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Balancing the Fair Treatment of Others while Preserving Group Identity and Autonomy

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Development · Fairness · Group identity

Abstract

Social exclusion and inclusion from groups, as well as the distribution of resources, are fundamental aspects of social life, and serve as sources of conflicts that bear on issues of fairness and equality, beginning in childhood. For the most part, research on social exclusion and allocation of resources has not focused on the issue of group membership. Yet, social exclusion from groups and the denial of resources reflect societal issues pertaining to social inequality and its counterpoint, fair treatment of others. Social inequality occurs when opportunities and resources are distributed unevenly in society, often through group norms about allocation that reflect socially defined categories of persons. This occurs at multiple levels of societal organization, from experiences of exclusion in childhood such as being left out of a play activity, to being denied access to resources as a member of a group. These situations extend to larger-level experiences in the adult world concerning social exclusion from voting, for example, or participation in educational institutions. Thus, most decisions regarding social exclusion and the denial of resources involve considerations of group identity and group membership, implicitly or explicitly, which contribute to prejudice and bias, even though this has rarely been investigated in developmental science. Current research illustrating the role of group identity and autonomy regarding decision-making about social exclusion and the denial of resources is reviewed from the social reasoning developmental model, a theoretical perspective that integrates social domain theory and developmental social identity theories to investigate how children use moral, conventional, and psychological judgments to evaluate contexts reflecting group identity, group norms, and intergroup dynamics.

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One of the complex tasks that humans face pertains to how to treat others with mutual respect regardless of group affiliation, while, at the same time, promoting group cohesion and recognizing the autonomy of individuals. Each of these goals is essential for living one's life, and fundamental to the health of social cultures as well as for individual social development. When values about fairness, social groups, and autonomy are in conflict with one another, though, difficult decisions and choices have to be made.

Of course, not all decisions involving multiple considerations are complex. As one navigates through social life, moral decision-making around these various issues becomes increasingly straightforward. As an example, by age 6–7 years children have little difficulty recognizing that the personal desire to play with a special toy at a friend's house does not warrant taking it home. The balance between autonomy (wanting to act on a desire for a toy) and treatment of others (understanding property rights) is readily understood. However, there are contexts in which this type of conflict is quite difficult, such as when there is ambiguity about the ownership of the object. The relevant concepts are understood (as in the straightforward situations), but resolutions or solutions to the conflict change when ambiguity makes the decision more difficult. Much of life involves making decisions that balance multiple considerations. Acquiring social experience and developing judgments enable an individual to recognize the full implications of different outcomes, and to make a decision after weighing moral, group, and individual considerations.

In this paper, we focus on children's and adolescents' judgments and reasoning in challenging contexts that involve issues of morality, autonomy, and intergroup dynamics (i.e., relations between social groups). Specifically, we focus on the contexts of social exclusion and distribution of resources. We discuss a new theoretical perspective, the social reasoning developmental (SRD) model, for conceptualizing individual social judgments in these complex situations [Killen & Rutland, 2011; Rutland & Killen, 2015]. The focus on intergroup dynamics stems from a long history in social psychology of understanding the origins of prejudice and bias by investigating how individuals' affiliations with ingroups creates distrust of the outgroup under certain conditions [Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003; Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005; Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1979].

Research on children's moral development has recently examined the role of intergroup dynamics on children's evaluations of fairness and equality. The findings, to be discussed in this paper, reveal that group biases, including stereotypes and negative intergroup relations, often serve as the basis by which children exclude others or deny resources to others. Social exclusion and denial of resources have moral implications because both involve the fair treatment of others. Yet, as we have discovered in our research, children's developing awareness of intergroup relations and knowledge about how groups work, in addition to their developing moral judgments, also enable them to rectify social inequalities [Elenbaas & Killen, 2015]. Without knowledge about social groups, children are less likely to understand what makes treatment of others based on group membership unfair and unequal. Thus, knowledge about intergroup dynamics is often complementary to moral decision-making when children challenge the unfair treatment of others.

Social exclusion and inclusion from groups, as well as the distribution of resources, are fundamental aspects of social life, and serve as sources of conflicts that bear on issues of fairness and equality, beginning in childhood [Killen, Elenbaas, Rizzo, &

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Rutland, 2016]. For the most part, research on social exclusion and allocation of resources has not focused on the issue of group membership. Yet, social exclusion from groups and the denial of resources reflect societal issues pertaining to social inequality and its counterpoint, fair treatment of others. Social inequality occurs when opportunities and resources are distributed unevenly in society, often through group norms about allocation that reflect socially defined categories of persons. This occurs at multiple levels of societal organization, from individual experiences of exclusion in childhood such as being left out of a play activity, to group experiences of being denied access to resources. These situations extend to larger-level experiences in the adult world concerning social exclusion from voting, for example, or participation in educational institutions.

Thus, many decisions regarding social exclusion and the denial of resources involve considerations of group identity and group membership, implicitly or explicitly, which contribute to prejudice and bias, even though this has rarely been investigated in developmental science. While these issues become increasingly complicated throughout life, understanding how they begin in childhood sheds light on what is involved in these types of decisions and how individuals do (and do not) weigh multiple considerations in social contexts, and when fairness and equality is given appropriate consideration.

In contrast, social exclusion research often focuses on individual personality deficits, as reflected in the literature on bullying and victimization, which identifies personality profiles that indicate vulnerability to being a victimizer or a victim [Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006]. Resource allocation research often focuses on allocation strategies (e.g., identifying when children focus on equal and equitable allocation) without detailed investigation of the group norms about allocation that children may be considering, or relevance of recipient or allocator group membership [Killen et al., 2016].

Moreover, recent research on social exclusion and resource allocation from a range of theoretical models (including behavioral economics, comparative research, neuroscience, evolutionary psychology, social cognitive development, and moral development) has greatly increased knowledge about and attention to these areas in the field. However, the findings have not yet coalesced into one overall picture of the developmental story from childhood to adulthood. This is due, in part, to the range of theoretical frameworks guiding the studies. For example, in regards to social exclusion, peer rejection studies have focused on individual differences and personality traits, while developmental neuroscience has focused on the areas of the brain that are activated when children witness exclusion. Likewise, in regards to resource allocation, behavioral economics studies have examined children's strategies for decision-making in competitive contexts, whereas studies from a comparative framework seek to determine how children's willingness to share reflects a form of cooperation that is either distinct or related to what is observed in non-human primates. Further, research in social cognitive development has investigated whether children allocate resources differently as a function of the friendship status, moral valence, and group membership of potential recipients.

Overall, these lines of research reflect the multiple dimensions on which social exclusion and resource allocation are relevant for human social life. They do not, however, provide coherent evidence of an age-related trajectory. That is, research has not yet established a picture of what occurs over the course of childhood and into

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adolescence around a single set of issues or a common paradigm related to social exclusion or resource allocation. In addition to the multiple theoretical perspectives brought to bear on these issues, studies within individual perspectives vary in their approach to research questions. For example, some studies focus solely on the moral dimensions of social exclusion or resource allocation (e.g., issues of fairness, rights, or equality), while other studies focus on the intergroup dimensions (e.g., ingroup biases, discrimination, or prejudice), but few studies aim to understand how both of these dimensions are implicated in resource allocation decisions.

By contrast, our research program on social exclusion has successfully demonstrated how both forms of reasoning, moral and intergroup, are implicated in social inclusion and exclusion decisions. Much of this paper is devoted to outlining key findings from this ongoing line of work. We have also recently applied our theoretical model to the topic of resource distribution. Findings thus far have revealed how both moral and intergroup considerations are important parts of children's decision-making, and particularly in the context of social inequality.

In our SRD model we argue that intergroup social exclusion and resource allocation contexts are complex issues involving moral, group, and personal considerations. In fact, group-level knowledge brings a new dimension to these encounters that are distinct from interpersonal exclusion, on the one hand, and fair distribution decisions in the absence of a social group context. To address how our theoretical model has incorporated both sets of concerns, we have organized our discussion regarding social exclusion and resource allocation on four central issues related to fairness, group identity, and autonomy: (1) ingroup preferences and outgroup stereotypes; (2) the salience of group norms; (3) perceptions of challenges and resistance to group norms from a moral perspective; and (4) rectifying social inequality in intergroup contexts.

These four areas reflect many of the factors that contribute to complexity in decision-making. Of importance for our theoretical model is how and when decisions about social exclusion and resource allocation reflect moral considerations such as fairness and equality, conventional considerations pertaining to group functioning and group norms, and issues of autonomy. We first provide background for our theoretical model, and then move to a more in-depth discussion regarding the central constructs of our framework.

Theoretical Background: Social Reasoning Developmental Model

A recent discussion about distributive equality and social equality in moral philosophy [Scheffler, 2015] is relevant for developmental psychology, and for our theoretical model, because it reflects the convergence of a concern for the role of social equality in society shared by both philosophers and developmental psychologists. The moral philosophers Rawls [1971] and Gewirth [1978] formulated theories of justice which identified criteria such as impartiality, generalizability, and obligatoriness to define the moral domain. According to these accounts, to be fair is to treat others impartially, and to extend the obligation to treat others equally and justly from familiar or close relations to all humans. This theory guided both foundational and current research in moral development [Kohlberg, 1969; Piaget, 1932; Turiel, 1983].

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More recently, however, moral philosophers have discussed the relations between distributive equality and relational equality [Scheffler, 2015]. Traditionally, distributive justice theories framed equality as a form of equal distribution of resources, in contrast to a relational equality framework which shifts the focus to the types of distributions that are consistent with a society of equals [Scheffler, 2015]. Scheffler's analysis of the two forms of equality leads him to conclude that they are distinct, with the observation that relational conceptions of equality (or social equality, in our terminology) include values regarding a society of equal persons that are not reducible to distributive values.

This general line of argument is consistent with our theory, which holds that, when individuals evaluate contexts involving relational equality concerns, they bring more than concepts of fairness to their evaluations. For example, moral considerations of others' welfare and equality of persons, as well as knowledge and awareness of group identity, group norms, and group dynamics, are all implicated in these types of decisions. While distributive equality requires an allocator to ignore the identity of the recipients (to achieve impartiality), social equality *requires knowledge of the recipients*, such as considerations of need and disadvantaged status, in order to achieve fairness. This is a complex and challenging set of considerations. However, our research program thus far has documented several ways in which this process begins in early childhood, as we describe below.

A question for psychological scientists is, what type of information about individuals should be taken into account, and to what extent does this type of information bear on (or erode) concerns of equality? The answer to this question is part of the motivation to investigate how moral reasoning is applied in contexts of inequality and disadvantaged status. For example, what types of reasoning are invoked when individuals view social exclusion to be unfair and unequal? In what contexts do individuals rectify inequalities by distributing resources in a manner designed to take disadvantage into account? How early in childhood does this recognition or understanding begin, and what changes over the course of development?

Our theoretical framework, referred to as the SRD model, integrates social domain theory from developmental psychology, and social identity theory (SIT) from social psychology [Killen & Rutland, 2011; Rutland & Killen, 2015]. The SRD model proposes that different forms of reasoning are brought to bear on decision-making in intergroup contexts. To fully understand the origins of prejudice, it is essential to understand the complexities, inconsistencies, and sometimes contradictions, that are revealed when investigating age-related changes in how children and adolescents make moral decisions in intergroup contexts.

We draw from *social domain theory* [Nucci, 2001; Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2014; Turiel, 2006] for measuring the moral (fairness, equality, rights), societal (group conventions, traditions, customs), and psychological (individual prerogatives, personal jurisdiction) forms of reasoning brought to bear by individuals when deciding whom to include or exclude in group contexts, and how to allocate resources. Social domain theory is an epistemologically based theory drawing on philosophical categories to identify the criteria for different domains of knowledge that develop through the life course and emerge in childhood. Over 40 years of research have provided verification that these forms of reasoning are central to social life, and reflect fundamental types of judgments that individuals use to make straightforward and complex social decisions in everyday life.

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We also draw on SIT, which proposes that individuals form an ingroup affiliation which often (but not necessarily) results in outgroup dislike to enhance the status of the ingroup; this theory provides an account for the emergence of prejudice. Decades of research guided by SIT have led to research by social psychologists studying multiple processes in adults, including processes involved in aversive racism [Dovidio, 2001; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986], implicit bias [Baron & Banaji, 2006], and intergroup contact [Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006].

More recently, developmental psychologists have examined how children develop prejudice and intergroup bias [Nesdale, 2004, 2008], acquire ethnic and racial identity [Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Verkuyten, 2007; Yip, 2014], understand subjective group dynamics [Abrams & Rutland, 2008], form stereotypes [Arthur, Bigler, Liben, Gelman, & Ruble, 2008], display implicit bias [Dunham, Baron, & Carey, 2011], and reveal explicit bias in their reasoning about intergroup contexts [Killen & Rutland, 2011; Rutland, Killen, & Abrams, 2010]. These studies have led to an explosion of research on intergroup attitudes and relationships regarding, for example, the formation of group norms [Schmidt & Tomasello, 2012] and resource allocation decisions [Blake & McAuliffe, 2011; Shaw & Olson, 2012].

Thus, an integrative theoretical approach (including moral, group, and personal concerns) is necessary for understanding the development of judgments, reasoning, and behavior in intergroup contexts. These contexts are especially important to investigate, as intergroup interactions are often reflective of prejudice, bias, and stereotypic expectations. Yet such biases are not inevitable. Research on intergroup contact, for example [Tropp & Prenovost, 2008], has shown that children who have cross-group friendships are less likely to display intergroup biases [Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009] and more likely to use moral reasoning to reject racial exclusion [Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2008] than are children who have low intergroup contact. The relations between social experience and moral reasoning are interactive; it may also be that children who use moral reasoning to reject acts of intergroup exclusion are more likely to make friends with members of outgroups. Further, children who experience indirect contact, such as hearing about someone from their ingroup who is friends with an outgroup member, have also been shown to exhibit less prejudice [Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Cameron, Rutland, & Brown, 2007].

The SRD model proposes age-related changes regarding moral, societal, and psychological reasoning about ingroup and outgroup attitudes and relationships. Reasoning, in this model, refers to children's inferences, judgments, and explanations about social situations. Included in these assessments are attributions of emotions as well as intentionality understanding and intergroup bias. Developmentally, there are age-related shifts in social reasoning as it becomes more nuanced and multifaceted, especially as individuals move into adolescence. From middle childhood into middle adolescence, individuals show evidence of moral reasoning, but also develop a better understanding of, and concern for, group processes and, therefore, focus relatively more on group norms and concerns about group identity or loyalty.

This advanced social knowledge can mean that, when making decisions about resource allocation and social exclusion, adolescents understand better why social exclusion is sometimes tolerated and resources are not always distributed fairly. Yet, their understanding of group processes, combined with a continuing understanding of morality, can also mean they better recognize social inequalities between social groups and consider these by attempting to counter historically unfair

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allocations of resources and social exclusion or discrimination. Knowledge about groups, then, often enables individuals to rectify social inequalities, a central moral consideration.

The application of social domain theory [Nucci, 2001; Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 2006] to the topic of intergroup attitudes and relationships is a unique focus, and differs from other research on intergroup attitudes in that it emphasizes the measurement and analysis of the reasoning that individuals bring to bear on intergroup contexts. Moreover, research from social domain theory has demonstrated how children apply their moral judgments to a range of contexts, with a consistent understanding of what makes straightforward acts unfair. Knowing when children view acts that are prejudicial as unfair is important for a full picture of their emerging knowledge of the social world, as well as for different types of interventions. For interventions to be effective, it is essential to know what types of reasons children provide for when they view social exclusion as legitimate or wrong. Similarly, facilitating children's fair and equitable distribution of resources necessitates knowing what reasons they use for taking group membership into account.

Thus, studying the role of group dynamics regarding decision-making about social exclusion and resource allocation provides an important window into how prejudice emerges and develops in childhood. Social exclusion and resource allocation are decisions that reflect complex group dynamics such as status, hierarchies, and power. Many aspects of social life revolve around determining who will be included or excluded in various personal, group, community, and institutional contexts [Killen, Mulvey, & Hitti, 2013a]. Yet, notably, only in the past 15 years has it been recognized that biased attitudes regarding gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other such categories are pervasive in childhood. The prevailing assumption of early developmental research was that prejudice and racism were part of the adult world and rarely entered into children's lives.

Research over the past few decades, however, has demonstrated the multiple ways in which implicit and explicit biases about others based on group membership are pervasive in childhood [Dunham & Degner, 2010; Levy & Killen, 2008; Neblett, White, Philip, Nguyên, & Sellers, 2008; Quintana & McKown, 2008; Rutland & Killen, 2015]. In many cases children are unaware that they hold such biases, and thus, their forms of prejudice are not explicit but implicit. However, research has also demonstrated that cross-group friendships decline with age, as children adhere to group norms about exclusivity based on gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as other group membership variables. Rejection based on group membership is painful, and the negative consequences of being the recipient of negative biases and prejudicial treatment are well documented [Killen, Rutland, & Ruck, 2011; Mendes, Gray, Mendoza-Denton, Major, & Epel, 2007; Seaton & Yip, 2009]. Thus, various biases exist both implicitly and explicitly from early childhood through adolescence.

Intergroup attitudes also bear on decisions regarding the fair distribution of resources. Traditionally, research on resource allocation in moral development has focused on the fair distribution of resources without taking into account group membership [Damon, 1975]. However, more recently, the focus of group norms and group identity has been applied to children's decision-making regarding resource allocation. Children display ingroup preferences when allocating resources. Yet, in some contexts, allocation of resources is specifically targeted for individuals based on group membership to rectify inequalities [Elenbaas & Killen, 2015]. Less attention has been

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given to the role of group dynamics regarding what factors in intergroup contexts make these decisions difficult. Yet, recent studies point to the role of group norms, group identity, ingroup preference, outgroup dislike, and group processes on how children include members of their groups and allocate resources [Rutland & Killen, 2015]. In the next sections, we describe research on new topics that integrate moral and intergroup knowledge regarding social exclusion and resource allocation in childhood and adolescence.

Ingroup Preferences and Outgroup Stereotypes

Social group affiliations change across the lifespan. Children and adolescents experience different degrees of association with their various group memberships [Rutland, Abrams, & Levy, 2007]. Group identity varies by context as well, as individuals receive different messages about which group affiliations are relevant in one setting versus another. With age, for instance, children begin to define group membership and identity in terms of a set of shared norms, traditions, and histories, in addition to external, observable characteristics (e.g., skin color for race, hair length for gender) [Abrams & Rutland, 2008; Abrams, Rutland, Pelletier, & Ferrell, 2009]. Moreover, with age, the meaning and content of group affiliations gains complexity as children acquire experience moving in and out of flexible social groups (e.g., play groups, after-school clubs, sports teams), and gain depth as children acquire knowledge of the expectations associated with their membership in larger socially constructed groups (e.g., gender, ethnicity, nationality).

Further, the heterogeneity or homogeneity of a given context (e.g., school, classroom, neighborhood, or community) contribute to the saliency of group identity. For instance, a girl may find her gender identity relevant when she is the only girl in a classroom full of boys, but not when she is at home with her siblings. Ethnic identity, in contrast, reflects different degrees of salience depending on factors such as the ethnic heterogeneity of the school context. Graham, Bellmore, Nishina, and Juvonen [2009] have shown that the ethnic diversity of a school contributes to an ethnic minority student's self-view [Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2001], as well as their sense of safety and security [Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006].

Another area of research that bears on the saliency of group identity in a given context stems from findings by which individuals' sense of public regard for their identity is related to their resiliency to experiences of discrimination [Rivas-Drake, 2011; Rowley, Sellers, Chavous, & Smith, 1998]. Public regard is defined as when individuals perceive that others have positive views of their ethnic/racial group. Individuals who have a high public regard are better prepared for resisting the negative effects of prejudice than are individuals who perceive public regard to be low.

Thus, group identity is highly salient for children, and provides a strong connection for them to others. Children form multiple identities, and through childhood begin to decide which group identities matter in different contexts. These identities also create alliances that contribute to prejudice, as when children identify with the ingroup at the expense of derogating the "outgroup." These biases may be implicit (unaware by the beholder) or explicit (conscious awareness of negative attitudes).

Research on intergroup social exclusion has shown that when norms about equality are highly salient, children will give priority to moral considerations over

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group identity, to the extent that they will prefer an outgroup member (an individual of another gender) who supports an equality norm regarding resource allocation over an ingroup member (individual of the same gender) who wants to benefit the ingroup by distributing unequally [Killen, Rutland, Abrams, Mulvey, & Hitti, 2013b]. Yet, when the group norms is highly salient, and the norm is not about morality but about conventions, with age, children will give priority to group identity [Rutland, Hitti, Mulvey, Abrams, & Killen, 2015]. These studies examined social exclusion by using resource allocation norms of equality. As we discuss in the next section, judgments and reasoning about groups based on stereotypes is directly related to social exclusion and inequality regarding resource distribution.

When Stereotypes Promote Exclusion and Inequality

In early childhood, children often allocate more resources like toys and treats to ingroup members (e.g., those who share their gender or racial group membership) than to outgroup members [Dunham et al., 2011; Renno & Shutts, 2015]. This example of ingroup bias, or preferential distribution of resources to benefit members of one's ingroup, is compounded by young children's use of group stereotypes to determine who should or should not be included in social groups. For example, gender stereotypes about activity preferences are prevalent in early childhood, and preschoolers have even been found to use gender stereotypes to determine whether a boy or a girl should be allowed to join a gender-stereotypic task (e.g., including a boy or girl to play with dolls when both are interested in the activity) [Killen, Pisacane, Lee-Kim, & Ardila-Rey, 2001; Theimer, Killen, & Stangor, 2001]. Young children often reference gender stereotypes about activity preferences to justify their decision to exclude (e.g., "girls don't like playing with trucks"), demonstrating how, even in early childhood, stereotypes may deny some children the opportunity to engage in group activities and share social group resources. Yet, when situations are more straightforward, such as excluding a child based solely on group membership, young children view it as unfair (e.g., excluding a boy from playing with dolls when there is plenty of room for everyone, or alternatively, excluding a girl from playing with trucks under the same circumstances). Decisions regarding inclusion appear to activate stereotypes more often than decisions regarding exclusion.

Over time, excluded children may be denied opportunities of increasing importance because of stereotypic assumptions about who "fits" with a given group. In later childhood and adolescence, for example, exclusion of peers due to sexual orientation is evaluated as more acceptable than other forms of discrimination, such as teasing, harassing, or assaulting a gay or lesbian peer [Horn, 2006]. Thus, gender norms are more complex, but not necessarily less rigid, in later childhood and adolescence, as the exclusion of a non-conforming individual is often perceived as legitimate.

Further, with age and increasing social experience, adolescents gain exposure to a wide variety of outgroups, and not all of this exposure is positive. For example, one recent study found that the more negative stereotypes non-Arab American adolescents held about Arab Americans, the less likely they were to opt to include an Arab American peer into their own social group [Hitti & Killen, 2015]. These findings demonstrate how intergroup tensions and negative assumptions exacerbate exclusive

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attitudes and behaviors throughout childhood and adolescence, leading to the perpetuation of misunderstanding and distrust between groups.

Unfortunately, stereotypes can take subtle forms that result in unfair treatment of others, even in children who are not explicitly aware of their biases. For instance, some research indicates that older European American children demonstrate implicit racial biases reflecting lowered expectations for African Americans relative to European Americans in resource allocation contexts (i.e., allocating more money to productive characters depicted as Black than to productive characters depicted as White, and more money to poor characters depicted as White than poor characters depicted as Black) [McGillicuddy-De Lisi, Daly, & Neal, 2006]. Further, some work indicates that observation of a resource inequality between racial groups (or even novel groups) can lead children to assume that the disparity is legitimate or "deserved," and to perpetuate it themselves by allocating more goods to a member of an advantaged group [Olson, Dweck, Spelke, & Banaji, 2011].

Thus, explicit and implicit stereotypes and preferences for one's social ingroup impinge upon children's application of moral principles of fairness and inclusion in peer interactions. As members of social groups, however, children seek a balance between adhering to group expectations for their behavior and attitudes, and treating others fairly and equally. Alongside this research on the early origins of prejudice in children's decisions to exclude or deny resources on the basis of group membership, considerable work has demonstrated how children balance moral concerns about fairness and others' welfare with social concerns about benefitting their social ingroup or adhering to stereotypic assumptions [Killen & Rutland, 2011; Smetana et al., 2014].

When Inclusion and Equality Take Priority over Ingroup Preferences

Children care deeply about acceptance, respect, equality, and fairness, and there are many instances in which they advocate for these principles rather than adhering to stereotypic assumptions about group membership. In these cases, concern for justice and others' rights in a broader sense can influence children's peer interactions. For instance, with age, children draw progressively stronger connections between their own daily experiences and overarching societal biases against certain social groups. When evaluating the exclusion of an African American child from a group of European American peers, for example, African American children and adolescents have been found to reason about the wrongfulness of this action in the larger context of society by elaborating on the negative consequences of discrimination [Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002].

Along these same lines, with age, older children and adolescents determining whether to include a boy or girl in a gender stereotypic activity often choose to include children who do *not* match the gender stereotype when both children are equally skilled at the game and equally interested in joining [Killen & Stangor, 2001]. These findings demonstrate children's increasing concern for fairness and inclusion, and increasing awareness of which groups are under-represented in which contexts (e.g., boys are not often allowed to try ballet, so this may be a chance to provide an opportunity). Between middle childhood and adolescence, in particular, children begin to connect their own everyday experiences of exclusion from

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groups and from access to resources with larger, systemic inequalities in their social environment.

The Role of Membership in a Traditionally Excluded Group

Perhaps as a result of their personal experiences with exclusion and inequality, older racial minority children and adolescents are often less likely than their racial majority counterparts to view socially rejecting a peer as acceptable, particularly in intimate situations like cross-race dating [Killen, Henning, Kelly, Crystal, & Ruck, 2007]. Further, in later childhood, girls are often less accepting of group exclusion of any kind than are boys [Killen et al., 2002; Killen & Stangor, 2001; Park & Killen, 2010]. The implication is that membership in a traditionally excluded group (e.g., by race or gender) can heighten children's sensitivity to or awareness of exclusion experienced by others, leading to greater rejection of such treatment even when it is not directed at the self.

Related research along these lines has revealed that early adolescents from ethnic minority backgrounds (e.g., Serbians living in Switzerland) attribute positive emotions (e.g., pride) to ethnic majority outgroup members (e.g., Swiss nationals) who exclude an ethnic minority individual [Malti, Killen, & Gasser, 2012]. Thus, not only do children whose social groups are the targets of habitual exclusion evaluate such behavior more negatively than their peers from advantaged backgrounds, but children from cultural minority groups may also assume that the excluding group feels proud of their biased actions, compounding the hurtful impact of exclusion and rejection. Minority group children's perceptions of hostile attitudes further underscore the cycle of intergroup misunderstanding and cynicism about inclusion that begins in childhood and adolescence.

Group Norms

As illustrated above, children weigh ingroup preferences and stereotypes about outgroups with moral convictions about tolerance and fair treatment of others when thinking and acting in social contexts. Decisions about exclusion or resource allocation are not, therefore, either/or choices in which moral or group identity concerns "win out." Rather, whether or not children demonstrate bias or prejudice depends on many factors, including the strength of their identification with their group, whether or not the outgroup is perceived as threatening, and whether they believe that showing prejudice is consistent with the norms of the ingroup [Nesdale, Maass, Durkin, & Griffiths, 2005; Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005].

The impact of norms on children's decisions in intergroup contexts presents a particularly interesting means for understanding the interplay of moral and group concerns. Norms can operate at many levels from the idiosyncratic ("We don't let them sit with us at lunch because they ride the bus and we get dropped off at school") to the very general ("We do not accept immigrants without the proper paperwork"), and can range from extremely exclusive to highly promotive of equality and justice.

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Positive Impacts of Inclusive Norms

Thus, larger social norms and unique group norms about who should receive access to resources and opportunities heavily influence children's decisions. This is particularly evident in later childhood and adolescence when individuals begin to identify groups and group membership not only in terms of external, observable characteristics, but in terms of adherence to behavioral expectations (i.e., norms) [Abrams & Rutland, 2008]. These prescriptive norms about groups involve attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that group members should display in order to define and sustain their group membership [Abrams, Rutland, Cameron, & Marques, 2003]. For example, on the level of the peer group, adolescents placed in social groups with stated goals of inclusivity (seeking to include others who are "different" from them) have been shown to be more inclusive of ethnic outgroup peers than adolescents placed in similar groups with exclusive norms (i.e., preferences for those who are "similar to them") [Hitti & Killen, 2015]. Thus, positive norms can be highly effective for promoting acceptance and inclusion among peers.

In addition to the peer group level, considerable research has been devoted to demonstrating how positive and inclusive norms developed through practices and policies at a wider institutional level can also be leveraged to promote equality. Perhaps the most successful of such initiatives pertains to school racial diversity. In addition to reducing prejudice overall [Tropp & Prenovost, 2008], greater opportunities for contact with members of racial outgroups can lead to more proactive attitudes about inclusion for both racial majority and racial minority status children and adolescents. For example, whereas younger European American children in racially homogeneous schools demonstrate implicit negative assumptions about racial minority peers, children of the same age enrolled in racially diverse schools demonstrate no such implicit racial biases [Margie, Killen, Sinno, & McGlothlin, 2005; McGlothlin & Killen, 2006]. Likewise, racial minority adolescents who report greater contact with outgroup peers are more likely than their peers reporting little intergroup contact to rate intergroup exclusion as more wrong, and to assert that they would intervene if they witnessed exclusion [Ruck, Park, Killen, & Crystal, 2011].

Not limited to issues of race/ethnicity, adolescents attending schools with safe school practices regarding sexual orientation (e.g., policies, professional development) have been found to evaluate exclusion on the basis of sexual orientation as more wrong, and to use more moral reasoning in justifying their judgments, than adolescents attending schools without such practices [Horn & Szalach, 2009]. Thus, norms and expectations are at work in children's decisions to promote equality or exclusion, from larger school norms of acceptance to unique peer group practices.

The most commonly proposed mechanism for the reduction of prejudice through positive intergroup contact (supported by inclusive institutional norms) is cross-group friendships. Engaging in cross-group friendships provides children with the opportunity to interact on equal footing with peers of another social group, thus affording them the opportunity to break down any negative stereotypes [Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, & Wright, 2011]. Indeed, children who report greater numbers of cross-group friends do experience more positive intergroup relations over time [Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003; Feddes et al., 2009]. Further, under certain

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conditions, mere awareness of a positive friendship between an ingroup member and an outgroup member (i.e., "extended" intergroup contact) is also effective at improving intergroup attitudes in children who do not have the opportunity to engage in direct contact or personal friendships with outgroup members [Cameron, Rutland, Hossain, & Petley, 2011]. This work has examined stigmatized groups including disabled individuals [Cameron & Rutland, 2006] and refugees [Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2006], and highlights how, when direct contact is difficult, just hearing about others who endorse positive norms of friendship can still help elementary-aged children reject stereotypes and biases. In addition, researchers have pointed to opportunities for collective action by minority individuals experiencing social exclusion to change institutional norms that perpetuate discrimination [Dixon, Levine, Reicher, & Durrheim, 2012].

Challenges when Norms Conflict

Many times, however, the challenge for children and adolescents does not lie in getting enough information about and personal experience with outgroup members to overcome negative assumptions. Rather, the challenge is negotiating between pervasive societal biases and the numerous lower-level group norms that either endorse or reject them to varying degrees. Unique peer group norms, for example, can come into conflict with overarching institutional or societal norms, such as when a school is racially diverse and teachers promote equality, but cross-race friendships are not valued by certain segments of the student population.

One recent study assessed another similar instance of conflicting norms with regard to elementary-aged children's outgroup attitudes in the context of a drawing competition between schools [McGuire, Rutland, & Nesdale, 2015]. The school-wide norm for the competition was presented as inclusive, in that teachers advocated for friendliness between the two teams. But the team-level norm was presented as either inclusive (i.e., "You have to like and include all the members of the other team") or exclusive (i.e., "You can't like or be friendly to any members of the other team"). Findings revealed that the inclusive school-wide norm promoted more positive attitudes toward the outgroup relative to no stated norm, but this effect was not present when children were held accountable to their team which held an exclusive norm. That is, an inclusive school-level norm was found to be most successful when peer-level norms were also inclusive. When school and peer norms were mismatched, however, unfair or exclusive attitudes at the level of the peer group undermined the success of a large-scale initiative toward acceptance and inclusion.

Recent research has also shown that children and adolescents consider the match between their own group's norm and that held by the outgroup when allocating resources between groups [McGuire, Rutland, & Manstead, 2015]. In this research the ingroup and the outgroup norms for allocating resources were manipulated so the participants thought their group was either competitive (i.e., "We want to get the most resources") or cooperative (i.e., "We want to ensure both groups get an equal share of resources"). The findings showed that children and adolescents typically showed more ingroup bias in their resource allocation when there was compatibility between the ingroup and outgroup norms (i.e., they were both competitive).

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As implied by the findings on children's stereotypic assumptions, intergroup biases, and the undermining effect of peer group norms on children's attitudes toward outgroups, striking a balance between preserving group identity and advocating for fairness is often very difficult for children and adolescents. Many behavioral and attitudinal expectations perpetuated in intergroup contexts are destructive and exclusive. In fact, with age, children are increasingly aware of the restrictive power of unequal social norms, and the potential detrimental consequences for those who deviate from groups' expectations.

Distinguishing What Is Fair from What Is Expected

While children often personally approve of an individual who advocates for fair resource distribution in a context of resource inequality between groups, they also expect that, in many cases, others would not like that individual as much as they would. One study, for instance, found that preschoolers personally approved of a peer who went against their classroom norm of seeking to keep more toys for themselves by advocating for equal allocation, and reasoned about this action in terms of fairness [Cooley & Killen, 2015]. But these same preschoolers also thought that other members of the classroom would be less approving of that individual than they would. That is, while they personally supported equality, they recognized that their ingroup would not approve of a change to a status quo that benefitted them.

These same differential attributions are also present in older children's expectations about an after-school club's opinion of an individual who advocated for equal allocation of money between clubs when the usual approach was to seek more for the ingroup [Killen et al., 2013b; Mulvey, Hitti, Rutland, Abrams, & Killen, 2014]. In this study, adolescents increasingly justified their evaluations of the group's reaction with references to issues of group functioning (e.g., "The group would like her because she's trying to get more money for them"), demonstrating their increasing awareness of group processes and pressures. With age, therefore, children build their capacity to distinguish what is fair from what is expected.

Consequences of Challenging Group Norms

Paralleling these findings, one recent study on deviance from gender norms found that older children and early adolescents personally supported individuals' decisions to challenge their groups' gender stereotypic activity preferences by suggesting that the group try a non-stereotypic activity (e.g., a girl in an all-girls group that always does ballet suggests that the group play football instead). However, they expected that individuals who advocated for such changes would not be well received by their groups, and would likely be excluded [Mulvey & Killen, 2015]. Thus, with age, children are increasingly aware that the price of contradicting a strong social or group gender norm may be extremely high, and may include exclusion from the group. In line with findings about the expected consequences of deviating from gender norms, these studies show that children expect that standing up to norms that exclude minority groups from opportunities and access to resources will not be easy, and will likely result in decreased support from the ingroup.

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There are some instances, however, when deviating from an established norm becomes so essential as to override concerns about challenging group expectations. As previously mentioned, with age, children recognize the importance of equal access to resources like school supplies, and choose to correct previous inequalities, even if it means that their racial ingroup receives less of a valued resource [Elenbaas, Cooley, Rizzo, & Killen, 2015]. Further, there are some types of resources that prompt children to consider issues of others' welfare from an even earlier age. For example, one recent study investigated young children's allocation of resources described as necessary (needed to avoid harm) versus luxury (desirable but not needed to avoid harm) to individuals who worked hard or were lazy [Rizzo, Elenbaas, Cooley, & Killen, 2015]. Consistent with previous work, with age, 3–8-year-olds allocated more of the resources described as luxury to the hardworking individual than to the lazy individual. But when allocating resources described as *necessary*, 6–8-year-olds adopted a different approach. Regardless of the recipients' relative effort, older children allocated necessary resources equally, and reasoned about the importance of equal access and the threat to the recipients' welfare posed by unequal allocation of these resources needed to avoid harm.

These findings reveal how, with age, children increasingly expect that groups will reject individuals who dissent from the prevailing social norms about status and resource access, judging that, even though they personally support equality, voicing that opposition to that status quo may be untenable in light of dominant social hierarchies. However, in line with related work on children's developing understanding of rights [Helwig, Ruck, & Peterson-Badali, 2014], with age, children do recognize some contexts as necessary cases for rejecting the status quo in order to protect the safety and wellbeing of others.

Rectifying Social Inequalities

More recently, we have studied how children respond to contexts of social inequality, and specifically in the context of resource allocation. Most studies on resource allocation with young children use resources that are "luxuries," such as candy, stickers and stars. These resources are motivating as children like to acquire such items, but the moral necessity of these resources is not the same as those that are necessary such as medicine or school supplies. As described above, using novel objects, "blickets," Rizzo et al. [2015] found that 6–8-year-olds, but not 3–4-year-olds, differentiated between luxury ("nice to have and fun to play with") and necessary ("makes you stay healthy") resources, allocating necessary resources equally, and allocating more luxury resources to a hard-working character. Older children's reasoning for their decisions reflected concerns for others' welfare when allocating necessary resources, and concern for other fairness issues when allocating luxury resources. Thus, with age, children used multiple forms of moral reasoning, including references to others' welfare, when the resources were necessary and important to stay healthy.

In another recent study focused on inequality of necessary societal resources, children's ingroup preferences interacted with their support for fairness in a resource allocation context [Elenbaas et al., 2015]. This study focused on children's responses to an inequality of school supplies between racial ingroup and outgroup members, revealing how children's decisions and reasoning changed with age as they consid-

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ered the implications of restricting access to this important resource [Elenbaas et al., 2015]. Specifically, younger children (ages 5–6 years) negatively evaluated an inequality of school supplies that put their racial ingroup at a disadvantage, and took steps to rectify it by giving more school supplies to ingroup members. By contrast, when their outgroup was disadvantaged, young children evaluated the disparity neutrally. By contrast, 10–11-year-old children generalized their negative judgments about denial of access to important educational resources to contexts in which their outgroup was disadvantaged as well. Unlike their younger counterparts, 10–11-year-olds took action to correct inequality when they had the opportunity to allocate resources, and reasoned about the importance of equal access and correcting past disparities.

In a similar study examining children's allocation of hospital supplies, Elenbaas and Killen [2015] found further evidence for the joint roles of moral judgment and group knowledge in children's resource allocation decisions. With age, children judged an inequality of hospital supplies between African American and European American children increasingly negatively. At the same time, they demonstrated increasing awareness of broader links between race and wealth outside of the experimental context. These changes in moral judgments and social knowledge explained the relation between age and children's increasing support for rectifying the hospital supply inequality, specifically when African American groups were being denied resources. These findings demonstrate how, with age, children increasingly recognize which social groups are the habitual targets of certain forms of discrimination and inequality, including, in this case, restricted access to quality medical care due to economic disparities. Importantly, when they had the opportunity to address discriminatory resource inequalities, children in this study used their social knowledge to take corrective action, responding to inequalities in a way that promoted the welfare and wellbeing of others.

Conclusion

In this paper we have provided evidence for the emergence of group identity, moral judgments, and group norms which contribute to the positive (fair treatment) and the negative (prejudice and bias) aspects of human development. Our theory is that these orientations emerge out of children's social-cognitive understanding of the world, and their interpretations of the varied messages that they receive from parents, teachers, peers, friends, and family members. Because individuals in children's lives do not all convey a unified message about these complex issues, children must often independently determine the right course of action to take. Adults and peers provide powerful sources of influence, but due to the often-conflicting nature of such messages, no one source is fully determinate. The consequences of being the recipient of unfair treatment, however, are potentially devastating, making this research agenda an urgent one.

Given the increasing complexity of children's lives, with multiple cultural messages and forms of contact with individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, it is essential to understand the child's viewpoint about these issues. This important source of information provides much needed information for intervention programs, policy decisions, and innovative curricula materials that help educators address these issues in the classroom, and to provide parents with guidance for how to talk with their children about these complex topics.

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Much more research is required in order to fully understand how children balance the fair treatment of others while preserving their group identity and establishing their own autonomy throughout development. However, studies thus far have revealed that the moral value of social equality emerges during childhood and adolescence, and understanding the factors that promote it or hinder it will be an important goal for future research, and for promoting an understanding of fairness and justice in childhood.

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