

# Chapter 5

## What We Know about Peer Relations and Exclusion

In this chapter, we will provide a brief overview of different theoretical approaches to peer exclusion and then review findings on inclusion and exclusion in children's lives. To fully understand problems that occur as a result of experiences of exclusion, it is also necessary to understand children's experiences with inclusion. In our previous chapters we focused on morality, which is reflected in children's orientations to be fair, children's prejudice, bias, and group identity, which are often revealed in their decisions to exclude others. Focusing on only one or the other is often necessary, and yet, to understand the "whole child" it is important to capture both the positive and negative aspects of social development. In this chapter, and the next chapter on peer exclusion and group dynamics, we explain the interweaving of these two aspects of social development.

The consequences of peer rejection and exclusion bear on children's healthy social development. Excluded children can experience hurt feelings and anxiety; in more extreme cases, excluded children can experience depression, social withdrawal, and disengagement. As has been mentioned there are many different types of exclusion. As explained by Abrams, Hogg, and Marques (2005), the study of exclusion can focus on individual personality traits that lead to exclusion (intrapersonal), the psychological dynamics when one person excludes another person (interpersonal), the group dynamics that occur when an individual excludes someone from their own group (intragroup), and the group dynamics that occur when a group excludes someone from another group (an outgroup).

Identifying these different sources of exclusion is important because intrapersonal and interpersonal exclusion focus on the personality traits of the individual, whereas intragroup and intergroup exclusion focus on the role of the group, both in terms of group norms as well as group identity. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of these sources of exclusion has to do with the focus on personality traits and individual differences that lead to peer rejection (interpersonal), on the one hand, in contrast to the focus on normative expectations that lead to prejudice, bias, and exclusion (intergroup), on the other hand. While there are psychopathological dimensions to the extreme cases for both types of exclusion, such as “ethnic cleansing” for group exclusion (Opatow, 1990; Staub, 1990) and victimization in the form of bully–victim relationships that result from extreme personality traits, the conceptualization of exclusion and the implications for intervention are quite different. As well, the source of the problems associated with exclusion based on personality (intrapersonal and interpersonal) and based on group identity (intragroup and intergroup) are different. Because not all forms of exclusion are detrimental or negative, it is essential to define, examine, and describe the multitude of ways in which children engage in exclusion at different levels in social interactions, relationships, and groups. Thus, in the next section of this chapter, each form of exclusion will be briefly discussed.

### **Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Exclusion: Social Traits and Individual Differences**

As mentioned, intrapersonal and interpersonal exclusion refer to exclusion based upon the individual psychological dispositions of children that make them vulnerable to the negative consequences of being excluded or excluding others, as well as the cost that they incur as a result of being excluded, such as depression, anxiety, or loneliness (Boivin, Hymel, & Bukowski, 1995). Individual psychological dispositions of children have been studied by researchers who have used sociometric techniques to identify children’s places in the group as a function of their popularity status (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006). Sociometric techniques involve asking children in a group or classroom to nominate who they view as their friends or their “nonfriends” (in various studies the “nonfriend” category includes acquaintances or enemies) and then combining the information from all children to determine which children have friendship nominations, and which children do not.

Peer nominations show how multiple profiles exist in classrooms (and schools), including those children who are deemed as popular (nominated by a lot of children) in contrast to those children who are rejected or neglected (nominated by very few children). There are also children who are referred to as “controversial” (nominated as high friendship and high “antagonist”). Not surprisingly, the majority of children are referred to as “average” (who receive some friendship nominations) and constitute 70% of the children in a classroom or school, leaving about 15% who are classified as rejected, neglected, or controversial, as well as 15% who are ranked as popular. Rejected status, even amongst children as young as 5 years of age, is negatively related to engagement and participation in classroom interactions as well as motivation to achieve in school (Buhs & Ladd, 2001). Thus, this type of analysis identifies the children who are the outliers and who have significant problems with peer relationships.

There are different approaches for understanding the personality and social characteristics of individual children that contribute to identifying which children are vulnerable to being excluded or rejected. Examples of social skills that appear to be lacking in excluded or rejected children include the ability to read communication cues from peers, resolve conflicts constructively, or enter peer groups effectively (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). Social information processing models (Bierman, 2004; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000) outline the steps that are necessary for children to encode and interpret social cues, clarify social goals and responses, and make a decision to act. For example, children might encode others’ behaviors as negative, which influences their goals and decision to act, in contrast to encoding cues as positive, which leads to a different line of thinking and social outcomes (Rubin et al., 2006).

Social cognitive processing research on rejected children has shown that these children are more likely than “non-rejected” children to have negative goals of “revenge” and to interpret others’ cues as negatively motivated (a benign or neutral expression by a peer is viewed as hostile by a rejected child). Further research has shown that rejected children reflect two different types of psychological patterns of social interaction, rejected-withdrawn and rejected-aggressive (Hymel, Bowker, & Woody, 1993). Rejected-withdrawn children are more likely than rejected-aggressive children to have problems with social skills, interpreting others’ intentions, and clarifying their social goals. Recently, research has shown that, in fact, aggressive children figure out how to manipulate others and wield power in ways that brings them high status, even when they are not well liked (Garandau & Cillessen, 2006). The major behavioral correlate of

peer rejection is aggression, however, and thus rejected children are at risk for aggression towards others (Dodge et al., 2003), which has also been referred to as externalizing behaviors. Some children who are rejected are shy and withdrawn, and are at risk for what has been termed internalizing behaviors, such as depression. Overall, these children reflect between 10% and 15% of the total population of children, and are targeted for special treatment programs and intervention.

Temperament is one of the intrapersonal factors that has received the most attention in the literature. Temperament refers to a person's emotional, reactive, and attentional disposition, measured in infancy, which is related to social behaviors in childhood and even adulthood (Rothbart, Ellis, & Posner, 2004). Research has shown that reticence and social withdrawal in infancy predict peer rejection in childhood, indicating that there are individual differences regarding dispositions that account for why a child is rejected by his or her peers (Gazelle & Ladd, 2003). Negative emotionality has been documented as a behavioral profile in infancy that is viewed as relatively stable throughout childhood, and related to being rejected and victimized by one's peers (Rubin et al., 2006). These analyses focus primarily on the individual given that these traits are measured in infancy and measured in relation to social relationships and interactions throughout childhood. Further, the focus remains on individual differences, and, particularly, on children at risk.

Recently, there has been more attention to the interaction between peers within the broader context of a group, and how rejection serves a social function of the group (Juvonen & Gross, 2005). Juvonen and Gross (2005), along with other peer relations researchers, assert that it is important not to rely solely on a developmental psychopathology model for understanding patterns of exclusion and rejection. Children often become social outcasts for reasons that have to do with group processes, not just the intrapersonal deficiencies of the child. Patterns of bullying and victimization are relational and can continue for reasons due to the interpersonal dimensions of social exchanges with peers, in addition to intrapersonal dispositions.

Group processes, from this perspective, refers to the ways in which groups react to children with different social interactional profiles, and how these profiles have implications for interactions in group contexts. As an example, Chang (2004) asserts that it is essential to study classroom norms in order to contextualize children's peer acceptance and rejection. Chang (2004) measured social norms in classrooms about prosocial leadership, aggression, and social withdrawal and then compared these norms to peer nominations and found that contextual norms affected

children's behavior by reinforcing social acceptance of peers. For classes in which there was a high level of social withdrawal this behavior was more accepted among peers than in classrooms with a low level of social withdrawal (Chang, 2004). This study was conducted in China, which also provided a context with varying social norms about classroom expectations. Thus, in this case, the source of exclusion was related to classroom norms in addition to an intrapersonal dimension, like temperament. What makes these analyses important is that a diagnosis of individual personality deficits may be incomplete without consideration of how group expectations are a contributing factor to why children are rejected.

If classroom norms vary regarding expectations that contribute to sociometric status then it follows that societal norms may be related to patterns of rejection and exclusion as well. Research on intragroup and intergroup exclusion focus on forms of exclusion that reflect group identity and social identity, processes in childhood that stem beyond the level of the classroom to societal norms and categories that reflect ingroup and outgroup attitudes.

As an example of how intrapersonal and interpersonal forms of exclusion are related to group forms (intragroup and intergroup), research by Nesdale has shown that children who are rejected by peers are often at risk for displaying prejudicial behavior towards others, which is a form of intergroup exclusion (Nesdale et al., 2007). Using a variant of the minimal group paradigm from social psychology (as discussed in chapter 3), Nesdale suggests that peer rejection increases anxiety and negative affect rather than decreases self-esteem, *per se*. Thus, Nesdale's research on peer group rejection emphasizes the significance of groups, namely how shifting group memberships result in shifts in social attitudes. Children who are rejected by others often display aggressive tendencies towards others, and these tendencies may manifest in negative attitudes towards others based on group membership. Yet, the process of exclusion that reflects intergroup dynamics is quite different from rejection that stems from individual personality traits.

### **Intragroup and Intergroup Exclusion: Ingroup/ Outgroup Identity**

Intragroup and intergroup exclusion refer to exclusion based on group membership. As discussed in chapter 4, studying group membership requires understanding Social Identity theory, and how children's social

identities are related to ingroup favoritism, the categorization of members of who are perceived to be the “outgroup,” and the stereotypic expectations and attitudes that result from ingroup/outgroup distinctions. Thus, this notion of “group” is different from that studied in intrapersonal and interpersonal exclusion in which the individual–group relationship is discussed in terms of the child in the classroom, where the classroom is the group. In the studies on how peer rejection is a function of the classroom environment, however, “classroom” does not form an ingroup or outgroup identification for the child. While peer relation studies examined the individual in the context of groups, the focus is on the relations of the individual within the group, and not the social identity of individuals in one group towards another group, which would reflect group identity processes.

In general, there are many different forms of group identity in childhood and many different ways of measuring identity. While much of the social identity literature has examined children’s behavior in groups created by experiments (e.g., “yellow” and “blue” groups (see Bigler & Liben, 2006) or art drawing groups (see Nesdale, 2004)), studies using actual categories, such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, and religion, have also provided significant findings regarding group processes and group identity. Actual groups have complex societal histories that create hierarchies and status among individuals in cultures, which has to be factored in to studies on group identity. Determining and measuring group identity based on race, ethnicity, or culture is a complex task, though, given that these categories often overlap and are related to other indices such as socioeconomic status as well as culture.

Bennett and colleagues have examined children’s subjective identification with groups and make the important point that categorizing oneself into a group is quite different from how one subjectively identifies with a group (Bennett & Sani, 2004). If I categorize myself as a girl this does not mean that my gender identity has the same salience in different situations. In some contexts it is important to me, perhaps when I am the only girl in a group setting; in other contexts, it may be less important than my cultural identity or identity based on age, nationality, or ethnicity.

Research has distinguished “given” groups, such as gender, race, ethnicity, or culture, as described in earlier chapters, from “chosen” groups, such as cliques, political affiliations, or religion (which is sometimes viewed as a “given” identity). Some group identities fall into both of these categories, depending upon the individual’s perspective (e.g., sexual orientation may be viewed as “given” or “chosen,” and research has been conducted on how individuals view this group identity from this vantage

point; see Horn, 2008). Intragroup and intergroup exclusion focuses both on evaluations of exclusion based on group membership, as well as on group identity and ingroup/outgroup relations.

As we discussed in chapter 1, exclusion is complicated because there are many instances in children's and adults' lives in which exclusion is viewed as legitimate and necessary to make groups work. Most of these examples of "legitimate" forms of exclusion in children's worlds stem from adult decisions about how to structure children's everyday lives, including home events, sports, and school rules. Exclusion also occurs for legitimate reasons among children. Social groups share common goals, and children will exclude someone who may disrupt the group for reasons such as being too aggressive or displaying bullying behaviors. Even for forms of exclusion that most individuals view as legitimate, there are emotional and psychological consequences to the recipient, who may or may not view him/herself as a victim. Thus, understanding the motivations and intentions of exclusion in childhood is important both for individual psychological development as well as for addressing pertinent societal issues and conflicts.

## Social Reasoning and Exclusion

Before discussing more complex aspects of group identity, such as the relationship between exclusion and inclusion, or intragroup and intergroup dynamics, it will be helpful to discuss what we know about children's evaluations of intergroup exclusion, and the reasons that they use for justifying exclusionary decisions in peer groups. Research on social reasoning from the Social Domain model, described in chapter 2, has examined how children evaluate exclusion and has revealed that concerns with group functioning are significantly related to decisions that justify exclusion based on gender, race, and ethnicity. Individuals use three forms of reasoning to evaluate social issues, the moral (unfairness, equality), the societal (customs, traditions, and group norms), and the psychological (autonomy, personal discretion), as reviewed in Chapter 2.

This model has been applied to the topic of intergroup exclusion (Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006; Killen, Sinno, & Margie, 2007). For example, one could view a decision to exclude as "unfair" (moral), or as legitimate to make the group work well (conventional), or as a personal choice (psychological), as shown in Table 5.1. What makes the application of a social domain model to the topic of exclusion novel is that exclusion, from this view, is conceptualized as multifaceted, rather than

**Table 5.1** Social reasoning about exclusion: Social exclusion domain categories.  
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*Moral:* Fairness, justice, others' welfare, and rights. Exclusion involves considerations relating to the negative intrinsic consequences to another with wrongful intentions:

- *Fairness:* "It's not fair to exclude others for that type of reason;" "It's okay to exclude her because this is not about fairness but about who is better at the game"
- *Discrimination:* "It's treating him differently because of his race and that's a form of discrimination;" "Sometimes it might feel like discrimination which would be wrong but this is about something else"
- *Equal treatment:* "They are not being treated equally because girls and boys are the same and both should get to try out for the music club"
- *Psychological distress and others' welfare:* "How will he feel if he knows that he has been rejected by the group for that reason? You have to understand what it would feel like and how painful it would be to know it's wrong"

*Social-conventional:* Customs, traditions, and group regulations. Exclusion involves considerations about the group and making the group function well:

- *Group identity:* "It's okay to exclude her because the group needs people in it who are the same and who have the same goals;" "You should include her because she will make it a better group and she fits the identity of the group"
- *Group functioning:* "Sometimes you have to exclude others because the group won't work well with someone new and different;" "I would include her because then the team will win"
- *Traditions:* "It's always been that way, and it should stay the same. My parents didn't date people from other backgrounds so why should we start doing that now?"
- *Conventions:* "The game is for boys and they know how to play it and everyone agreed to do it this way so it's okay to tell her she can't join"

*Psychological:* Personal prerogatives, autonomy, identity, knowledge of others' minds, and individuality. Exclusion involves considerations about the individual perspective and individual goals:

- *Personal choice:* "It's a personal choice who to be with;" "It's just up to her who she wants to be friends with;" "It's not a good reason to not be friends with someone because of their race but it's her decision and she has to be happy"
  - *Theory of Mind:* "She isn't thinking about what they are thinking about in this situation"
  - *Autonomy:* "It's her life and she can do what she wants"
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strictly moral or nonmoral (selfish or negative intentions), and empirical research findings have verified this approach.

### **Gender Exclusion in Early Childhood: Okay or Unfair?**

In a series of studies on children's reasoning about exclusion, children were interviewed about how they evaluated gender and racial exclusion from peer groups. The studies were designed to determine how children balance evaluations of exclusion in which issues of fairness, group identity, and stereotypic expectations were made salient. The goal was to examine when children give priority to fairness in the context of intergroup interactions when making decisions about inclusion and exclusion of peers from everyday contexts. These studies examined whether children apply their moral concepts about fairness to situations that involve stereotypic expectations that were made explicit, or situations that involve implicit biases. Even though stereotypes about gender are highly salient in early development (Devine, 1989; Liben & Bigler, 2002), this does not mean that young children will use stereotypes to condone exclusion based on gender. Moreover, determining whether young children will use moral or social-conventional reasoning to explain their exclusion and inclusion decisions was tested in these studies.

In the first set of studies, to be described below, children and adolescents evaluated exclusion in contexts that applied stereotypic expectations, such as a boys' group excluding a girl from truck-playing and a girls' group excluding a boy from doll-playing. Assessments were varied and the contextual elements were made more or less salient (such as past experience or talent). In addition, some contexts were straightforward and others were more complex or ambiguous with the expectation that stereotypes might be more readily activated in complex and ambiguous situations. Subsequently, other studies were conducted to minimize stereotypic expectations (e.g., exclusion from a music club) or to maximize the level of intimacy (e.g., exclusion from a birthday party "sleepover"). The studies and findings are described below to provide the set of factors that contribute to understanding children's evaluations of peer exclusion.

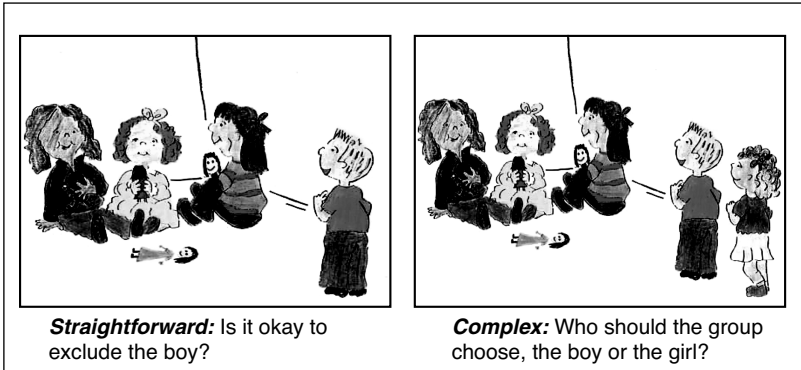
In several studies with young children (4.5 and 5.5 years), assessments were administered to evaluate children's exclusion decisions based on group membership (ethnicity reflected the United States' distribution with 71% ethnic majority and 29% ethnic minority for the Killen, Pisacane, Lee-Kim, and Ardila-Rey (2001) study, and an ethnically homogeneous

sample for the Theimer, Killen, and Stangor (2001) study). In the standard design, children were interviewed about play activities associated with gender stereotypes (e.g., doll-playing, truck-playing, role playing as firefighters, and role playing as teachers) (Killen et al., 2001; Theimer et al., 2001). In one study, interviewers asked children whether it was all right for a group of boys who were playing with trucks to exclude a girl who wanted to join them, or for a group of girls who were playing with dolls to exclude a boy. Children who viewed exclusion as okay gave conventional and stereotypic reasoning such as “I think they should pick the girl because girls like being with girls” or “Pick the girl because the girls are playing and he will just play the wrong way; he hasn’t played dolls before” or “Boys can’t play with dolls because they’re for girls and boys just look silly playing with dolls.” These reasons reflect what would be typically expected; that is, that children would rely on stereotypic knowledge to justify exclusion.

Surprisingly, though, the majority of children viewed it as wrong to exclude someone, even when stereotypic knowledge would suggest that it would be all right. The majority of children gave moral reasons, such as equal opportunity or fairness (“You should give the girl a chance to play trucks because she might like it and doesn’t get to play with trucks very much” or “It wouldn’t be fair to not let the boy play with the dolls because he should be able to just like the girls can do it”). What was unexpected about this finding was that research on stereotyping has shown how highly associated play activities such as dolls and trucks are with gender identity at this age period. In addition, children attending the ethnically mixed school were more likely to view straightforward exclusion as wrong (87%) than were children in the homogeneous school (65%). One possible reason could be that intergroup contact facilitated an inclusive orientation (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005), although this hypothesis was not tested for these studies.

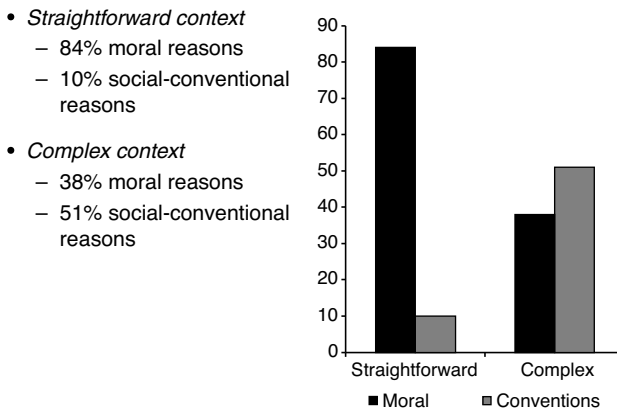
In another condition, children were asked to evaluate more complex decisions in which a group had to decide which of two children the group should pick when there was only room for one more child to join – a child who fit the stereotype (the girl for dolls) or a child who did not (the boy for dolls) (Figure 5.1). More than half of the children picked the stereotypic child for the activities and less than half for the roles, but about half across all types of activities.

A third manipulation was conducted in which the interviewer introduced a statement regarding the child’s choice, referred to as a counterprobe, which entailed giving a reason for the alternate choice, either equal



**Figure 5.1** Picture cards for a gender exclusion task. (© 2010 Melanie Killen. Source: Killen et al., 2001.)

opportunity reasoning (e.g., “Boys don’t get a chance”) or stereotypic reasoning (e.g., “Dolls are for girls”) (Figure 5.2). The results demonstrated that children who initially relied on stereotypic expectations to make a decision about whom to include in a play group were more likely to switch their judgment after hearing a “moral” counterprobe than children who initially relied on moral judgments to make their decision; children who initially used moral judgments were less likely to change their decision after hearing a stereotypic counterprobe (“Even though



**Figure 5.2** Moral and conventional reasons used by children in straightforward and complex exclusion contexts. Complex contexts evoke conventions, group functioning, and stereotypes. (Created by Melanie Killen. Source: Killen et al., 2001.)

dolls are for girls, you should still give the boy a chance to play with them”). Thus, moral judgments were less malleable than social-conventional reasoning and stereotypic judgments. Children who viewed the exclusion situation in moral terms were not easily influenced to change their decision and to agree to exclude the child who did not fit the stereotype. Yet children who viewed the situation in stereotypic terms were more likely to think about it differently, and subsequently view exclusion as wrong.

Overall, younger children relied on stereotypic expectations more than did older children, and there were no differences for gender of the participants, which was somewhat surprising. It might be expected that girls would view boys excluding a girl as more wrong than girls excluding a boy, or the reverse. But instead, girls, overall, viewed exclusion as more wrong than did boys. No ingroup bias was found. This may be because girls have experienced exclusion more than boys from experiences with sports and other types of club activities. It is clear, though, that young children use different forms of reasoning to evaluate exclusion and stereotypes often overwhelm their decisions about fairness.

These findings revealed that young children weigh both moral and conventional judgments to make exclusion decisions. A question raised was whether older children use conventional reasons to justify exclusion and whether stereotypes bear on their decisions about the exclusion of peers. It could be that stereotypes have less of an impact as explicit stereotypes decrease with age. Yet, prejudice continues into adolescence and maybe studies of exclusion will reveal what underlies biased behavior.

### **Comparing Gender and Racial Exclusion: Group Goals and Qualifications**

Determining whether increasing the salience of the group identity by using situations that were associated with stereotypes in older children was tested by Killen and Stangor (2001), who interviewed European-American students in the first, fourth, and seventh grades about excluding children from counter-stereotypic activities based on race/ethnicity or gender. The goal was to determine the cost to group functioning for children's judgments about exclusion by manipulating the qualifications of children who wanted to join the club or group. This study expanded the category of group conventions used in previous studies generated by Social Domain theory. Instead of framing conventions as adult-generated

norms for keeping order, such as school regulations about classroom management (“raise your hand before you speak”), conventions were conceptualized as the expectations that establish group identity.

The situations involving race/ethnicity were: (1) excluding a European-American child from an all-Black basketball club; and (2) excluding an African-American child from an all-White math club. The situations involving gender were: (3) excluding a girl from an all-boys baseball card club; and (4) excluding a boy from an all-girls ballet club (gender and race were not mentioned as participants were shown picture cards for all scenarios). Children were asked whether it was all right to exclude and whether someone’s qualifications would influence children’s evaluations of exclusion.

While most children and adolescents considered it wrong to exclude someone based solely on their group membership, presenting an inclusion situation that varied the qualifications of the peers who wanted to join revealed *stereotypic* responses from children. In this case, a club had to pick either one of two children (for race, a European-American or an African-American to join, and for gender, a boy or girl to join), and participants were told that in one condition the two individuals who wanted to join had “the same level of talent” (equal qualifications condition) and in another condition the participants were told that of the two who wanted to join, the one who fit the stereotype was also “better at it” (unequal qualifications condition).

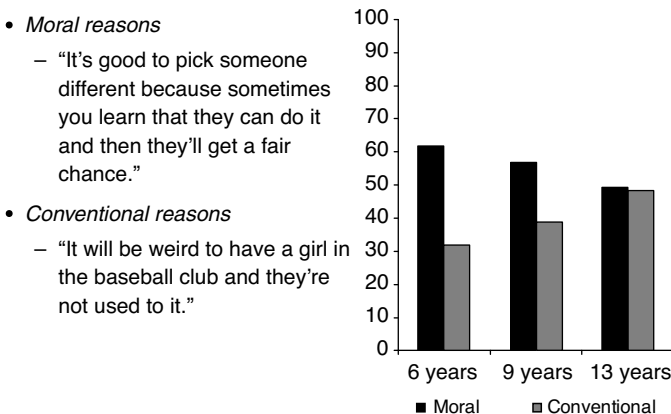
When children’s qualifications to play baseball or ballet (or basketball or math) were the same, the majority of the participants picked the child who did not fit the stereotype. Thus, all things being equal, children picked someone who had not had an opportunity to engage in the activity much, even when this changed the make-up of the group. Yet, when the qualifications were not equal, children were more likely to pick the child who fit the stereotypic expectations. There were gender and age effects as well, such that girls were more likely to chose the nonstereotypic child than were boys across both conditions.

As children got older, they paid more attention to qualifications. Older children, specifically 13-year-olds, were less likely to pick the nonstereotypic child in the unequal qualifications condition than younger children. Many 6- and 9-year-old children stated that it would be good to include someone who did not conform to the stereotype, even when not as skilled, to provide a new opportunity for the child (e.g., “Boys don’t get a chance to take ballet, even if he is not good at it, they should pick him”). With age, stereotypes increased, such as “They should pick the girl for ballet because boys can’t do it very well” or “Pick the Black kid for

basketball because the White boy might not be able to jump very high.” The increase in stereotype use provides another example that stereotyping does not decline after age 7–8 years, as suggested by cognitive-developmental models. Instead, stereotyping to justify exclusion increased with age, and was related to a concern about group functioning.

Adolescents (aged 13 years) were also more likely to rely on talent level for making a decision about who to include than were younger children. Age differences were particularly reflected in the gender exclusion context (Figure 5.3). This may be due to the general greater acceptance of gender stereotypic activities than racial associations with activities, and that explicit gender stereotypes are more readily condoned than racial stereotypes.

When complexity was added to the decision – such as who to include when two new students wanted to join and there was only room for one more to join – adolescents used multiple reasons to explain their evaluation decision, including conventions, traditions, as well as stereotypes. Thus, the situations with stereotypic associations were more likely to be viewed as legitimate contexts for exclusion than were situations that did not invoke stereotypes. Because the Killen and Stangor (2001) study was homogeneous regarding ethnicity, a new, larger study was undertaken to expand the ethnicity sample to four groups and to evaluate exclusion using peer encounters that were not associated with stereotypic activities.



**Figure 5.3** Reasons for a decision about who to pick in gender-equal qualification decisions. (Created by Melanie Killen. Source: Killen & Stangor, 2001.)

## **Interviewing Ethnic Minority and Majority Children and Adolescents about Exclusion**

An aim of the study by Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, and Stangor (2002) was to determine what types of criteria children and adolescents applied to their evaluation of different types of exclusion. In social domain research, researchers such as Smetana (2006) have shown that children use one set of criteria for moral transgressions and a different set of criteria for social-conventional transgressions. For example, as discussed in chapter 2, children view a rule transgression such as hitting someone as wrong, even when teachers say that it is all right; yet a rule transgression such as not raising your hand when talking in class is only wrong if the teacher says it is wrong. The reasons for the hitting violation pertain to the negative intrinsic consequences to a “victim,” whereas the reasons for the raising hand violation are due to the group functioning of the group, which is determined by the teacher in the classroom (the rule is contextually based). We were interested to determine whether children view exclusion as a moral transgression (wrong even if parents or friends say that it is okay) or a conventional transgression (wrong depending on what others say) and generalizability. Acts that are evaluated as “moral” are viewed as wrong in other contexts and cultures, whereas acts that are evaluated as “conventional” are contextual and culturally specific. Thus, we also asked children whether the act of exclusion would be wrong in another cultural context.

Using a large sample with boys and girls from four ethnic groups (African-American, European-American, Asian-American, and Latino) participants evaluated exclusion based on race or gender from three contexts: (1) friendship (dyadic exclusion in which one person does not want to be friends with someone else based on gender or race); (2) music club (group exclusion, in which a group does not want to include someone based on gender or race); and (3) school (institutional exclusion, in which a school does not admit children based on gender or race). These contexts were selected because they arose in pilot testing as situations that often involved peer exclusion and were not explicitly associated with stereotypes.

The interview involved a list of semi-structured questions (see Killen et al., 2002 for the complete protocol). Participants were asked for their judgment of the exclusion (“Is it okay or not okay?”), their justifications for their judgment (“Why is it okay or not okay?”), two counterprobes about whether exclusion is all right when parents condone it, or peers

condone it, and a generalizability question that referred to whether exclusion would be allowed in another cultural context. The counterprobes involved asking the child whether it would matter if an authority figure (parents) had a different viewpoint from the participant (“What if Jerry’s parents said it was okay to not be friends with Damon [the Black child]?”) or peers (“What if Tom’s friends say that they don’t think he should hang out with Sally because she’s a girl. Would it be okay then to not hang out with her?”).

While the majority of children and adolescents judged exclusion based on race or gender as wrong and focused on the wrongfulness of discrimination and harm to the individual (i.e., moral concerns), there was a range of reasons used depending on the context, the target, and the age and demographics of the participants. We found that, with age, exclusion in the friendship and peer group exclusion contexts was viewed as multifaceted because these acts were evaluated as moral, conventional, *and* personal (whereas younger children more often viewed exclusion in solely moral terms). Overall, adolescents were more likely than were younger children to evaluate exclusion from friendship and a music club as okay.

In addition, the contexts for exclusion reflected different forms of reasoning. In the friendship situation, for example, in which one child did not want to be friends with someone because of their gender or race, adolescents often evaluated it with psychological justifications such as “personal choice” (“It’s up to me to decide who I want to play with”). In contrast, exclusion from peer groups was often evaluated with conventional justifications about group functioning (“It might not work to have someone different in the club”). Yet, exclusion from a societal institution (when the school excludes girls or minority children) was viewed almost exclusively with moral reasons (“It’s unfair to not let girls go to school”).

An example of a reason based on *fairness* for the friendship context is from a 9-year-old (fourth grade) girl who said:

I don’t think it’s fair because you can’t just have friends who are boys, you have to have some girls that are your friends, and he shouldn’t judge her by if it’s a boy or a girl, he should judge them by personality and stuff . . . like if they are a meanie or like you give them something and they won’t give it back or share.

Typically, friendship choices are viewed as a *personal choice* issue for children (Nucci, 2001). Yet, this 9-year-old girl viewed friendship exclusion based on gender as unfair. While much of the friendship literature focuses on gender as an organizing principle for friendship in the



elementary school years, refusing to be friends with someone because of their gender is viewed as wrong. In the friendship literature, the notion of homophily is often invoked, which refers to the tendency of individuals to associate and bond with similar others (Rubin et al., 2006). Yet, what counts as similar requires in-depth examination. While physical features may be the first category used by children (gender, race), developing shared interests and forming psychological compatibility may be a more fundamental basis for friendship as children have more opportunities to interact with children from different backgrounds. While children's friendships are often same-gender this does not mean that all children view friendship choices based solely on gender as legitimate. When children do use gender as a reason for exclusion, it often has to do with personal autonomy. For example, in contrast, a 13-year-old (seventh grade) boy, who evaluated the decision of a boy who did not want to be friends with a girl, used *personal choice* reasoning:

I think it's okay because boys and girls don't get that much along. Right now, it's like Tom should make his decision about who he wants to hang out with. You pick your friends. It's something you do on your own. It's really up to you to decide.

This is a very different orientation to the same type of exclusion. A 9-year-old girl views friendship exclusion in fairness terms whereas a 13-year-old boy views the same type of exclusion in personal choice terms. In this case, age, not gender, of the participant contributed to these differences. With age, children used personal reasons to discuss the legitimacy of friendship exclusion decisions. Yet, these discrepant views reflect the potential for conflict when these types of situations arise. When children view exclusion differently, such as when one views it as unfair and the other as legitimate (because it is a personal decision) then intervention strategies to reduce potential conflicts need to focus on these divergent viewpoints.

Similarly, in the adolescent literature, Smetana (2006) has shown that parents and adolescents often have conflicts over issues that generate different forms of reasoning. The classic example is the conflict about cleaning one's room. Adolescents view this type of issue as a personal decision ("It's my room and I can do what I want in it") whereas parents often view it in conventional terms ("The house will be messy and look bad to the neighbors"). Overall, children and adolescents were more likely to appeal to personal choice when condoning not being friends with someone because of the person's race or gender than not allowing someone into a club or a school, which were viewed quite differently. A set of children and adolescents reasoned that it is okay for someone to

not be friends because of someone else's race due to the personal nature of the decision – it is up to the individual to decide who his or her friends are.

For the music club context, however, exclusion was justified more often on the basis of preserving group identity and group functioning. A 13-year-old (seventh grade) European-American boy viewed exclusion of a girl from the music club in terms of group functioning:

I think that Mike and his friends are right for not letting her in the club because it's their club and then like if they don't want girls to join and make it an all-boys club that's okay. They like the same kind of music. She might not like it and she might not have any good CDs. If she wanted to make her own group then she can do it and make it so that no boys are allowed.

This type of reason is quite different from using personal choice. The adolescent is not viewing the exclusion decision as okay because it's up to an individual to decide. Instead, the reasons are about shared interests, decisions about membership, and decisions about formulating a club with a set of criteria for the goals of the club.

Interestingly, though, a 13-year-old (seventh grade) European-American girl, viewed this type of exclusion quite differently. She said the following about a boys' club's decision to exclude a girl:

In a way, yes, and in a way, no, because it's trying to keep her out just because she's a girl. That's discrimination. But boys, they talk about stuff that, you know, girls just don't like or don't like doing. But really, they don't have a good reason not to let her in and I think it's a form of discrimination.

Again, when one child views exclusion as a form of discrimination this is quite different from viewing it as personal choice or group functioning. In this case, the girl who is quoted refers to moral reasons. Overall, boys use more group functioning and personal choice reasons than did girls. This may have to do with many reasons, which have been explored in other studies. As suggested above, it may be that girls, who have experienced more general exclusion than boys (e.g., sports) view it as more wrong due to understanding the perspective of the excluded individual. One argument for attributing moral interpretations of intergroup exclusion to past experience is that there are very few gender differences for ethnic minority students, who also experience exclusion (boys as well as girls). This indicates that, again, discussing different viewpoints could be important for combating forms of exclusion that turn into prejudice and discrimination.

For a small number of participants, appeals were made to stereotypes based on gender and race (e.g., “He [the Black child] listens to hip-hop and they don’t, so he wouldn’t fit in with the group” or “Girls don’t really like being in clubs they just like to do other stuff”). On the whole, justifications supporting exclusion in the friendship and music club contexts were based on social-conventional considerations but stereotypes may also underlie these forms of reasoning. For example, children may state that “he won’t fit in the club” and the basis of this “fit” is a stereotypic association. This underlying rationale requires close examination.

While the majority of children and adolescents in the Killen et al. (2002) study judged racial exclusion as wrong across all contexts, there were significant age-related findings. Instead of appealing to explicit stereotypes or negative views of race per se, students appealed to the individual’s autonomy in making the friendship decision or the importance of the group to maintain an identity and high level of functioning.

When asked about exclusion from school (“What if a school does not allow Black children/girls to attend?”), adolescents were explicit about what would make that wrong. As an example, a 15-year-old (10th grade) Latin-American female shared her insights on why a Black child should not be excluded from school:

We have a Constitution now, and it’s forming us. We should be able to, we have to stand united, not look at people because of their race. [Interviewer: “What do you mean? Can you explain a little bit more?”] Like, if you see a homeless person, and they’re light skinned, and you’re Black, and they ask you for a dollar, and they’re really hungry, and you know they’ve been there for many days, you should at least give them something, even if it’s like a nickel or something. You don’t know what that person’s been through. People have been through many things over these years, and every single race, and it’s time for us to stand united. We shouldn’t just be like “oh, we don’t like him because he’s Black, or we don’t like him because he’s White.” That’s not right, we have to stand united . . . We need to do something about that, and we need everybody to come together. He should be able to go to the same school.

The counterprobe technique used in the interview, which involved discussing an alternative position to the child’s original exclusion judgment from both authority members (parents) and peers (friends in the club), revealed that with age, children viewed authority influence fairly critically (rejecting parents’ affirmation of exclusion) and viewed peer influence as more significant (adhering to what friends might say). Yet, even with this

pattern, there were gender and ethnicity interaction effects. For example, when asked about whether it is all right for peers to exclude a girl from an all-boys music club, a 15-year-old (10th grade) European-American girl explained:

It doesn't matter what other people say. It is still the same basis. You have to keep your view even if different people's opinions are told to you. Like if a new person comes and is the captain of the club and says that I am not going to let girls in then that is not going to work. It is still against different people and you have to keep it in some order. If there was a good reason that was different from being a girl, okay. But if there isn't then they should let her in.

This explanation indicates that the criterion of "social influence" bears on the categorization of exclusion for this girl, indicating that she views the decision in moral, not conventional terms. In contrast a 15-year-old (10th grade) European-American girl used group functioning to justify why it is okay for the music club to exclude the girl:

Maybe they don't want to have a club that has girls in it. Sometimes like it was a group of guys and I was a girl and I went rock climbing with them, I might not be as good as all of them. It would be harder for me and they don't want me. [Interviewer: "So it's okay for the boys to not let Jessica join?"] Yeah, she can start her own club.

When asked about whether it is all right to exclude based on gender or race if *parents* (authority) condoned it, children did not view exclusion as strictly a matter of authority mandates because the majority of the participants stated that it would be wrong to do it for intrinsic negative reasons (unfair treatment). However, when asked whether it would be okay if the parents approved of it, some children viewed this as legitimate. The legitimacy was not strictly in terms of viewing the act as okay, the way that teachers can make a conventional transgression permissible (e.g., not raising your hand to talk in class). More often, children were conflicted about it.

An example of a response to the authority permissibility question is from a 9-year-old (fourth grade) European-American boy who said: "Well, it's okay because you should listen to your parents. You should obey them. But he can just tell her that his parents said no so she won't feel bad about it." In contrast, though, an African-American 9-year-old (fourth grade) girl gave priority to fairness: "The parents are teaching their son not to like people like that and like they are just doing wrong

things and stuff just only to like White people and not Black people, and that's not right.”

Most children used both authority and fairness reasons when asked to consider parents' influence on whether Damon should be friends with a girl. For example, a European-American 9-year-old (fourth grade) girl explained:

I don't think it's right to do something that your parents don't want you to do, but still you should be friends with everyone. Maybe his parents had a good reason for telling him it was okay to not play with Damon [who is Black].

With age, children were less conflicted about authority expectations and more likely to reject them. An Asian-American 15-year-old (10th grade) student explained why she believed excluding a Black child from a music club would be wrong even if the parents encouraged it:

I strongly don't like people that are so racist about things. I mean, it's so weird because like when I was growing up as a kid, my parents were always racist against different, I mean, they are not really racist, but they didn't like how I hung out with people from different countries and different cultures. I mean it's just not right to be racist, everyone is created equal and everyone is the same in the inside, it's just, we are unique in the outside. We are alike, there is just no reason for anyone should be eliminated from like anything just because of the way they look or their sex or the color of their skin.

Regarding whether children changed their judgments based on counterexamples, children were more likely to change their judgment upon hearing that friends and peer cohorts were inclusive and encouraged the protagonist to be friends with the target of exclusion or to include the target in the group. However, the reverse was not true. Children who rejected exclusion were unlikely to change their judgment after hearing that friends and peer cohorts encouraged exclusivity and suggested that the protagonist reject the target. As with young children, this finding indicated that the “moral” position was more difficult to change than the nonmoral position.

Guided by the Social Domain model, it was shown that children's evaluations of exclusion depended on the context and the target of exclusion, as well as the gender, age, and ethnicity of the individual making the judgment (Killen, 2007). Social Domain theory indicates that social judgments are sensitive to the context of social interactions, and

that an analysis of the context is necessary in order to determine patterns of social reasoning (see Helwig, 1995a, 1995b; Smetana, 1995; Turiel, 1983, 2002; Turiel, Killen, & Helwig, 1987).

In fact, children at all ages made clear distinctions between exclusion in the three contexts, friendship, peer groups, and societal institutions, such as school, and they used different forms of reasoning to evaluate exclusion in these contexts. Friendship was also viewed as the most legitimate context in which someone could decide not to be friends with a peer solely on the basis of their gender or race, and this was because friendship was viewed as a personal decision. What requires further examination is what underlies the notion of “group functioning” and group identity.

Even though participants reflected four ethnic backgrounds, European-American, African-American, Latino, and Asian-American, there were surprisingly few differences in children’s and adolescents’ evaluations of exclusion based on ethnicity. The majority of participants from different ethnic backgrounds evaluated gender exclusion (a boy excluding a girl) or racial exclusion (a European-American “White” student excluding an African-American “Black” student) as wrong. The few differences that arose pertained to the “parental influence” question in which participants were asked whether it was all right (or not all right) for a parent to endorse a viewpoint different from the participant (in most cases this meant a parent who endorsed exclusion). In this condition, more Asian-American and Latino participants than European- or African-Americans were willing to go along with the parents’ position. This may have to do with several reasons, which require further examination. Most Asian-American and Latino participants in the study were first- or second-born generation, which means that their parents or grandparents were immigrants. Immigrant status may be related to the extent to which a child or adolescent will challenge a parent’s influence about social relationships involving exclusion. In addition, Asian-American and Latino participants were “third-party” observers to some extent given that the exclusion involved a White– Black interaction. Yet, there were no differences for their evaluations of general exclusion, indicating that other studies need to be conducted to understand the role of ethnicity and exclusion judgments.

Exclusion based on group membership extends to many groups beyond gender and race. Given how important group functioning was for adolescents, Horn (2003) conducted a line of research on how adolescents evaluate exclusion from social groups as defined by cliques and crowds, which will be described in the next section.

### **Social Reasoning about Exclusion in Adolescence: Crowds, Cliques, and Networks**

Horn has focused on adolescent reasoning about exclusion in the context of adolescent groups that are defined by the adolescent social world (Horn, 2003, 2006). In a study on social cliques, Horn (2003) conducted a pilot study to determine the salient cliques in an adolescent sample and used these groups (e.g., “goths,” “jocks,” “preppies,” “druggies,” “cheerleaders”) to administer surveys regarding their evaluations of excluding or denying resources to another adolescent when the individual did not fit stereotypes (e.g., denial of resources: student council denies a scholarship to a “jock;” exclusion: cheerleaders exclude a “goth” from joining the team). Overall, adolescents evaluated denial of resources to other adolescents as more wrong than exclusion and used moral reasons to justify their judgments. When evaluating exclusion situations in which no individuating information was provided (e.g., the skill level of the excluded individual was not known), adolescents more often relied on stereotypic expectations than when the individuating information was made explicit. Ninth graders and boys more frequently evaluated exclusion and denial of resources as acceptable and used conventional reasoning or stereotypes in justifying their evaluations than 11th graders and girls.

In another line of research, Horn (2006) provided evidence that both social identity and group status influence adolescents’ judgments about inclusion and exclusion. Overall, high-status group members were included in school activities more frequently than low-status group members. Adolescents who identified themselves as members of high-status groups, however, exhibited more in-group bias in their choice judgments, were more likely to use conventional rather than moral reasoning in justifying their judgments, and were more likely to invoke stereotypes than other adolescents.

### **Social Reasoning about Sexual Prejudice**

Adolescents’ beliefs about personality characteristics associated with gender identity (e.g., sexual orientation) are related to their reasoning regarding harassment as well. Horn and her colleagues (Horn, 2007, 2008; Horn & Nucci, 2003) have studied adolescents’ views about the contexts in which it is acceptable or wrong to exclude peers based on their sexual orientation. Prejudice towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, and

transgender individuals is prevalent in most societies and yet only in the past 20 years has this topic reflected a body of research in social psychology, and even more recently in developmental psychology and child development. Surveying 14- to 18-year-olds in several large Midwestern high schools, Horn and Nucci (2003) found that while 50% of the students surveyed believed that homosexuality was wrong or somewhat wrong, only 11% evaluated exclusion based on homosexuality as all right or somewhat all right, and only 6% viewed teasing as all right or somewhat all right.

One of the novel findings was that gender conformity, that is, the outward appearance of individuals in terms of dress and mannerism is more important for acceptability than self-reported sexual orientation. Thus, individuals who do not appear to be different based on clothes and mannerism but self-report to be homosexual, for example, are more accepted by the majority of adolescents than are individuals who dress in a non-normative manner or act differently, and self-report to be heterosexual. Sexuality is often viewed as an intimate and thus personal issue, which is up to the individual to decide. Yet, outward displays of sexual identity are often highly conventional in appearance and this is given high priority, especially in adolescence. Thus, this line of research has implications for the timely and important issue of sexual prejudice, which has become an issue of great concern and discussion, particularly in high schools. One of the issues that has arisen with sexual prejudice has to do with the intimacy that is associated with sexual prejudice. While much of sexuality is about identity, it is also about intimacy, and areas of intimacy in social life are often the last places in which individuals are comfortable crossing the boundaries of group identity. In the area of childhood, this is related to cross-group friendships, as we discuss in the next section.

### **Exclusion in Interracial Encounters: Lunch Table, Birthday Parties, and Dating**

Aboud and her colleagues compared same-race and cross-race friendships and found that the quality was the same with one exception: reported levels of intimacy (Aboud, Mendelson, & Purdy, 2003). While children reported liking both types of friendships, children reported higher levels of intimacy for same-race rather than cross-race friendships. This finding is a concern for many reasons. First, children's experiences of cross-race friendships have been shown to be highly related to the reduction of prejudice (Tropp & Prenovost, 2008). This is presumed to be due to the



empathy and perspective-taking that is associated with friendships. In addition, being friends with someone enables an individual to draw on direct experience to challenge stereotypic expectations that are pervasive in cultures. Stereotypes are generalizations about individuals based on group membership and when a friend does not conform to the stereotype then this makes it easier to reject the stereotype (“My friend is not like that”). Second, cross-race friendships decline dramatically with age, and particularly during early adolescence. This is the time when dating begins and thus a lack of comfort or shared intimacy with someone based on group membership may contribute to the decline of intergroup friendships. Third, the finding that children reported a lack of intimacy raises questions about what factors contribute to this deficit. Thus, a new study was undertaken to examine exclusion in interracial contexts which were not identified by an activity associated with stereotypes (such as ballet and baseball for girls and boys, respectively) but rather by increasing levels of intimacy, such as a sleepover birthday party (who you would invite over) or a school dance (who you would invite for a date).

In addition, this research study more closely examined the issue of intergroup “discomfort.” In prior studies, children and adolescents often justified intergroup exclusion by stating that the group would be “uncomfortable with someone different.” What is not known is the extent to which this “discomfort” is due to an underlying stereotypic expectation about what contributes to comfort or more legitimate bases for establishing group harmony. Social psychology research has shown that stereotypic expectations often involve confusion between competence and group membership (e.g., girls are slow at running; ethnic minority students are bad at math). Thus, children may attribute social incompetence to members of outgroups without actual evidence of social incompetence. Moreover, societal conventions and expectations are often used to justify inequities and allocation of resources in an unfair manner (Levy, Chiu, & Hong, 2006). Thus, in this study, participants were asked “What is it about race that makes people uncomfortable?” This phrasing was used to pose the question in a general manner, to analyze whether stereotypes were used to explain interracial discomfort.

In order to examine how children and adolescents evaluate intergroup exclusion in interracial intimate settings, 9-, 13- and 15-year-old children (fourth, seventh, and 10th grade) ( $N = 685$ ) evaluated different types of peer encounters that reflected multiple levels of intimate relationships in the area of racial/ethnic exclusion (Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2008; Killen, Henning, Kelly, Crystal, & Ruck, 2007). Specifically, children and adolescents were asked about racial exclusion in a friendship context

(not having lunch with a different-race peer), a dating context (not bringing a different-race peer to a school dance), and a home context (not inviting a different-race peer home for a birthday sleepover party). These contexts were developed from pilot focus groups with children and adolescents of the same age group as those who participated in this study. Children and adolescents were asked to evaluate interracial peer scenarios that included multiple possible reasons for the exclusion. There were two types of reasons: race-based (e.g., “What if X excludes Y because Y is a different race?”) and non-race-based (e.g., “What if X excludes Y because Y has different sports interests than X?”). As found in previous studies, the vast majority of all participants judged race-based exclusion as wrong using moral reasons.

What was unique in this study was that the reasons for exclusion, in interracial interactions, such as lack of shared interests, were viewed as more wrong by ethnic minority than by ethnic majority participants. Thus, when told that a White student did not want to have lunch with a Black student because they did not share sports interests, ethnic minority children were more likely to judge it as wrong due to the potential interpretation that underlying this decision there could be a racial bias. In addition, ethnic minority students voiced a more critical viewpoint about the basis for not having lunch with someone due to a lack of shared interests than did ethnic majority students. For example, a seventh grade ethnic minority student said:

I don't think that she should not have lunch with her just because she doesn't like soccer. After all they can still be friends. It's just lunch. What if she thinks it's because of being Black? Then what? How will she feel?

In contrast, a seventh grade ethnic majority student said:

It's okay if he doesn't want to have lunch with him. He doesn't like soccer and it's his choice who to be friends with.

It is important to examine more closely the perspective-taking on the part of ethnic minority children and adolescents. In addition, in this study, ethnic minority children were more likely to expect that racial exclusion will occur, perhaps supporting the view that these students are concerned about the implications of using a non-race-based reason to exclude someone in an interracial encounter because they often experience this type of exclusion.

Overall, ethnic background, social experience, and age were significantly related to interpretations of interracial peer motives for exclusion.

Similar to previous studies on race-based exclusion, adolescents were also less likely than younger children to consider non-race-based friendship exclusion wrong. This is because adolescents view decisions about friendship as part of their autonomous decision-making (“It’s up to me to decide who I am friends with”) (Nucci & Turiel, 2000).

In the context of potential bias and prejudice, however, these types of decisions take on different meaning, especially for individuals who have experienced unfair exclusion. When interracial friendship decisions are explicitly made on the basis of race then the vast majority of adolescents view it as wrong (and this increases from 9 to 15 years of age) and more so than when the stated reasons are due to “lack of shared interests,” which are viewed as more legitimate. Yet, when interracial friendship decisions are made due to the “lack of shared interests” then the basis for determining what counts as “shared interests” may be viewed more critically, though, by those who are the recipients of the exclusion, particularly regarding race, which has long reflected segregated patterns in the area of friendships and intimate relationships. Not surprisingly, then, ethnic minority students in the Killen et al. (2007) study viewed reasons such as “lack of shared interests in sports” or “parental discomfort” for not having lunch or not inviting someone to a party (respectively) as wrong, and more so than did ethnic majority children.

With age, children thought that it was wrong for a European-American child to decide to not invite an African-American friend for a sleepover party because the parents might be uncomfortable. Yet, with age, children viewed peer disapproval as a legitimate basis for not inviting a different-race friend as a date to a dance. These findings point to ways in which parental discomfort, peer approval, and group functioning are used by children, particularly White majority children, to justify racial exclusion.

What is not clear is the extent to which these considerations are proxies for stereotypic beliefs. As mentioned, Levy et al. (2006), have shown how children invoke lay theories about work ethics (the “Protestant work ethic”) to make decisions about the fair allocation of resources (moral decision-making) based on race and ethnicity (Levy et al., 2006). Whether children are aware of the potential ways in which societal traditions, expectations, and group approval reflect underlying stereotypes or prejudicial behavior requires further research. Moreover, these findings provide further evidence for how contextual factors are differentially weighed by children and adolescents when evaluating exclusion.

Regarding interracial discomfort, children’s and adolescents’ social experiences (and intergroup contact) are related to the extent that they

explicitly use stereotypes to explain racial discomfort in these three contexts (Killen, Kelly, Richardson, Crystal, & Ruck, 2010). European-American children and adolescents attending ethnically homogeneous schools were more likely to use stereotypes to explain racial discomfort than were European-American students in ethnically heterogeneous schools (and reporting cross-race friendships). For example, when asked what it is that contributes to “interracial discomfort,” in a friendship context, a child stated that “Blacks and Whites just don’t get along because Black people like different music.” One explanation for the relative absence of these types of statements by children and adolescents reporting cross-race friendships is that they are exposed to the heterogeneity within the “outgroup” and these experiences enable them to reject the stereotypes. Another reason may have to do with the school and class environments that contribute to understanding what it means to pre-judge others. As will be discussed in chapter 8, positive contact with the outgroup reduces prejudice when significant conditions are met, which includes parental support of the goals of inclusion and diversity.

Most of the studies described so far pertain to exclusion in peer encounters at school. What about exclusion in the home context? Studies in social psychology have examined gender exclusion, and specifically exclusion based on social roles in the home. Determining how children evaluate exclusion based on gender in the home provides another window into how children both experience, and evaluate, exclusion.

### **Gender Exclusion in the Family Context: Children’s Views about Parental Expectations**

As demonstrated by Dunn (2006), the child’s first social milieu in which morality emerges is the family. Yet, as Okin (1989), a political scientist, has written, the family has not always reflected concepts of fairness and equality, which creates complexity for the child. Okin (1989) wonders how it is that children construct concepts of equality when the home environment is often one of inequality, particularly based on gender roles, duties, and division of labor. Researchers studying family dynamics have explored the many ways in which the balance of workload and chores reflects equity and the bearing that these arrangements have on social development (Crouter, Bumpus, Head, & McHale, 2001; Crouter, Head, Bumpus, & McHale, 2001). This is an area ripe for investigations of exclusion as well, and specifically exclusion based on gender. What makes it relevant for understanding peer exclusion is that siblings in the

home receive different messages about gender roles, which bear on their interactions with peers in the school setting.

As an example, McHale and Crouter, along with their colleagues, have extensively investigated gender expectations about family workload balance in the home (Crouter, Head, et al., 2001; Durkin, 1995) and found that the division of labor and workload in the home was related to gender differences for boys and girls regarding gender role attitudes, including gender stereotypic expectations in educational and career settings (Crouter, Manke, & McHale, 1995; McHale, Bartko, Crouter, & Perry-Jenkins, 1990; Taylor, 1996). In one study, girls from egalitarian homes (regarding the division of labor) were more likely to have high expectations for academic achievement than were girls in families that were not egalitarian, and this bears on gender stereotypic expectations in the school setting.

Gender stereotyped expectations, particularly about balancing career and child-rearing obligations, are pervasive in most cultures (Biernat, 2003; Fuegan, Biernat, Haines, & Deaux, 2004). Parents who view themselves as more traditional in their family roles often endorse their children's acquisition of gender stereotypic roles and behaviors (Ruble & Martin, 1998). Further, parents convey gender stereotypic expectations to children who then carry these expectations into the school context regarding peer social competencies and abilities (e.g., "Girls are dumb at math" or "Boys are always mean").

To examine children's perceptions of gender expectations at home, Schuette and Killen (2009) interviewed 120 children at 5, 8, and 10 years of age regarding exclusion decisions in the home. Children were asked to evaluate parental decisions to exclude a son or daughter from engaging in chores that do not fit gender stereotypic expectations. Unlike previous studies in which children's use of gender stereotypes to justify peer exclusion *decreased* with age, this study found that children's gender stereotypes about chores in the home *increased* with age, and were used to justify exclusion. Moreover, boys were more likely than girls to condone stereotypic expectations regarding father-son activities (such as changing the oil in the car or mowing the lawn) as well as mother-daughter activities (such as sewing curtains or baking brownies); further, boys' support for excluding children from chores increased with age from half in kindergarten to the vast majority by fifth grade. The reasoning associated with evaluations of exclusion by parents differs from evaluations of exclusion by peers due to the overwhelming support for stereotypic decision-making by parents. This finding indicates that parents and adults play a powerful role in condoning or rejecting inclusion and

exclusion decisions based on stereotypic associations in the home; these expectations may carry over into the peer world.

Park, Lee-Kim, Killen, Park, and Kim (2009) examined whether this support for parental use of gender expectations to exclude a son or daughter from chore-related activities in the home generalized to peer activities. They interviewed students in the United States and Korea regarding parents' decisions to prevent children from engaging in peer activities associated with gender expectations, such as ballet and football, as has been studied in past peer-exclusion studies. Interviewing 230 Korean ( $N=128$ ) and Korean-American ( $N=102$ ) children at third (8 years) and fifth grades (10 years) about scenarios in which a boy or girl desired to learn ballet or football, the findings revealed that participants were unlikely, overall, to support parental decisions to treat sons and daughters differently based on gender, or to exclude them from participating in an activity, even when the activity did not fit the stereotypic expectations (e.g., a boy learning ballet or a girl learning football). While stereotypes were used to justify same-gender interest in an activity ("She wants to learn ballet because it's what girls do"), the same expectations were not used to constrain interest in an activity ("If he wants to learn ballet he should be able to do it because it's his life").

Sinno and Killen (2009) applied the analysis of social reasoning about exclusion to the topic of parental roles in the home and extended it to career choices. The goal of the research study was to determine the type of social reasoning used by children to evaluate parental decisions to constrain a spouse's decision to take on a role associated with the opposite gender (a father who wants to stay home and take care of the children, or a mother who wants to work outside the home). Interviewing 121 second grade (7-year-old) and fifth grade (10-year-old) American children, the findings revealed that children used personal choice reasoning for mothers' desires to work but applied gender stereotypes to fathers' desires to take care of children. In fact, with age, children were more flexible about gender expectations and were more likely to view it as legitimate and unfair to constrain a father's decision to stay home and take care of the children (Sinno & Killen, 2009).

While children viewed it as acceptable for parents to take on roles typically associated with the other gender, children from traditional family structures (in which a mother stayed home and the father worked outside the home) used more stereotypic expectations than did children from non-traditional homes. Thus, experience with flexible home arrangements was associated with support of fathers in the

non-traditional role. Overall, though, children viewed a mother's decision to work as one of autonomy but a father's decision to stay home as going against conventions and reflecting incompetence.

In a related study, Sinno and Killen (in press) surveyed adolescents about "second shift parenting" and the fairness of a mother or father taking on both the work and family obligations. The findings indicated that adolescents viewed it as more unfair for fathers to take on "double duty" than for mothers to do so, reasoning that mothers are familiar and competent at both roles, unlike fathers who are not competent at child-rearing. Again, stereotypic expectations about father involvement in the family contributed to adolescents' inconsistent application of fairness reasoning to the family context. One implication of these findings is that girls may not aspire to demanding careers that would make "double duty" difficult, and boys may not plan for a career that enables them to take on family obligations and duties. Because father involvement in the family has been shown to be related to children's successful academic achievement as well as social development (Palkovitz, 2002; Tamis-LaMonda & Cabrera, 2003), this pattern of judgments about gender expectations in the home warrants further examination.

These studies indicate that children are aware of family dynamics, particularly those interactions that involve various forms of exclusion. The findings on exclusion in the home indicate that the underlying categories of reasoning brought to bear on peer exclusion are similar, reflecting moral (fairness), conventional (group functioning), and personal (autonomy) considerations as well as stereotypic expectations.

## Summary

To conclude, social exclusion in the context of peer relationships is a fundamental part of social development. All children experience different forms of exclusion, which reflect a range of consequences. For exclusion that occurs in situations in which the criteria are well understood, agreed upon, and fair then the consequences are part of learning how to interact with others, such as when a child is excluded from a club due to lack of talent essential for the club (e.g., sports, music). When the criteria for exclusion are unclear, nonexistent, or unfair, however, then the consequences of exclusion may be severe, resulting in depression, anxiety, or disengagement. Peer rejection that results from individual differences in terms of psychopathology regarding personality traits is one form that has negative consequences.

What has not been examined as often in childhood as exclusion based on personality traits is exclusion that results from being a member of a social group that experiences prejudice and discrimination, such as gender, racial, and ethnic exclusion. These forms of exclusion have severe consequences as well, and are also part of childhood, not restricted to the adult world, as was previously thought. In the next chapter, we discuss new research on how children's group identity and understanding of group dynamics is an essential aspect of how children view exclusion and inclusion. Not only do children think about individuals from other groups but their views about the ingroup are important, and particularly when they view it as legitimate or unfair to exclude someone from their own group. With age, children understand the complexities of group dynamics, which is what we will discuss in more detail.