

Social Exclusion in Childhood: A Developmental Intergroup Perspective

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Interpersonal rejection and intergroup exclusion in childhood reflect different, but complementary, aspects of child development. Interpersonal rejection focuses on individual differences in personality traits, such as wariness and being fearful, to explain bully–victim relationships. In contrast, intergroup exclusion focuses on how in-group and out-group attitudes contribute to social exclusion based on group membership, such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and nationality. It is proposed that what appears to be interpersonal rejection in some contexts may, in fact, reflect intergroup exclusion. Whereas interpersonal rejection research assumes that victims invite rejection, intergroup exclusion research proposes that excluders reject members of out-groups to maintain status differences. A developmental intergroup social exclusion framework is described, one that focuses on social reasoning, moral judgment, and group identity.

From early childhood through adulthood, peer rejection and social exclusion are facts of social life. In social interactions and encounters, rejection from a friend, peer, or peer group is common, and successfully determining how to manage rejection and exclusion provides a basis for healthy social development. Most childhood research on peer rejection, to date, has investigated *interpersonal rejection*, that is, rejection that is due to individual differences regarding personality traits that explain relational aggression, victimization, and becoming an outcast in the world of peers (Bierman, 2004; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006). Extensive experiences of peer rejection in childhood result in increased levels of depression, withdrawal, and a lack of motivation to achieve. Thus, initial research on peer rejection identified key factors that explain individual differences regarding patterns of peer rejection.

An equally important and different level of conceptual analysis to explain peer rejection stems from the developmental intergroup perspective. This approach has investigated the contexts in which *intergroup exclusion* stems not from individ-

ual personality deficits but rather from prejudicial attitudes about group membership, such as gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, and culture (Killen & Rutland, 2011). Societal expectations about groups, status, and power begin in early childhood and are reflected in playground and school-based peer interactions (Bigler & Liben, 2006; Rutland, Killen, & Abrams, 2010). From an intergroup approach, social exclusion on the basis of group membership results from processes related to group identity, such as in-group bias, out-group threat, and stereotyping, phenomena that have been studied extensively by social psychologists (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, & Estes, 2010). Although social psychologists study mostly adult populations examining both intergroup and interpersonal exclusion (Abrams, Hogg, & Marques, 2005), there has recently been a focus on child and adolescent populations from a developmental intergroup perspective.

The *interpersonal* rejection approach has focused on two individual profiles that underlie victimization: (a) children who are extremely shy, fearful, and anxious and are likely to be vulnerable to victimization, and (b) children who are uninhibited and demonstrate externalizing behaviors leading to bullying behavior, but also to being rejected by peers, which creates negative cycles of peer relationships. According to the literature, shy and withdrawn children are nonthreatening prey and unlikely to retaliate (“the whipping boy”), in con-

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trast to aggressive children who are viewed as troublesome by their peers and thus undesirable ("the provocative victim"; Olweus, 1993; Rubin et al., 2006, p. 894). The factors that have been shown to contribute to these patterns of peer rejection are temperament, insecure attachment, lack of friends, lack of confidence, and social-cognitive deficits such as misreading others' cues and the over attribution of hostile intentions of others. This research has been extremely important for understanding individual differences in being vulnerable to victimization. Through individual social-skills training, children at risk for peer rejection become more socially competent and resilient (Bierman, 2004; Rubin et al., 2006). Overall, however, there has been a pervasive assumption in the peer rejection literature that children who are victimized behave in ways that *invite* rejection and exclusion (Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, & Bukowski, 1999).

The intergroup exclusion approach differs from peer rejection research most dramatically by challenging the assumption that victims are engaging in behaviors that invite rejection and exclusion. Instead, it is proposed that social-cognitive judgments and attitudes, along with societal structures and expectations, also provide the basis for social exclusion of this type. This proposal is not to deny that the factors identified by an individual differences approach are essential for understanding patterns of peer rejection. Instead, the point is that a new approach needs to be considered as well. A child who is repeatedly and systematically excluded from playing with peers at recess because he or she is Muslim, for example, requires a different level of analysis from one in which the source of rejection derives from the excluded child's social deficits (e.g., extremely shy, fearful, or wary). Rather than focusing solely on whether the excluded child is lacking in social skills, new research should also focus on other factors, such as those associated with the intergroup context, which include group identity, the categorization of "in-group" and "out-group," cultural stereotypes, moral judgments about the fair treatment of others, conventions, traditions, and group dynamics.

To complicate matters, one of the outcomes of extensive exclusion is social withdrawal and, in the scenario depicted above, a Muslim child may become more socially withdrawn as a consequence of repeated rejection, even when the origin of the problem stemmed from factors independent of the child's individual personality traits. This scenario is repeated in school settings and communities around the world, given the increased mobility of

cultural groups to areas of the world that were previously homogeneous, and the pervasiveness of intergroup attitudes which can foster out-group distrust and dislike.

Thus, two distinct approaches for investigating peer rejection are *interpersonal*, focusing on children's individual differences regarding personality traits that lead them to become bullies and victims, and *intergroup*, focusing on children's group membership and the stereotypes and biases that lead children to be excluded by others, including peers and adults. An intergroup approach requires investigating children's emerging understanding about group identity, societal structures implicated in children's lives, conventions and traditions in the world of peers, and the larger societal arrangements that perpetuate hierarchical social relationships and attitudes. This is because stereotypic expectations, in-group bias, group norms, cultural conventions, traditions, and group identity serve, at times, to justify exclusion based on group membership. In addition, investigating concepts of fairness and equality in childhood and adolescence is central to understanding intergroup exclusion because moral judgments have been shown to provide a motivation for individuals to reject exclusion and promote intergroup inclusion (Rutland et al., 2010). This approach to understanding exclusion provides a window into the origins and emergence of prejudice, and, specifically, social contexts in which children perpetuate and are victims of prejudicial attitudes.

While we recognize the importance of the foundational research examining peer rejection from an individual differences perspective, we believe that it is time for a new generation of research on peer rejection and exclusion, one that recognizes the potential role of intergroup relations in peer rejection. We propose that peer rejection identified as an outcome of personality deficits may, in some contexts, be the outcome of intergroup exclusion. To consider this possibility, empirical research on peer relationships could include a focus on majority group attitudes and bias as well as identifying individual children who reflect a developmental psychopathology profile, that is, children with extreme behavioral characteristics that put them at risk for being a bully or victim. An intergroup exclusion approach involves including a systematic focus on how group identity, bias, stereotypes, and social-cognitive reasoning (moral, societal, and psychological) provide an explanation of children's experiences of social exclusion.

While societal messages about status in the form of stereotypic expectations about social groups

clearly exist, children also begin to categorize individuals on the basis of group membership and group identity at a very young age (Olson & Dweck, 2008). Contrary to popular belief, there is little evidence that child forms of prejudice are the result of modeling parental attitudes (Aboud & Amato, 2001). Instead as expected by social psychological theory on social identity, and confirmed by developmental intergroup data, children form in-group and out-group categories early in life and these categories begin to guide, both explicitly and implicitly, their allocation of resources, preferences for friends, and decisions about inclusion and exclusion (Abrams et al., 2005; Dunham, Baron, & Carey, 2011; Fehr, Bernhard, & Rockenbach, 2008; Levy & Killen, 2008). Thus, although peers, adults, and societal messages contribute to which categories children create as in-group or out-group (e.g., whether what is salient in a culture is race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or language), children also have early social-cognitive propensities to generalize the categories to decisions involving social interactions and friends. From a very young age, then, children seek to identify with groups (Nesdale, 2004). A natural component of this process is developing a group identity. The desire to ensure distinctiveness of the in-group in contrast to the out-group can result in in-group bias as well as out-group dislike. There is a long-standing tradition of research on intergroup attitudes (and in-group identity) in the adult literature. In the past 15 years this research has expanded and proliferated in the developmental literature, which will be reviewed in this article.

What is important to note, however, is that children do not make all decisions relying upon in-group bias. An important factor that enables children to reject social decisions that are strictly based upon in-group and out-group categories is the simultaneous emergence of social (prosocial; Brownell, Ramani, & Zerwas, 2006; Warneken & Tomasello, 2007) and moral (fairness, equality) concepts about how to treat others (Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1998). While children seek group affiliation, they also form notions of fairness and equal treatment. Until recently, most of the research on the emergence of fairness and equality concepts was investigated in family and peer contexts, which were not designed to also examine intergroup relationships. Documenting the emergence of fairness concepts within the context of same-gender, same-ethnic groups, for example, provides information about the existence of early morality, but not whether it is applied to different-gender, different-ethnic group

(intergroup) social encounters. Thus, the development of moral judgments, such as concepts of equality, fairness, and justice in intergroup contexts are relevant for understanding patterns of social exclusion (Killen & Rutland, 2011).

The increase in the mobility of social groups around the globe has created new social contexts for understanding and investigating these issues in child development. Increasing diversity in school, family, and cultural contexts has the potential to provide the opportunity to foster celebrations of universality and common ground. At the same time, diversity brings stereotypes, biases, and negative attitudes toward others (Levy & Killen, 2008; Verkuyten & De Wolf, 2007). Research in child development has made significant inroads toward understanding the diverse phenomena associated with social exclusion and prejudice in childhood.

From our viewpoint, addressing children's peer relationships and social development requires: (a) understanding when peer rejection is a matter of a child's individual lack of social competence or deficiencies, (b) when peer rejection stems from basic social-cognitive differentiations made about social groups as early as infancy, and (c) how societal messages about status, power, and hierarchy in cultural contexts bear on children's peer relationships. To a large extent, understanding peer relationships in childhood and adolescence requires a full developmental context, one that includes what we know about social-cognitive categorizations early in social life as well as the messages that are perpetuated in the larger adult world.

Moreover, what appear to be age-related changes regarding friendship formation and dissolution from a peer relationships perspective looks different from a developmental intergroup social exclusion approach. For example, in the peer relationships literature, children's friendships are characterized as based on interest in toys and play activities before age 10 or 11 (Rubin et al., 2006) and focused on psychological factors in early adolescence. Not until early adolescence, then, it is assumed that children's social relationships reflect group processes and group identity, defined by peer cliques, crowds, and networks. In general, friendships become more psychological with age, focusing on intimacy, loyalty, disclosure, and trust in adolescence (Berndt, 2002; Dunn, 2004). Most analyses of early peer relationships focus on the dyadic level, with a pervasive finding of homogeneity, termed "homophily" in the peer relationships literature, which is the finding that children seek similarity in their peer friendships defined on the basis of physical

appearance in childhood, followed by group interests in adolescence (Kindermann & Gest, 2009).

Intergroup exclusion research has found other age-related patterns, showing that group loyalty emerges in the form of group identity as early as 6 years of age (Abrams & Rutland, 2008; Patterson, Bigler, & Swann, 2010). During childhood, intimacy is related to the type of intergroup relationship in childhood (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003), and similarity based on gender and ethnicity is often a function of the structure of the school (regarding gender segregated activities and messages; Graham, Taylor, & Ho, 2009). Even the ethnic composition of the classroom and the school (regarding the proportion of diversity by ethnic makeup) can bear on how children define their friendships and who they are close to at school (Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006).

Thus, we will provide a framework for considering developmental patterns in peer group exclusion, which take intergroup relations and contexts into consideration. To provide a comprehensive approach to investigating peer exclusion, we will draw on developmental intergroup theories that have focused on social-cognitive development and its application to intergroup contexts. These theories provide a framework for investigating the social-cognitive bases by which children and adolescents reject members of groups for reasons based on group identity and group norms, as well as when they challenge intergroup decisions that are based on stereotypic expectations.

Social Domain and Social Identity Approaches for Intergroup Exclusion

Social domain theory identifies a set of conceptual categories that reflect how individuals categorize social interactions and judgments. Developmental theories drawing on social identity theory have investigated how children understand the self in the context of a group, and how the dynamic of in-group and out-group distinctions are formed and change over the life span.

Social Domain Theory: Social Reasoning and Context

The social domain model conceptualizes development in terms of the emergence of moral, societal, and psychological categories, which reflect a framework for interpreting behavior as well as judgments and reasoning about the social world. These categories have been well validated in the

literature for analyzing how individuals understand, interpret, and evaluate social events (Nucci, 1981, 2001; Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 2006). The *moral domain* refers to prescriptive norms of how individuals ought to treat one another with respect to justice, others' welfare, and rights; the *societal domain* encompasses behavioral regularities that ensure smooth functioning of social groups such as customs, traditions, and conventions; the *psychological domain* includes concepts about personal issues that are not regulated but viewed as a matter of individual choice and personal discretion (e.g., issues that affect one's body, identity, personal self). Domain models have been put forth and validated in the area of cognitive development as well as social-cognitive development (Keil, 2006; Kuhn & Siegler, 2006). This approach has been fruitful for investigating the forms of reasoning that individuals use when evaluating, interpreting, and making decisions about social interactions and social issues.

Thus, the initial social domain research program concentrated on whether individuals evaluated prototypic events using criteria associated with these domains (such as whether the rule associated with a domain is alterable, contingent on authority jurisdiction, a matter of punishment, or generalizable).

An explicit consideration of the intergroup context, however, was not part of the early research program. Instead, studies were conducted in which group membership such as gender, race, and ethnicity were control variables (e.g., interviewing girls about distribution of resources between girls, and boys about distribution of resources among boys). However, research in the past decade has expanded the social domain focus to include the evaluation of complex events, also referred to as multifaceted events, and one such context has been identified as the intergroup context (see Richardson, Mulvey, & Killen, 2012). Multifaceted events are those that reflect multiple domains and involve coordinating moral, societal, and psychological concepts when making decisions. Thus, research using the social domain categories has been applied to the context of intergroup social exclusion and has revealed how children use multiple forms of reasoning to evaluate exclusion as wrong or legitimate. Just as applying social domain categories to the topic of intergroup exclusion has been fruitful regarding how prejudice and bias emerge in childhood, so too, we argue that examining patterns of peer rejection from an intergroup perspective sheds light on the factors that contribute to victimization in childhood.

As depicted in Figure 1, we display how moral, societal, and psychological considerations

Moral	Societal	Psychological
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is fair?• Value of equal treatment?• Who might be hurt by my decisions?• Has the target of exclusion experienced discrimination in the past?• Is my decision prejudicial?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the traditions and customs of my group?• What would benefit my group?• What is the societal status of my group?• How much does my group reflect my values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is this a personal decision for me to decide, not the group?• What are the intentions of my group?• What is the perspective of the outgroup?• What is the perspective of the target of the exclusion?
Social Cognitive Constructs Activated	Social Cognitive Constructs Activated	Social Cognitive Constructs Activated
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equal and fair treatment of ingroup and outgroup.• Rights of the minority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship of ingroup to outgroup• Group identity and group functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perspective-taking about the ingroup's or outgroup's intentions• Personal choice

Figure 1. Social domain-related reasoning and constructs regarding intergroup exclusion.

are part of children’s interpretations of social exclusion in intergroup contexts. Developmental intergroup research applying social domain categories to the topic of intergroup social exclusion has demonstrated when and how prejudicial bias and stereotypic expectations enter into decision making. Generally, age-related changes pertain to the context in which a particular form of reasoning is used and the type of reasoning as we detail below. On the basis of these studies, we propose an extension of the traditional domains identified in social domain theory (see Figure 1).

Specifically, although the moral domain traditionally involves issues of fairness, justice, and rights, we have shown how children refer to moral concerns about the wrongfulness of prejudice and discrimination when evaluating intergroup encounters. Data have also revealed how children’s traditional focus on conventions and customs extends to include concerns with group functioning and group identity regarding group goals (along with stereotypic expectations about how groups work best, such as reference to gender roles). Finally, the psychological domain, which has traditionally included concepts about personal issues, has been extended to understanding others’ states of mind, and in particular, intentionality, autonomy, perspective taking, and theory of mind. For an example, children attribute negative intentions to the mental states of others on the basis of in-group or out-group identification, such as race (McGlothlin & Killen, 2006). From an intergroup perspective, we propose that

each domain activates social-cognitive constructs, including equal and fair treatment of the in-group and out-group (moral), group identity and group functioning (societal), and attributions of others’ intentions (psychological).

For investigating intergroup exclusion, moral, societal, and psychological domain-generated categories can capture the complexity of children’s evaluations, as they determine whether to exclude or include others and weigh information about group membership while making these decisions. Drawing on social psychological theories about development, we have applied these forms of reasoning to contexts reflecting intergroup constructs such as in-group bias, in-group identity, and out-group threat. Research has identified age-related differences in children’s judgments about exclusion in intergroup contexts, revealing that group affiliation can result in positive judgments (“I like my group and I want it to be the best one”), as well as negative motives (“I don’t like your group so I don’t like you”).

Age and gender findings on exclusion from Social Domain theory. Regarding intergroup decisions, children as young as 3.5 years of age use moral reasons, such as references to fairness, equal treatment, and psychological harm to reject exclusion based on gender (Killen, Pisacane, Lee-Kim, & Ardila-Rey, 2001), albeit fairly simple reasons; children often use only one type of reason to support their judgment. When situations are made more complex (e.g., picking one of two children, a boy or girl, to

join a gender-stereotypic activity), then children use more stereotypic and social-conventional expectations to make a decision about inclusion.

Investigations of children's evaluations of gender exclusion regarding play activities and after-school activities that are gender stereotypic, such as play activities (dolls, truck) or sports and teams (ballet, baseball) also reveal that girls typically view exclusion as more wrong than do boys, with boys referencing more gender stereotypes than girls to justify exclusion. In fact, in a study in Korea, these gender differences were replicated in a sample of 8- and 11-year-old children (Park, Lee-Kim, Killen, Kim, & Park, 2011). In this study children viewed gender-consistent exclusion (a girl from ballet, a boy from baseball) as more wrong than gender-inconsistent exclusion (a boy from ballet, a girl from baseball), similar to other U.S. findings (Killen & Stangor, 2001). These findings suggest that in contexts in which a girl is excluded from an activity that is perceived to be male stereotypic, for example, this act may be a consequence of stereotypic expectations rather than something that she has done (e.g., victims inviting exclusion or rejection). These results bear directly, then, on the proposition that interpersonal rejection research may need to examine the larger social context of exclusion.

When children have been asked about the qualifications, merit, or prior experience of the excluded individual, references to social-conventional considerations when evaluating social exclusion generally increase from 6 to 12 years of age (Killen & Stangor, 2001). With age children focus on group functioning considerations as well as group identity; at the same time, explicit stereotypes decrease (Aboud, 2008). These conflicting considerations are difficult for children when evaluating social exclusionary contexts. These patterns of reasoning suggest that children's interpretations of exclusion contexts reveal motivations beyond the individual personality that factor into their decision. To support this view, several studies have also directly compared how children (11- and 12-year-olds), as well as adolescents (14- and 15-year-olds), evaluate peer rejection based on personality traits with social exclusion based on group membership, and the findings revealed that they interpret these contexts quite differently, viewing peer rejection based on personality traits as a personal choice, whereas intergroup exclusion is more often viewed as either unfair (moral) or legitimate due to group identity considerations (Malti, Killen, & Gasser, 2012; Park & Killen, 2010). As described below, children's

understanding of group identity becomes highly salient as early as 6 years (Nesdale, 2004).

Research in adolescence regarding social exclusion has revealed that multiple considerations such as group loyalty in the form of national pride, cultural and ethnic identity exists along with an underlying knowledge about group conformity, group norms, and institutional expectations that factor into young and older adolescents' judgments about exclusion (Gieling, Thijs, & Verkuyten, 2010). Thus, adolescents are likely to use references to group functioning, norms, identity, and group cohesion to explain decisions about exclusion (Horn, 2008). However, there remain contexts in which, with age, adolescents invoke moral judgments, such as when evaluating exclusion based on sexual identity. In this context, younger adolescents (14- to 16-year-olds) are more likely to use conventional reasoning to judge the acceptability of excluding a gay peer than are older adolescents (16- to 18-year-olds) who are more likely to use moral reasoning to reject exclusion based on sexuality (Horn, 2008). For an issue such as sexual identity, the distinction between interpersonal rejection, in which it is theorized that the victim invites rejection, and intergroup exclusion, in which judgments about the group membership category contribute to the social interaction, is very important. For complex issues involving sexuality, in this case, with age, adolescents have generally been shown to challenge stereotypes and refer to the wrongfulness of discrimination, even from very different regional and religious backgrounds (see Horn, 2008). However, there are instances in which adolescents' views about sexuality and sexual identity have led to bullying and aggressive encounters. Thus, this is an area in which studying individual differences (using interpersonal rejection criteria) about reasoning regarding sexual identity (an intergroup approach) may be fruitful (see Horn, 2008).

Even when explicit stereotypes decrease with age, children and adolescents use conventional reasoning, such as traditions and customs, along with psychological reasons, such as personal choice, to justify exclusion. In fact, with age, children frequently turn to the psychological domain and mention the importance of autonomy, and personal choice for why one might exclude someone who is a member of an out-group. This occurs even when they view the context to be one in which the reason would be bad (e.g., "You can date who you want to; it's up to you. But using race as a reason to not date someone is ignorant and you have to learn that race doesn't matter when deciding who you

can get along or go out with"). Throughout development children and adolescents use moral reasoning, such as the unfairness, lack of equal treatment, and wrongfulness of discrimination, to reject exclusion based on group membership.

What social domain research focusing on exclusion has shown is that, with age, children begin to use multiple domains (as opposed to focusing on one) to reason about exclusion scenarios. As children grow older and gain more experience with groups they show more sophisticated forms of reasoning that reflect their nuanced ways of weighing the multiple factors that are involved in peer group exclusion (i.e., fairness, harm to the excluded, group functioning, group identity and norms, autonomy, perspective taking). Social domain theory provides an explanation of the types of norms that matter to children, which include moral norms about fairness, social-conventional norms about traditions, and considerations of the personal domain, such as autonomy. However, how do norms operate in the context of group affiliations and group identity? Developmental intergroup research on social identity has provided some answers to this question.

Social Identity Approaches to Intergroup Exclusion: Group Norms and Identity

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) proposes that individuals' identification with a social group creates an identity that becomes both a central part of how one defines oneself as well as how individuals think about themselves in relation to others. One outcome of social identity perception is that the individuals are motivated to support the in-group (to promote the self) and distance themselves from the out-group. Social psychological research has examined how this process works with adult populations, which includes investigating the role of self categorization, self-esteem, and social comparisons (Brown & Gaernter, 2001; Dovidio et al., 2010). These studies provide information about underlying group processes, but not about the developmental emergence of attitudes about in-group and out-group relationships.

Age-related findings from intergroup identity theories. Developmental social psychologists have conducted research to test social identity theory with children from a developmental framework (Rutland, Abrams, & Levy, 2007). This research pertains to how identification with groups varies over time and whether the context elicits meaningful group membership category identification. Nesdale's

social identity development theory (Nesdale, 2004, 2008) has shown that children's in-group bias takes a different trajectory than out-group dislike. Ethnic awareness emerges prior to ethnic preference when children form a group identity around 4 and 5 years of age, with ethnic prejudice manifesting by 7 years of age. Three main factors determine whether other ethnic groups are seen negatively in middle childhood, which include: (a) level of identification (strong identification is related to forming attitudes that support the group), (b) out-group threat, and (c) consistency between personal and group norms.

As an illustration of in-group bias in the context of social exclusion, Nesdale, Durkin, Maass, and Griffiths (2005) examined the effects of levels of in-group identification and levels of out-group threat on children's favorability toward members of an ethnically different or similar out-group (i.e., Pacific-Islanders vs. Anglo-Australian) in a sample of 6-, 7-, and 9-year-old Anglo-Australians, revealing that young children show negativity toward the out-group, particularly when they strongly identify with their group and experience threat from an out-group. What these findings indicate is that exclusion manifests when children are put in situations that encourage them to maintain positive group identity and group functioning. Thus, future research from the peer rejection framework could attend to the role that threat from the out-group plays in exclusion or rejection decisions.

Another developmental model of social identity, developmental subjective group dynamics (Abrams & Rutland, 2008), investigates how children (6- to 12-year-olds) understand group dynamics in the context of inclusion and exclusion. The model has shown that, with age, children's identification with groups lies more directly with their view of the group norms associated with the group ("I like my group because they believe X"), not just the membership ("I like my group because they are boys"). This has been shown by investigating the relation between intragroup and intergroup dynamics. Intragroup dynamics refer to the conditions under which a deviant member of a group would be excluded for rejecting an in-group norm; intergroup dynamics refers to decisions in which an out-group member is rejected to maintain in-group distinctiveness. This theory has revealed the complex knowledge that children have regarding group dynamics and the contexts in which group identity determines decision making about inclusion and exclusion. Moreover, being part of a group is important

for enhancing self-identity and self-worth. Friends who are identified as deviating from group norms will be rejected, and individuals who support in-group norms will be included, even if they appear to be different in terms of group membership.

In several studies, British children between 6 and 11 years of age were asked about competition between national soccer teams as an intergroup context. In these experiments children were first asked to rate how they felt toward their group as a whole and another group as a whole (i.e., national bias; Abrams & Rutland, 2008). Children were then told about an in-group member who rooted for their own team and the other team, as well as an out-group member who did the same (rooted for both teams), both of whom were deviating from the group norms of being loyal only to their own team. Children preferred the deviant member of the out-group over the in-group deviant member because their own in-group member was violating an expectation about the group with which the child had high identification. These studies reveal that the cost of being disloyal to the in-group was greater than the decision to reject a member of one's own group. Between the ages of 6 and 9 years, children's group identity changes from being based on group membership to an understanding of group norms. Thus, exclusion is not only related to group membership (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity) but also to the norms of the group, which eventually come to define group identity.

Making distinctions between group norms and group loyalty require knowledge about groups as well as social-cognitive abilities to evaluate these two considerations simultaneously. This information is relevant for determining how children evaluate the social hierarchy of a group. In a recent study drawing on both social domain and developmental subjective group dynamics theory (Killen, Rutland, Abrams, Mulvey, & Hitti, *in press*), children (9–10 years of age) and adolescents (13–14 years of age) evaluated members of their own groups (boys or girls) who deviated from their in-group norms in terms of allocation of resources (equal or unequal) and traditions (wearing a club shirt or not wearing it). Participants were also asked about inclusion and exclusion of group members who deviated from their group norms. The findings indicated that participants were willing to support in-group members who rejected group norms that were unequal or nontraditional. With age, participants distinguished between their own favorability of in-group members who voiced opposition to the group for being unequal or nontraditional and their expectations

about how the group would respond. The implication of these findings for the main thesis of this review article is that children and adolescents balance competing information about group identity and group norms when making social decisions about inclusion and exclusion in peer contexts as young as 9 years of age.

Differentiating Interpersonal and Intergroup Exclusion

Research on children's peer relationships has focused on risk and protective factors, identifying the contexts in which friends enable children to succeed and to navigate the social world. This wealth of data has provided the essential building blocks for understanding the importance that friendships provide children as they move throughout their social world from early childhood to adolescence (Rubin et al., 2006). To understand what happens when children encounter peers who they view as different in terms of group status, another level of analysis is needed to determine the types of interventions that are necessary to reduce victimization (based not on personality traits but on group identity). Investigations of children's evaluations of intergroup exclusion (e.g., "You're an X and we don't want Xs in our group") have shown that decisions to exclude others involve a range of reasons, from group norms and stereotypic expectations to moral assessments about the fairness of exclusion.

As shown in Figure 2, we propose that research on interpersonal and intergroup exclusion results in different trajectories or interpretations of behavior. Using a question about exclusion ("Should we invite X to join us?"), we provide a scheme for how research on interpersonal and intergroup perspectives examines peer rejection and exclusion. On the left side of Figure 2, interpersonal rejection has been shown to be explained by different victim and bully profiles regarding personality traits (shyness and aggression). On the right side of Figure 2, intergroup exclusion (nationality and gender) has been explained by individual-group relationships deriving from group identity and group norms.

As shown in Figure 2, what might appear to be an interpersonal rejection encounter in which a child does not want to play with a shy peer could actually include another layer, which is at the intergroup level, and could involve stereotypes about individuals based on cultural membership. Thus, underlying the interpersonal encounter that leads to

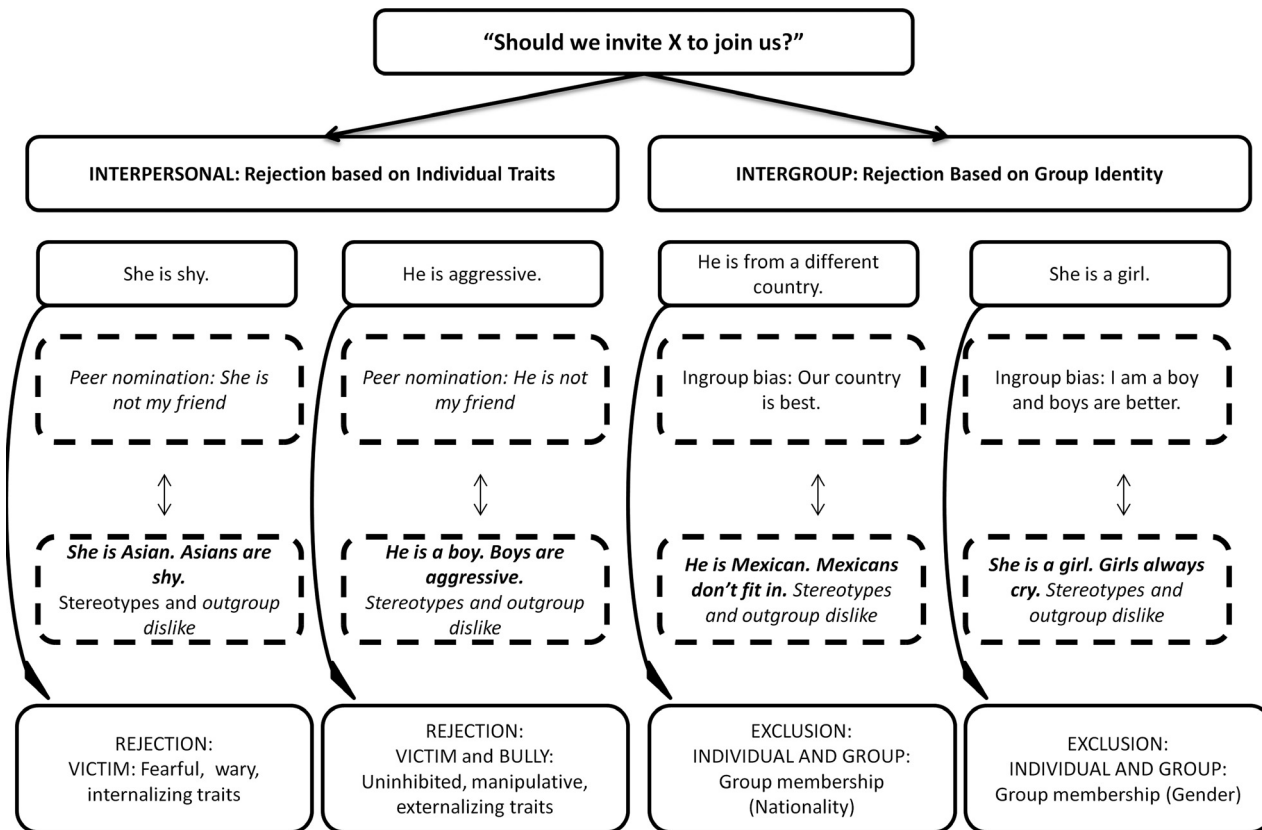


Figure 2. Social exclusion: A developmental intergroup perspective.

rejection based on shyness, may be a stereotypic expectation that Asians are shy which turns an interpersonal encounter into an intergroup one. Similarly, aggression has also been a common stereotypic trait associated with boys as well as ethnic minority children, such as African American children, and may lead to the same outcome, that is, what appears to be an interpersonal form of peer rejection may be an intergroup one. Intergroup exclusion has been shown to result from in-group bias or out-group dislike, which often (but not always) is related to stereotypic expectations.

As described above, children form group identities very early and understand processes that underlie group dynamics (Abrams & Rutland, 2008), which contribute to decision making about friendship and preferences for peer relationships early in development. Peer relationships are not defined solely in terms of play activities and access to toys and games, but also in terms of the groups that peers identify with and express an affiliation. Furthermore, children categorize others in terms of in-group and out-group members based on minimal information and as young as 3 years of age (Dunham et al., 2011), indicating that young children

have a predisposition to form groups based on identity however defined. Given that stereotypic expectations about group identity are pervasive, it is not surprising that children use this information to determine group membership. Many different theories have provided explanations about why certain categories such as gender and race are more salient than minimal categories such as eye color and height, from biological and evolutionary theories to sociological and anthropological ones (e.g., see Graves, 2001; Hirschfeld, 2001).

Given the vast number of studies that focus on friendship nominations as an indicator of social adjustment (in terms of sociometric status), knowing more about the intergroup factors that influence these choices is important. Thus, including intergroup components in investigations of interpersonal rejection will shed light on how children are making their friendship decisions.

How Do These Two Approaches Inform One Another and Provide for New Lines of Research?

First, we will discuss the methods of interpersonal rejection research, how an intergroup

approach could be relevant for revealing new aspects of children's social experiences, and then what aspects of interpersonal rejection research could be incorporated into the existing intergroup approaches. One predominant method for identifying children who are at risk has been to solicit children's peer nominations of friendships (who in their class or school they identify as a friend), referred to as sociometry, which is a method originally developed to assess social groups (Moreno, 1960). There are many variants to this methodology with some instruments asking children to name friends and enemies, and other techniques focused more squarely on friendship without requesting nominations from children of others who they dislike. The sociometric method results in a classification system of children's social standing in classrooms and schools in terms of friendship relationships. Children who are rarely named by their peers as being a friend are categorized as rejected or neglected, with those ranked high classified as popular. Most children fall into the "average" category (75%–80%) and some who are both disliked and liked by their peers as "controversial" (Newcomb, Bukowski, & Pattee, 1993).

Much of the recent research has provided extensive information about distinctions between the categories. One recent set of findings has shown that rejected children are both disliked and yet desire to have friends in contrast to neglected children who are not nominated by others but also do not express a desire to have friends. These findings have provided information that is relevant for interventions (i.e., who to train on social skills and for what purpose; Coplan, Girardi, Findlay, & Frohlick, 2007; Hymel, Bowker, & Woody, 1993). Thus, recommendations about intervention based on perceived personality traits have been qualified by the type of traits that warrant intervention in the form of social-skills training for the victim.

Furthermore, the construct of sociometric popularity has been contrasted with "perceived" popularity (or sociological popularity; Lease, Kennedy, & Axelrod, 2002; Rose, Swenson, & Carlson, 2004). Children ages 9–13 years who are rated as "popular" in the classroom or school have different profiles from those children who are nominated by their peers to be their friend. Children who are sociometrically classified as popular (those who are nominated by others as friends) are rated as interpersonally sensitive toward others by teachers and as mediators by their peers. Children who are perceived as popular in terms of who they believe "others like the best" are

those children who are often associated with relational aggression, that is, the use of manipulative and control tactics to gain power in the status hierarchy (Lease et al., 2002).

These findings indicate that the underlying social strata and hierarchy in school interactions contributes to why some children (ages 10 years in a study by Hodges et al., 1999) are rejected by others. In addition, these findings reveal the importance of considering the psychological domain, in particular, children's understandings of others' intentions when evaluating peer rejection and exclusion. Furthermore, researchers have indicated that there is a need to better understand the relation between the status of individuals within a group with respect to their nomination status (Bukowski & Sippola, 2001).

As mentioned, intergroup perspectives reveal information about levels of status, power structures based on group membership, how group identity bears on the process, and the social-cognitive developmental explanation that underlies peer rejection. For example, children's ratings of friendship (who they are friends with) are not free of biases, stereotypic expectations, and group membership affiliation (Graham et al., 2009). Developmental intergroup research has shown that young children use categories such as gender, race, and ethnicity to determine group membership. However, most studies using sociometric methods ask children to rate friendships from a pool of same-gender, same-ethnicity peers, which prevents an analysis of how intergroup relationships factor into friendship nominations (see Miller, Lurye, Zosuls, & Ruble, 2009). Researchers have reported that methodological traditions in the field of sociometry have led to an exclusion of opposite-gender options for nominations, despite the recognition that including this dimension would provide ecological validity to the types of friendships that exist (Berndt & McCandless, 2009).

In the area of ethnicity, children's nominations of different-ethnic friendships are a function of the ethnic composition of the classroom, the school, and the neighborhood, limiting an understanding of how ethnicity plays a role in selections of friendships. Few analyses have been conducted to determine the proportion of children who rate peers as friends who match race, ethnicity, or immigrant status (Aboud et al., 2003; Graham et al., 2009). In fact, Graham et al. (2009) conducted an extensive search and found that only 7% of citations in the peer relations literature referred to race or ethnicity (2009, p. 394). Graham et al. point out that in the early research on peer nominations, African-American

youth were often categorized as “controversial,” which refers to children who are rated as *liked most* and *liked least*. What was not done, though, was to examine the larger social context for this type of nomination, that is, the ethnic composition of the classroom, and school, along with the intergroup attitudes and group identity variables that could help explain this finding. Moreover, research that has aimed to include ethnicity as a variable in assessing peer rejection has suffered from confounds with socioeconomic status. A recent study conducted to address these issues (Putallaz et al., 2007) revealed that the school context (homogenous or heterogeneous) is related to children’s perceptions of differences in victimization.

Friendship nominations carry a large weight toward determining children’s healthy social adjustment (e.g., average, neglected, or rejected), and thus understanding how intergroup variables factor into peer nominations is important. If it is demonstrated that children prefer same-gender, same-ethnicity friendships (which is an open question as it has not been comprehensively and systematically investigated), then additional analyses need to be conducted to determine why this might be the case. The first level of inquiry should be at the level of exposure, which typically exists for gender (except in same-gender schools) but not always for ethnicity, race, or immigrant status. For contexts in which there is no exposure, then knowing whether intergroup bias exists along these variables is important given that a lack of contact is related to higher levels of prejudice when conditions for indirect cross-group contact are not made available (such as reading about other groups and learning about intergroup members who are friends with out-group members; Cameron, Rutland, & Brown, 2007). For contexts in which there is cross-group exposure, then knowing whether cross-group nominations exist provides further information about the extent to which intergroup bias may explain, in part, interpersonal rejection patterns.

These issues are related to intergroup contact (described below), which has shown that cross-group friendship is the most significant predictor of prejudice reduction (Tropp & Prenovost, 2008). Thus, it is highly likely that whether children have cross-group friendships is related to patterns in friendship nominations. Therefore, another aspect of interpersonal rejection research that bears on intergroup studies has to do with identifying individual differences in the propensity to use stereotypes to exclude other peers, on the one hand, and for challenging hierarchies that perpetuate the sta-

tus quo when it leads to unfair exclusion, on the other hand.

Relational Aggression

Research on peer victimization originally focused on children who are victims (or bullies) of physical aggression and then turned to relational aggression, defined as the intent to hurt or harm another through the manipulation, threat, or damage to a close relationship, and often including social exclusion (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Ostrov & Godleski, 2010). The original set of findings with 9- to 12-year-old children revealed that relational aggression is more common among females than males, the latter of which would be more oriented to physical than relational aggression. However, whereas physical aggression declines with age, relational aggression increases with age for all children, and has been widely observed in the adult world, particularly in spheres in which males dominate, such as politics and governmental decision making. Moreover, observations of children in schools about relational aggression and gender differences have been inconsistent. More recently, studies on relational aggression in multiple contexts have revealed that both girls and boys engage in it, but findings continue to document connections between relational aggression in young girls and long-term experiences with rejection (and more so than for boys; Murray-Close & Ostrov, 2009).

The focus on girls as perpetrators of relational aggression has led to a set of somewhat contradictory findings. On the one hand, relational aggression has been viewed as a female type of aggression; on the other hand, research on social exclusion has demonstrated that female participants are often more likely to view social exclusion as wrong than are male participants (Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006). Females view intergroup social exclusion as wrong in cases in which boys are excluded and more so than do boys, indicating that girls’ evaluations of exclusion as unfair is applied to groups other than their own group. Thus, while research reports that females are likely to engage in relational rejection, which includes excluding a targeted peer from a group-based activity to make them feel bad or to stir up negative feelings and to gain popularity, females are also more likely to view excluding someone else based on group membership (such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture) as unfair and wrong. This is the case even when girls are not the victims of exclusion. In most of the studies, girls viewed exclusion based on ethnicity,

race, and culture as more unfair, discriminatory, and wrong than did boys. How can these two seemingly opposite portrayals be accurate?

Two alternative interpretations are possible. First, it may be that girls engage in relational aggression but they may also experience it as a victim and the extent to which they have had experience as a victim they would infer that it is unfair to exclude others. Second, it may be that what is referred to as relational aggression is actually a mixture of acts that include psychological harm to another but also group identity, group affiliation, and psychological considerations, such as autonomy and attributions of intentions. In the latter case, individuals (girls) may not view some acts categorized as relational aggression to be forms of harm to another. For instance, there are contexts when a group excludes a member who is perceived as deviating from the conventional norms (not adhering to the group's expectations for membership), and thus is viewed as disloyal to the group. While the excluded individual may feel bad, the majority group may be unaware that this criterion for group membership was not understood or recognized by the excluded person.

As an example, a group may exclude a member because they assume that the member would not want to be in the group (e.g., "He doesn't want to be in our group"), making attributions about the member's psychological desires. In this case, the majority group may be making psychological attributions of desires based on faulty information about the potential member's desires, or, potentially, based on stereotypes (e.g., girls do not play baseball; therefore, she will not want to play in our baseball game). In both of these cases, the majority group is engaging in relational aggression from the excluded individual's viewpoint, but engaging in group cohesiveness and identity from the excluder's viewpoint.

An empirical question is whether children who focus on group identity and cohesiveness are unaware of the intergroup exclusionary dimension, or are aware of it and do not believe that it matters. These are very different interpretations of exclusionary behavior in an intergroup context that has to be carefully measured and examined. This is because the same individuals who view aggressively motivated exclusion as unfair may be actively engaged in acts of similar exclusion unbeknown to them (because they view it as group loyalty rather than moral exclusion). This interpretation warrants a closer examination of how children (boys and girls) evaluate and interpret acts of aggression, and the meaning that they give to

it in terms of the identity of the group and the consequences to another person.

In fact, while relational aggression has been defined as acts of harm, which would be viewed as wrong from a moral viewpoint, many examples of social exclusion are not motivated out of a negative intention to harm another individual. A guiding assumption from social domain theory is that social exclusion is a multifaceted construct. There are contexts when social exclusion is viewed as necessary to make groups work well or to avoid potential moral transgressions (excluding a slow runner from the track team, an extremely shy person from the theater club, or an overly aggressive person from a peer group). Expanding the conceptualization of what counts as exclusion, why and when it occurs, including at what ages in development it is prominent, is necessary to explain potentially contradictory findings as well as to understand when exclusion reflects prejudicial attitudes (and stereotypic expectations) and when it is viewed as making groups work well (without a cost to moral principles) or a matter of individual choice (drawing on the psychological domain).

Furthermore, in several studies, U.S. ethnic minority boys did not differ from U.S. majority girls, for example, in their views about the unfairness of social exclusion based on race and gender, indicating that prior experiences of exclusion may contribute to judgments about when exclusion is wrong (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002). Studies on relational aggression, then, could determine why it is that some children appear to engage in relational aggression but also view it as unfair and wrong. Furthermore, it is important to disentangle relational aggression focused on interpersonal rejection from intergroup exclusion.

Intergroup exclusion research could expand its inquiry by examining individual differences in why it is that some children view intergroup exclusion as legitimate whereas other children view it as wrong. Nesdale (2008) drew on peer rejection research to examine bullying behaviors and found that children who were rejected by their peers (using sociometric measures) were more likely to be prejudiced toward an out-group member and display bullying behaviors. This study reflected an integrated approach in that it drew on individual difference measures to identify children who bullied in an intergroup context. Other studies have now examined the social status and behavior of U.S. ethnic majority and minority students in diverse classrooms using both sociometric measures and intergroup assessments (Newheiser & Olson, 2012).

In general, research on intergroup social exclusion differs from interpersonal rejection research by taking into account status and hierarchies of the larger societal culture as well as the local peer culture for understanding peer relationships, and how children construct status in the peer world. On the one hand, children create categories based on their local world of activities, interests, and opportunities as shown by interpersonal peer rejection research. Thus, gaining power may be defined by physical appearance, modes of dress, or engagement in extracurricular activities that convey status within a school setting (Brown, 1990). On the other hand, children and adolescents are aware of the larger cultural markers of status, such as group membership in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual identity, and nationality. Moreover, children hold implicit bias about such categories early in life, as demonstrated by developmental intergroup research (Bigler & Liben, 2006; Degner & Wentura, 2010). These categories and biases become incorporated into adolescents studies on peer networks and crowds (Horn, 2008). Understanding social hierarchies involves obtaining information about the larger social structure that creates a majority and minority status within the peer world.

Minority and Majority Status and Stereotypic Expectations

Developmental intergroup social exclusion research has revealed the ways in which being a member of a minority or majority group is often differentially related to experiences of prejudice and discrimination, and evaluations of exclusion as legitimate or wrong. Majority and minority status refers to the relation of group membership to the hierarchical status in a culture or group context, and specifically to high or low status, which are determined by a number of variables. The status of minority individuals does not necessarily refer to numeric status, but to status associated with access to power, prestige, and wealth (high or low). In some cultures, such as the United States, ethnic minority members are also numeric minority (though this is increasingly changing). Individuals in these categories experience lower status than ethnic majority members, specifically European Americans. In other cultures, the numeric representation for ethnicity, for example, does not reflect status. For instance, in South Africa, an ethnic minority (Whites) experience high status due to the history, power, and wealth (Olson, Shutts, Kinzler, & Weisman, 2012). Furthermore, the numeric representation for gender is not relevant to the status as

most cultures are evenly divided by gender in terms of numeric representation even though females experience lower status than males in many cultural contexts (Dasgupta & Asgari, 2004).

For racial exclusion, for example, ethnic majority children and adolescents (ages 9, 12, and 15) are more likely to view interracial exclusion as all right than are ethnic minority youth, and specifically for contexts involving friendship expectations, parental discomfort, and cross-race dating (Killen, Henning, Kelly, Crystal, & Ruck, 2007). When assessing whether it was all right (in the same situation) if an exclusion act was motivated not by race but by avoiding peer and parental disapproval of cross-race interactions, ethnic minority students viewed it as more wrong to exclude than did ethnic majority students (no age differences). Participants differed as a function of their own ethnic identification when asked about interracial exclusion when the explicitly stated motivation was conventional (e.g., parental discomfort).

Recent immigration patterns in Western Europe, Asia, and Australia have created negative tensions in schools and have revealed the multiple ways in which ethnic majority and minority students have different perspectives about social exclusion and cross-group friendships. As one example, media stories about youth crime stemming from immigrant adolescents in Western Europe have been directed toward ex-Yugoslavian adolescents, such as Serbians, in the past decade. Malti et al. (2012) asked Swiss and non-Swiss national adolescents (12 and 15 years of age) to evaluate peer intergroup and interpersonal exclusion. Whereas the majority of adolescents viewed exclusion based on nationality as wrong and unfair, Serbian (ethnic minority) adolescents viewed it as more wrong than did Swiss adolescents (ethnic majority; Malti et al., 2012). When asked about psychological states, in particular, attributions of emotions, Serbians attributed more positive emotions (e.g., feeling proud) to Swiss nationals who excluded the ethnic minority Serbian peers than did adolescents who were Swiss nationals. Interpretations for negative motives for exclusion were more explicitly addressed by those participants who had a high level of identification with the excluded victim in the scenario (non-Swiss nationals).

Identification with the excluded victim in intergroup exclusion contexts does not always translate into a more negative evaluation of exclusion decisions given the findings in the United States in which girls are more likely to view exclusion as wrong than boys (ages 4–10 years) across different

forms of exclusion (whether girls were the target or the excluder). These contradictory findings indicate the necessity of more systematic analyses of the complex interplay between status, perception, behavior, and judgments of intentions in analyzing peer relationships, and exclusion in particular.

An implication for *interpersonal* rejection is that identification with the target on the basis of group membership changes how children perceive the situation. Children who are nominated by their peers as friends may also share group identification, and children may be reluctant to nominate peers from an "out-group" as a friend, leading to categories of social rejection that are based on intergroup attitudes as well as personality traits. When asked directly about both intergroup and interpersonal exclusion, children and adolescents view intergroup exclusion (e.g., exclusion based on gender, nationality, ethnicity) as more unfair (and wrong) than interpersonal rejection (e.g., based on personality traits such as shy or aggressive; Park & Killen, 2010). Social reasoning analyses indicate that children and adolescents view excluding a shy peer, for example, as legitimate because there is the assumption that shy children do not want to be included. In contrast, children view excluding an aggressive peer as permissible due to the disruption to group functioning as well as the goal of preventing physical harm.

While these forms of reasoning have a legitimate dimension, contradictory messages, stereotypic expectations, and attributions of bias factor into individuals' interpretations of personality traits and group membership, which can easily create situations in which social exclusion is unfairly justified. More information is needed about the role of cross-group peers in children's nominations of friends. Extensive research by social psychologists with adults has demonstrated that intergroup contact, particularly cross-group friendships, reduces prejudice, and these findings have been extended to studies with children and adolescents.

Intergroup Contact and Intergroup Social Exclusion

Allport (1954), a social psychologist who studied the nature of prejudice in the 1950s, hypothesized that optimal conditions are necessary for intergroup contact to be effective in reducing prejudice. Reviews of research findings in social psychology (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and developmental psychology (Cameron, Rutland, Hossain, & Petley,

2011; Tropp & Prenovost, 2008) have examined the effectiveness of four conditions that Allport (1954) identified: *authority sanctions* (institutional authorities are on board with goals of mutual respect and tolerance), *common goals* (working cooperatively together to achieve a goal), *equal status* (deconfounding status and group identity, and equalizing respect and power relations between groups), and *personalized interactions* (friendships with out-group members).

Allport's (1954) theory was that prejudice is due, in part, to the unfamiliarity of others from different groups, and that contact with members of "out-groups" under positive conditions can enable individuals to challenge stereotypes and biases due to the identification with an out-group member. Many different mechanisms have been proposed for how these conditions work ranging from an increase in empathy and perspective taking to a reduction in anxiety and out-group threat (Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005). Interventions have been designed to test the many different facets of Allport's theory, ranging from employing cooperative goals, common in-group identity, and curricula designed to address the conditions.

To a large extent, Allport (1954) was arguing against a psychopathology-based theory of prejudice and, instead, promoting a view that prejudice can stem from normative-based expectations about others that stem from social categorization and perceptions. What enables individuals to change attributes associated with categorizations of in-groups and out-groups, which leads to prejudice, are social experiences with peers, and social cognitive inferences about encounters with peers, according to Allport. In many ways, there is a parallel argument in our proposition in this review article. We are encouraging developmental researchers to focus on the expectations that are often "normative" in society but that contribute to exclusion in childhood.

Social psychological research has studied intergroup contact on prejudice reduction for over 50 years and developmental psychology has recently conducted systematic investigations of intergroup contact as a means for reducing prejudice, for at least a decade. Analyses of intergroup contact provide a way of examining what it is about social relationships that may promote social inclusion and reduce intergroup exclusion. For example, attending a heterogeneous school does not necessarily mean that children have cross-race friendships. Not surprisingly, school tracking perpetuates existing racial and social class differences within heterogeneous schools (Orfield & Kurlaender, 2001). Furthermore,

ethnic minority students also experience a greater sense of safety in schools that are ethnically diverse than when their group represents a small numeric proportion of the student enrollment, indicating that the quality of their relationships changes as a function of their numeric representation in a school (Graham, 2006; Juvonen et al., 2006). Children who attend homogeneous schools may have little or moderate amounts of intergroup contact outside of the school context, limiting their opportunities for cross-race friendships. These factors also need to be taken into account in studies using sociometric methodologies. Children's nominations of friendships may be a function of the ethnic breakdown of the school, and the opportunities for cross-group friendships.

When does contact with members of out-groups reduce intergroup exclusion or, alternatively, increase exclusion and bias? Both possibilities can occur. On the one hand, having a friend from an out-group can enable one to challenge biases and stereotypes ("I know that some say that X people are mean but my friend is not like that so I don't think it's true"). On the other hand, encountering people from different backgrounds with different traditions can create discomfort, unease, anxiety, and wariness, and from social identity theory, out-group threat. How are cross-group friendships measured in childhood and what types of outcomes reflect a reduction in prejudice? Defining and measuring friendships as well as prejudice are necessary to investigate the role of intergroup contact on prejudice and bias.

As an illustration, two longitudinal studies conducted to examine intergroup contact in relation to German and Turkish children revealed that contact plays a positive role in promoting positive intergroup attitudes. Feddes and his colleagues conducted a longitudinal study on children's cross-group friendships and measured changes in their out-group biases overtime in several schools in Germany (Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009). The study included German and Turkish children ages 7–11 years in ethnically nonmixed elementary schools at the beginning and end of the German school year (Turkish children form an ethnic minority in Germany, a group that has experienced discrimination and social exclusion). Among majority children, but not minority children, cross-group friendships predicted, over time, positive out-group evaluations, showing the causal direction between greater direct contact (i.e., more cross-group friendships) and more positive out-group attitudes among ethnic majority children.

Returning to considerations of interpersonal rejection, these findings indicated that positive intergroup contact and cross-group friendships may be important for reducing instances of interpersonal rejection that are founded upon negativity toward the out-group. One way to examine this further would be to conduct direct comparisons between children's sociometric status and the degree of cross-group friendship that is reflected in the overall classroom or documented school relationships.

In one of the few studies to use peer nomination procedures in an intergroup context, Jugert, Noack, and Rutland (2011) asked German and Turkish children to nominate their friendships over a 1-year period and found that German children who had positive intergroup attitudes desired contact with members of out-groups. The finding that contact was more beneficial for the majority, not the minority group has been replicated in other studies, and indicates that majority and minority individuals begin with different levels of expectations about cross-group friendship (Jugert et al., 2011). Furthermore, research does show other benefits of cross-race friendships for children. A study with fourth graders showed that children who had cross-race friendships were not only more relationally inclusive but also had stronger leadership skills (Kawabata & Crick, 2008). Future research, however, should examine developmental patterns involving cross-race friendships in greater detail.

Although much of the peer relations literature has focused on interventions that target the victims of rejection, including social-skills training, different interventions are needed for intergroup social exclusion. Intergroup contact, which has the potential to lead to positive cross-group friendships, focuses on both the targets of exclusion and the excluders, as well as high- and low-status individuals or groups. Research indicates that fostering cross-group friendships by focusing on both majority and minority children may improve intergroup interactions and reduce exclusion and rejection due to group membership. The findings on intergroup contact point to the significant role that cross-group friendships have on reducing intergroup exclusion. What makes these findings novel for the child development literature is that the emphasis is on peer relationships, not authority–child relationships, and suggests a bottom-up, not top-down approach, of prejudice reduction intervention. Moreover, these findings are relevant for understanding interpersonal rejection and for determining the best course of action for intervention to promote positive peer relationships.

Intergroup Social Exclusion: Group Identity, Social Status, and Fairness

Children who are excluded by their peers are at risk for many negative developmental outcomes. We propose that a research framework that accounts for intergroup factors that contribute to peer rejection is important. Investigating how children reason about their peer relationships in interpersonal and intergroup contexts will help researchers better understand the dynamic interplay between interpersonal rejection and intergroup exclusion. Systematic research on intergroup attitudes with adults has been conducted since the mid-1940s, following WWII; only recently has the focus included children. However, the rate of interest in this topic in children (including infancy through emerging adulthood) has exploded in the past 10 years, with a wide range of methodologies and theories.

Interestingly, over this same time period, there has been an increasing interest in documenting the developmental origins of morality as well and the spontaneous forms of cooperation and prosocial behavior that emerge early in development, which reflects the taxonomy of concepts reflected in social domain theory (Brownell et al., 2006; Warneken & Tomasello, 2007). Understanding the ways in which the development of morality serves to offset or counteract negative intergroup attitudes has formed a coherent and timely avenue of research in child development.

An exciting aspect of the field of intergroup research is the interdisciplinary focus (including psychology, education, behavioral economics, primatology, neuroscience, philosophy, linguistics, and sociology) as well as the international attention paid to the topic in both social and developmental psychology. By and large, most children are not solely "prejudiced" or "moral"; designing studies to understand the *social contexts* in which the emergence of forms of prejudice and morality lead to discriminatory behavior and attitudes or to social justice orientations by late adolescence is essential.

We assert that it is important to consider the potential role of intergroup dynamics when evaluating peer rejection, and that children, who are just learning how to balance group identity with a sense of what is fair and just, may have a difficult time coordinating domains when making judgments about exclusion in intergroup contexts. Adolescents, who have a greater understanding of the complex interplay between group goals, fairness, and intergroup relations, may, at times, be more willing to

justify exclusion because of group considerations, but may also be more aware of and resistant to issues of discrimination. This developmental shift requires investigating how children and adolescents weigh multiple variables when evaluating peer rejection and social exclusion, and when they give priority to fairness or to the group.

Research drawing on methods previously used to study both interpersonal rejection and intergroup exclusion will provide a more comprehensive account of the factors that contribute to maladjustment in childhood, that ensure healthy development, and that provide safe environments for children in schools and adults in the workforce. A multidisciplinary, multimethod approach will help to disentangle exclusion based on personality traits from rejection based on group membership. The time is ripe to understand children's social development in the context of diversity, equity, and social justice. Understanding the context of diversity for all children will enable developmentally informed recommendations for intervention to address the conditions necessary for promoting healthy child development as well as a just and civil society.

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