

EDITORS' NOTES

Peer relations have repeatedly been shown to play a significant role in personal, social, and academic development. At the group level, researchers have focused on both liking (peer acceptance or popularity) and disliking (peer rejection). More recently, attention has been focused on the role of dyadic relationships in development. Although much has been learned in recent years about the impact of positive dyadic relationships (that is, friendships) on child and adolescent development, the developmental significance of negative dyadic relationships has been largely ignored. This volume is intended to provide a conceptual and empirical basis for the study of these antipathetic relationships.

Theoretical and empirical attention is lacking regarding the formation and maintenance of antipathetic relationships. Are some youths more likely than others to become involved in inimical relationships? Children and adolescents who are aggressive or withdrawn, lack social skills, and have low cognitive ability are often rejected by the peer group, but these findings speak to disliking at the group level, and it is not clear that characteristics associated with peer rejection will necessarily be relevant to dyadic antipathy or enmities. How do enemy relationships form? Some may arise out of broken friendships, whereas others may emerge within the context of bully-victim relationships. It might also be expected that enmities could arise from jealousy (such as competition for a common friend or romantic partner) or through peer group structure (such as out-group biases and hostility). What distal factors, such as family environment and neighborhood characteristics, are relevant to the formation of enmity in the peer group? Are inimical relationships short-term or long-lasting? If they are long-lasting, what processes occur in the maintenance and solidification of these relationships? It might be expected that following the formation of an inimical relationship, certain behaviors, such as aggression and avoidance, biased perceptions, and high rates of retaliation, may maintain and intensify the enmity. Again, however, these possibilities have received little prior attention.

It might be expected that relationships based on mutual animosity have serious, often negative, developmental consequences for children and adolescents. As described by Abecassis in Chapter One, enmities are relationships based on hatred, hostility, and fear. Because enmities are relationships, in which by definition partners are unique from other peers, it is likely that this disdain is personalized, and perhaps more intense, than the unilateral dislike often examined when researchers talk of peer rejection. Moreover, children and adolescents who are not rejected at the group level may experience the same negative consequences associated with peer rejection by

having a small number of enemies. It is also possible that those rejected at the group level differ in their developmental trajectories depending on whether peers' dislike toward them is unilateral or in the context of mutually antipathetic relationships. For these reasons, it might be expected that inimical relationships constitute a distinct developmental risk beyond that of peer rejection. However, the developmental consequences of enemies and other antipathetic relationships have received little prior attention.

This volume represents an effort to lay conceptual and empirical foundations for these previously unexplored topics. Using diverse samples, chapter authors provide an empirically based exposition of both distal (for example, attachment styles with parents, community violence exposure) and proximal (for example, perceptions of enemies' behavior, social structure of the peer group) factors related to inimical relationships. Developmental sequelae, such as affective, behavioral, and interpersonal, of having enemies are also explored within concurrent and longitudinal designs.

In Chapter One, Abecassis provides a typology of antipathetic relationships, of which enemy relationships are one type. She also provides an overview of prior theoretical and empirical work relevant to these negative relationships.

The second and third chapters explore how distal factors are related to inimical relationships with peers. In Chapter Two, Card and Hodges discuss associations between the family context and enmity within the peer group, and they present data on avoidant and preoccupied attachment styles to demonstrate these linkages in middle childhood. In Chapter Three, Schwartz, Hopmeyer-Gorman, Toblin, and Abou-ezzeddine demonstrate that children's inimical relationships with peers exacerbate associations between exposure to violence in the community and psychosocial adjustment in the peer group. These findings suggest that enmity with peers may provide contexts in which distal factors manifest as maladjustment.

Chapters Four through Six explore the processes and consequences of interpersonal enmity among children and early adolescents. In Chapter Four, Parker and Gamm examine individual behaviors and interpersonal adjustment associated with preadolescents' involvement in inimical relationships. The authors also demonstrate the potentially biased perceptions occurring within enmities, relative to friendships. Chapter Five, by Rodkin, Pearl, Farmer, and Van Acker, provides an examination of how the gender-segregated nature of children's peer groups manifests in antipathetic dyads. These authors also examine the temporal stability of children's inimical relationships, as well as co-occurring changes in behavioral and peer group adjustment. In Chapter Six, Pope examines the concurrent and longitudinal consequences associated with children's involvement in mutual antipathies, relative to the consequences associated with group-level rejection, contrasting two methodologies to assess inimical relationships.

In Chapter Seven, Hartup provides integration and commentary on the other chapters of this volume. More important, he suggests directions for

future research in this emergent field. Using the definition of enemies suggested by Abecassis in Chapter One, Hartup also provides clarification of the constructs of enemies and mutual antipathies as they are used in the chapters of this volume.

The imperfect overlap between the conceptualization (Chapter One) and empirical operationalization (Chapters Two through Six) of enemy relationships, as Hartup points out in Chapter Seven, represents a clear call for researchers to better identify enemy relationships and distinguish them from other mutual antipathies when conducting work in this area. Many of the correlates of enemies reported in this volume are likely attenuated by confounding enemies and other mutual antipathies. That is, the processes and associated maladjustment studied here are likely to be operating more strongly within enemy relationships than other mutual antipathies. Future research with more precise assessment of enemy relationships might be expected to document better the developmental significance of child and adolescent enemies, as well as to explore differences in the processes involved in enemy and other antipathetic relationships.

In summary, this volume consists of theoretical and empirically based explorations of factors involved in the formation, maintenance, and impact of enemies and other mutual antipathies. These works are not meant to be authoritative, as it is likely that future research in this emergent area of study will clarify, and perhaps contradict, many of the findings reported here. Instead, our hope is that this volume will serve as a springboard for further theorizing and research on enemies and the darker side of peer relations.

Ernest V. E. Hodges
Noel A. Card
Editors

ERNEST V. E. HODGES is an associate professor of psychology at St. John's University, Jamaica, New York.

NOEL A. CARD is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology at St. John's University, Jamaica, New York.

