Lebanese Adolescents' Expectations about Social Inclusion of Peers in Intergroup Contexts

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Abstract

This study examined the role of group norms, group identity, age, contact, and stereotypes on youths' decisions to include a peer in an intergroup context portraying Lebanese and American adolescents. Lebanese participants ($N = 275$), ages 12 and 16 years, were surveyed about expectations for inclusion of an out-group target with similar interests or an in-group target with different interests into their own Lebanese group or another American group. Findings indicated participants focused on shared interests, rather than national identity, when making inclusion decisions for either group and group norms mattered. Older participants expected American peers to be less inclusive toward an out-group peer. Direct contact predicted inclusivity of out-group American peers into one's own Lebanese group, and indirect media-based contact predicted expectations for inclusivity into an American out-group. Findings have implications for interventions aimed at improving cross-national friendships which, in turn, have the potential to reduce prejudicial attitudes.

Keywords: group norms, intergroup inclusion, nationality, intergroup contact.

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Increases in migration trends over the past several years call for greater global inclusivity (International Organization for Migration, 2018; United Nations, 2017). Yet, adolescents are confronted with a range of conflicting messages about whom to include or exclude in their peer groups based on ethnicity, nationality, and other group categories. Interpreting societal and group norms about inclusion and exclusion is not always easy, especially in intergroup contexts (Abrams & Rutland, 2008; Hitti & Killen, 2015). Yet, how youth make sense of group norms about inclusion and exclusion can shape their inclusivity toward peers from different backgrounds.

Past research has focused on racial or ethnic inclusion and exclusion in predominantly European and North American samples. Less research has been conducted with samples from other countries, such as those located in the Middle East (Thalmayer, et al., 2020). Thus, to understand what promotes global inclusivity in youth from different parts of the world, the current study focused on Lebanese Arab youth, an under-represented population in developmental psychology research. Additionally, in light of findings with U.S. non-Arab youth showing biased perceptions of Arab American peers' inclusivity (Hitti & Killen, 2015), this study was conducted to examine whether Arab youth had similar perceptions. Such biases have negative consequences for Arab American youth as members of a marginalized numeric minority in the United States. The current study provided an Arab perspective on American-Arab intergroup relations, giving an "Arab" voice to questions about whether Arab youth, as majority members of their country, are likely to include American peers when provided the opportunity. Thus, a central aim of the current study was to examine whether similar biases would be revealed

by Arab youth living in Lebanon. Target groups were identified by nationality, Lebanese and American, given that Lebanon is one nation among 22 diverse Arab nations, providing one Arab perspective.

Thus, to address this goal, Lebanese youth's inclusivity toward out-group American peers was investigated. Inclusion and exclusion toward out-groups within friendship contexts has provided a means for measuring bias and prejudice in developmental samples (Killen & Rutland, 2011; Mulvey, 2016). Additionally, expectations about an out-group's inclusive or exclusive behavior can provide further insight into intergroup bias and prejudice. For example, Hitti and Killen (2015) found that Non-Arab American 12- and 16-year-olds assumed an Arab American out-group will "only want to hang out with their own kind". This presupposition provides a potential justification for excluding an out-group from activities ("they don't want to join us anyway") and created an exclusivity orientation. Thus, examining expectations of a national out-group's intergroup inclusivity, and comparing that to one's own national group's inclusivity, provides further clarity on psychological attitudes that perpetuate exclusion.

Intergroup contact is one of the most effective interventions for improving intergroup relations (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). Therefore, another goal of this study was to examine the role of intergroup contact for increasing nationality-based inclusivity. This information is useful for understanding peer intergroup relationships in non-Western societies, but also for understanding peer relationships between non-Arab and Arab youth in countries, such as North America and Europe, where global strife has contributed to negative stereotypes held about Arabs by adults (Shaheen, 2003).

Group Norms and Group Identity

A social reasoning developmental (SRD) framework posits that children understand the tension between the unfairness of rejection based solely on intergroup categories (such as gender, race, and nationality) and the desire for a group to maintain its identity (Rutland, et al., 2010). Adolescents' inclusion judgments are often influenced by an increased understanding of group norms and group identity (McGuire, et al., 2018). Findings indicate that individuals do not automatically prefer the group as defined by one's *nationality* (or other salient group identities, like gender), but rather may prioritize *norms of the group*. Peer group norms can reduce or exacerbate prejudicial attitudes; inclusive peer group norms can result in more positive attitudes toward out-groups, while in-group norms of exclusion invoke various types of negative attitudes toward out-groups (Nesdale, 2008). However, less is known about how youth interpret out-group norms.

Initial evidence exists showing that youth interpret in-group and out-group norms differently. For example, in Hitti and Killen (2015) an exclusive norm of "liking those who are similar to you" was interpreted as preferring shared interests in activities over shared ethnic identity, when the norm was held by an in-group (non-Arab American), but interpreted as preferring shared ethnicity over shared interest when held by an out-group (Arab American). Misinterpreting an out-group's norm may lead to biased judgments, uncomfortable interactions, and less inclusivity. Therefore, understanding the role of in-group as well as out-group norms is essential for addressing prejudice and bias in children and adolescents.

Shared Interest Versus Shared National Identity. Exclusion based on an individual's personal preferences or behaviors (individuating characteristics) is different from exclusion based on group identity. Pitting an individual's interests in activities against their national identity in an inclusion context provides additional novel information about the underlying

reasons behind inclusive expectations. Further, consistent with theories about the development of intergroup relationships, adolescents value maintaining group identity as a means to smooth group functioning more than do younger children when considering friendships, suggesting age-differences in the priority of group identity (Abrams & Rutland, 2008; Møller & Tenenbaum, 2012; Verkuyten, 2014).

Intergroup Contact

While, adolescents are more likely than children to consider group processes, often indicating more bias and less inclusivity during adolescence compared to childhood (Rutland et al., 2010), evidence for different pathways exists. For instance, intergroup contact has been found to increase interethnic inclusivity (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014; Turner & Cameron, 2016). Direct contact -- when individuals form friendships with out-group peers -- has been found to be the most effective intervention for reducing prejudice (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). Indirect contact, defined in this study as exposure to out-group members through stories and the media (media-based contact), can also be an effective means to reduce prejudice (Vezzali, et al., 2012). This is distinct from extended contact, which refers to exposure to intergroup friendships by witnessing in-group members befriend members of out-groups. Given the extant research on both direct and indirect contact as interventions for reducing bias and prejudice, both forms of intergroup contact were examined to further understand their implications for Lebanese youth's inclusivity.

Current Study

The first goal of the current study was to examine the role of group norms (exclusion and inclusion norms) and group identity (Lebanese and American peer groups) on youths' inclusion decisions. The second goal was to determine age-related differences regarding whether Lebanese

12- and 16-year-olds prioritized either national identity or shared interests when making inclusion decisions. The third goal was to assess the impact of intergroup contact on inclusion. Stereotypes about Americans were also assessed to control for possible effects on expectations of inclusion as has been found in past research (Hitti & Killen, 2015).

In this study, participants were asked to anticipate whether groups, with either inclusion or exclusion norms, would include an out-group peer with similar interests in activities, or an in-group peer with different interests in activities. This contrast pitted national identity (Lebanese and American) with shared interests in activities (e.g., film, art, sports). Following Nesdale (2008), groups norms were: exclusion norms (e.g., "We only invite kids who are similar to us") and inclusion norms (e.g., "We invite kids who are different from us"). In past research, these norms have been found to either help or hinder the development of prejudice (Nesdale, 2008). Two age groups (12- and 16-year-olds) were chosen to track age-related differences that occur throughout adolescence, as hypothesized by SRD, and to provide comparisons with other studies on intergroup inclusion and exclusion, using similar age groups (Hitti et al., 2019; Møller & Tenenbaum, 2011; Smetana, 2011).

Hypotheses

First, it was predicted youth would expect inclusion of a target who matched the group's norms (Abrams & Rutland, 2008), and these matches would be made based on shared interest as opposed national identity (Hitti & Killen, 2015) (H1a). However, interpretations of these group norms were expected to differ based on the national identity of the group, such that the out-group would be perceived as more exclusive toward an out-group peer when the group had an exclusion norm (H1b). Due to growing concerns for group identity in older adolescents it was predicted that 16-year-olds would expect less inclusivity toward a national out-group than 12-

year-olds (H2; Rutland, et al., 2010; Killen et al., 2007). Finally, it was expected that direct contact would positively impact inclusion evaluations (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014) (H3). While Lebanese youth have exposure to U.S. entertainment media (films, TV programs, and music), which often portray Americans positively (Melki, 2015), they are also exposed to negative coverage of U.S. foreign policy in local news (Melki, 2014). Therefore, it was unclear whether media-based contact would positively or negatively impact inclusion expectations. Stereotypes, can be formed through media-based forms of contact (Shaheen, 2003) and can influence youth's inclusivity (Hitti & Killen, 2015); therefore, stereotypes were measured and controlled for in this study.

Methods

Participants included 275 Lebanese youth (42.5% female, 57.5% male) who attended private schools in Beirut, Lebanon, and nearby suburbs. Private schools in Lebanon serve low-middle to high-income families. Among the participants, 87 were aged 12 years (M_{Age} = 11.95, SD_{Age} =0.55, 52% female, 48% male) and 188 were aged 16 years (M_{Age} = 15.92, SD_{Age} =0.99, 38% female, 62% male); 65% of them were of Lebanese nationality only, and the other 35% were dual nationals of Lebanon and another country (but not the United States). Dual nationality in Lebanon is very common, with considerable proportions of Lebanese citizens having a passport from another country due to emigration, but also to be used as a security net when the country's stability is threatened by political tensions (Skulte-Ouaiss, 2013).

The original sample consisted of 328 participants. Participants reporting dual identity of Lebanese and American (N = 39), 10 participants who reported other nationalities (i.e., Syrian, Dutch), and four participants who did not report their nationality were removed, leaving a sample of 275. According to a power analysis conducted in G*Power (Faul, et al., 2009), the sample size

allowed for the detection of odd ratios at a magnitude of at least 2.00, equivalent to a 0.38 Cohen's *d* (based on formulas referenced in Borenstein, et al., 2009) at 80% power.

Procedure

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of a local Lebanese university (ID: FAS.JM.09). Only schools in which subjects were taught in English were solicited for participation to control for language comprehension, and language as a potential barrier to inclusion (see Beißert, et al., 2020). Most schools (public and private) in Lebanon are bilingual and teach either English or French as part of their K-12 curriculum. Upon receiving approval from the school principal, parental consent forms and student assent forms were distributed to students in grades 6, 7, 10, and 11 to reach 12- and 16-year-olds. The study was introduced to students as a way to learn about friendship groups. Lebanese research assistants distributed questionnaires to students with signed assent and parental consent in groups of 20-25. Questionnaires were completed in 30-40 minutes.

Design

The questionnaire was designed to measure group inclusion evaluations based on two factors, each with two levels: (a) *Group norm* (exclusion or inclusion), and (b) *Group identity* (American or Lebanese). Two versions of the questionnaire, gender-matched to participants, were randomly administered (Version 1: 49.5% $n = 136$; Version 2: 50.5% $n = 139$, evenly divided by age). Each version included two hypothetical stories, one about an American (non-Arab) group of friends and another about a Lebanese group of friends. Version 1 included one story about an American group with an exclusion norm and another story about a Lebanese group with an inclusion norm. Group norms were reversed in Version 2. In each story

participants were asked to anticipate inclusion of one of two targets (1) out-group peer with similar interests as the group, or (2) in-group peer with different interests from the group.

Participants were first introduced to their own group of Lebanese friends (see Figure 1a) and completed a group identification task, modified from Nesdale, et al., (2005), and used to invoke identification with one's in-group. In this task, they were told they belonged to a Lebanese group of friends ("This is your group") depicted with an illustration of four same-gendered peers with Arabic names (e.g., Sana, Jenna). Participants were asked to give their group a name, choose an end-of-year activity for the group, and pick a symbol for the group. Participants were shown three illustrations depicting three types of activities that their group liked to do (e.g., photography, tennis, or painting). Next, the American (non-Arab) group of friends was introduced ("This is the other group") as an illustration of four same-gendered American peers with American names (e.g., Sandra, Angela, see Figure 1b), with three activities (music, filming, roller blading) that the group enjoyed.

Next, group norms were described for each group.

Exclusion group norm: "In the past when your/this group of Lebanese/American (non-Arab) friends, who are your age, invited others into their group, they would invite only those who were *similar* to them."

Inclusion group norm: "In the past when your/this group of Lebanese/American (non-Arab) friends, who are your age, invited others into their group, they would invite those who were *different* from them."

Following norm descriptions, participants responded first to a story about their national out-group (the American peer group) and second to a story about their Lebanese in-group. Story order was piloted and showed no order effects, so the same order was maintained for both

versions of the questionnaire. In each story, participants were introduced through illustrations to an out-group peer with similar interests as the group and an in-group peer with different interests, each seeking entry into the group (e.g., "Hani is Lebanese and wants to join the group, he likes these activities"). The activities each target liked were depicted pictorially. When the target was an in-group peer, activities were different from those of the group but also represented varying sports, artistic, and outdoor activities. After being introduced to the targets, participants responded to several measures.

Measures

Inclusion measure. Participants' inclusion evaluations were assessed by a *forced group inclusion measure* ("Your/This group of friends is going to the mall/movie and they have room for one more person to invite. Remember that your/this group likes to have kids who are different/similar from them to join the group. If both Zeina and Julie like to go to the mall/movie, who do you think the group will invite? (Choose one only)"). Participants were also asked to reason about their inclusion decisions (see supplemental materials for description and analyses).

Other predictors of inclusion evaluations. The following predictors were presented at the end of the questionnaire.

Stereotypes about American people. Stereotypes were measured using one open-ended item, adapted from previous research (Hitti & Killen, 2015). Participants responded to the following question: "What characteristics if any, do you think of when you think of an American?" Five types of response categories emerged: (a) *neutral stereotypes* included neutral associations, references to American pop culture, and generalizations about differences in culture and customs (e.g., "They like to eat hamburgers.", "They are different from Lebanese."); (b) *positive stereotypes* included positive associations (e.g., "Open-minded", "Respectful, friendly"),

(c) *negative stereotypes* included negative associations (e.g., "They are racist," or "Limited and unfriendly"); (d) *factual knowledge* included factual and accurate knowledge about American people (e.g., "Someone who is born in America," or "Comes from an American family"); and (d) *other* included no knowledge or no references to any distinguishing characteristics. Five variables were created to capture each type of category response. For each participant, each of the five categories were coded as the following: 1 = mention of the category, 0 = no mention of the category. Based on 27% of the interviews (n = 75), 84% agreement and interrater reliability, Cohen's κ = .82, was achieved between two coders.

Direct contact with American individuals. Participants' direct contact with American peers was measured. The assessment included five items reflecting varying levels of direct contact, using a 5-point Likert scale (e.g., "How many kids in your neighborhood are American?", 1 = none, 2 = a few, 3 = half, 4 = most, 5 = all: or "How often do you hang out with kids who are American?", 1 = never, 2 = a little, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always). An average score was created with high values indicating higher levels of direct contact (Cronbach's α = .81; M = 2.52, SD = 0.76).

Media-based contact with American culture. Participants' media-based contact with American people was measured by assessing media-based exposure to the out-group. The assessment included seven questions about digital and print media forms (e.g., "How often do you rely on movies/books to get information about American people?" or "How often do you rely on the internet to get information about American people?") and used a 5-point Likert scale on which 1 = never, 2 = a little, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always). An average score was created with high values indicating higher levels of media-based contact (Cronbach's α = .75; M = 2.67, SD = 0.91).

Plan for Analyses

Generalized estimating equations (GEE) with a logit link function were used to test hypotheses. GEE is an analytic approached similar to repeated measures analysis of variance, but within the regression framework and employed for binary outcomes (Liang & Zeger, 1986). Logistic GEE analyses regressed the binary forced group inclusion outcome (0 = In-group target, 1 = Out-group target) on the within-subject factor group identity (Lebanese, American), and the following predictors of interest, group norm, age group, media-based contact, and direct contact. Control variables included, gender, positive stereotypes, neutral stereotypes, and negative stereotypes. Gender was maintained in the models given past research showing differential social exclusion evaluations based on gender due to social status differences (Killen et al., 2013). Stereotypes (i.e., positive, neutral, negative) about Americans were also included in models to control for possible effects of stereotypes (Hitti &Killen, 2015).

Results

Descriptive statistics regarding stereotypes toward the out-group are reported in Table 1. Participants mostly reported positive stereotypes (42.20%), followed by negative stereotypes (32%), and neutral stereotypes (20.40%). Older participants mentioned more negative and neutral stereotypes (37.20% and 23.90%, respectively) than 12-year-olds (20.70% and 12.60%; $\chi^2(1, N = 275) = 7.48$, $p = .006$ and $\chi^2(1, N = 275) = 4.68$, $p = .031$, respectively). While 12-year-olds mentioned more positive stereotypes (54.00%) than 16-year-olds (36.70%, $\chi^2(1, N = 275) = 7.32$, $p = .007$). Correlations among all variables of interest are reported in Table 2.

To examine hypotheses, the GEE models in Table 3 were examined. Group identity was the within-subject factor and coded (0 = Lebanese, 1 = American) for the model with Lebanese as a reference group, and coded (0 = American, 1= Lebanese) for the model with American as a

reference group. These two models were assessed because when interaction terms are included in a GEE model the parameter estimates (*β, Exp(β)*) for main effects are interpreted as average change in the outcome due to the predictor, for the reference category in the within-subject factor, controlling for all other predictors. Therefore, in the model in which the Lebanese group was the reference category, odds ratios for main effects represent estimates for the Lebanese peer group, while odds ratios in the model with the American group as a reference represent odds ratios for the American peer group. Interaction effects were included to test differences between group identity levels (Lebanese and American peer groups).

Group norm effects. First to test H1a – predicting norms would influence inclusion expectations and whether participants prioritized shared interest over national identity – effects for group norms in each model were examined. The findings support the hypothesis that group norms impacted participants expected inclusion of an out-group target with similar interests. They showed that on average the odds of expecting a group with an exclusion norm would include an out-group target were greater than inclusion into a group with an inclusion norm (Lebanese group: Wald χ^2 (1) = 10.26, p = .001, OR = 2.33*;* American group*:* Wald χ^2 (1) = 6.28, p = .012, OR = 1.96). Figure 2 illustrates this finding showing that shared interests were prioritized over national identity, when groups had an exclusion norm, but not to the same degree as groups with an inclusion norm.

To test whether norms were interpreted differently based on the group's identity (H1b), the group identity × group norm interaction effect was examined. The interaction was statistically non-significant (p = .630), indicating that participants' interpretation of group norms did not differ based on the group's identity. Therefore, hypothesis 1b was not supported.

Age differences. Next, hypothesis 2 regarding age-related differences in participants expected inclusion was examined. It was expected that older participants would focus more on national identity than 12-year-olds. Findings showed no main effect for age group in the Lebanese group as reference model, but showed an effect for age group in the American group as reference model (Wald χ^2 (1) = 5.21, p = .022). This difference in models was supported by an interaction effect in both models showing that parameter estimates for effects of age group differed by the group's identity (see Figure 3a). Thus, on average, the odds of 16-year-olds expecting an American group to choose an out-group target were 0.53 times those of 12-year-olds. Therefore, 16-year-olds were less likely than 12-year-olds to expect an American peer group would choose a Lebanese with similar interests.

Intergroup Contact. To test the role of intergroup contact on forced inclusion assessments (H3) main effects for direct contact and media-based contact, as well as interaction effects with group identity were examined in the models. Table 3 indicated an effect for direct contact was found for expectations about the Lebanese group (Wald χ^2= 5.00, df = 1, p = .025) but not for expectations about the American group (p = .260). Thus, when Lebanese youth assessed which target their own group would include, on average the odds that those with higher levels of direct contact would expect inclusion of an out-group target with similar interests were 1.48 greater than those with lower levels of direct contact. No group identity × direct contact effect was found indicating the effects of direct contact on expected inclusion did not statistically significantly differ between the two groups ($OR_{Lebanese}$ = 1.48; $OR_{American}$ = 1.22).

Additionally, an effect for media-based contact was found for expectations regarding the American group (Wald χ^2= 6.29, df = 1, p = .012) but not the Lebanese group (p = .579). An interaction effect for group identity × media-based contact was also found (Wald χ^2= 4.00, df =

1, $p = .045$), indicating that the effect was statistically different between the two groups (see Figure 3b). Altogether, the findings indicated that when expecting inclusion into an American group, on average the odds that those with higher levels of media-based contact would expect inclusion of an out-group target with similar interests were 1.46 greater than those with lower levels of media-based contact.

Discussion

The current study addressed novel questions about evaluations of inclusion and exclusion among Lebanese Arab youth, within a context that is politically charged among Lebanese Arab adults (Pew Research Center, 2005). The findings indicated that, unlike attitudes among Lebanese adults, Lebanese youth expected peers to be inclusive toward American peers. When forced to choose they expected groups would give priority to peers with shared interests over shared nationality. This was the case when thinking about inclusion into their own Lebanese peer group and when predicting whom an American out-group would include. This was counter to previous findings with U.S. samples in which non-Arab youth attributed ethnic exclusivity to an Arab American out-group. Specifically, non-Arab American youth choose an Arab peer with different interests over an American peer with the same interests even when they expected their own American group to be inclusive towards an Arab peer (Hitti & Killen, 2015).

The study provided a different vantage point regarding ethnicity biases that have been demonstrated by non-Arab youth in the United States. The current study sampled Lebanese Arab participants, living in their own country, making judgments about the inclusion of a Lebanese or an American peer into their own or the out-group's peer groups. Interestingly, many of the same processes were documented regarding the role of group norms and group identity with a few exceptions.

Group Norms and Group Identity

Consistent with previous research indicating the potency of group norms in intergroup context (Abrams & Rutland, 2008; Nesdale, 2008), groups norms played a key role in Lebanese youth's inclusion judgments. The group norms examined in this Lebanese/American intergroup context were exclusion norms ("We like others who are similar") and inclusion norms ("We like others who are different"). These norms helped assess whether Lebanese youth prioritized information regarding interests in activities (individuating characteristics) over national identity (group-based characteristics) when assessing the inclusion of peers. As expected, group norms mattered and interests in activities were prioritized over national identity. This meant an exclusion norm of liking others who are similar was interpreted as liking those who shared the same interest and not the same national identity, whereas an inclusive norm of liking others who are different was interpreted as preferring both shared interests and national identity. This is consistent with previous findings in U.S. samples, where shared interests were prioritized over ethnic and racial identity for inclusion into one's in-group (Hitti et al., 2019).

Unlike previous findings in Hitti and Killen (2015), in which the similarity was interpreted as meaning similar ethnic identity for an Arab American out-group, however, in this study the inclusion criteria, prioritizing shared interest, applied to both a Lebanese in-group and an American out-group. One possible explanation for the discrepancy between both samples is that despite negative messages from local media about America (Melki, 2004), Lebanese youth might be responding to positive messages from U.S.-based media (Melki, 2015). U.S. youth, on the other hand, are exposed to media vilifying Arab people from an early age, through animation series and movies (Shaheen, 2003). Yet an explicit distinction between U.S.-based and local media was not made when assessing media-based contact.

Age and Intergroup Contact

Consistent with SRD (Rutland, et al., 2010), age differences were found but only when assessing inclusion into an American group. Lebanese 16-year-olds expected an American peer group to be less inclusive toward an out-group peer than did younger participants. This could be attributed to adolescents' increasing concerns with group identity as a means to help groups function smoothly or their increased awareness of stereotypes associated with Americans. While older participants, compared to their younger counterparts, reported more negative and neutral stereotypes and less positive stereotypes, it is unlikely that stereotypes were driving this age difference. The age effect was found when controlling for all types of stereotypes. This finding is therefore more consistent with previous research showing adolescents' growing concerns for group identity and its role in group dynamics, which allows them to factor in identity politics when making inclusion decisions (Abrams et al., 2009; Rutland, et al., 2010).

Additionally, unlike previous findings (Hitti & Killen, 2015; Killen & Rutland, 2011), there was no age effect when making inclusion assessments about one's own group. The fact that this age effect was only present for inclusion expectations regarding an American out-group, and not their own group, is novel. It provides initial evidence that in some contexts identity considerations during adolescence impact expectations of how out-groups might behave. It could also mean when it comes to one's own group norm, Lebanese 12-year-olds have the same group dynamics acumen as their older counterparts. More research contrasting perceptions of one's own group with those of an out-group in varying intergroup contexts and at different ages is needed to clarify this finding. In addition, including other types of assessments of intergroup relationships such as out-group helping would provide more information regarding expectations about out-groups in the Lebanese context (Hitti & Mulvey, 2021).

Intergroup contact. Research has supported the view that experiences with intergroup contact mitigate intergroup biases in mostly European and North American samples (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). Previous research has also shown, in the United States exposure to diverse peers impacts children's focus on shared interest over racial identity (McGlothlin & Killen, 2005). These findings were extended in this study for Lebanese 12- and 16-year-olds. What was novel was that contact mattered not only when expecting inclusion into one's own Lebanese peer group, but also when expecting inclusion into an American out-group. Direct contact with American peers helped Lebanese youth prioritize shared interests in activities over national identity when making inclusion decisions regarding their own group. Media-based contact impacted how Lebanese youth expected an American out-group would behave.

Media-based contact was positively correlated with positive stereotypes for this sample of Lebanese youth. Lebanese youth, particularly those from affluent families and those who attend private schools, are exposed to high levels of U.S.-based media content, especially television programs, music, and films produced in the United States that positively portray U.S. cultures and personalities (Melki, 2015). It is plausible that this high exposure to positive portrayals of U.S. media characters positively influences Lebanese youths' attitudes toward Americans as an out-group. Social psychology research has posited that: "if viewers get to know and like out-group members on television, their attitudes toward the out-group as a whole will improve" (Dovidio, et al., 2010, p. 248). Future research should examine other sources of influence on children's intergroup inclusion, particularly when out-groups are portrayed negatively in mainstream media, especially in U.S. television and cinema. Additionally, the role of local versus non-local media should be explored further especially, in other intergroup contexts in Lebanon, such as growing tensions between Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees in

Lebanon. Future research should also address questions about the moderating effects of contact and age group on group norms while seeking to replicate current findings to fully understand how experience impacts group processes and intergroup inclusion across development.

Conclusion

This study provided new evidence for the role of group norms, age, and contact in how youth might expect out-groups to behave in an intergroup context. While Lebanese youth overall expected both their own group and an American out-group to prioritize interests in activities over national identity, significant differences for expectations for each group based on age and contact indicate that more research is needed in this area to clearly understand the processes at play. Finally, this study highlights the potential for media-based contact in helping youth attribute inclusivity toward out-groups. This is critical given that inclusive expectations could promote more direct contact with peers (Turner & Cameron, 2016). This work provides evidence for the positive role of indirect contact through media exposure, an avenue that requires further exploration in developmental intergroup research. It also suggests a possible negative role for groups that are negatively stereotyped in the media. This necessitates the engagement of children with media literacy pedagogies that help counter negative social identities and stereotypes in the media (De Abreu, et al., 2017). In sum, the findings point to the importance of documenting the complexities associated with how adolescents navigate the social world. Understanding group dynamics provides an important window into peer relationships, which provides the foundation for healthy development (Killen & Verkuyten, 2017; Smetana, 2011).

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Table 1

Stereotypes about Americans: Percent Use

	12-year-olds	16-year-olds	Total
Neutral Stereotypes	12.60%[a]	23.90%[a]	20.40%
positive Stereotypes	54.00%[b]	36.70%[b]	42.20%
Negative Stereotypes	20.70%[c]	37.20%[c]	32.00%
Factual	4.60%	4.80%	4.70%
Other	16.10%	19.70%	18.50%

[a] $p = .031$, [b] $p = .007$, [c] $p = .006$

Table 2

Correlation Table

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Forced Inclusion for Lebanese Group									
2	Forced Inclusion for American Group	-.15*								
3	Group Norm	.19*	.15*							
4	Age Group	.04	-.16**	.02						
5	Direct Contact	.12*	.09	-.11	-.02					
6	Media-based Contact	.01	.16*	.09	.00	.01				
7	Neutral Stereotypes	-.04	.05	-.15*	.13*	.00	.05			
8	Positive Stereotypes	.00	.11	.04	-.16**	.01	.14*	-.01		
9	Negative Stereotypes	-.08	-.08	-.10	.17**	-.05	-.10	-.02	.08	
10	Gender	-.05	-.09	.08	.13*	-.04	-.10	-.02	-.13*	.01

Note. Forced group inclusion (0 = In-group target, 1 = Out-group target), Group norm (Inclusion norm = 0 and Exclusion norm = 1), Age group (12-year-olds = 0 and 16-year-olds = 1), Gender (Female = 0 and Male = 1), Positive Stereotypes (No mention = 0, Mention = 1), Neutral Stereotypes (No mention = 0, Mention = 1), and Negative Stereotypes (No mention = 0, Mention = 1). *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

Table 3

Generalized Estimating Equation Models

	Lebanese group as a reference[a]					American group as a reference[b]				
				Exp(β) 95% CI					*Exp(β) 95% CI*	
Variables	*β*	*S.E.*	*Exp(β)*	*Lower*	*Upper*	*β*	*S.E.*	*Exp(β)*	*Lower*	*Upper*
Constant	-1.06	0.64	0.35	0.10	1.22	-1.30	0.68	0.27	0.07	1.03
Group Identity	-0.24	1.00	0.79	0.11	5.54	0.24	1.00	1.27	0.18	8.95
Group norm	0.85	0.26	2.33** *	1.39	3.91	0.67	0.27	1.96*	1.16	3.32
Age group	0.32	0.28	1.38	0.80	2.37	-0.64	0.28	0.53*	0.30	0.91
Media-based contact	-0.08	0.14	0.92	0.70	1.22	0.38	0.15	1.46*	1.09	1.97
Direct contact	0.39	0.17	1.48*	1.05	2.08	0.20	0.17	1.22	0.87	1.70
Gender	-0.24	0.17	0.79	0.56	1.11	-0.24	0.17	0.79	0.56	1.11
Positive stereotypes	0.18	0.18	1.19	0.84	1.69	0.18	0.18	1.19	0.84	1.69
Neutral stereotypes	0.05	0.23	1.05	0.66	1.65	0.05	0.23	1.05	0.66	1.65
Negative stereotypes	-0.31	0.19	0.73	0.51	1.07	-0.31	0.19	0.73	0.51	1.07
Group Identity: Group Norm	-0.17	0.36	0.84	0.42	1.70	0.17	0.36	1.19	0.59	2.40
Group Identity: Age Group	-0.96	0.43	0.38*	0.17	0.88	0.96	0.43	2.62*	1.14	6.04
Group Identity: Media-Based Contact	0.46	0.23	1.58*	1.01	2.48	-0.46	0.23	0.63*	0.40	0.99
Group Identity: Direct Contact	-0.20	0.26	0.82	0.50	1.36	0.20	0.26	1.22	0.73	2.02

Note. Forced group inclusion (0 = In-group target, 1 = Out-group target), Group norm (Inclusion norm = 0 and Exclusion norm = 1), Age group (12-year-olds = 0 and 16-year-olds = 1), Gender (Female = 0 and Male = 1), Positive Stereotypes (No mention = 0, Mention = 1), Neutral Stereotypes (No mention = 0, Mention = 1), and Negative Stereotypes (No mention = 0, Mention = 1). *p < .05; **p < .01; and ***p < .001

[a] Group identity coded (0 = Lebanese, 1 = American), [b] Group identity coded (0 = American, 1= Lebanese).

Figure 1

Depiction of groups in each survey: (a) Lebanese peer group and (b) American (non-Arab) peer group

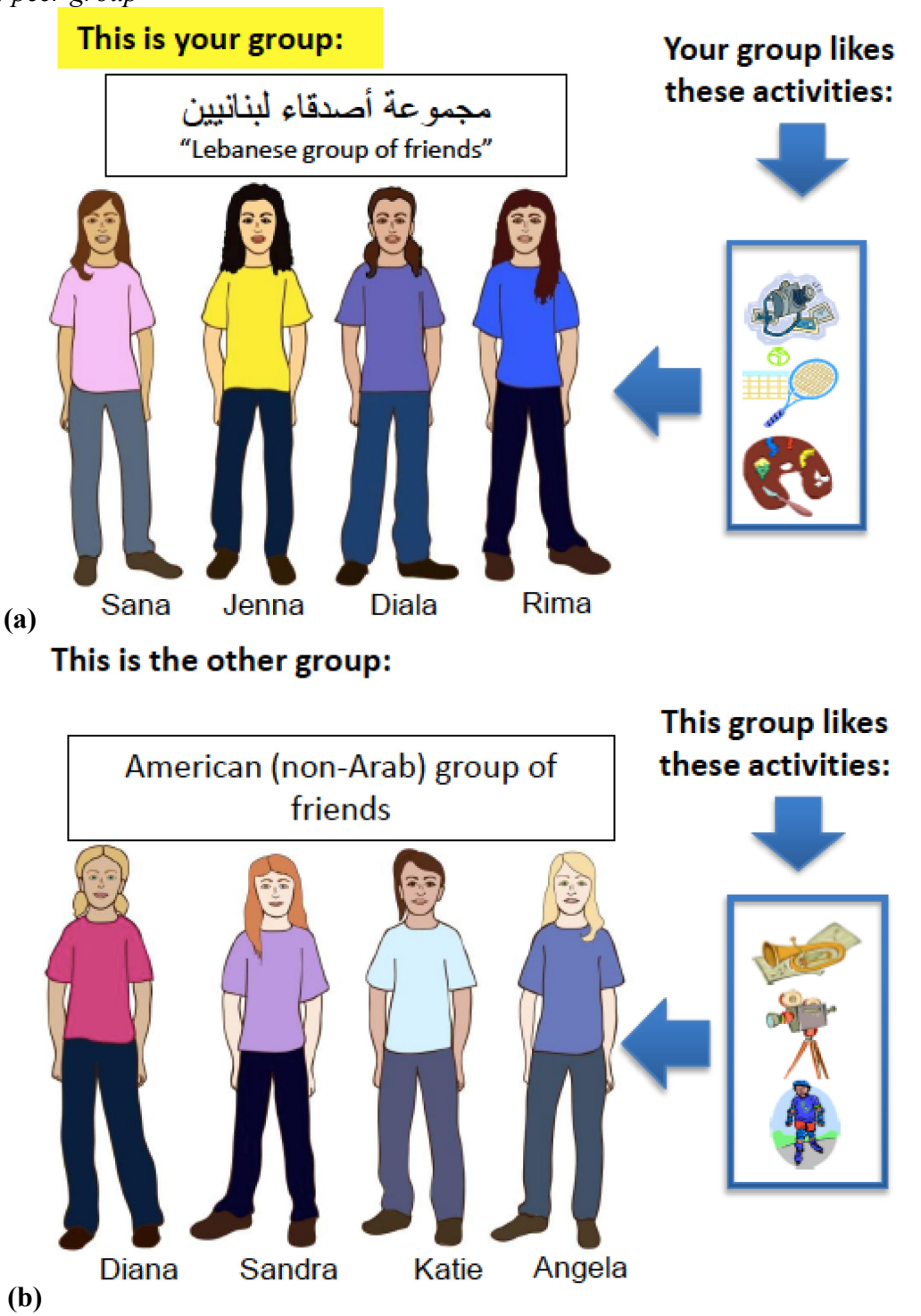

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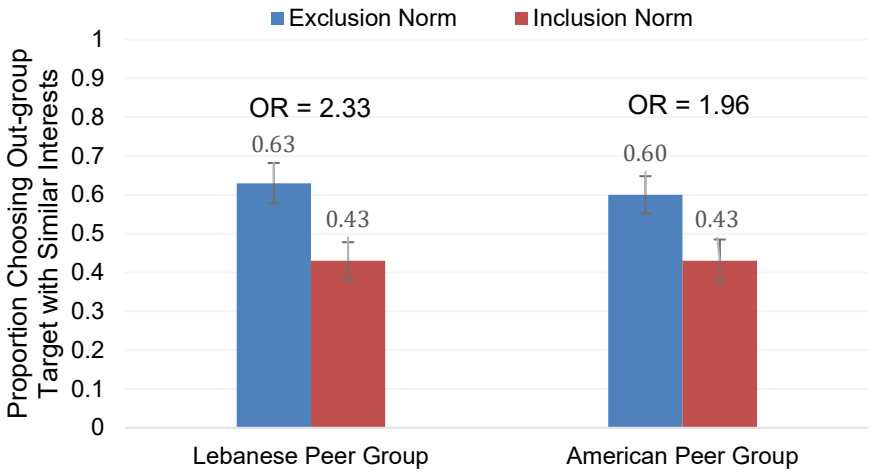
Figure 2

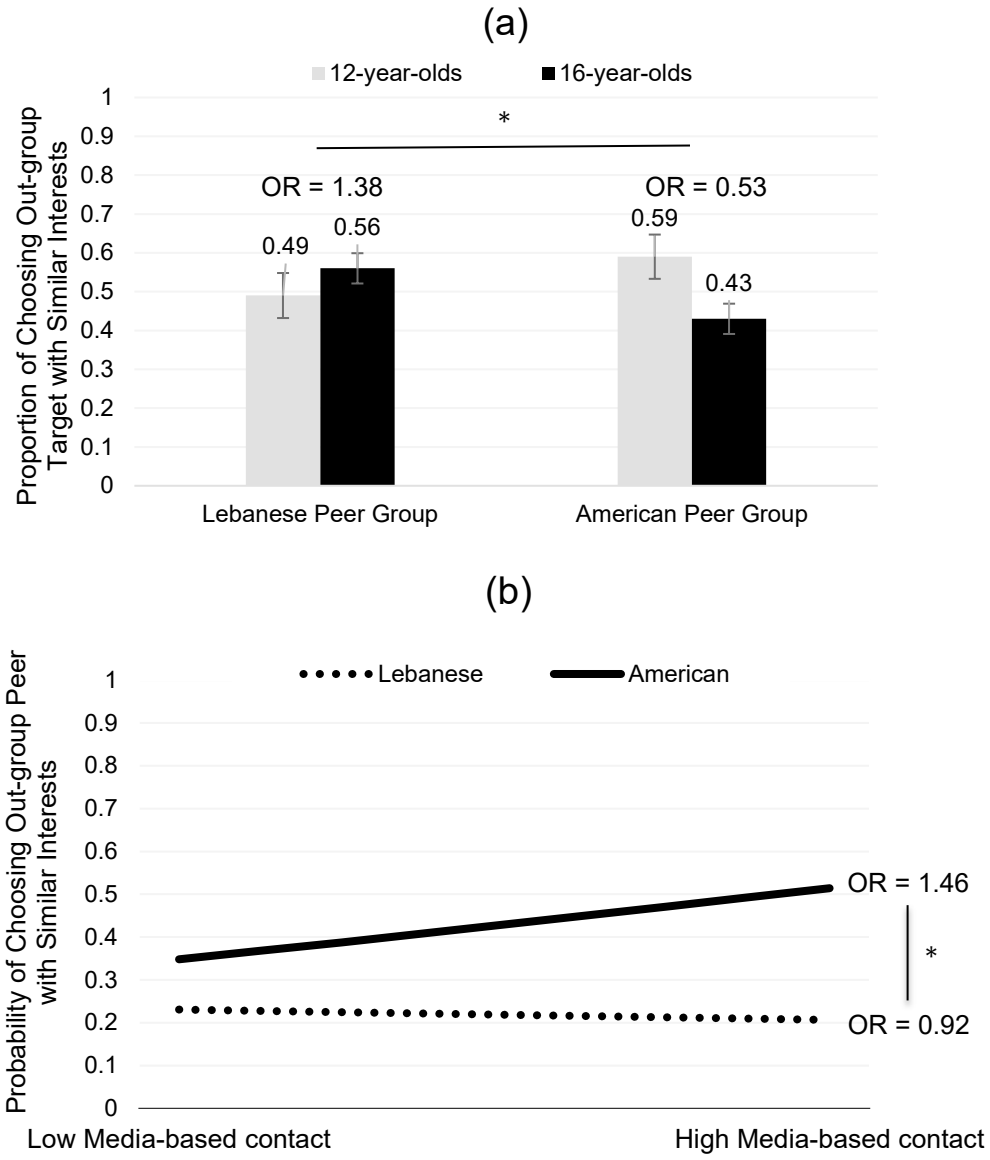
Forced group inclusion by group norm



Note. Proportions represent estimated marginal means generated from the GEE models.

Figure 3

Interaction effects for age group and media-based contact by group identity



Note. (a) Shows the Group Identity × Age Group effect based on estimated marginal means, and (b) Shows a Group Identity × Media-based Contact effect based on estimated parameters given that media-based contact was a continuous variable.
*$p < .05$

Supplemental Material

Participants'' reasoning about their inclusion expectations were obtained to better understand their underlying criteria for inclusion. Due to growing concerns for group functioning and group identity in older adolescents (Rutland, et al., 2010; Smetana, 2011), it was predicted that 16-year-olds would be less inclusive and would use more reasoning related to group functioning and group identity than 12-year-olds (H2b). The *forced group inclusion reasoning* ("Why? (Please fill out the lines with your answer.)") was given after each forced inclusion measure ("Who do you think the group will invite?").

Participants' justifications for forced inclusion responses were coded using categories drawn from social domain theory (Smetana, 2006) and the results of pilot testing. Analyses were conducted on the most frequently used justifications, those used in at least 10% of responses. Two categories of reasoning emerged: (a) *activity preferences* (e.g., "She likes to do different activities" or "He likes tennis just like them") and (b) *national identity* (e.g., "He's American which is different from them" or "She's Lebanese, they would like her"). Justification responses for inclusion evaluations could have a maximum of two codes, thus responses were coded as 1 = full use of the category, 0.5 = partial use, 0 = no use of the category. Partial use of a category occurs when it is cited simultaneously with another category. Based on 27% of the interviews (n = 75), 92% agreement was achieved between two coders with Cohen's κ = .90 for interrater reliability.

Analyses. To investigate age-related differences in the type of reasoning used when participants were making forced group inclusion assessments, two separate 2 (Age

Group: 12-year-olds, 16-year-olds) × 2 (Gender: female, male) × 2 (Group Norm: exclusion norm, inclusion norm) × 2 (Inclusion decision: out-group target with similar interests, in-group target with different interests) × 2 (Reasoning: activity preferences, national identity) ANOVAs with repeated measures on the last factor were conducted.

Inclusion into a Lebanese peer group. First, a main effect for reasoning indicated that activity preferences were used statistically significantly more than national identity, F (1, 252) = 26.24, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$ (Table 4). Second, a significant Reasoning × Inclusion Decision interaction effect, F (1, 252) = 16.75, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, and a significant Reasoning × Group Norm interaction effect, F (1, 252) = 3.72, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, were found. Thirdly, these were qualified by a statistically significant Reasoning × Inclusion Decision × Group Norm interaction effect, F (1, 252) = 63.73, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .20$, which showed that youth matched their choices of who to include with the group norm. Thus, when a Lebanese with different interests was merged into an in-group with an inclusion norm ("We like those who are different"), participants referenced activity preferences more than national identity, $p < .001$. When participants chose to include a Lebanese in-group target into a group with an exclusion norm ("We like those who are similar"), participants reasoned about it by referencing national identity, $p < .001$. When participants chose to include an American with similar interests into a group with an exclusion, they referenced activity preferences more than national identity. Yet, when choosing to include an American into a group with an inclusion norm, they reasoned about the decision using both activity preferences and national identity, $p = .152$. Consistent with hypothesis H1a, reasoning data indicated participants were matching the

characteristics of the target they chose with the group norm, however, there was no effect for age.

Inclusion into an American peer group. Similarly, when making expected inclusion decisions on behalf of an American peer group (Table 4), a main effect for reasoning indicated that activity preferences were used statistically significantly more than national identity, F (1, 246) = 16.29, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. In addition, a significant Reasoning × Inclusion Decision interaction effect, F (1, 246) = 28.01, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, and a significant Reasoning × Group Norm interaction effect, F (1, 246) = 8.67, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .3$ were found. These were qualified by a statistically significant Reasoning × Inclusion Decision × Group Norm interaction effect, F (1, 246) = 87.03, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$. Thus, when participants were evaluating an American peer group with an inclusion norm ("We like those who are different"), participants referenced activity preferences more so than national identity, $p < .001$ when choosing to include an American with different interests. When the group had an exclusion norm ("We like those who are similar"), they referenced national identity, $p < .001$, more than activity preferences when choosing the American target. However, when choosing to include a Lebanese with similar interests into an American group with an exclusion norm, they referenced activity preferences more than national identity, $p < .001$. When choosing to include a Lebanese into an American group with an inclusion norm, they reasoned about the decision using both activity preferences and national identity, $p = .152$. Again, counter to expectations no age effects were found in participants' reasoning.

Summary. Consistent with SRD (Rutland, et al., 2010), participants' reasoning corroborated their forced inclusion expectations as impacted by group norms. Findings

showed that an exclusion norm primed the use of national identity as an inclusion criterion when choosing to include an in-group target. This provided participants with a reason to be exclusive toward out-group targets despite their shared interests. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that exclusion norms can increase negative attitudes toward out-group members (Nesdale, 2008). Also consistent with this research is the fact that inclusion norms can provoke more intergroup inclusion for those who make decisions based on group identity. For instance, Lebanese youth relied on national identity as much as activity preferences to reason about choosing an American peer with similar interests into a group with an inclusion norm. This indicated their support for national diversity.

Table 4

Reasoning About Forced Group Inclusion Assessment

	Activity preferences *M* (*S.E.*)	National identity *M* (*S.E.*)
Lebanese peer group		
Exclusion norm		
In-group target, different interests (*n* = 49)	0.13 (.05)	0.61 (.07)
Out-group target, similar interests (*n* = 87)	0.73 (.05)	0.04 (.02)
Inclusion norm		
In-group target, different interests (*n* = 72)	0.60 (.06)	0.12 (.04)
Out-group target, similar interests (*n* = 60)	0.37 (.06)	0.30 (.05)
American peer group		
Exclusion norm		
In-group target, different interests (*n* = 57)	0.08 (.03)	0.65 (.06)
Out-group target, similar interests (*n* = 73)	0.79 (.04)	0.05 (.02)
Inclusion norm		
In-group target, different interests (*n* = 77)	0.62 (.05)	0.18 (.04)
Out-group target, similar interests (*n* = 55)	0.44 (.06)	0.34 (.06)