and assimilate into the community. They cite English language learning as the biggest obstacle to settling in Canada and argue that the residents of Fredericton often create an imaginary language barrier by assuming that if immigrants are visible minorities then they do not speak English. There is an underdeveloped public awareness about immigration and cultural diversity in Fredericton, which is either the result of this lack of contact, or the cause of it. Cultural stereotypes, silly questions from curious peers, and racist name calling in the schools are unfortunate features of the community. Fredericton residents, for their part, are unsure of what to do with immigrants once they arrive. "If we are not doing a good job welcoming newcomers it is because we are new at this," they argue. They described Fredericton as open to diverse cultures and opinions, but "a bit late off the mark" compared with the rest of Canada when it comes to welcoming immigrants (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 76). Residents of Fredericton are engaged in the community and with each other, but that engagement, for the most part, does not appear to reach the immigrant adolescents. Those native-born adolescents who do interact with immigrant adolescents form a small cohort of socially-conscious people who have either travelled extensively, or are second-generation immigrants themselves. My research findings suggest that the immigrant adolescents are dependent upon formal programs to support them in the integration process. Outside of the schools and the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF), which provides settlement services to immigrants, few relationships are being cultivated with immigrant adolescents.

The small town of Florenceville-Bristol with its single main street and one major employer provides ample opportunity for daily interpersonal interaction between residents. Adults tend to look out for the immigrant adolescents and act as the primary agents of social control in the community. Being watched by native-born residents and not "disappearing into the background" add to the teens' sense of security. The schools in Florenceville-Bristol were initially unprepared to include children and adolescents who did not speak English, but ultimately, they not only "got the hang of it," they have become adept at communicating with the teens, recognizing their talents and abilities, and finding a good fit for them in activities within the schools. Learning English was a difficult undertaking for the immigrant adolescents, but an effort was made on their part to leave their ethnic and linguistic comfort zones so that they could communicate with native-born peers and learn English more rapidly. An equal effort was made by teachers and students to converse with the immigrant adolescents using dictionaries, electronic translation devices, and hand gestures. The immigrant adolescents in Florenceville-Bristol who participated in the research did not discuss cultural stereotypes as described by their Fredericton counterparts and they largely regarded "silly questions" about their home countries as positive expressions of interest. Florenceville-Bristol is too small to be able to support programs and services targeted specifically at immigrant adolescents, or even at native-born adolescents. The primary source of social support for immigrant adolescents is school. Immigrant adolescents are treated no differently than their New Brunswick-born peers at school, and for the most part, any social support offered there is informal and spontaneous.

Allport's Four Conditions for Contact to Result in the Reduction of Prejudice

Gordon Allport was aware that contact in itself is not enough. He was cautiously optimistic about the role of contact in reducing prejudice and qualified his hypothesis with specific conditions:

Prejudice...may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom, or local atmosphere) and provided it is a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups (Allport 1954: 281 as cited in Kenworthy et al. 2005: 279).

Thus, the basic formulaic version of the contact hypothesis had four elements: (a) equal status; (b) common goals; (c) institutional support, and (d) a perception of similarity and friendship between two groups (Kenworthy et al. 2005: 279).

Equal Status Contact

Perhaps the most critical element in the contact hypothesis is that both groups perceive equal status in a given situation (Cohen 1982; Riordan & Ruggiero 1980; Robinson & Preston 1976). If one party has advantages that the other does not, then this unbalances power. Two distinctly different views have been applied regarding the equal-status concept. Some writers emphasize that the groups should be of equal status coming into the contact situation, that is, "personal contact between members of different groups is generally most effective in providing friendly relations when the individuals are of the same or nearly the same, economic and social status and share similar interests and tastes" (Williams 1947: 169). Many studies have operationalized the equal-status variable along these lines, most often using the degree of interpersonal friendship or socioeconomic status as the "equalizing" attribute (Ford 1973; Patchen et al. 1977; Robinson & Preston 1976; Shaw 1973; as cited in Riordan 1978: 164-165). Another approach represented in studies by Gordon Allport & Bernard Kramer (1946, 1950) and by Thomas F. Pettigrew places special emphasis upon the status positions that are held by members of the two groups within the face-to-face contact encounter proper. If, for example, black students are accorded equal dignity, status, and power on an interracial college campus, the equal-status criterion can still be satisfied even though the majority of blacks may come from working class homes (Pettigrew 1969: 203).

In my research findings, socio-economic and racial status clearly shaped the nature of interaction between the immigrant adolescents and native-born adolescents in Fredericton, but less so in Florenceville-Bristol. In Fredericton, the provincially nominated parents of the immigrant adolescent participants have gradually joined the ranks of the city's university-educated, middle class professionals. The addition of ten refugees from Colombia, the Congo, Liberia, and Sierra Leone to a total population of immigrant adolescents in Fredericton, however, made social stratification more obvious. The dire economic situation of many refugee families, combined with their struggle to start from scratch and get ahead place them at the bottom of the community's social hierarchy making it that much more difficult for the teens to make friends and access social capital and social networks. Due to a shortage of low-income housing, these refugee families are located together in low rental apartment complexes in a single north-side neighbourhood. Friendly, helpful neighbours do not appear to be prevalent in these low-income apartment complexes. While the provincially-nominated adolescent participants residing in middle-class neighbourhoods described warm conversations with friendly neighbours, the only "neighbours" mentioned by those in the low rental complexes were the Jehovah Witnesses who would regularly knock on their doors. The refugee families are also dependent on public transportation because they generally cannot afford their own vehicles. Therefore, outside of school, the only public spaces to make contact with these teens are on the city's limited bus route. The immigrant adolescents I interviewed are often left out of Sunday afternoon picnics, soccer games, and other recreational activities on the south side of the city because there is no bus service on Sunday. Race also defines the self-worth and aspirations of many of the refugee adolescents. In a largely white city, fair-skinned, blue-eyed immigrant adolescents from Northern Europe are going to have an easier adjustment and a more obvious welcome than their black peers from Africa or Hispanic peers from Latin America. The African-born participants, in particular, have experienced relentless racist name-calling by New Brunswick-born peers in the schools, and have generally felt degraded and excluded. This is perhaps best demonstrated by Auma, who pointed out that "at my school if you are white people will hang out and talk with you. The white kids are popular, they have friends and they get good grades. But if you are the black one it is really tough to get friends or to be good at anything" [Auma, Sierra Leone] (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 71).

On the contrary, in Florenceville-Bristol all of the immigrant adolescents are relatively homogeneous with respect to their urban, professional, middle-class family backgrounds. All but two of the adolescents, in fact, have at least one parent working at the McCain Foods Ltd. Global Technology Centre. Florenceville-Bristol is so heavily dominated by the corporation that hired most of the immigrant adolescents' parents that it increases the likelihood that their families will interact with each other and be more easily integrated into the community. Provincially nominated immigrant parents working as systems engineers and computer programmers at the Global Technology Centre, moreover, would ultimately develop close ties with other middle class educated professionals allowing the parents to gain access to a broad range of social resources and information channels, which may prove useful to their adolescent children as they integrate into the community. The immigrant adolescents who participated in the research mentioned having a higher standard of living in New Brunswick and being able to afford nicer things than in their

countries of origin. They did not view themselves as being of lower socio-economic status than their New Brunswick-born peers. Nor did they regard themselves as members of a visible minority group. Racism is undoubtedly present in rural New Brunswick, but incidents of racism were not mentioned by the adolescent participants.

In short, some of the immigrant adolescents in Fredericton came into contact situations with the majority group with a more unequal status than the immigrant adolescents in Florenceville-Bristol who experienced a more level playing field. Given that school constitutes the major opportunity for social interaction between the two groups my findings also suggest that the contact situation proper was more unequal in Fredericton than Florenceville-Bristol, the reason for this being somewhat paradoxical. In his study of the integration of immigrant youth in Israel, Reuvin Kahane (1986) found that the greater the presence of informal elements in a particular social structure, the greater the probability of fair encounters between local and immigrant youth. Kahane noticed that immigrant students integrated better into schools with less formal curricula and teaching methods because they provided a context in which young immigrants could meet local youth and adults on their own terms and on a relatively equal footing. At a much more macro level, an important criticism of Canada's ethnic relations was levelled by John Porter (1965), who argued that maintaining interest in ethnicity merely perpetuates ethnic stratification in Canadian society: multiculturalism may serve only to keep particular groups in their place in the "vertical mosaic." It may also provide a basis for discrimination (As cited in Berry 1991: 19). Is it possible then that formal programs implemented to help immigrant adolescents in the schools serve only to worsen their situation by emphasizing the fact that they are "different?"

Fredericton's middle and high schools have responded to a recent influx of newcomer students with specialized guidance counsellors; in-school settlement workers; and of most significance to this article: separate English as an Additional Language (EAL) classrooms where newcomer students who speak little or no English are placed for at least half of the day until they become comfortable enough with the language to move into the academic curriculum in mainstream classrooms. While providing newcomer students with "sheltered" instruction in special classrooms, EAL programs separate the immigrant adolescents from their English-speaking peers for a large part of the school day. Peers sustain and support the development of significant social competencies in youth, including tangibly supporting academic engagement by clarifying readings or lectures and helping one another in completing homework assignments. They also help the immigrant adolescents fit into their new environment since these teens want nothing more than to put aside their differences and blend in with their peers at school. But because many of the immigrant adolescents are segregated in EAL classrooms, they have limited access to a network of peers beyond their immediate immigrant group or across immigrant groups. Recent studies by Carola Suárez-Orozco and colleagues (2008; 2010) in the United States reveal that, in many cases, immigrant youth have almost no meaningful contact with English-speaking peers, which clearly contributes to their cultural and linguistic isolation.

The Florenceville-Bristol middle and high school have no formal programs or specialized staff in place for newcomer students. The immigrant adolescents are treated no differently than their New Brunswick-born peers in this respect. While informal learning environments usually refer to activities outside of formal schooling, such as after-school clubs, the schools in Florenceville-Bristol seem to bring those informal elements into the school setting. The immigrant adolescents are placed in mainstream classes with their peers. The lack of a separate EAL classroom means that teachers and students have had no choice but to figure out how to communicate with them. They have had to improvise, be creative, use available technology, and even learn some Spanish and Korean themselves. By communicating with the immigrant adolescents contact is made and inter-personal friendships begin to form. The immigrant adolescents in Florenceville-Bristol may actually be benefiting from the deficiency of formal programs for their integration in the schools because it puts them on a more equal footing with their New Brunswick-born peers.

Contact with Common Goals

The attainment of common goals should be an interdependent effort based on cooperation rather than competition (Kenworthy et al. 2005: 265). This concept is most often demonstrated in Muzafer Sherif and

colleagues' famous (1961) "Robber's Cave" boy's camp study where they stirred up rivalry between two groups then found that they could cool the hostility down by giving them tasks where no one group could complete it by themselves. Forced to work together, the boys became friends again. Thus, having the two groups in competition do something that requires the groups to work together helps break up the rivalries and fights. In communities, majority and minority groups might be given a project involving high levels of negotiation and problem solving to complete together, like raising money for a charity, working on community development initiatives or hosting an event.

At some point following the Second World War, a shift in approach to immigration occurred in New Brunswick from widespread opposition to the largely uncritical acceptance of the value of immigration to economic development. As will be noted in this section, it is clear that immigration works for Florenceville-Bristol, but it is less clear for Fredericton. The larger size of the city and the fact that immigrants are not central to Fredericton's major industries – government and education – reduces the pressure to engage newcomers (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 140). Native-born residents do not go out of their way to talk to immigrants and their attitude toward the newcomers is, at best, indifferent: "The thing that is most difficult or unwelcoming about the cultural mix here is not as overt as someone yelling at you telling you to get out of their city, but rather more subtle in that most local community members don't notice you are here at all," said one participant [International Student Advisor, Fredericton] (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 39-40). Residents of Fredericton do not appear to have a common goal to work toward. This, of course, is irrelevant to the immigrant adolescents who just want to be included: "We need to feel included in activities," said Luis. "For example, if there is a group of kids playing soccer and I am watching them they will call out to me 'hey are you new here? Would you like to come and play with us?'" [Luis, Guatemala] (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 40).

In Florenceville-Bristol, the idea that immigrants bring the strength of numbers to collective community efforts appears to be ingrained in citizens' minds. To many potential McCain Foods Ltd. employees and their families, Florenceville-Bristol's rurality and relative remoteness are unattractive features. Many people (both native-born and immigrant) gain initial experience at McCain Foods Ltd. then migrate to larger cities in central and western Canada. The high population turnover in the small town creates a great expense for McCain Foods, Ltd with respect to the hiring and training of human resources; it also inhibits community development and makes long-range community planning difficult. Residents of Florenceville-Bristol are therefore acutely aware that they have to capitalize on the experience, skills, investment, and creativity that is available through immigrants moving to the community. It is in their best interest to be involved in the integration of immigrant adolescents, so that they can keep the young immigrants and their families in the community for as long as possible. In the words of one Florenceville-Bristol resident who participated in the research: "We are a small number of people and we realize if we don't accept newcomers we become a smaller number of people. So out of necessity we end up being interdependent and getting to know one another, and ultimately figuring out together what we need to do to achieve common goals for the community" [Dianne, Florenceville-Bristol] (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 120-121).

Contact with Institutional Support

Intergroup contact will also have more positive effects when it is explicitly supported by authority figures and social institutions. Authority sanction establishes norms of acceptance and guidelines for how members of different groups should interact with each other (Kenworthy et al. 2005: 265). Field research underscores its importance in military (Landis et al. 1984), business (Morrison & Herlihy 1992), and religious institutions (Parker 1968; as cited in Pettigrew 1998). My research findings suggest that the sanctioning of daily interaction between majority and minority groups occurs in both case communities, but, like the other conditions, it appears to have a greater influence on interaction between immigrant and native-born adolescents in the smaller town. In New Brunswick, the acceptance of and respect for immigrants have been legislated from above by the provincial government. New Brunswick needs immigrants because the demographic reality of slowing population growth, rapid population aging, and significant out-migration is resulting in declining labour force participation. The province has been attempting to attract and retain more immigrants and to equip the population to be more receptive to cultural diversity and to recognize its advantages.

As the provincial capital of New Brunswick, authority figures and social and cultural norms dictate that immigrants of all ages be accepted in Fredericton, but the institutions that provide jobs and services have been slow to adjust their agendas to more extensively reflect the city's growing cultural diversity. Fredericton residents are respectful toward immigrants, but few have given much thought to providing opportunities for them to become more involved in the community's institutions and, subsequently, to become embedded in diverse social networks. Schools, churches, and voluntary associations are not as proactive as they could be when enabling immigrants to fully participate in the life of the community. As noted by former Fredericton Member of Parliament Andy Scott, "we certainly don't have a policy that if you are East Indian you can't be part of our club, but I don't think anyone is sitting around at a Rotary Club meeting on a Thursday afternoon saying 'there are no East Indians here we need to go out and find some.' [Andy Scott, Fredericton] (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 146). Social interaction between immigrant adolescents and their New Brunswick-born peers gradually did occur and with it the potential for friendships; the teens said they were doing "okay." However, it is evident that despite encouragement from authorities, the residents of Fredericton are not doing enough to purposefully create opportunities for positive contact with immigrant adolescents. In other words, if the adolescents have successfully integrated into the community it is "in spite of us and not because of us."

Florenceville-Bristol, in contrast, is a one-industry town. Its citizens are dependent on the farming, manufacturing, and professional support divisions of a single employer – McCain Foods, Ltd., a multinational leader in the production of french fries and frozen food products. Not only does McCain Foods, Ltd determine, to a great extent, the economic and social well-being of the residents of Florenceville-Bristol, by employing the majority of these people either directly or indirectly, it also shapes their view of the world. The managers of McCain Foods, Ltd. recognize that cultural diversity contributes to their bottom line by making it easier to attract and retain good employees, lowering costs by developing skills in-house and developing a multicultural reputation that helps attract even more foreign talent. This organizational culture appears to be transmitted through McCain's many employees to the wider community, resulting in a general acceptance and promotion of cultural diversity by authorities, institutions, and the social and cultural norms that guide them (Wilson-Forsberg 2012: 29). If Florenceville-Bristol's schools are any indication, the town's institutions are responding well to increased ethnic and cultural diversity. When interviewed, the staff and students in the two schools had no problem describing the personality and strengths of each of the thirteen immigrant adolescents. The immigrant adolescents are happy in Florenceville-Bristol. They "hang out" at the homes of their New Brunswick-born friends and they spent a substantial amount of interview time talking about feeling safe, secure, and free.

Contact Resulting in Perceptions of Similarity and Friendship

Allport emphasized that superficial contact is unlikely to change attitudes or beliefs since this type of contact does not involve meaningful communication (Allport 1979 [1954]: 272). Random encounters at the pub or in the supermarket do not provide stereotype-disconfirming evidence. Rather, the contact situation must be regular and involve communication about important, rather than trivial, issues. Regular contact situations enable observation of actual behaviour from which qualified judgements can be made about other people (Frølund Thomsen 2012). The type of contact most likely to provide meaningful communication is intergroup friendship.

Daily social interaction between immigrant adolescents and their native-born peers resulted in many friendships in Florenceville-Bristol, but the citizens of Fredericton's social networks tend to be small, interconnected, and difficult for newcomers to penetrate. Most of the parents of the immigrant adolescent participants in Fredericton do not work in institutions where they could interrelate with local residents with similar professional backgrounds. Instead they are self-employed, unemployed, or still learning English. The immigrant adolescents' parents therefore cannot give them access to social networks so they must make friends on their own. The schools have attempted to facilitate communication and friendship between groups by establishing youth buddy systems whereby a newcomer student is purposefully matched with a New Brunswick-born student for a specified period. However, the contact made through

the program tended to be superficial and contrived. Furthermore, the schools were unable to encourage local students to participate beyond the handful of socially conscious teens who would have become friends with the newcomers without the host program in place. My findings in Fredericton revealed that immigrant boys make connections in the school faster than the girls do and they are more likely to break out of their little ethnic groups and make friends with the local students. Team sports such as soccer appear to offer a meeting place where communication with native-born peers is stimulated, and where an immigrant adolescent can be noticed, respected, and appreciated by peers despite his or her perhaps low level of fluency in English or French. While all but one of the boys who participated in the research in Fredericton played soccer, none of the girls were involved in team sports. The girls claimed that they are just too different from their New Brunswick-born peers; that they have different cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds; that they look different, or speak another language, and that they have different beliefs and values than their local peers.

In Florenceville-Bristol, some of the parents of New Brunswick-born adolescents work with the immigrant parents at the McCain Foods, Ltd Global Technology Centre, making contact between the teens more likely. Curiosity on the part of the local adolescents in the community appears to have eased the development of close friendships with the immigrant adolescents. The lack of separate EAL classrooms in the Florenceville-Bristol schools has further facilitated contact across the two groups and provided the immigrant adolescents with a sense of inclusion or membership in the school community. A clash of values with respect to the local teens' involvement in underage alcohol consumption was reported by the immigrant girls who participated in the research. Nevertheless, the immigrant adolescents in Florenceville-Bristol have been afforded a network of knowledgeable local peers who support them in their adjustment to school and the wider community – it is precisely this network, and the bridging social capital embedded in it that many of their Fredericton counterparts are missing.

Critiques of the Contact Hypothesis

The major generalization derived from early research using the contact hypothesis is that changes in ethnic relations do occur following intergroup contact, but the nature of this change is not necessarily in the anticipated direction; social interactions under "favourable" conditions do tend to reduce prejudice, but "unfavourable" conditions may increase intergroup tension and prejudice (Amir 1969). Above and beyond the specific conditions for positive contact, the two major concerns about the contact hypothesis, which potentially limit the argument presented in this article are that: (1) The numerous conditions for enabling contact make the hypothesis practically unfalsifiable (Dixon 2006: 2180); and (2) the hypothesis tends to restrict the nature and causes of racism and ethnic divisions to individual ignorance and misunderstanding without giving adequate attention to the central role played by broader social structures and institutions (Connolly 2000: 170). For example, most research evidence surrounding contact hypothesis tends to ignore the issue of race, and the effect of institutionalized racist practices and policies on the relationships between people. If it were really true that existing stereotypes start to break down with increased contact between people, then in places like the Southern United States, there would be a perfect relationship of trust between the African American and white communities, but this is not the case (Nunes 2010). It is not surprising that this critique has led writers such as Mary R. Jackman & Marie Crane (1986) to recommend that the contact hypothesis be rejected altogether and replaced with a clear focus on power relations and broader structures (Connolly 2000: 171). This article, however, subscribes to Paul Connolly (2000)'s argument that the full-scale dismissal of what has become one of the most durable ideas in the sociology of racial and ethnic relations is a little premature. The contact hypothesis is still relevant when studying the interpersonal processes and practices of how members of diverse cultures perceive the world around them and exchange meaning with one another in conducting their daily affairs at the local community level.

Conclusion

As the federal and provincial governments continue to look at ways of balancing the distribution of immigrants across Canada and outside of the largest metropolitan centres, small communities are

becoming ideal settings to study the practices and processes underlying budding multiculturalism. In the small cities and rural towns of New Brunswick, Canada where a relatively homogeneous population is the norm and multiculturalism is a new practice, encounters between native-born residents and recent immigrants and the gradual changes they bring are magnified. My research findings suggest that the established residents, and especially the adolescents of Fredericton, are uninterested and ambivalent toward immigrant adolescents because Allport's (1954) four necessary conditions for contact to result in the reduction of prejudice are not as developed as they are in Florenceville-Bristol. One receiving community appears to have been more successful than the other at practicing multiculturalism for three precise reasons: (1) contact; (2) connect; (3) include. The immigration literature has generally shown integration (becoming an active member of the receiving community, yet simultaneously maintaining a distinct ethnic identity) to be the most adaptive mode of acculturation. It is also the most conducive to fostering the sense of belonging and positive ethnic identity that are central to the successful practice of multiculturalism (Berry et al. 1987; Berry & Sam 1997). Integration involves making contact with the immigrant adolescents and connecting them with their new communities by striving to include them in institutions, activities, and social networks.

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