

Intercultural Friendship: The Case of a Palestinian Bedouin and a Dutch Israeli Jew, Daniel J. N. Weishut, Brill, 2021 (ISBN 978-90-04-37240-5), 304 pp., hb \$232

In a world riven with strife and subject to instantaneous cross-cultural communication, how does one make peace? How does one get to 'know' the other? In this book, Daniel Weishut, a trained psychotherapist, a researcher with a doctorate in cultural psychology, a human rights activist, and a Dutchman who has chosen to live and serve in Israel, shares with the reader his path in getting to know another, Ahmad, a Bedouin Muslim sheikh and a Palestinian who lives on the other side of the separation wall that divides between Israelis and Palestinians.

Using the 'Friendship Research Method', Weishut forms a friendship with Ahmad that has lasted 17 years and includes his visits to Ahmad and his family, Ahmad's visits to him in Israeli Jerusalem, and their joint trips to Europe to his family. Weishut uses three approaches for this study. First, using the theoretical literature on 'interculturality', he exposes his and Ahmad's cultural beliefs and assumptions. He also outlines the political background against which the study takes place, including the daily economic, military, and political complications for both parties. Second, Weishut uses 'Stories of Friendship' – real stories of what happened, all set in italics – as an illustration of the points he makes. And third, Weishut uses 'autoethnography' to analyze himself as he develops as a person through this friendship. Weishut's honesty and forthrightness in revealing his weaknesses and frustrations is admirable as well as instructive, particularly in the concluding chapter (pp. 228–42).

A few contrasts that Weishut uncovered and expounded well in Chapters 5–8 will give a sense of the insights contained in this book. *Food*: Westerners prepare enough food for themselves and guests whom they invite, and they set the table carefully; guests are expected to arrive on time. Bedouins prepare an excess of food and eat out of one large pot without utensils, and everyone present is expected to participate in the meal, even employees; no women eat with the men. *Weddings*: Westerners plan weddings well in advance, after selecting a mate. Bedouins decide when they are getting married and then select a mate.

Institutionalized authority: Westerners are respectful of duly institutionalized authorities such as police, army, courts, banks, etc. Bedouins respect primarily the authority of the extended family in its hierarchy and are less respectful of the police, army, courts, banks, etc., both Israeli and Palestinian. *Individual and collectivity*: Westerners enshrine the rights and needs of the individual as generally having priority over the collective. Bedouins enshrine the power of the collective (the extended family hierarchy) over the rights and needs of the individual. *Money*: Westerners invest money in businesses and have spreadsheets to keep

track of the rate of return. Bedouins regard money as part of the socializing network, and hence, debt is often settled in kind, customers who are relatives or friends are favored, no budget is used, and children are often expected to do real work. The Dutch invented the 'Dutch treat' in which each person pays for his or her own meal. For Bedouins, it would be an insult not to invite, or be invited, by the other. *Saying 'no'*: Westerners tend to be direct in their communication even of negative judgments. Bedouins do not say 'no' but use evasive language. Thus, it is common to give an estimate that the customer wants to hear and then deal with the real costs later. *Planning and time*: Westerners have a plan of action for major and minor activities. Bedouins do not have long-range plans. Westerners are on time and try not to be late. Bedouins arrive when they are there. *Masculinity and femininity*: Westerners treat women as equals. Bedouin women are expected to be deeply modest, not appearing in public unescorted, not eating with men, appearing fully covered, etc. Westerners expect men to be compassionate and aggressive only as needed. Bedouins expect men to be physically and emotionally aggressive and not show, or admit to, weakness.

Weishut has several excellent sections on honor, dignity, and respect (especially, pp. 186–92). In Western society, honor and respect are not central motifs though acceptance of institutional authority is an important value. In Bedouin society, honor, and the respect it entails, is central, as is loss of face and disrespect. Thus, one does not address, or inquire about, the women of another. One does not reveal, even in a joke or in a compassionate comment, the weakness of the other. Because of the priority of the collective, dishonoring someone immediately becomes a matter for the extended family, frequently leading to physical violence. Such conflict is resolved by a negotiation process called 'sulha' in which the offender's family must compensate the offended person's family in an agreed way. If not compensated properly, further violence will occur. In order not to dishonor Ahmad and to be true to his own ethic of honoring the other, Weishut admits that he agreed to omit material from the book that would impugn Ahmad's honor.

There is much more in this astounding and important book. As Weishut, whom I have known for many years and whose work and family I have followed for a long time, writes on p. 1, 'The fact that someone can perceive the world in such a different way than I used to do was for me an eye-opener, even though I was trained as a psychologist'. This is true for the reader, too.

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