

## Expectations About Ethnic Peer Group Inclusivity: The Role of Shared Interests, Group Norms, and Stereotypes

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This study investigated three factors that contribute to social exclusion: group norms, individual characteristics, and stereotypes. Non-Arab American 12- and 16-year-olds ( $N = 199$ ) judged their expectations about the inclusivity of Arab American and non-Arab American peer groups toward new peers characterized by: (a) different ethnic identity but similar interests (e.g., hobbies) and (b) same ethnic identity but different interests. Participants expected that when groups had exclusive norms, Arab American peers would base inclusion decisions on ethnic identity, but that their own non-Arab group would base decisions on shared interests. Participants who reported stereotypes expected their in-group to be ethnically less inclusive. With age, ethnic-based exclusion increased. The findings are discussed in light of current research on developmental intergroup relationships.

Given the increase in mobility of people around the world, children today are encountering peers from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. For children who are members of an ethnic minority group, and who may already feel like outsiders, extensive experiences of social exclusion impede healthy adjustment to school environments (Stone & Han, 2005). Research has demonstrated that social exclusion based on ethnic membership is different from peer rejection based on individual characteristics, such as temperament, shyness, and social deficits (Killen, Mulvey, & Hitti, 2013). Unlike peer rejection based on individual characteristics, ethnic-based social exclusion has to do with the role of prejudice and bias as well as the unfairness experienced by children who are excluded because of their gender, race, and ethnicity. Research over the past decade has shown that stereotypes, prejudicial attitudes, and negative biases account for some of

the peer-based social exclusion in childhood. Other research has also documented the instances in which children and adolescents reject ethnic-based exclusion, thus capturing their moral concerns about the injustice associated with prejudice and discrimination (for a review, see Killen & Rutland, 2011).

The social reasoning developmental (SRD) perspective (Rutland, Killen, & Abrams, 2010) has provided a framework for conducting research on social exclusion in intergroup contexts. This model integrates social identity development theories (Nesdale, 2004; Tajfel, 1979) and social domain theory (Turiel, 1983) to guide research on social exclusion. SRD integrates these theories to make predictions about developmental changes in children's inclusive and exclusive orientations as a function of moral concerns, group identity, group norms, intergroup contact, perceived out-group threat, and stereotypic assumptions (Rutland et al., 2010). Therefore, when evaluating exclusion of others, children try to balance between competing concerns for fairness and being inclusive as well as threats to group identity or cohesion. What factors are given priority change developmentally as identification with one's own ethnic group emerges and understanding of group dynamics (i.e., how groups work) increases with age. Consequently,

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This research was funded by the College of Education, University of Maryland, Support Program for Advancing Research and Collaboration (SPARC) awarded to the first author. We thank Kelly Lynn Mulvey, Shelby Cooley, Laura Elenbaas, Michael Rizzo, and Jeeyoung Noh for their invaluable input on this project. In addition we want to thank the undergraduate research assistants who helped with data collection, coding, and analysis: Sofia Castro, Samantha Lichbach, Jamie Ott, Phillip Jordan, Kaye Schacter, Amy Komen, Benjamin White, Hillary Johnson, Naina Vohra, Nilo Fallay-Sohy, Leon Li, and Chandni Patel. Importantly, we would like to thank the schools and students who participated in this study.

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DOI: 10.1111/cdev.12393

children's intergroup judgments can be influenced by both the norms of the groups (moral or conventional) and attitudes about out-groups. Additionally, the emergence of stereotypes about out-groups plays a role in whether children rely on fairness or intergroup attitudes to make group decisions about inclusion. The goal of the current study was to understand how group norms and stereotypes are related to the extent to which children give priority to individual characteristics when making interethnic group inclusion decisions.

One of the pervasive findings to emerge has been that children who reject or exclude peers because of their group membership (gender, race) provide reasons for their actions that are based on "group functioning," which is often defined as the perceived problem that arises from including someone who is "different" into a group (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002). What is not well understood is what "being different" means when used as an explanation to justify peer exclusion. Research on peer relationships shows the choice of friendships or inclusion of peers into one's social group is based on shared interests, values, and beliefs (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006; Stark & Flache, 2012). However, Stark and Flache (2012) showed that peer friendships based on shared opinion (i.e., opinion homophily) can be disguised as ethnic homophily if ethnicity is highly correlated with opinion (e.g., "African Americans don't like pop music" or "Latinos do not like school"). Stereotypic assumptions made about an ethnic out-group's interests, values, and beliefs can therefore interfere with the extent to which an ethnic majority child might view peers from an ethnic minority as similar.

While some research has shown that young children give priority to shared interests over race when provided with the opportunity for intergroup contact (see McGlothlin & Killen, 2005, 2010), little is known about whether children older than 7–10 years with little out-group contact would focus on shared interests over group membership, especially when evaluating group decisions about including new peers into their friendship groups. Targeting older children is important given findings from an SRD perspective (Rutland et al., 2010) showing adolescents more frequently reference "group functioning" to justify exclusion than do younger children. Adolescents also have greater experience with groups than younger children (Brown, Eicher, & Petrie, 1986) and thus are expected to have a more sophisticated understanding of group dynamics. Extending the focus on

shared interests and group membership to the context of inclusion and exclusion for children, as well as adolescents, who have very little contact with an ethnic out-group, was a central goal of this study. When shared interests are given priority in ethnic intergroup encounters, this implies that children are making ethnically inclusive choices.

Another goal of this study was to test the role of exclusive and inclusive peer group norms in whether children and adolescents focused on shared interests or ethnic group membership. In a study by Nesdale, Maass, Durkin, and Griffiths (2005), children as young as 9 years of age, who were experimentally assigned to groups with exclusive norms (e.g., your group does not like to work with children in the other group, especially if they are different) preferred out-group members less than those assigned to groups with inclusive norms. Findings from the same line of research also show that if schools support inclusive norms then the effects of exclusive peer group norms are mitigated (Nesdale & Lawson, 2011). Moreover, children's perceptions that an ethnic out-group is inclusive predicts their willingness to partake in cross-ethnic friendships (Tropp, O'Brien, & Migacheva, 2014). Attention to group norms and the type of group norms continues through adolescence, impacting intergroup attitudes (Mähönen, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Liebkind, 2011) as well as reasoning about exclusion and group dynamics (Abrams, Rutland, Pelletier, & Ferrell, 2009; Hitti, Mulvey, Rutland, Abrams, & Killen, 2014). Thus, examining whether children's and adolescents' judgments about the use of shared interests or group membership varies as a function of inclusive or exclusive peer group norms was investigated in the current study.

Additionally, assessing participants' expectations about inclusion decisions made by both their own group and an ethnic out-group provided further insight into the obstacles that are created when a majority group perceives a minority group to be exclusive. Past research has assessed expectations about groups based on long histories of national rivalries (e.g., Abrams et al., 2009) or gender (Mulvey, Hitti, Rutland, Abrams, & Killen, 2014). The current study extended the research in a new direction by focusing on a target out-group of U.S. children of Arab descent. This group was chosen because most U.S. children and adolescents have had little contact with children of Arab background, and yet this is a group associated with negative stereotypes, especially given the events in the past decade in the United States, post 9/11 (Ibish, 2008). This context is one that has been occurring in many

places around the globe as communities migrate to new countries to seek asylum, such as Muslims in the Netherlands (Verkuyten, 2008), or to take refuge from civil wars and strife, such as with ex-Yugoslavs in Switzerland (Malti, Killen, & Gasser, 2012).

#### *Arab Peers as an Ethnic Out-Group in the U.S. Context*

According to Naber (2000), who extensively discussed the paradoxes of the Arab American identity, the first wave of Arab immigrants to the United States in the late 1800s included Arabs of Christian faith who assimilated into the "White" Christian American majority. Recent Arab immigrants in the past decade (2000s), who mostly ascribe to the Muslim faith, have had more difficulty integrating in American culture. Ethnic majority U.S. children typically have little contact with Muslim children of Arab descent. Societal norms that condemn exclusion of Arabs are weak, just as many norms regarding immigrants in Europe, which is also currently dealing with tensions due to an influx of new Muslim and Arab immigrants. In addition, in the United States, Arab as an ethnic out-group category is an understudied group in developmental research but is an important one to consider given that Arabs have been stigmatized because of associations with terrorism and negative portrayals in the media (Shaheen, 2003).

Recent research in the United States has shown that children and individuals of Arab descent are at times treated differently by their peers due to their religion or language (Flanagan, Syvertsen, Gill, Galley, & Cumsille, 2009). Research has documented examples of misconceptions and stereotypes about Arab Americans (e.g., "They are all Muslim," "They are racist") as well as a high rate of prejudice and discrimination aimed at this group (DeRosier, 2004; Flanagan et al., 2009; Ibish, 2008). What has not been examined is whether children and adolescents use stereotypes to make inclusion and exclusion decisions about Arab out-group peers. The current study investigated the effects of stereotypes, in the form of generalizations made about an Arab out-group, given that stereotypes have been shown to influence social judgments in the absence of other individuating information (Horn, 2003; Killen et al., 2002).

#### *The Current Study*

This study had four central goals. The first goal was to determine age-related differences regarding

whether non-Arab American children and adolescents gave priority to group membership (ethnic identity) or individual characteristics (shared interests) when deciding who peer groups should include into the group. The second goal was to test whether group norms (inclusive or exclusive) factored into inclusion or exclusion decisions. The third goal was to examine the role of group identity in children's understanding of group dynamics by determining whether participants differed when judging expectations about groups' exclusivity for the in-group (non-Arab American) or the out-group (Arab descent). The fourth goal was to examine whether stereotypic expectations were related to expectations about ethnic out-group inclusivity and exclusivity.

In the current study, participants were asked to anticipate how groups would make inclusion decisions regarding same-gender peer groups that differed by ethnic identity (Arab American and non-Arab American). To examine whether children expected peer groups to give priority to shared interest over ethnic identity, two target peers were identified as wanting to join the group and they had the following characteristics: (a) different ethnic identity but does share the same interests and (b) same ethnic identity but does not share the same interests in activities. Following Nesdale and Lawson (2011), groups had two types of norms: inclusive (e.g., "We invite kids who are different from us") and exclusive (e.g., "We only invite kids who are similar to us").

Two age groups (11- to 12- and 15- to 16-year-olds) were used to test for age-related differences in children's and adolescents' intergroup attitudes and development of group dynamics understanding. Previous developmental intergroup research investigating group norms has used samples ranging from ages 6 to 11 years (Abrams et al., 2009; Nesdale, Maass, et al., 2005), and found that older children become more attuned to group norms than their younger counterparts. It is during adolescence that ethnic group identity becomes most salient (Verkuyten, 2004). In addition, concerns for optimal group functioning and awareness of stereotypic information about other groups become pronounced in adolescence (Killen et al., 2002). Fifteen- and 16-year-olds would also have had ample experience with groups (Brown et al., 1986) and a more complex knowledge about group processes than 11- and 12-year-olds. Therefore, as hypothesized by SRD, a comparison of these two age groups (12- and 16-year-olds) would capture developmental differences in the role of group identity, group norms, and stereotypes in intergroup judgments.

### *Hypotheses*

The hypotheses were derived from the theoretical model guiding the study (SRD; Rutland et al., 2010). First, from an SRD perspective children's inclusive orientations will align with their interest to enhance in-group positivity; thus, it was hypothesized that participants will anticipate their own group (non-Arab American) to be more ethnically inclusive (i.e., include based on shared interest and not ethnic identity) than will the out-group. With age, however, ethnic inclusivity will decrease, given the decline of cross-race friendships (Hallinan & Williams, 1989), increasing examination of one's own ethnic identity, and increasing concerns with group functioning and group dynamics (Killen et al., 2002; Verkuyten, 2004).

Second, as posited by SRD, group norms will impact judgments such that children and adolescents will be more likely to include others irrespective of a person's ethnic identity or shared interest when the group norms were inclusive; however, sensitivity for group norms will increase with age (Abrams et al., 2009; Nesdale & Lawson, 2011; Rutland et al., 2010). Conversely, exclusive group norms will heighten expected ethnic exclusivity by the out-group. Thus, the third hypothesis is regarding differential expectations about one's ethnic in-group versus an ethnic out-group. Based on research evidencing perceptions that out-group dyads are more similar even if they do not share the same interests (McGlothlin & Killen, 2005), it is expected that children will assume the criteria for inclusion (shared interests vs. ethnic identity) will be based on ethnic identity for the ethnic out-group while the criteria for inclusion will be based on shared interest for one's own ethnic in-group. This will be supported by children's and adolescents' reasoning about their inclusion expectations. Therefore, their reasoning will reflect different definitions of "similarities" for their own group in comparison to the Arab American group (e.g., for the Arab American group: "They are more likely to include Hani because he is Arab like them"; for the non-Arab American group: "They will include Omar because he likes the same things").

Finally, based on research showing that stereotypes can be used to justify exclusion (Horn, 2003; Killen et al., 2002), it was expected that participants who make stereotypic associations regarding an Arab out-group will be more inclusive toward an ethnic in-group member than an ethnic out-group member, irrespective of whether they shared the same interests. Given that exclusive group norms

decrease favorability toward ethnic out-group members (Nesdale, Maass, et al., 2005), the effects of stereotypes were expected to be more pronounced when groups had exclusive norms.

### **Method**

#### *Participants*

Participants included 199 non-Arab American 6th and 10th graders who attended public middle and high schools in a school district serving a low-middle- to middle-income population. The sample consisted of two age groups: 102 children (12-year-olds,  $M = 12.08$  years,  $SD = 0.49$ , 52% female) and 97 adolescents (16-year-olds,  $M = 16.16$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ , 53% female). The sample included 48% European Americans, 17% African Americans, 8% Asian Americans, 7% Latin American, 15% biracial, and 5% other races or ethnicities. Participants were asked to report their religion and 63% were Christian, 12% were Jewish, 2% were Muslim, and 23% reported other religions and beliefs (e.g., agnostic, atheist, Hindu). Two 6th graders and one 10th grader reported being of Arab descent; these participants were removed from the sample due to the study design, leaving a total of 199 for the final sample.

#### *Procedure*

Parental consent forms were distributed with an average of 65% return rate and all students who had parental consent participated (the demographics of the sample revealed the same demographics of the schools). The study was introduced to students as a study about how children think about who to include in or exclude from their group of friends and what things are important to them when making these decisions. On the day of data administration paper-and-pencil questionnaires were distributed to students in groups of 20–25. Students took 30–40 min to complete the questionnaire.

#### *Design*

The questionnaire was designed to measure group inclusion judgments based on three factors, each with two levels: (a) group ethnic identity (Arab American and non-Arab American), (b) group norm (exclusive and inclusive), and (c) target of inclusion (ethnic out-group target with similar interests, ethnic in-group target with different interests).



Age (12- and 16-year-olds) and stereotypic associations (stereotypes vs. no stereotypes) were independent variables of interest.

Two versions of the questionnaire were randomly administered (Version 1: 49.7%,  $n = 99$ ; Version 2: 50.3%,  $n = 100$ , evenly divided by age and gender). Female participants received stories about female characters, and male participants responded to stories about male characters. All participants assessed two hypothetical stories, one about a group of Arab American friends (see Figure 1b) and another about a group of non-Arab American friends who hang out after school (see Figure 1a), each having different group norms. Version 1 included one story about an exclusive Arab American group and another story about an inclusive non-Arab American group; the group norms were reversed in Version 2. For each story, there were two conditions, which required social decisions about inclusion of an: (a) ethnic out-group target with similar interests and (b) ethnic in-group target with different interests.

Participants were first introduced to their own ethnic group (see Figure 1a) and completed a Group Identification Task in which they were told that they belonged to a “non-Arab” American group of friends (“This is your group”) in the form of an illustration of four peers with non-Arab names (e.g., Sandra, Michael). The Group Identification Task was modified from Nesdale, Durkin, Maass, and Griffiths (2005) and used to help participants identify with their group. This method has been previously validated in developmental intergroup research, which adopts the minimal group paradigm and novel groups to investigate intergroup attitudes (Dunham, Baron, & Carey, 2011). Participants were asked to give their group a name, choose an end-of-year activity they would like the group to do, and pick a symbol for the group. In previous research, children were found to identify with their groups as measured by their levels of happiness for being part their assigned group after being primed with this task (Nesdale, Durkin, et al., 2005). In the form of three illustrations, participants were shown three types of activities that their group liked to do (e.g., filming, roller blading, trumpet).

Next, on the same page, the Arab American group of friends was introduced (“This is the other group”), through an illustration of four same-gendered “Arab” peers (see Figure 1b). To identify the Arab American group as Arab, each member of the group was given an Arabic name written phonetically using the English alphabet (e.g., Samya, Rami), and was depicted to have darker features such as hair and eyes, but had varying skin tones. The

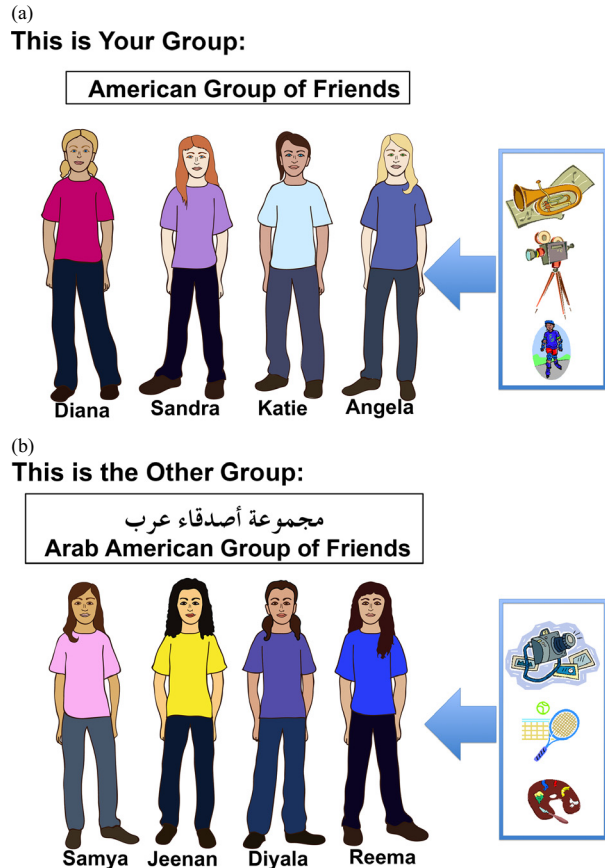


Figure 1. Ethnic peer groups as depicted in the female protocol. (a) Non-Arab American group. (b) Arab American group. © 2011 J.M.K. Tycko, Illustrator.

depiction of the Arab American group of friends was intended to represent heterogeneity as Arab Americans can come from numerous regions around the world. The group had similar clothing styles as the American group, so as not to have clothing customs impact children's judgments about each group. A statement written in Arabic, which translates to “Arab group of friends,” was shown above the picture of the group. The three activities that the Arab American group liked to do were also indicated through depiction (e.g., painting, tennis, photography). These were similar in genre as the activities of the non-Arab American group as to control for any stereotypic assumptions about the interests of peers from Arab backgrounds. On the next page participants were informed about the norms of each group, which were established as follows.

#### *Exclusive group norm:*

In the past when your/this group of American/ Arab American friends, who are your age,

invited others into their group, they would invite only those who were *similar* to them.

#### *Inclusive group norm:*

In the past when your/this group of American/Arab American friends, who are your age, invited others into their group, they would invite those who were *different* from them.

Following the description of the norms, participants responded first to a story about their ethnic out-group (Arab American peer group) who had to decide to include a new peer, and responded second to a story about their ethnic in-group. The order of the stories was counterbalanced in a pilot study and showed no order effects so the former order was maintained for both versions of the questionnaire. In each story participants were introduced to an out-group peer with similar interests and an in-group peer with different interests, each seeking entry into the group (e.g., "Hani is Arab American and wants to join the group, he likes these activities"). The activities that each target liked were also depicted pictorially. When the target was an ethnic out-group peer the activities were similar to those depicted for the group, and when the target was an ethnic in-group peer pictures of activities were different from those depicted for the group but also represented varying sports, artistic, and outdoor activities. After being introduced to a target, participants responded to several measures about inclusion and group dynamics regarding the target.

### *Measures*

#### *Inclusion Judgments and Reasoning Assessments*

Two assessments were the focus of the current study, (a) group inclusion ("How likely would it be that the group decides to invite Zeina/Julie to join the group?" Likert-type scale: 1 = *really not likely*, to 6 = *really likely*), and (b) group inclusion reasoning ("Why?").

#### *Stereotypes About Arab People Task*

This task was administered at the end of the questionnaire and after participants responded to all inclusion judgments and reasoning measures. The task included two items adopted from previous research assessing stereotypes with Jewish and Palestinian children (Bar-Tal, 1996; Cole et al., 2003) but adjusted for use with the current sample based

on pilot data: (a) knowledge about Arab culture and (b) stereotypic associations. Two open-ended questions were administered to participants: "Please define who is an Arab" and "What characteristics if any, do you think of when you think of an Arab?" Responses were coded for three types of responses (which included subcategories that were collapsed due to low frequency): (a) *stereotypic associations* included generalizations about physical markers, ethnic customs, religion, negative associations, geography and language (e.g., "They have beards," "They believe in Allah," and "I think of Bin Laden" and "They have an accent"); (b) *factual knowledge* included factual and accurate knowledge about Arab people (e.g., "Someone from the Middle East and speaks Arabic" and "Someone from an Arab country whose parents are Arab"); and (c) *other* included no knowledge or no references to any distinguishing characteristics. Responses were coded, 1 = *full use of the category*, .5 = *partial use*, 0 = *no use of the category*. Partial use of a category occurs when it is cited simultaneously with another category. On the basis of 25% of the interviews ( $n = 50$ ), at least 88% agreement was achieved between three coders, with Cohen's  $\kappa = .86$  for interrater reliability.

For descriptive statistics, a new dichotomous Arab knowledge variable was created from the responses to the knowledge about Arab culture item, which divided the sample into those who had factual knowledge about Arab people and those who did not (1 = *factual knowledge*, 0 = *nonfactual knowledge*). To be used both for descriptive statistics and as an independent factor a new dichotomous stereotypes variable was also created to track the presence or absence (1 = *presence*, 0 = *absence*) of stereotypic associations (generalizations about physical markers, ethnic customs, religion, negative associations, geography, and language) in participants' responses to the stereotypic associations item.

#### *Contact With Individuals of Arab Descent Measure*

Participants' level of contact with peers of Arab descent was measured for descriptive purposes, using the Contact with Individuals of Arab Descent assessment. This included five items reflecting varying levels of contact (e.g., "How many kids in your neighborhood are Arab?" Likert-type scale: 1 = *none*, 2 = *a few*, 3 = *half*, 4 = *most*, and 5 = *all*, or "How often do you hang out with kids who are Arab?" Likert-type scale: 1 = *never*, 2 = *a little*, 3 = *sometimes*, 4 = *often*, 5 = *always*). Factor analysis was conducted on all five items, showing that they load on one factor, representing participants' level

of contact with Arab peers and explaining 50.1% of variance in all five variables. Contact with individuals of Arab descent was low for this sample,  $M = 1.88$ , and  $SD = 0.58$  (for the Likert-type scale data). In addition, participants were asked about the ethnic composition of their friendship group. This item was worded as the following: ethnic or racial composition of friendships ("How many of your friends are the same ethnicity or race as you?" Likert-type scale: 1 = *none*, 5 = *all*). Forty percent of participants reported having more than half their friends of a similar race, while 60% had less than half their friends of the same race or ethnicity.

#### *Reasoning and Coding Reliability*

Participants' justifications were coded using a coding system composed of categories drawn from social domain theory (Smetana, 2006), as well as based on the results of pilot testing. Analyses were conducted using the three most frequently used justifications, which were categories used with a proportion of .10 or higher. For this study these codes included: (a) group functioning (e.g., "He won't fit in" or "It doesn't affect the group"), (b) activity preferences (e.g., "She likes to do different activities" or "He likes tennis just like them"), and (c) ethnic identity (e.g., "He's American which is different from them" or "She's Arab American, they would like her"). Justification responses for inclusion judgments could have a maximum of two codes; thus, responses were coded as 1 = *full use of the category*, .5 = *partial use*, 0 = *no use of the category*. On the basis of 25% of the interviews ( $n = 50$ ), at least 89% agreement was achieved between three coders with Cohen's  $\kappa = .88$  for interrater reliability.

#### *Plan for Analyses*

Hypotheses regarding group inclusion judgments were tested using one-sample  $t$  tests and repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). Planned comparisons were conducted to test expected differences between factors, and Bonferroni comparisons were conducted as follow-up tests on the ANOVA to control for Type I errors. The primary variables of interest for this study were group ethnic identity (Arab American, non-Arab American), group norm (inclusive, exclusive), the target of inclusion (ethnic out-group with similar interests, ethnic in-group with different interests), age, and stereotypic associations as independent factors. Although no gender differences were hypothesized and this study was not designed to address questions about gender, gender

was maintained in the analyses, given that past research has shown differential social exclusion judgments based on gender (Killen et al., 2002) due to social status differences (e.g., status based on gender). Dependent measures in these analyses were group inclusion judgments. Homogeneity of covariance and variance were examined and showed nonsignificant Box's statistical test and Levene's statistical test, respectively. Differences between the proportions of the top three types of reasoning used for the group inclusion reasoning measure were assessed using repeated measures ANOVAs. ANOVAs were used to analyze proportions due to repeated measures designs, which are not appropriate for logistic regressions (see footnote 4 in Wainryb, Shaw, Laupa, & Smith, 2001). Descriptive analyses using independent samples  $t$  tests were conducted on the stereotypes about Arab people task to assess group differences based on age, gender, religion, and ethnic composition of friendships (i.e., more than half of friends of the same ethnicity and less than half of friends the same ethnicity).

## **Results**

### *Judgments and Reasoning About Group Inclusion*

#### *Group Inclusion Judgments*

Will the group include X? Initially, one-sample  $t$  tests were conducted to assess whether participants' group inclusion judgments in each target condition in each of the four stories (stories: exclusive Arab American group, exclusive non-Arab American group, inclusive Arab American group, inclusive non-Arab American group; see Figure 2 for all the conditions), differed from a 3.5 midpoint, which indicated an average 50% likelihood of including the target in the group. Participants expected groups to be inclusive with more than 50% likelihood of inclusion in all conditions at  $p < .001$ , except for two. These two conditions were when an exclusive Arab American group was deciding to include an ethnic out-group target with similar interests, and when an exclusive non-Arab American group was deciding to include an ethnic in-group target with different interests (see Figure 2 for test statistics).

*Differences between ethnic groups.* The first hypothesis regarding whether participants would anticipate their own group to be more ethnically inclusive than the out-group was examined with the group inclusion measures as dependent variables in two separate 2 (age group: 12 and

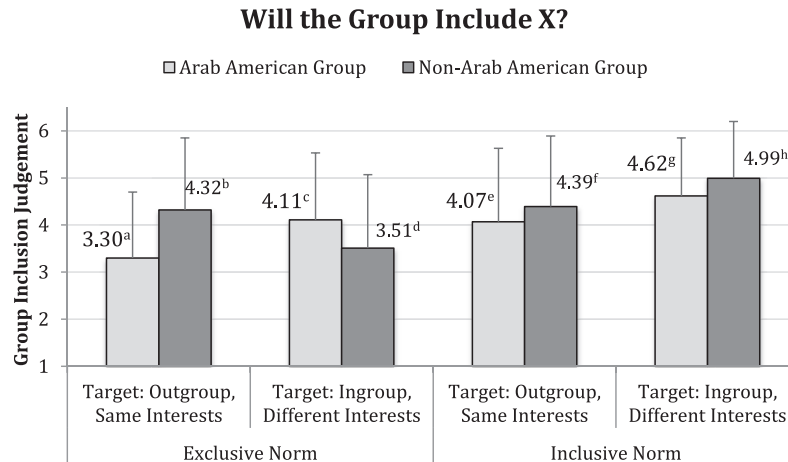


Figure 2. Group inclusion judgments for both targets by ethnic group identity and group norm. Inclusion judgments were made on a Likert-type scale: 1 = *really not likely* to 6 = *really likely*. Error bars represent standard deviations.

<sup>a</sup>*ns* compared to 3.5 midpoint inclusion judgment. <sup>b</sup> $t(99) = 5.47, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.55$ . <sup>c</sup> $t(97) = 4.19, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.42$ .

<sup>d</sup>*ns* compared to 3.5 midpoint inclusion judgment. <sup>e</sup> $t(97) = 3.60, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.36$ . <sup>f</sup> $t(98) = 5.57, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.56$ .

<sup>g</sup> $t(99) = 9.20, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.92$ . <sup>h</sup> $t(97) = 11.31, p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = 1.00$ .

16 years)  $\times$  2 (group norm: inclusive, exclusive)  $\times$  2 (gender: female, male)  $\times$  2 (group ethnic identity: Arab American, non-Arab American) ANOVAs with repeated measures on the last factor. One ANOVA was for assessing inclusion of an ethnic out-group target with similar interests and the other was for an ethnic in-group target with different interests. Ethnic inclusivity was demonstrated by high ratings for the inclusion of an ethnic out-group target with similar interests (i.e., shared interests trumps ethnic identity). Ethnic exclusivity on the other hand was demonstrated by high ratings for inclusion of an ethnic in-group target who did not share the same interests as the group (i.e., ethnic identity trumps shared interests). Group norms and age were included in the repeated measures ANOVAs to examine hypotheses related to exclusive and inclusive group norms as well as a decrease in ethnic inclusivity in adolescents.

*Ethnic out-group target with similar interests.* Expectations were confirmed for the ethnic out-group target. First, a main effect for group ethnic identity was captured,  $F(1, 188) = 14.64, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .07$ . Findings showed that participants perceived their own group to be more inclusive toward an Arab American (out-group target) with shared interests ( $M = 4.36, SD = 1.52$ ) than an Arab American group would be toward a non-Arab American with similar interests as the group ( $M = 3.68, SD = 1.53$ ). Thus, they expected their own group to demonstrate ethnic inclusivity more than the Arab American out-group.

Second, a Group Ethnic Identity  $\times$  Group Norm interaction effect was found,  $F(1, 188) = 6.19, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .03$ , confirming expectations about the effects of group norms, indicating the main effect was driven by both groups having exclusive norms ("We like kids who are similar"). Thus, in the exclusive norm stories, the Arab American group was viewed to be less inclusive than the non-Arab American group toward someone with a different ethnic identity (shared interests),  $p < .001$  (see Figure 2). When the groups had inclusive norms ("We like kids who are different"), however, no differences were found for including an ethnic out-group target. Third, a main effect for age,  $F(1, 188) = 4.08, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$ , was found, showing that older participants perceived both ethnic groups to be less inclusive toward an out-group target than younger participants (12-year-olds:  $M = 4.16, SD = 0.87$ ; 16-year-olds:  $M = 3.89, SD = 0.87$ ). This confirmed our hypotheses that ethnic inclusivity will decrease with age.

*Ethnic in-group target with different interests.* When judging inclusivity toward an ethnic in-group target with different interests, no main effect was found based on the ethnic identity of the group; both groups were viewed to be inclusive toward an ethnic in-group target with different interests (Non-Arab American group:  $M = 4.24, SD = 1.58$ ; Arab American group:  $M = 4.37, SD = 1.35$ ). A Group Ethnic Identity  $\times$  Group Norm interaction effect was, however, found,  $F(1, 188) = 51.97, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .21$ . In this case, when the groups had an exclusive norm,



one's own non-Arab American group was viewed to be less inclusive than the Arab American group toward someone with different interests in activities (same ethnicity),  $p < .01$  (see Figure 2). When groups had inclusive norms, however, the finding was reversed. Participants expected their group to be more inclusive than the Arab American group,  $p < .05$ . No age-related effects were found for inclusion of an in-group target with different interests.

In summary, when judging the likelihood of including an ethnic out-group who shares the same interests as the group, participants expected their own group to be more ethnically inclusive than an Arab American group. This was the case, though, only when both groups had exclusive norms. Irrespective of the ethnic identity of the group, ethnic inclusivity decreased with age. No age effects or overall ethnic group differences were found for inclusivity of an ethnic in-group target who has different interests. Both inclusive and exclusive group norms impacted how children made inclusion judgments regarding an ethnic in-group target (different interests) in their own group, but norms had no impact for inclusion of the same target in an Arab American group.

#### *Shared Interests Versus Ethnic Identity*

To examine whether participants expected inclusion criteria to differ for each group, inclusion judgment ratings for an ethnic in-group target were compared against ratings for an ethnic out-group target for each peer group separately. Therefore, two 2 (age group: 12 years, 16 years)  $\times$  2 (group norm: inclusive, exclusive)  $\times$  2 (gender: female, male)  $\times$  2 (target of inclusion: out-group member with similar interests, in-group member with different interests) ANOVAs with repeated measures on the last factor were conducted with group inclusion judgments for each group as the dependent variable. The hypotheses regarding differences in judgments based on group norms and age were also examined by the inclusion of these variables as factors in the repeated measures ANOVAs.

*Non-Arab American group.* First when examining the results for the non-Arab American group there was no main effect for the target of inclusion. This indicated that participants expected their own group to be equally likely to include both targets. Second, confirming predictions about the role of group norms, a main effect for group norm was found showing participants' overall inclusion judgments regarding both targets were lower when their group had an exclusive norm than when it

had an inclusive norm,  $F(1, 189) = 33.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .15$  (exclusive norm:  $M = 3.91$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ; inclusive norm:  $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ). However, these main effects were qualified by a Target of Inclusion  $\times$  Group Norm interaction effect,  $F(1, 189) = 18.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .08$ . As shown in Figure 2, the interaction indicated confirmation of the hypothesis that shared interests would trump ethnic identity for the non-Arab American group when the group had an exclusive norm. Thus, participants expected their own exclusive group would be more likely to include an ethnic out-group target who shared the same interests as the group than it would be to include an ethnic in-group target who did not share the same interests,  $p = .001$ . Although participants were likely to include both targets when their group had an inclusive norm ("We like kids who are different"), they expected their group would more likely include a target who liked different activities,  $p < .05$ , thus reaffirming their focus on activities.

In addition, participants were especially sensitive to their group's norm when making decisions about including an ethnic in-group target (different interests) but not when making decisions about an ethnic out-group target (shared interests). Thus, in the case of an ethnic in-group peer, participants expected their group to be less inclusive when it had an exclusive norm than when it had an inclusive norm,  $p < .001$  (exclusive norm:  $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ; inclusive norm:  $M = 4.95$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ). Irrespective of one's own group norm, participants expected that their group would be inclusive toward an ethnic out-group target with similar interests (exclusive norm:  $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ; inclusive norm:  $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ ). Contrary to expectations that adolescents would be ethnically less inclusive than 12-year-olds when groups had exclusive norms, there was no Age  $\times$  Group Norm effect.

*Arab American group.* Different patterns emerged when anticipating the inclusivity of an Arab American group. First, unlike evaluations of their own group when evaluating an Arab American, a main effect for target of inclusion,  $F(1, 187) = 18.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .09$ , was found showing that participants expected the Arab American target group would be less likely to include a non-Arab American target than an ethnic in-group target (ethnic out-group, similar interests:  $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ; ethnic in-group, different interests:  $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ). Second, a main effect for group norm was also found, indicating that, irrespective of the target's identity, inclusion judgments matched the group's norm,  $F(1, 187) = 30.97$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .14$

(exclusive norm:  $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ; inclusive norm:  $M = 4.36$ ;  $SD = 0.86$ ). No interaction effect was found for Target of Inclusion  $\times$  Group Norm. Therefore, the criteria for inclusion did not change as a function of the group's norm.

In summary, shared interests took priority as the criterion for inclusion over ethnic identity when both 12- and 16-year-olds anticipated their own group's inclusivity. However, expectations for an Arab American group were different, showing that participants expected this group to give priority to ethnic identity over shared interests, irrespective of the group norm. Inclusive group norms generally elicited more inclusive judgments for both groups.

### Reasoning About Group Inclusion

To understand how participants interpreted "similarity" for each ethnic group, participants' reasoning about group inclusion judgments under the exclusive group norm stories (e.g., "We invite kids who are similar") was analyzed. The three most frequently used justifications were group functioning, activities preferences, and ethnic identity. Two separate 2 (age group: 12 and 16 years)  $\times$  2 (gender: female, male)  $\times$  2 (group ethnic identity: Arab American, non-Arab American)  $\times$  3 (reasoning: group functioning, activity preferences, ethnic identity) ANOVAs with repeated measures on the last factor were conducted using proportion of reasoning for inclusion of an ethnic out-group target (first ANOVA) and inclusion of an ethnic in-group target (second ANOVA).

*Ethnic out-group target with similar interests.* When judging the inclusion likelihood of an ethnic out-group target with similar interests in a group with an exclusive norm, first, a main effect for the type of reasoning used was found,  $F(2, 378) = 4.76$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ . This finding shows that participants reasoned about group decisions regarding inclusion of this target by referencing activity preferences more so than ethnic identity,  $p < .01$ , and approximately similar proportions of group functioning (see Table 1). As shown in Table 1, a Reasoning  $\times$  Group Ethnic Identity interaction effect was found,  $F(2, 378) = 4.05$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .02$ , showing that participants referenced ethnic identity more when judging likelihood of inclusion by the Arab American group than they did for inclusion by their own non-Arab American group,  $p < .01$ .

In addition, only when judging their own group's decision to include an out-group target did participants use more group functioning and activity preference reasoning than ethnic identity,

$ps < .001$  (see Table 1). Thus, when evaluating a group with an exclusive group norm, participants attended more to ethnic identity ("She's not Arab") when judging inclusion of an ethnic out-group target with similar interests in the Arab American group and attended more to group functioning ("He fits in better") and activity preferences ("They like to do the same things") when thinking about their own group.

*Ethnic in-group target with different interests.* When the group had an exclusive norm, reasoning about decisions to include an ethnic in-group target with different interests also differed based on the ethnic identity of the group. Overall, participants used similar proportions of reasoning except this changed based on the ethnic group they were judging. A Reasoning  $\times$  Group Ethnic Identity interaction effect was found,  $F(2, 374) = 8.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .04$ . This effect showed that participants reasoned based on group functioning and activity preferences more so than ethnic identity when judging inclusion of an in-group target into their own group, both  $ps < .01$  (see Table 1). Significantly more references for group functioning,  $p < .01$ , but less references to ethnic identity,  $p < .001$ , were made when reasoning about inclusion into a non-Arab American group compared to reasoning about inclusion into an Arab American group (see Table 1). They referenced ethnic identity more than group functioning when reasoning about inclusion of an Arab American target in the Arab

Table 1  
Proportion of Reasoning Used to Judge Inclusion of Both Targets in an Exclusive Group

Condition	Reasoning	Arab American group	Non-Arab American group	Total
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Target: Out-group, similar interests	Group functioning	0.28 (0.41)	0.37 (0.47)	0.32 (0.44)
	Activity preferences	0.32 (0.37)	0.40 (0.45)	0.36 (0.41)
	Ethnic identity	0.29 (.39)	0.14 (0.30)	0.21 (0.35)
Target: In-group, different interests	Group functioning	0.20 (0.37)	0.37 (0.47)	0.29 (0.43)
	Activity preferences	0.30 (0.38)	0.34 (0.45)	0.32 (0.41)
	Ethnic identity	0.39 (0.44)	0.15 (0.32)	0.27 (0.40)

Note.  $N = 199$ .

American group,  $p < .01$ . In sum, when evaluating inclusion of an ethnic in-group target in their own exclusive group, participants were concerned more with group functioning and interests in activities ("She likes different things"). When making similar judgments regarding an exclusive Arab American group, they frequently referenced ethnic identity ("He's Arab American, like they are"). Overall, the findings for reasoning about both targets indicated that participants gave more priority to individual level characteristics such as shared interests in activities when thinking about their own ethnic group but expected an ethnic out-group to be more concerned with ethnic identity.

### *The Role of Stereotypes*

#### *Stereotypes About Arab People Task*

Before analyzing the effects of stereotypes on participants' group inclusion judgments, descriptive analyses were conducted on responses to the stereotypes about Arab people task. First, the Arab knowledge variable was used as the dependent variable in independent sample  $t$ -test analyses to assess participants' group differences in their knowledge about Arab people. This dichotomous variable indicated that 33% of participants reported having factual knowledge about Arabs (*Arab knowledge* = 1) and the remaining 67% did not (*Arab knowledge* = 0). A large effect size for age was found, showing older participants had more knowledge about Arab people than younger participants,  $t(168) = -5.89$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = -0.86$  (12-year-olds:  $M = 0.15$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ; 16-year-olds:  $M = 0.52$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ). Knowledge did not vary by gender, religion, or ethnic composition of friendships.

When analyzing differences in the proportion of generalizations made about Arab people by participants, the stereotypes variable was used as the dependent variable in independent sample  $t$  tests. Forty-seven percent ( $n = 88$ ) of participants did not report stereotypic associations with Arab people, while 53% did ( $n = 99$ ). Older participants reported more stereotypic associations than younger participants, revealing a moderate effect size,  $t(185) = -4.90$ ,  $p < .001$ , Cohen's  $d = -0.73$  (12-year-olds:  $M = 0.36$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ; 16-year-olds:  $M = 0.70$ ,  $SD = 0.46$ ). Stereotypic associations did not vary by gender, religion, or ethnic composition of friendships. Participants' stereotypic associations did not significantly differ based on their knowledge of Arab people.

#### *Effects of Stereotypes on Group Inclusion Judgments*

To test hypotheses related to stereotypes and judgments about group inclusion the stereotypes variable was used as a fixed factor in repeated measures ANOVAs with age and group norm. No gender effects were investigated because there were no hypotheses pertaining to gender and stereotypic associations. Additionally, the proportion of stereotypic associations made did not differ by gender. Two 2 (age group: 12 and 16 years)  $\times$  2 (group norm: inclusive, exclusive)  $\times$  2 (stereotypes: presence, absence)  $\times$  2 (target of inclusion: out-group member with similar interests, in-group member with different interests) ANOVAs with repeated measures on the last factor were conducted on group inclusion judgments. One analysis was conducted for judgments about their own group and another for judgments about an Arab American group. Only effects related to stereotypic associations will be reported as other effects have already been reported above.

When making inclusion judgments about their own ethnic group, as expected, a Target of Inclusion  $\times$  Stereotypes interaction effect was found,  $F(1, 178) = 6.79$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ . As depicted in Figure 3a, this finding shows that those who made stereotypic associations about Arabs were less inclined to think their own group would include an Arab American than those who did not make stereotypic associations,  $p < .05$ . In addition, those who did not make stereotypic associations were more inclusive toward an Arab American who shared the same interest in activities than toward a non-Arab American target who did not share the same interests as the group,  $p < .05$  (see Figure 3a). When judging inclusivity of the Arab American group toward either target, no differences were found between those who made stereotypic association and those who did not. No main effects for stereotypes were found in either analysis.

Planned pairwise comparisons were conducted to test hypotheses pertaining to the role of group norms and how they may influence those who hold stereotypes. These analyses indicated that stereotypes proved to play a statistically significant role for participants judging inclusion of an Arab American,  $F(1, 178) = 6.81$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = .03$ , when one's own group had an exclusive norm but not when the group had an inclusive norm (see Figure 3b). These findings indicate that participants who held stereotypic knowledge about Arab people expected their group to be less inclusive toward an Arab American peer, especially when their group had an

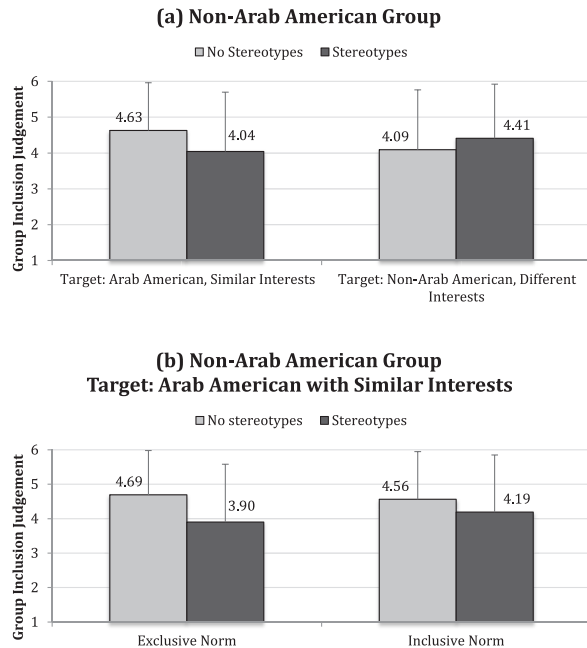


Figure 3. (a) Role of stereotypic associations on the non-Arab American group's inclusion judgments about ethnic out-group and in-group targets. (b) Group inclusion: the role of group norms on those who make stereotypic associations. Inclusion judgments were made on a Likert-type scale: 1 = *really not likely* to 6 = *really likely*. Error bars represent standard deviations.  $N = 199$ .

exclusive norm. However, when their group had an inclusive norm those with stereotypes did not differ in their inclusion expectations from those without stereotypes. No stereotype by group norm effects were found for judgments about the Arab American group.

## Discussion

The novel findings of this study revealed that non-Arab American children and adolescents expected that an ethnic out-group (of Arab descent) would value ethnic identity over individual characteristics, such as shared interests in activities, when given the opportunity to invite a new person to join their group. Conversely they anticipated that their in-group would be inclusive, valuing shared interests in activities more than ethnic identity. In addition, stereotypic associations were found to be directly related to children's and adolescents' inclusion expectations. These findings are important and generalize to other cultural contexts. Many places around the globe are experiencing new immigrant groups. In these contexts little prior intergroup con-

tact exists but negative stereotypes are associated with the newly arrived groups. One implication of these findings is that a contributing factor to pervasive segregation of majority groups with newly immigrated minority groups is the expectation by the majority group that the new group "prefers to be with their own kind."

A limitation with this expectation is that it assumes homogeneity of the out-group (with little recognition of the intragroup variation regarding choice of friends and companions) and a generalized view that overtures of inclusion are not warranted. Yet, individuals in newly immigrated groups need to both socialize with their own groups and integrate with the majority group for healthy adjustment within their host communities (Phinney, 2008; Verkuyten, 2004). Moreover, when assumptions of exclusivity are associated with stereotypes, the assumption may not be founded on actual information about preferences for exclusivity but expectations due to unfamiliarity with the out-group or even due to essentialist beliefs that out-groups have inherently different values and live by different rules than one's in-group.

Children and adolescents gave priority to shared interests in activities over ethnicity as the criteria for inclusion by their own group. This is consistent with research on young children's perceptions of similarity between cross-race dyads that share the same interests (McGlothlin & Killen, 2005). Past research on dyadic friendships in younger participants has shown that variables such as language (Kinzler, Shutts, Dejesus, & Spelke, 2009) also trump ethnicity in social preferences of young children (5–6 years).

The current study extended these previous findings in several ways. First, in contrast to social preference or perceptions of similarity, the current findings were demonstrated using a social-contextual method, in which judgments and reasoning were analyzed for inclusion decisions by both the in-group and the out-group as well as for when the groups had inclusive or exclusive norms. Second, as predicted from an SRD perspective, the finding that shared interests trumped ethnicity was context specific, such that shared interests were expected to matter more for one's own group than for an ethnic out-group. Third, the current findings were shown with an older sample (12- and 16-year-olds) than previously studied. This is important as adolescence is a developmental period in which group identity is highly salient, and group norms guide decisions about peer relationships. Fourth, having an inclusive in-group norm ("We like kids who are different")



allowed participants to equally consider both variables (i.e., ethnicity and shared interests) when making inclusion judgments. Finally, while previous research shows that shared interests trumped race regarding expectations about one's own group, in the current study ethnicity trumped shared interests for expectations about an ethnic out-group.

In this study, differential expectations about inclusion based on ethnic group identity were robust as they appeared in both children's judgments and reasoning. Participants' justifications for their inclusion judgments when both groups had exclusive norms focused on ethnic identity (e.g., "She's Arab like them") when reasoning about the Arab American group and on group functioning (e.g., "They'll get along better") or activity preferences (e.g., "He likes the same things as the group") when reasoning about their own non-Arab American group. These findings extend SRD by showing that both children and adolescents use different criteria for group dynamics when groups have different ethnic identities.

Additionally, the findings support the view that participants' judgments about the Arab American group are a form of implicit stereotyping, reflecting intergroup attribution error, whereby a misattribution is made based on a social category (Hewstone, 1990). In this case the misattribution being made is that an Arab American group would not be inclusive toward a non-Arab peer; therefore, when seeking entry into an ethnic out-group (Arab American peer group), "being similar" was interpreted as being of a same ethnicity, as opposed to sharing the same interests. Given that "similar" was never defined within the questionnaire, children's differential interpretations about what "similar" means can also reflect an indirect, potentially implicit form of bias that favors their in-group (i.e., interpreting similarity based on shared interests as opposed to ethnicity). To further confirm such interpretations, future research should also examine children's own individual inclusive preferences and compare them to their expectations about peer groups' inclusivity.

Given research showing that children are less likely to want to be friends with those they perceived as having exclusive norms (Tropp et al., 2014), the overgeneralization (or misattribution) found in the current study is likely to hinder the development of cross-ethnic friendships between Arab American and non-Arab American youth. Perceiving one's peers to be exclusive solely on the basis of their group membership assumes homogeneity of the group, which undermines an individual's own choice about potential friendships. This

misattribution was found in both 12- and 16-year-olds, which provides a potential explanation as to why cross-ethnic friendships decline in adolescence, and also suggests that the phenomenon begins in early adolescence for friendships with peers of Arab descent.

Age differences appeared when judging the likelihood that a group would include an ethnic out-group target. Consistent with expectations from SRD, these findings showed that 16-year-olds found ethnic identity to be more salient than 12-year-olds because they expected both groups to be less inclusive toward ethnic out-group targets despite their sharing an interest in activities. Past research shows that although both children and adolescents reject exclusion, children (9- to 11-year-olds) reject it more than adolescents (Killen et al., 2002). These previous findings are qualified by adolescents' concerns with optimizing group dynamics, and the perception that diversity in ethnic identity can hinder group functioning (Rutland et al., 2010).

It was expected that adolescents would be more attuned to group norms than 12-year-olds, given their more extensive experience with groups (Brown et al., 1986). However, no age differences were found based on the type of group norm; both 12- and 16-year-olds responded in similar ways when the group had either an exclusive or inclusive norm. This may be because by 12 years children have had experience navigating through exclusive and inclusive group behavior, and have established a good understanding of group norms that fall within the domain of exclusion and inclusion. Twelve-year-olds, however, may not have had experience with other types of group norms, such as those related to experiences in adolescence (e.g., student council, financial scholarship, risky behavior), and therefore differences between preadolescents and adolescents may be more pronounced in those contexts as opposed to the norms presented in the current study. What was clear though, and consistent with past research (Nesdale, Maass, et al., 2005), was that defining a norm in terms of "liking others who are similar" resulted in less inclusive judgments and defining a norm in terms of "liking others who are different" elicited more inclusive judgments.

Participants' sensitivity to group norms was more nuanced when making inclusion judgments about their own group. They expected that group norms would influence inclusion of an ethnic in-group peer who did not share the same interests in activities in their own group. Inclusion of an ethnic out-group member who shared the same interests as the group, however, was not affected

by their group's norm. This nuanced effect of group norms did not manifest when making judgments about inclusivity of an Arab American group. These findings extend SRD theory (Rutland et al., 2010) by showing that group norms are perceived to play a different role for ethnic out-groups than they are for one's own ethnic group. In an effort to fully grasp the role of group norms in intergroup relationships, further research is needed to investigate how other out-group norms are interpreted in comparison to one's own group norms (e.g., freedom of expression).

A central goal of this study was to assess the effects of stereotypes on children's and adolescents' inclusion judgment through the direct measurement of stereotypic knowledge. It was found that children and adolescents who readily made stereotypic associations perceived their own group to be less inclusive toward ethnic out-group targets despite their sharing the same interest in activities as the groups. Those who did not make stereotypic associations (47%) were more inclusive toward ethnic out-group targets. Importantly, the effects of stereotypic associations on inclusion decisions were strongest when the group had an exclusive norm and nonexistent when it had an inclusive norm. Inclusive group norms lessened the effects of stereotypes, thus highlighting the significance of fostering ethnic inclusivity in classrooms and schools, as theorized by Nesdale and Lawson (2011). While Nesdale and colleagues have shown the effects for group norms on how favorable children are toward out-group members, the current study extended these findings to inclusion judgments of both children and adolescents. This finding has important implications for stereotype and prejudice reduction interventions. It implies that inclusive norms can mitigate the effects of stereotypes on children's inclusion decisions.

There were no age-related differences in how stereotypes affected inclusion judgments. However, in contrast to only one-third of the 12-year-olds, the majority (70%) of the 16-year-olds reported stereotypic associations. Moreover, 16-year-olds were less inclusive toward out-group targets than were the 12-year-olds, perhaps because the stereotypic associations contributed to their less inclusive orientations; however, there is only indirect evidence for this given that minimal references to stereotypes (< 10%) were explicitly made in adolescents' reasoning about their judgments. Research on social identity development shows that in late childhood through adolescence, concepts about group identities are based on beliefs, values, status differences,

and stereotypes (Bennett, 2011). While the current study sheds light on these age-related shifts, a direct connection between stereotypic expectations and exclusion judgments in adolescents remains to be further investigated. In addition, the level of identification with one's own group is expected to increase in adolescence, and the changing demographics of the United States suggests that ethnic minority children make up more than half of the youth population (Cabrera, 2013); therefore, future studies should examine the level of identification with a superordinate American identity and its impact on inclusion judgments of both ethnic majority and minority children.

### *Conclusions and Future Directions*

Understanding attitudes about out-group peers is important given the increasing global context of child development. Children are growing up in cultures and communities with new immigrants from around the world. The findings in this study provide teachers, counselors, and administrators with some guidance on how to best facilitate positive interethnic relationships. The effects of stereotypic associations and the tendency to misattribute that an ethnic out-group would be ethnically exclusive can be directly addressed by the promotion of inclusive peer group norms. Therefore, schools, classrooms, or groups that foster inclusivity by embracing differences (e.g., ethnic and those based on interests in activities) and ethnic openness can combat the influence of stereotypes on children's and adolescents' social decision making in exclusion contexts. This finding supports research assessing the effects of multiethnic education on children's intergroup favorability evaluations (Verkuyten, 2008).

While the target ethnic out-group in this study was composed of peers of Arab descent, the current findings may be generalized to contexts in which newly immigrated groups associated with negative stereotypes encounter rejection and segregation. Around the world, communities are changing as groups that differ based on ethnicity, culture, and religion (and other group membership categories) are living together for the first time. How children and adolescents conceptualize out-groups with low contact (and often high levels of stereotyping) has to be investigated to create effective interventions. Future research could explore questions about group-based exclusion versus interest-based exclusion with other group categories (as well as other ethnic groups).

Importantly, future research could more specifically examine how different ethnic minority groups perceive other groups in terms of stereotypes and inclusivity. In this study, we focused on two groups because we did not find any significant differences for the different ethnic groups in the "non-Arab American" category. However, more detailed assessments of stereotypes as well as group identity may reveal new relationships and forms of bias. Targeting samples of different ethnic groups in the United States and measuring their level of identification with their ethnic group as well as their identification as a broader American identity would contribute to understanding group categories that enhance inclusive orientations in different contexts.

Exploring the role of stereotypes on inclusive judgments with a sample that has varying levels of contact can inform whether contact will also help mitigate the effects of stereotypes on intergroup exclusion. As indicated by the current findings, a non-Arab perspective on intergroup exclusion was informative. However, it is imperative to conduct research with both ethnic majority and minority groups as both perspectives are essential for understanding group dynamics. In the case of the present study, obtaining a sample with a large representation of Arab participants (for statistical analyses) was not feasible. Having both perspectives, however, provides valuable information for understanding whether minority groups expect majority groups to focus on culture over shared interests. In addition, a one-dimensional stereotype assessment was used in this study, mainly because little was known about the content of the stereotypic associations children made with people of Arab descent. While negative stereotypes were cited, most stereotypic associations in the study represented neutral generalizations such as those related to physical appearance, language, and religious beliefs. Further research must be carried out with different and larger samples to capture specific effects of stereotypes that vary in content.

Overall, the findings from the current study reveal the complex ways in which children and adolescents reason about intergroup exclusion encounters, providing further insight into the development of intergroup attitudes. This information can be used to inform intervention-based research aimed at reducing prejudicial attitudes in social relationships through the promotion of inclusive group norms that combat children's and adolescents' stereotypes and misattributions about ethnic out-groups.

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