understanding children's worlds

Children and Social Exclusion

Morality, Prejudice, and Group Identity

Melanie Killen and Adam Rutland

WILEY-BLACKWELL

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Children and Social Exclusion

Understanding Children's Worlds

Series Editor: Judy Dunn

The study of children's development can have a profound influence on how children are brought up, cared for, and educated. Many psychologists argue that, even if our knowledge is incomplete, we have a responsibility to attempt to help those concerned with the care, education, and study of children by making what we know available to them. The central aim of this series is to encourage developmental psychologists to set out the findings and the implications of their research for others – teachers, doctors, social workers, students, and fellow researchers – whose work involves the care, education, and study of young children and their families. The information and the ideas that have grown from recent research form an important resource which should be available to them. This series provides an opportunity for psychologists to present their work in a way that is interesting, intelligible, and substantial, and to discuss what its consequences may be for those who care for, and teach, children: not to offer simple prescriptive advice to other professionals, but to make important and innovative research accessible to them.

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To Rob, Sasha, and Jacob for their love and affection,
and to Marcia, David, and Sean,
for their love and support (M.K.)

To Rachel, Kate, and Jonathan for their love and
endless inspiration, and to my late father, Peter, who
sadly died during the writing of this book, and Marion,
my mother, and Neil, my brother, for their continuous
love and support (A.R.)

Series Editor's Preface

This series, *Understanding Children's Worlds*, is concerned with children's social worlds, and their developing understanding of those worlds. The topics of exclusion and prejudice are clearly central to their social experiences, especially to their relationships with other children. What makes some children able to recognize and challenge stereotypic or prejudiced views of others? What experiences, in contrast, reinforce prejudice and bias? How well do we understand the development of individual differences in these early aspects of morality, and what are the trajectories in bias and prejudice from early childhood to adolescence and adulthood?

What is striking about this book is that Melanie Killen and Adam Rutland have brought together a notably wide range of ideas and research findings on these questions, a range that spans developmental psychology and social psychology – it is a bold vision that integrates very different ideas and theoretical approaches. Three themes stand out. First, Killen and Rutland summarize the early emergence of morality: how children view social exclusion as right or wrong, and the growth of their understanding of both explicit prejudicial views and implicit biases. Second, they consider children's ideas on group identity and exclusion, and carefully distinguish prejudice and exclusion. They examine, for instance, how children think about excluding individuals from within their own groups, and how they evaluate exclusion of individuals from a different group (intragroup versus intergroup exclusion). Third, importantly they move on to consider what we know about exclusion in diverse cultures – rather than solely in laboratory studies.

Particularly valuable, they then consider interventions that attempt to promote positive inclusion and a sense of shared identity among children from different groups. They assess how successful programs that vary

intergroup contact, media exposure, and, importantly, cross-group friendship can be. Their integration of the ideas and findings of social and developmental psychology does indeed shed light on the developmental programs which, they argue, are fundamental for progress towards a fairer society.

Judy Dunn

Preface

Exclusion and inclusion are pervasive in children's lives and continue throughout adulthood. Understanding why exclusion happens, how children think about it, and what it means for social development involves an analysis of individuals, groups, and relationships. Writing this book from our various perspectives, which included social cognition, moral development, social identity, and intergroup attitudes, we took a new view on exclusion and inclusion in children's lives, one that enabled us to reflect on its fundamental role in social development. We have described how it is that through experiencing exclusion and inclusion, children develop morality (when to include, when not to exclude, and why) and form social identity (what groups do I belong to, what group norms do I care about?).

As a result of these developmental processes, children become capable of challenging or reinforcing prejudicial attitudes and stereotypic beliefs (sometimes explicitly and often implicitly). This is because children who develop social identity without invoking moral judgments appear to justify exclusion in contexts that reflect prejudice, discrimination, and bias. Yet children who develop an understanding of group dynamics and balance these concerns with fairness and equality are well positioned to reject or challenge stereotypic expectations and prejudicial beliefs. The factors and sources of experience that contribute to these diverse trajectories and perspectives reflect the core of this book. The tension between morality and social identity is complex, which makes it an intriguing and compelling topic to write about.

We emerged from this project with a strong sense that much is at stake in understanding children's perspectives about exclusion and inclusion because of the different consequences to social exclusion and inclusion. Issues as important as social justice and fairness are invoked.

Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination are unfortunate outcomes of exclusion decisions that are made without a balance of all of the factors that are implicated. Thus, exclusion takes many forms throughout social life and its meaning is vast and varied.

We began this book as an integrative collaboration, crossing the boundaries of developmental and social psychology to understand exclusion in the child. Over the past 10 years, researchers in the fields of developmental, social, neuroscience, and cognitive psychology have investigated ingroup bias and outgroup threat in their research designs and empirical projects; at the same time, researchers from many different subfields of social science have delved into morality and moral judgment in the child. The convergence of interest on these topics from such diverse areas is astounding and engaging. We found that the areas of intergroup attitudes and morality were often dichotomized, however, and not well integrated. Even closer to our own areas of study, we have found that developmental research has not traditionally examined morality in the context of intergroup relations, and social psychology research on social identity has not typically studied moral reasoning. Thus, one aim of this book was to take an integrative approach for describing how intergroup attitudes, morality, and social identity emerge in the child and create the conditions for exclusion and inclusion.

We would like to thank our respective colleagues and graduate students for discussions and collaborations on the topics in this book. Melanie Killen thanks her colleagues Dominic Abrams, William Arsenio, Natasha Cabrera, Robert Coplan, David Crystal, Ileana Enesco, Nathan Fox, Silvia Guerrero, Dan Hart, Charles Helwig, Stacey Horn, Peter Kahn, Sheri Levy, Tina Malti, Clark McKown, Drew Nesdale, Larry Nucci, Ken Rubin, Martin Ruck, Judi Smetana, Charles Stangor, Elliot Turiel, Cecilia Wainryb, Allan Wigfield, and Amanda Woodward for many collaborations and conversations about social cognition, social development, morality, and exclusion, as well as for many research collaborations that served as the basis for most of her research. In addition, she is grateful to William Damon and Elliot Turiel for inspiring her to study the development of morality, and for providing an intellectually engaging community in graduate school, one that has endured for several decades post-graduate, to Jonas Langer for his encouragement, to Judi Smetana for her mentorship, and to Larry Nucci for his guidance. Melanie Killen also thanks her former doctoral students for their many contributions to the research program on social and moral development, for pushing the research agenda into new and original research directions, and for becoming collaborators on many of

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Exclusion and Inclusion in Children's Lives

Acquiring morality, identifying with groups, and developing autonomy provide the foundation for social development in childhood and continue throughout adulthood. Understanding these foundational aspects of development helps to explain why children exclude and include peers, and how it is related to a larger part of becoming a member of a society and culture. When is exclusion legitimate and when it is wrong? What is involved when children exclude other peers and how is this related to exclusion as it happens in the adult world?

While children begin to understand the importance of including peers in their social exchanges, excluding other children from friendships and social groups is complicated. What is complicated is that inclusion is not always desirable, even from an adult perspective, and exclusion is not always wrong. Sports teams, music clubs, and social events often require abilities and talents that are necessary to join, and social events are often arranged in such a way that some type of decision rule about exclusion is used to make it work well. In fact, there are times when it would be viewed as negative to include someone in a group when the individual does not meet the expectations for the group goals (a slow runner will be excluded from a track team). In addition to meeting the criteria for inclusion there are other factors that are considered, which include what makes the group work well. For example, an overly aggressive individual or someone who has unhealthy intentions towards others might be excluded. This type of exclusion is more complicated because it refers to psychological traits which may be inferred by behavior that belies the actual talents of the individual. Moreover, psychological

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