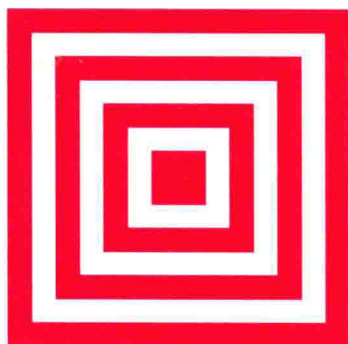


How Children and Adolescents Evaluate Gender and Racial Exclusion



Melanie Killen
Jennie Lee-Kim
Heidi McGlothlin
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with commentary by
Charles C. Helwig

MONOGRAPHS OF THE SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Willis F. Overton, *Editor*

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ABSTRACT

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Children's and adolescents' social reasoning about exclusion was assessed in three different social contexts. Participants ($N = 294$) at three ages, 10 years (4th grade), 13.7 years (7th grade), and 16.2 years (10th grade), fairly evenly divided by gender, from four ethnic groups, European-American ($n = 109$), African-American ($n = 96$), and a combined sample of Asian-American and Latin-American participants ($n = 89$) were interviewed regarding their social reasoning about exclusion based on group membership, gender, and race. The contexts for exclusion were friendship, peer, and school. Significant patterns of reasoning about exclusion were found for the context, the target (gender or race) of exclusion, and the degree to which social influence, authority expectations, and cultural norms explained children's judgments. There were also significant differences depending on the gender, age, and ethnicity of the participants. The findings support our theoretical proposal that exclusion is a multifaceted phenomenon and that different forms of reasoning are brought to bear on the issue. This model was drawn from social-cognitive domain theory, social psychological theories of stereotype knowledge and inter-group relationships, and developmental studies on peer relationships. The results contribute to an understanding of the factors involved in the developmental emergence of judgments about exclusion based on group membership as well as to the phenomena of prejudice, discrimination, and the fair treatment of others.

HOW CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS EVALUATE GENDER AND RACIAL EXCLUSION

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I: INTRODUCTION, THEORETICAL BACKGROUND, AND PRIOR RESEARCH

... child morality throws light on adult morality. If we want to form men and women, nothing will fit us so well for the task as to study the laws that govern their formation.

Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child*

Thought finds a greater difficulty in dealing with our grasp of group events (than with perceiving individuals), despite the fact that we act as members of groups and deal with others in terms of their group membership. A prominent reason for this difficulty is that human groups, unlike things, consist of a multiplicity of individuals or units, each of which is itself a highly complex system.

Solomon Asch, *Social Psychology*

If we operate with a determinate conception of the human being that is meant to have some normative moral and political force, we must also, in applying it, ask which beings we take to fall under the concept. And ... all too easily ... the powerless can be excluded.

Martha Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice*

Exclusion from social groups is a source of conflict, stress, and tension in social life around the globe. If we are to address the multitude of problems that we witness around the world among and between groups, cultures, religions, and countries, it is important to understand the developmental origins of exclusion. How does one explain exclusion? What makes it legitimate? When is it wrong, why is it wrong, and how do we conceptualize such acts? At what points in development do children begin to exclude one another on the basis of gender, race, and ethnicity? What do children think about exclusion, and what forms of reasoning do they use in making decisions related to it? As Solomon Asch (1952) has elegantly written, understanding individual social cognition about social groups requires analyzing the complexities of social groups. In so doing we must also define the parameters of the group—that is, who is included

and who is excluded. We propose that these types of decisions involve multiple considerations, and addressing these issues involves conducting research that is informed by multidisciplinary lines of research and scholarship.

There is surprisingly little research on how children evaluate exclusion from groups despite the rather large output of work on stereotyping, intergroup relationships, peer rejection, moral reasoning, and cultural norms and conventions. We have drawn from different avenues of research to formulate a research program designed to investigate how children evaluate exclusion from social groups, relationships, and institutions. Our research has emerged over the past five years and reflects only the beginning of a line of work necessary to fully understand this complex phenomenon. The events of the fall of September, 2001, point to the need to better understand how individuals reason about exclusion, when it is a legitimate decision designed to preserve group functioning, and when it is an unfair decision designed to perpetuate discrimination, inequality, and oppression. How do individuals deal with decisions that involve conflicts between group functioning, on the one hand, and unfairness, on the other hand? Most relevant to our inquiry is the developmental question: What are the developmental origins of these types of judgments? How do children and adolescents evaluate exclusion based on group membership and when do stereotypes, biases, and fairness judgments enter into decision-making about exclusion? These questions guided our research program, one that constitutes a very preliminary inquiry into this vexed and complicated aspect of human life.

In developmental psychology, much of the research on exclusion from social groups has focused on peer rejection (Asher & Coie, 1990; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998) and, more recently, peer victimization (Graham & Juvonen, 1998). Studies in the area of children's social competence have demonstrated that children who are rejected from social groups experience a wide range of negative consequences that bear on the children's trajectories for healthy social development (Rubin et al., 1998). For example, children who are rejected from social groups are at risk for poor academic achievement, increased depression, and adolescent delinquency (Asher & Coie, 1990; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Graham & Taylor, 2002; Rubin, Coplan, Nelson, Cheah, & Lagace-Seguin, 1999). This result is further borne out by research on interpersonal rejection in adult interactions, which also finds that interpersonal rejection results in depression, anxiety, and a decrease in positive motivation to join groups (Leary, 1990). Thus, the outcome of extensive peer rejection and peer victimization is both negative and long term.

Most of this work, however, has been conducted from an individual social deficit model (Hymel, Wagner, & Butler, 1990). From that perspec-

tive, the focus of research is on the social deficits of the rejected child and/or the child who victimizes other children, as sometimes children who are rejected by others become victimizers (this relationship is complex and has been the focus of recent work in the area of peer harassment; see Graham & Juvonen, 2001). A range of risk factors that have been identified for children who victimize others includes aggressiveness (Hymel, Bowker, & Woody, 1993), the misreading of social cues (Crick & Dodge, 1994), and the inability to use prosocial strategies when responding to interpersonal conflicts (Crick & Dodge, 1989; Rubin & Krasnor, 1986). Factors that lead certain children to be rejected from groups include social withdrawal and shyness (Parkhurst & Asher, 1992), and social wariness (Newcombe & Bukowski, 1984). Researchers have recently pointed to the need to distinguish different subtypes of rejected children, those who are withdrawn and submissive from those who are aggressive (Rubin et al., 1998). More recently, researchers have pointed to the need to examine the relationship between children's social and moral judgments and victimization (see Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001). Generally, the individual social deficit model has led to interventions aimed at altering the behavior and thoughts of the rejected child (see Coie & Koepl, 1990).

We propose that rejection from social groups requires an examination of the role that social groups play in addition (and sometimes in contrast) to the process of the individual social deficit model that currently predominates research in developmental psychology. From our perspective, there needs to be a close examination of decisions by social groups, and an analysis of the contexts in which individuals as members of groups reject others. There may be times when groups reject individuals for reasons that are wholly external to the social skills or social abilities of the individual being rejected. These reasons include group membership, such as gender, ethnicity, race, religion, and social class. Throughout history, in fact, social groups have excluded individuals who do not conform to the expectations of the group, and these expectations reflect criteria regarding group membership, such as gender, race, and ethnicity. This type of rejection is not a result of the individual child's lack of social skills but is an outcome of concerns about group functioning, which in many circumstances includes prejudice and stereotypic attitudes on the part of the members of the group. Although they are closely related, we distinguish this group functioning form of exclusion from relational aggression, which is defined as the *intent* to harm another by undermining inclusion in groups (see Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Exclusion from groups is not necessarily a negative intent to harm others because there are situations in which exclusion from groups is designed to promote positive social group functioning without a negative intent toward others (e.g., exclusion of a slow runner from a sports team) as well

as to increase the comfort level of the group. Thus, without an examination of how children evaluate such acts, it is difficult to infer motives and intentions (see also Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001).

To formulate our theoretical model and to design our studies, we have drawn from an extensive body of literature on intergroup relationships in social psychology as well as on theory and research in developmental psychology. We have used a developmental social-cognitive model to formulate our hypotheses and expectations. We will now turn to our developmental model and then discuss theory and research on intergroup relationships, followed by a discussion of our prior studies on social reasoning about exclusion and inclusion, and conclude with a statement about our goals and expectations, which is expanded on in the next chapter.

SOCIAL-COGNITIVE DOMAIN MODEL

In the present project we analyze children's and adolescents' social reasoning about exclusion using a social-cognitive domain model (Turiel, 1983, 1998). The social-cognitive domain model guided this project in a number of ways. First, it provided a theoretical approach for analyzing social knowledge. Research generated from this model has provided a wealth of information on children's and adolescents' fairness reasoning (morality), social-conventional expectations (societal knowledge), and personal decision-making (psychological knowledge) (see Killen & Hart, 1995; Smetana, 1995; Turiel, 1983, 1998, 2002; Turiel, Killen, & Helwig, 1987). Three domains of knowledge have been identified: (a) the moral (justice, fairness, rights, and equality); (b) the societal (customs, conventions, norms, and etiquette); and (c) the psychological (individual jurisdiction, autonomy, self-esteem, and self-development). In general, the findings have revealed that individuals from early childhood to adulthood apply these forms of reasoning to their evaluations of social events, issues, and transgressions in social life. These categories were used to analyze how children and adolescents evaluated exclusion in multiple contexts in this study.

Second, our conceptualization of context stems from the social-cognitive domain model. A fundamental part of this project was to examine the ways in which children's and adolescents' reasoning about exclusion varies by the context—specifically, how exclusion is evaluated differently in situations that vary in terms of relationships and social expectations. The social-cognitive domain model proposes that individuals apply different forms of reasoning to a range of situations. This is in contrast to traditional stage models, which assume that individuals, at a particular point in their ontogenetic development, apply the same form of reason-

ing (referred to as a *structure*) across situations. From the social-cognitive domain perspective, it is proposed that individuals may apply reasons from one domain (e.g., moral or social-conventional) or more than one domain (both moral and personal) and that judgments include interpretations of specific features of the situation (see Helwig, 1995, 1997; Turiel et al., 1987, for analyses of context from this model). This approach is contextual in the sense that individuals' interpretations of context becomes part of their evaluation, and may be related to the type of reasoning that is applied to the situation. In this project, we predicted that evaluations of exclusion would vary depending on the context.

We chose to examine three contexts of exclusion judgments: friendship, peer group, and school; and two targets of exclusion: gender and race, resulting in six scenarios described to each participant. Our rationale for choosing these contexts and our expectations are described below. Because the social-cognitive domain model is context-oriented rather than stage-oriented, predictions are made about the multiple forms of reasoning that individuals use when assessing situations.

Third, researchers from the social-cognitive domain model have provided an established methodology for evaluating social reasoning about a wide range of issues and we applied this methodology in this project as well as extended it in several ways (to be discussed in more detail below). This includes using well-established coding systems for categorizing participants' reasons for their judgments and administering counterprobes for assessing the stability of children's and adolescents' judgments about exclusion.

Thus, the social-cognitive domain model guided this project by providing a conceptual basis for assessing social reasoning, a set of hypotheses about context, and a methodology for documenting children's and adolescents' social perspectives about exclusion. We now turn to a more in-depth description of the model.

In general, the strengths of the social-cognitive domain model, which have provided a striking contrast to the stage theories of moral development that were dominant until the early 1980s (Kohlberg, 1969, 1971, 1984; Piaget, 1932), are that (a) it analyzes the multiple forms of reasoning present in children's and adolescents' judgments rather than solely focusing on moral reasoning; (b) it moves the analysis away from how children and adolescents reason about unfamiliar hypothetical scenarios (sometimes once-in-a-lifetime events) to one that studies reasoning about everyday, familiar issues; (c) it examines how an individual's reasoning varies across a wide range of social contexts rather than reflecting general, global stages theorized to apply across diverse social contexts; (d) it shifts the focus of the study of morality away from the test of a hierarchical, primitive-to-advanced theory and toward an examination of how

individuals coordinate different forms of reasoning, moral and nonmoral, at different points in development; (e) it allows for examination of contextual and cultural variation in moral and nonmoral social reasoning; and (f) it does not compare individuals from different cultures on one scale or "standard" (for reviews, see Helwig, 1995; Helwig & Turiel, 2002; Killen, 1991; Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 1995; Tisak, 1995; Turiel, 1983, 1998, 2002; Turiel et al., 1987).

Initially, researchers from the social-cognitive domain perspective examined how children reasoned about straightforward moral transgressions such as unprovoked hitting (Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Smetana, 1984) or refusing to share toys or take turns (Smetana, 1989b), and social-conventional transgressions such as refusing to line up for recess (Tisak, 1995) or violating mealtime etiquette (Davidson, Turiel, & Black, 1983). This was done to validate the proposition that individuals differentiate between rules that are morally based and those that pertain to social conventions. Researchers, beginning with Nucci (1981), then extended the model to examine how children evaluate issues that are not regulated by rules, such as choice of friends (Smetana & Bitz, 1996), choice of occupation (Bregman & Killen, 1999), and privacy (Nucci, 2001; Nucci & Herman, 1982)—issues that were categorized as part of the personal or psychological domain (Nucci, 1981, 1996). Most of these transgressions (moral or social-conventional) and issues are categorized as straightforward because individuals use predominantly one form of reasoning when evaluating the legitimacy and nature of the acts. For example, hitting is typically viewed as wrong because it hurts someone (e.g., the wrongfulness of inflicting harm on another), not sharing toys is conceptualized as wrong because someone is denied access to resources, and choosing a friend is perceived to be a personal choice decision.

Social-cognitive domain research in the past 10 years has moved from its initial focus on straightforward rule transgressions to investigating complex issues. In contrast to straightforward rule transgressions, complex issues typically involve the use of more than one form of reasoning to evaluate the nature of the act. The research has included investigating how individuals evaluate issues such as drug use (Nucci, Guerra, & Lee, 1991), religion (Nucci & Turiel, 1993), homosexuality (Turiel, Hildebrandt, & Wainryb, 1985), parent-adolescent conflict (Smetana, 1989a), mixed emotions (Arsenio & Fleiss, 1996; Arsenio & Lover, 1995), conflict resolution (Ardila-Rey & Killen, 2001; Killen & Sueyoshi, 1995), interpersonal responsibilities (Miller & Luthar, 1989), autonomy (Nucci, 2001), and cultural expectations of social norms (Killen & Wainryb, 2000; Nucci, Killen, & Smetana, 1996; Turiel & Wainryb, 1998; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994).

Findings resulting from this research have revealed that when individuals evaluate such acts and issues, they weigh different considerations and

give priority to one perspective (or form of reasoning) over another. For example, in her research on adolescent-parent conflict, Smetana (1988) demonstrated that issues which generate conflict are ones in which adolescents and parents use different forms of reasoning to evaluate the same phenomenon. Adolescents judged cleaning one's room as a *personal* issue ("It's my room and I can live in it how I want to") and parents viewed it as a *social-conventional* issue ("If the neighbors see the way you keep this room I'll be embarrassed"). Nucci and Turiel (1993) examined how children and adolescents evaluate religious rules and prescriptions. They found that religious rules were evaluated with multiple forms of reasoning: moral (what one should do to be a good person), social-conventional (forms of dress and rituals that vary by religion), and personal (the decision to be a religious person). Thus, there are different ways in which issues can be complex. A complex issue may be one that some individuals view as a personal issue and others view as a social-conventional issue, such as certain examples of parent-adolescent conflicts. On the other hand, a complex issue may also be one in which most people use multiple forms of reasoning, such as moral, social-conventional, and personal ones, to evaluate it, as in the case of how people evaluate many religious prescriptions (Nucci & Turiel, 1993).

A small but burgeoning area of research from the social-cognitive domain perspective has focused on how individuals make judgments about democracy and rights (Helwig, 1997, 1998; Prencipe & Helwig, 2002; Ruck, Abramovitch, & Keating, 1998), tolerance (Crystal, Watanabe, & Chen, 2000; Wainryb, Shaw, & Maianu, 1998), personal freedoms (Nucci & Lee, 1993), acts of subversion and gender oppression (Turiel, 1998, 2002), and minority perspectives on autonomy and rights (Smetana & Gaines, 1999). These issues are complex because they involve the coordination of fairness and rights with judgments about social group, customs, norms, conventions, and personal choice. These foci are closely related to issues about exclusion based on group membership because exclusion potentially involves considerations of rights, tolerance, cultural expectations, social norms, and historical patterns of societal intergroup relationships. Only a few studies from the social-cognitive developmental model, however, have explicitly examined reasoning about intergroup relationships, such as reasoning about stereotypes, discrimination, and exclusion. We now discuss how the social-cognitive domain model has provided a way of examining context and a methodology for doing so.

The primary method used to investigate how individuals evaluate social issues from the social-cognitive domain model has been the interview method. Theoretical criteria have been used to examine whether individuals differentiate among social domains, and the types of justification responses given by individuals. For example, Turiel (1983) proposed

that moral rules differ from social-conventional rules along a number of dimensions. These included (a) generalizability (Is the act wrong in another country or school?); (b) authority contingency (Is the wrongfulness of an act contingent on authority mandates?); (c) authority jurisdiction (Is it okay for parents/teachers/or the government to make rules about X?); (d) rule contingency (Is the act all right if there are no rules about it?); (e) rule alterability (Is it all right to change the rule?); and (f) punishment mandate (Is the act wrong if there is no punishment?). Turiel (1983, 1998) based these criteria on ones used by moral philosophers (see Gewirth, 1978; Nagel, 1979) and predicted that individuals would use these criteria to distinguish moral transgressions from social-conventional transgressions. Thus, one of the goals of the empirical project was to determine whether philosophical criteria reflect the ways in which individuals make distinctions between social and moral transgressions. Individuals were asked to give reasons for their classification and evaluation of acts. These reasons were coded into a wide range of categories, such as fairness, rights, equality, social conventions, authority, punishment avoidance, and personal choice.

Research conducted over the past two decades has supported the theoretical predictions about the use of criteria and justifications. In more than 90 empirical studies (see Tisak, 1995; Smetana, 1995; Turiel et al., 1987) it has been shown that children, adolescents, and adults identify moral rules as generalizable (not a matter of authority jurisdiction or contingency, not rule contingent, and not a matter of punishment). Conversely, social-conventional rules are viewed as context-specific (under authority jurisdiction, contingent on authority, rule contingent, and legitimate even if no punishment is involved). Studies on this difference have been conducted with children as young as $2\frac{1}{2}$ years of age (Smetana & Braeges, 1990) up through adulthood (Turiel et al., 1985). When asked about unprovoked hitting, for example, children say that it is wrong even when a teacher says it is all right, or when everyone in the class agrees it is all right, or when people in another country say it is all right. Yet, while children initially say that "wearing pajamas to school" is wrong, they judge the act as all right if the teacher says it's all right, and okay if everyone agrees to do it, and all right in another country (Tisak & Turiel, 1984). Thus, there has been empirical verification of the use of these theoretical criteria for determining the distinctions individuals make when evaluating moral and social-conventional transgressions.

Nucci formulated additional criteria to be used for determining when individuals believe that an issue is not a matter of regulations or rules but a matter of personal jurisdiction (Nucci, 1981, 2001). For example, children were asked to categorize acts as independent of authority (moral), contingent on authority (social-conventional), and not a matter of right

or wrong but up to the individual to decide. Nucci found that children, adolescents, and parents identified a number of issues as personal, including choice of friends, hair length, clothes, and hobbies. This aspect of social reasoning has been documented in young children's judgments (Nucci, 2001) and in adolescent reasoning (Smetana & Bitz, 1996), as well as in parental judgments of children's role in the home (Nucci, 2001). Reasoning about the personal domain has also been shown to be important in judgments by individuals in non-Western cultures (Ardila-Rey & Killen, 2001; Nucci, Camino, Milintsky-Sapiro, 1996). Initially, these criteria were used to investigate how individuals evaluate straightforward issues, such as unprovoked hitting and conventional customs like etiquette; more recently they have been applied to complex issues involving a wide range of social contexts.

The social-cognitive domain model proposes that social reasoning varies by the context. In each situation, individuals have to assess the multiple dimensions often present in a context in order to make an evaluation, referred to as a *context analysis*. In most cases, individuals mentally pull apart the different dimensions of a situation and determine what predominates, what gets priority. Thus, it is essential for researchers to similarly analyze a situation being presented to participants for their evaluation. What are the components of the context and what are the predictions about how individuals will analyze it? The domain model provides some guidance. Are there moral components (e.g., issues of fairness, justice, or rights?), societal components (e.g., customs, cultural expectations?), and personal components (e.g., personal choice, privacy, intimate relationships)? Additionally, Wainryb (1991) has indicated that many situations involve informational assumptions (judgments about reality, the nature of learning, etc.) that enter into evaluations of social contexts.

EVALUATING EXCLUSION

Studying Context

In this project, we identified three social contexts, friendship, peer group, and school, and made predictions about the forms of reasoning that individuals would use when evaluating exclusion in these contexts. The extensive literature on peer rejection and peer victimization has focused primarily on friendship relationships (Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Rubin et al., 1998). The friendship context is clearly one in which children experience exclusion and experience negative consequences as a result of these experiences. Research from the social-cognitive domain approach has shown that individuals use personal reasoning when discussing choice of friends and decisions about friendship relationships (Nucci,

1996). No research that we know of has examined how children evaluate exclusion of a friend based on arbitrary categories, such as race and gender. Do children view this as a personal decision because it is about friendship, or as a moral transgression because it is about treating someone in such a way as to hurt their feelings (psychological harm) or using unfair reasons for refusing to get to know them (prejudicial treatment)?

The second context we chose to examine was the peer group context. This context involves exclusion at the group level, which is distinct from the dyadic friendship context. Social groups emerge during childhood and peak during middle-school and high school (Brown, 1989). In middle school, students spontaneously organize themselves into cliques and groups with clearly defined members, rituals, and customs (Brown, 1989; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Though structured group interactions are present in elementary school (e.g., sports, music clubs, chess clubs), adults organize most of these interactions, and parents and teachers govern membership. Exceptions occur during recess on the playground when exclusion from groups begins to occur. As has been documented by Putallaz and Wasserman (1990) entry into peer groups involves complex rituals that are slowly acquired by children through extensive group interaction. Research on entry rituals has shown that children who are excluded from groups are often those who have not yet figured out how to enter groups by using rituals that make it possible to join the group in a seamless fashion. This focus on the excluded child is important for understanding the consequences of peer rejection.

Children conceptualize social groups in social-conventional terms, such as focusing on what makes a group work well (group functioning; see Turiel, 1983). Children's behavior indicates that entry and exit rituals are created at a young age (by preschool) to give their social groups a sense of cohesiveness (Killen, 1991; Putallaz & Wasserman, 1990). What happens when a child uses entry rituals established by a peer group and continues to be rejected for reasons based on group membership, such as gender or race? The consequences of this type of rejection are not well understood, and one way to begin to understand this phenomenon is to study how children evaluate exclusion from groups based on gender and race. As Turiel (1983) articulated, social conventions are behavioral regularities designed to promote the smooth functioning of social groups. Most behavioral regularities are shared by members of groups (such as greetings, assigned roles, and shared group goals); yet, when conventions have to do with criteria for group membership itself, then the behavioral regularities designed to promote the group functioning may not be enough. For example, in the adult world, social conventions continue to exist that determine group membership, such as in golf clubs that are male-only. Interviews with male members of male-only golf clubs refer to social tra-

dition and custom ("It's always been that way"; "It's what the members are comfortable with"). How early do these types of justifications emerge regarding group membership and exclusion? When do fairness and equality principles take priority over group tradition? This was the focus, in part, of the analyses, on the peer group context. When and how do children reason about exclusion from peer group contexts in social-conventional (in contrast to moral) terms? Thus, these two contexts, friendship and peer group, are quite different from our third context, the school setting, which is the predominant institutional context in the child's world.

Exclusion from a societally organized institution, such as school, has been studied extensively in adult populations (Minow, 1990; Opatow, 1990; Skrentny, 1996). Attitudes and conventions around race-segregated and gender-segregated schools have changed dramatically in the United States over the past century. The *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1955 changed the legal basis for segregation, and with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, adult attitudes about exclusion based on race significantly changed by the end of the last century. Social psychologists have documented the ways in which explicit racism has significantly declined over the past 50 years in the United States (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000), and this has been reflected in the condemnation of race-segregated institutions. Although it has not been the subject of extensive research, one would predict that most children also condemn such practices, viewing it as wrong from a strictly moral viewpoint.

Attitudes about gender-segregated institutions are more positive than are those about race-segregated institutions given that many institutions remain gender-specific (such as same-sex schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts). At the same time, there is also a clear understanding in childhood that all children, boys and girls, should (and have the right to) attend school. Thus, we expected that the school context, one in which girls or African-American children were excluded from attending school, would be viewed very differently from the friendship and peer group contexts. Social institutions are subject to legal regulations and principles, which provide a more general level of accountability when it comes to the treatment of persons (Turiel, 1983). As a contrast to the friendship and peer group settings, we chose the school context as a setting in which exclusion was expected to be viewed in moral terms (as a moral transgression) and thus would be differentiated from dyadic and peer group forms of interaction, which would be viewed using multiple forms of reasoning.

Examining Gender and Race

In addition to context, we focused on two targets of exclusion: gender and race. We chose these two categories because individuals have