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The Role of Group Processes in Social Exclusion and Resource Allocation Decisions

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Introduction

Group processes play an important role in children's developing understanding of the social world. Children identify with social groups quite early in development (Nesdale, 2008). Throughout childhood and adolescence, the influence of group identity manifests in children's decisions about whom to include or exclude from their groups, and how to distribute resources between groups (Killen, Hitti, Cooley, & Elenbaas, 2015; Rutland & Killen, 2015). With age, children build knowledge about group norms and processes, and demonstrate increasing capacity to weigh considerations like shared values, attitudes, and activities with observable markers of overarching group membership like gender and race. The processes of developing knowledge about groups, and how groups function, are integral to social development.

As children's awareness of, and affiliation with, groups expands in older childhood and adolescence, so does their application of this social knowledge to everyday interactions with peers. Social inclusion and exclusion decisions as well as resource

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distribution decisions are especially important contexts for understanding children's application of their knowledge about group processes because they pertain to the fair treatment of others. As members of social groups, children often seek a balance between preserving group norms, equal and just treatment of others, adherence to societal norms, and expectations from both peers and parents. How children address these issues in their own social interactions and in evaluating the interactions of others has been a key focus of child development research in recent years. This chapter provides an overview of theory and recent research on the role that group processes play in social exclusion and resource allocation decisions in childhood and adolescence.

In order to frame empirical investigations of these processes in development, researchers have drawn from fundamental theories in adult social psychology and moral developmental psychology, including Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Social Domain Theory (Smetana, Jambon, & Ball, 2014; Turiel, 2002). In recent years, the Social Reasoning Developmental Model (Killen, Elenbaas, & Rutland, 2015; Rutland, Killen, & Abrams, 2010) has emerged as a framework for generating hypotheses about children's and adolescents' decisions and reasoning about social contexts that involve consideration of group processes and fair treatment of peers. Following a brief review of the theoretical models guiding the Social Reasoning Development (SRD) approach, empirical research on social exclusion and resource allocation will be reviewed in detail in this chapter, concluding with an overview of the implications for peer group processes, and for future directions for the general research program.

Developmental social identity theories

Research in social psychology (involving adults) has investigated the role of group identity on attitudes held towards different groups. According to social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), individuals are motivated to make favorable evaluations based on in-group membership, and are thus more susceptible to expressing out-group biases. Drawing on this research with adults, a number of SIT-influenced researchers have formulated developmental social identity theories (Abrams & Rutland, 2008; Nesdale, 2008; Verkuyten, 2007). Key findings have revealed that children bolster their sense of social identity by excluding out-group others from their social in-group (Nesdale, 2004; Verkuyten & Steenhuis, 2005), present a positive image of themselves to their peer in-group (Rutland, 2004; Rutland, Cameron, Milne, & McGeorge, 2005), and exclude in-group members who deviate from group norms (Abrams & Rutland, 2008).

Children's preference for their own in-group is differentiated from their potential dislike of out-groups (Nesdale, Griffiths, Durkin, & Maass, 2007; Nesdale,

Maass, Durkin, & Griffiths, 2005). Children do not automatically dislike peers from out-groups. Whether they show out-group dislike or not depends on the strength of their identification with their group, how much they feel their group is being threatened, and if they understand and believe that showing such prejudice is consistent with the expectations of their group (i.e., the in-group norm; Nesdale et al., 2005; Rutland et al., 2005).

Further, research based on developmental subjective group dynamics theory (Abrams & Rutland, 2008) has shown that by 7–8 years, and with increasing group identification, children develop a dynamic relationship between their judgments about peers within groups and about groups as a whole (i.e., intergroup attitudes). Changes in children's social cognition and group identification mean that they can often refrain from including a peer because of their out-group status, as well as exclude a peer from within their group who deviates from the group's social-conventional norms by showing increased liking or support for an out-group member. For example, in a recent study (Rutland, Hitti, Mulvey, Abrams, & Killen, 2015) in which 9–16 year olds judged in-group members who behaved in line with or counter to a generic norm shared by two school groups (i.e., wearing club t-shirts at school assemblies), children and adolescents actually preferred out-group over in-group deviants *only* when deviance by the in-group peer was in line with the generic norm and a threat to their group's identity. Children justified their disapproval for these individuals by focusing on the need for group cohesion and loyalty, while they signified approval by spotlighting the need for personal autonomy.

The social reasoning developmental approach has also demonstrated that individuals do not view all group norms in the same way. As described below, children and adolescents evaluate group loyalty, or loyalty to group norms, differently depending on whether the group norms pertain to moral (e.g., fairness) or conventional (e.g., traditions) outcomes. This has implications for when children are willing to challenge in-group norms, or take action to rectify group decisions that are unfair or involve harm to others. Thus, the social reasoning developmental model provides a way to understand processes associated with group dynamics in new ways, with a focus on developmental and age-related changes. Taken together, then, children's attitudes towards in-group and out-group members are not simply a result of automatic favoritism of their own group. Rather, children actively reason about group processes and consider whether the behavior of their peers matches different types of group norms, as well as norms shared by the wider society. With age, children are increasingly capable of evaluating peers and their behavior on these multiple dimensions. In the next section we briefly review social domain theory and how its tenets have contributed to understanding peer group processes with a new lens.

Social domain theory

In child development research, a considerable body of evidence has been generated regarding social and moral judgments and reasoning (Helwig & Turiel, 2002; Killen & Cooley, 2014; Nucci, 2001; Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 1983; Wainryb & Recchia, 2014). Over 35 years of empirical research stemming from social domain theory (SDT; Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 1983, 2002) has documented that children and adolescents evaluate social events and interactions using different domains of knowledge: (1) the moral domain (including justice, others' welfare, and rights); (2) the societal domain (including conventions, customs, and traditions); and (3) the psychological domain (including personal choice and autonomy). According to this theory, the moral domain refers to prescriptive rules regarding how individuals ought to treat one another, the societal domain refers to behavioral regulations designed to promote the smooth functioning of social groups, and the psychological domain refers to individual prerogatives and choices that are not regulated by society (see Turiel, 1983, 2002). The empirical project has consisted of testing whether individuals use these categories when evaluating and interpreting everyday social interactions and events (Killen & Smetana, 2015).

Contrary to many earlier propositions from developmental psychology that focused on stages of development, research from a SDT perspective has revealed that different domains of knowledge coexist from early childhood onwards. Morality is not "reached" in adolescence or adulthood; instead children value moral concepts like fairness and equality from as early as the preschool years. Likewise, morality is not solely taught by parents and other adults, rather children construct notions of morality, societal concepts, and psychological autonomy through interactions and exchanges with peers and adults.

Thus, individuals from childhood to adulthood do not view all rules and obligations as the same, and they understand the underlying criteria that differentiate between a conventional rule to make groups function well (e.g., for preschoolers, sitting in a circle at story time helps to provide focus for the activity; for adolescents, electing a student body president helps make decision making work well) from a moral rule, like refraining from harming others or fairly dividing necessary resources.

Moreover, most situations are multifaceted, with both moral and social-conventional aspects, and current research indicates that children are aware of this social complexity. In fact, there are contexts in which schools and authority figures may have rules that they deem to be conventional, but that children (and other adults) view as moral transgressions. For example, the regulation that clothes are gender-specific, such as pants are for boys and skirts are for girls, may be viewed by children as conventional in terms of what children wear to school but moral in terms of the

unfairness regarding gender bias about clothing conventions. In these cases, an empirical question is whether children and adults give a clear priority to one issue over the other (e.g., do individuals give priority to the moral unfairness or to the conventional dress code?).

What has been missing from the social domain theory research is a comprehensive focus on peer group process issues such as intergroup attitudes and group dynamics. The societal domain of knowledge has been investigated as an area that covers conventions, traditions, and customs created by individual members of cultures to ensure the smooth functioning of social groups. Yet, what the developmental social identity model has revealed is how group dynamics and intergroup attitudes play an essential role in the formation of group identity and affiliation in the early years of development. These processes result in in-group preference and out-group dislike, in some contexts, which contributes to potentially detrimental outcomes, such as prejudice and bias. Thus, another dimension that requires a more in-depth analysis for social domain theory is a comprehensive examination of the moral unfairness of prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes. Understanding how moral, conventional, and psychological reasoning is related to peer group dynamics is essential, and has reflected one of the essential goals of the social reasoning developmental line of research.

The social reasoning developmental model

Thus, the SRD model draws upon theory and research in both developmental psychology and social psychology (Killen et al., 2015; Killen & Rutland, 2011; Rutland et al., 2010). The model integrates and extends social domain theory (Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 1983, 2002) and social identity development theory (Nesdale, 2008) by considering together how children's reasoning and group identity are important to the group processes underlying social exclusion and resource allocation.

The SRD model considers group identity to be a fundamental factor in how children judge and reason about social exclusion (i.e., is it legitimate and fair to exclude that child?) and allocate resources (i.e., is it fair and just to allocate resources in this way?). A child's identification with their own group often influences their judgments and reasoning in these contexts. Furthermore, individuals belong to multiple groups, which exist at different levels of affiliation, attachment, and meaningfulness, from the local level (e.g., peer groups) to the global level (e.g., nationality, religion). Group affiliations change across the life span as individuals experience different degrees of relative salience for their various group memberships, and receive different forms of social communication about group affiliation, and as the socio-political context changes (Yip, 2014). Research based on the SRD

model seeks to understand when and in what ways different types of group membership are relevant to children's social judgments.

Beyond group identity concerns, research based in the SRD model also examines how children's judgments and reasoning are framed within the moral and psychological domains derived from SDT. For instance, with regard to social exclusion, there are important developmental shifts in children's and adolescent's judgments and reasoning (Killen, Rutland, Abrams, Mulvey, & Hitti, 2013). Young children focus primarily on fairness norms in the moral domain, and traditions in the conventional domain; this focus within each domain changes through late childhood as adolescents' increasing knowledge about group dynamics and group functioning (Rutland et al., 2010) leads them to focus on the specific norms that their social groups generate (Horn, 2006).

Importantly, the SRD model makes a fundamental difference between excluding someone based on in-group preference and on the basis of individual traits (e.g., rejecting someone due to individual abilities; Killen, Mulvey, & Hitti, 2013). The former behavior is connected to group identity, which is part of social development (belonging to groups); the latter behavior is connected to personality traits, in some cases, or personality deficits (such as excluding someone who is extremely shy or overly aggressive). Children who are treated differentially due to their group membership (race, gender, religion) face different consequences from children who are treated differentially due to their social deficits which, in extreme cases, may be reflective of developmental psychopathology (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006).

Taken together, the SRD model has three main tenets. First, children's judgments and reasoning about social exclusion and resource allocation are influenced by what group they belong to and their identification with that group. Second, children and adolescents actively form judgments and reason simultaneously using their knowledge in the moral, societal and psychological domains. Third, there are developmental changes in individuals' judgments and reasoning, with younger children being more focused on the generic norms of equality and traditions, and adolescents concerned more with group-specific norms, and giving priority to the preservation of group-specific norms in both the moral and societal domains. In the section below we review the empirical evidence which has supported this theory and contributed to the developmental trajectories that we have summarized.

Social Exclusion: Empirical Research Findings

Social exclusion from groups is a source of psychological stress for children. Frequent rejection by others leads to anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal (Rubin et al., 2006). Yet, social exclusion based on arbitrary factors such as gender,

race, ethnicity, or religion carries an additional burden for the excluded child: experiences of discrimination. It is essential to understand why such exclusion occurs, and the group dynamics involved in these contexts (Killen & Rutland, 2011). Developmental literature on peer rejection in childhood (e.g., bullying and victimization) has often suggested that victims of exclusion invite rejection by their peers because of specific individual traits, such as shyness or aggressiveness (Rubin et al., 2006). While assessing individual characteristics is important, this approach cannot account for social exclusion based on group membership, in which peers use stereotypes about an individual's group affiliations to exclude them (Killen, Mulvey et al., 2013).

Affiliation with groups is essential for becoming part of a community, however, and a significant change that takes place in childhood pertains to the balancing of different levels of groups that children identify with, including small peer friendship groups, organized peer groups based on activities, and larger societal groups (such as gender, race, culture, and ethnicity). These different levels of groups have the potential to provide learning opportunities for children and serve as a context for constructing notions of fairness and equality, as well as a source of emotional and social support. Group identity, however, can also result in exclusionary norms that contribute to negative attitudes about others who are not members of one's "in-group," oftentimes creating prejudicial or biased attitudes (Abrams, 2011). Investigations of the developmental processes related to these issues are essential for addressing the emergence of prejudice as well as the facilitation of an understanding about fairness and equality.

Children's evaluations of interpersonal and intergroup exclusion

Social exclusion based on gender, race, ethnicity, and culture has been widely documented in cultures and nations around the world (Killen & Rutland, 2011), and such exclusion is disproportionately experienced by children and adolescents from cultural minority groups (Monks, Ortega-Ruiz, & Rodriguez-Hidalgo, 2008; Strohmeier, Kärnä, & Salmivalli, 2011). Some reports indicate that up to 57% of cultural minority children report being bullied at least once over the course of a school year on the basis of cultural norms, religion, clothing, language, and food (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000).

With age, children and adolescents differentiate between interpersonal exclusion (e.g., based on personality characteristics) and intergroup exclusion (e.g., based on group membership categories, such as gender, race, sexual identity), when judging the legitimacy of exclusion. For example, when children in different countries (Japan, Korea, Switzerland, and the United States) were asked to evaluate peer exclusion, they viewed exclusion based on interpersonal traits such as shyness to be

less wrong than exclusion based on intergroup variables such as gender, nationality, and culture (for a review, see Hitti, Mulvey, & Killen, 2011). Children reasoned that intergroup exclusion was unfair, whereas interpersonal exclusion based on a mismatch of the individuals' personality or traits to that of the group was considered a conventional ("the group will not work well") or psychological issue ("it's his choice who he picks"), and was often supported. In line with the SRD model, these findings illustrate how, broadly, children reason about different types of exclusion using different criteria.

Not all children and adolescents view intergroup exclusion in the same light, however. Specifically, ethnic minority adolescents often view exclusion on the basis of group membership to be more wrong than ethnic majority adolescents, and ethnic minority adolescents also tend to attribute more positive emotions to the excluder (Malti, Killen, & Gasser, 2012). For example, Malti and colleagues (2012) found that Serbian adolescents attributed positive emotions to Swiss national peers who excluded a Serbian peer from attending a sports event, and viewed the act of exclusion as more unfair than did Swiss national adolescents. On a more intimate level, Crystal, Killen, and Ruck (2008) found that the level of intimacy (e.g., dating) involved was related to how majority adolescents, but not minority adolescents, evaluated exclusion. Racial and ethnic majority participants were more likely to justify exclusion in intimate contexts (that is, to deem it acceptable) than were ethnic minority participants who viewed intimate forms of interracial exclusion (e.g., interracial dating) as wrong, reflecting prejudice. Ethnic majority youth were more likely to view it as a personal choice than as an unfair decision.

Finally, the extent to which individuals identify with their social group also influences their evaluations of exclusion. For instance, in a study testing the factors that contribute to social exclusion based on religious identity, Jewish American and non-Jewish American 14- and 17- year-olds who reported higher levels of identification with their culture or ethnicity were less inclusive than those who identified less with their culture or ethnicity (Brenick & Killen, 2014).

Stereotypic expectations and group norms

Just as children's own group membership and the extent to which they identify with that group impact their evaluations of social exclusion (as described above), children's stereotypes about the members of other groups influence their endorsement of exclusion. In the area of gender identity, Mulvey and Killen (2015) found that the act of resisting gender-stereotypic peer group norms (e.g., a boy challenging his football group to try ballet, or a girl challenging her ballet group to try football), was

supported by children between 9 and 14 years, even though they expected their groups to resist it, and expected that exclusion from the group was a likely outcome.

In the area of sexual identity, Horn and colleagues (Horn, 2007; Horn & Szalacha, 2009) examined how adolescents reason about peer-based harassment stemming from sexual orientation and sexual identity. The research findings provide evidence that both individual (e.g., age, religion, social identity) and environmental (e.g., school factors, peer group status, having a lesbian or gay friend) factors are related to adolescents' reasoning about bias-based peer harassment. For example, older adolescents have been shown to be more likely to judge excluding a lesbian or gay peer to be wrong, and to base their judgments on moral reasoning than are younger adolescents, who are more likely to make appeals to social conventions (Horn, 2012).

In addition, adolescents attending a school that had implemented safe schools practices (e.g., policies, professional development) evaluated exclusion as more wrong and used more moral reasoning in justifying their judgments than adolescents attending a school that had not implemented these practices (Horn & Szalacha, 2009). These findings highlight the importance of school and community-level norms for combating stereotypic expectations.

Of course, opportunities for social contact with members of minority groups are essential if inclusive norms are to have an effect on children's behavior and evaluations. Hitti and Killen (2015) investigated non-Arab American adolescents' views about inclusion and exclusion of non-Arab American and Arab American peers who shared interests within and between groups, using a sample of 12- and 16-year-olds who had little contact with Arab American peers. Adolescents often chose to include peers with shared interests into their own (non-Arab American) cultural group, regardless of individual ethnicity. But these same adolescents expected that a group of Arab American friends would choose new group members based on ethnicity (i.e., the Arab American "out-group" would be exclusive). Further, adolescents who held stereotypes about Arab Americans were less likely to include an Arab American peer into their group than those who did not hold stereotypes. But when adolescents were members of a group with a stated goal of inclusivity, this positive message reduced the effect of stereotypes on adolescents' judgments about whom to include in their group, demonstrating the impact of group norms, as well as school or community norms, on inclusion and exclusion judgments.

Social exclusion and group dynamics

Understanding group dynamics involves accumulating knowledge about between-group relations (as discussed in the previous sections) as well as within-group relations (Abrams, Hogg, & Marques, 2005; Rutland et al., 2010). In the context of

social exclusion, this knowledge helps determine whether exclusion is acceptable in two contexts: (1) intragroup exclusion, which involves excluding members of one's group because they do not adhere to group norms, and (2) intergroup exclusion, which involves excluding a member of an out-group.

Children's conceptions of group loyalty change with age, from concrete representations of group identity (such as being the same gender or race) to abstract representations of group norms (such as the values held by one's group). This reflects a change in how group identity is defined, with an increasing recognition of the role that group norms and values play on what makes group identity important for an individual. In fact, even young children (6–11 years) do not like in-group members who express disloyalty to group norms and values (see Abrams & Rutland, 2008).

Yet, research on favorability of deviant in-group members (Killen, Rutland et al., 2013) shows that dislike for in-group deviants (individuals who deviate from an established group norm) depends on the type of norm that is being challenged. Children view rejection of an in-group member who challenged a group norm about social conventions (what to wear at a school assembly) as less okay than rejection of an in-group member who challenged a norm about morality (how to divide monetary resources between groups). With age, children's and adolescents' conceptions of what constitutes an acceptable violation of an established norm become more contingent on the type of norm (moral versus conventional).

Group identity, however, makes a difference in the context of decisions about inclusion. In one study, participants were given a forced choice between inclusion of an in-group deviant member (an in-group member who rejected an equality norm of the group) or an out-group deviant member (an out-group member who supported the in-group's equality norm). In these contexts, participants were told that the in-group deviant member rejected its in-group norm to divide resources equally by asserting that the in-group should get more resources than the other group. In contrast, participants were informed that the out-group deviant member supported the equality norm of the in-group. Children and adolescents were less likely to choose an out-group deviant (who supported equality) in a context in which group identity was school affiliation than when it was gender. This meant that group loyalty was more important in the context of school affiliation than in the context of gender because children were less likely to include the same-school in-group member who rejected equality than the same-gender in-group member who rejected equality (Mulvey, Hitti, Rutland, Abrams, & Killen, 2014a). These results highlight the importance of research on the cognitive abilities associated with this type of complex decision making in childhood.

Group and individual perspectives on social exclusion

Abrams and colleagues (2009) have discussed a cognitive ability known as theory of social mind, which refers to the recognition that how a group will behave may be different from one's own expectations of what the group should do (see Abrams et al., 2009). Young children at 4 and 5 years have difficulty differentiating between judgments about groups and their own preferences about members who deviate from group norms, and this is especially the case for norms related to equal distribution of resources (Cooley & Killen, 2015). For example, young children often state that "I would like the person who wants to divide up resource equally" and "My group will like the person who wants to divide equally, too." Older children, however, recognize that, while they might like an in-group deviant who advocates for equality at the expense of extra resources for the in-group, the group may not feel the same way. Moreover, the cost of deviating from the group may be exclusion. Specifically, by age 6 children begin to demonstrate the ability to differentiate between how a group might evaluate a deviant member and how they themselves evaluate the same member. Later in development, as adolescents become more autonomous (Daddis, 2011), they acquire greater skills in coordinating their own opinions and beliefs with what they expect of groups. These findings are reflected in both decisions about including deviants (Killen, Rutland et al., 2013) and how favorable participants are towards deviant members (Mulvey et al., 2014a).

Similar patterns of adolescents' differentiation between group and individual perspectives have been found in studies assessing inclusion of cultural in-group and out-group members (Hitti & Killen, 2015). These findings show that adolescents expect groups to be less inclusive toward both in-group and out-group members than they themselves would be, especially when making judgments about including an in-group target who does not share the same interests as the group. For example, non-Arab American adolescents report that they would be inclusive by inviting an out-group peer (Arab American) to join their group who shares the same interests (e.g., hobbies) but they expect that their group will be exclusive (unwilling to include). We highlight these findings because they provide evidence for how children begin to develop identities that, although they can be influenced by their in-group norms and beliefs, are also distinct from them.

Resource Allocation: Empirical Research Findings

Resource allocation decisions are a core context in which children apply their knowledge of group processes to make decisions about how to fairly distribute goods, and how to evaluate others' behavior. Traditionally, research focused on the

emergence of equality and equity concepts in the context of dyadic, triadic, and group interactions with little attention to the role of groups. Yet, the context for much of resource allocation involves distributions to groups, and thus group knowledge is relevant for these types of decisions. Resource allocation decisions are inherent in social interactions from childhood through adulthood, and understanding normative, age-related changes in resource allocation decisions has long been a focus of research in moral development.

When children and adults make decisions about the allocation of limited resources to others, they reference moral concepts of fairness, equality, and justice (Smetana et al., 2014; Turiel, 2006). It is often determined that, in order to maintain impartiality, group membership or group identity should *not* be relevant when allocating limited resources, because an unequal distribution on the basis of group membership would be deemed unfair. However, there are many contexts in which an understanding of group identity, group norms, and intergroup relations is not only relevant, but in fact necessary for ensuring a fair distribution. These contexts include considerations regarding access to resources, types of resources, and claims to resources. For example, if one group has a high status providing full access to resources, and another group has a low status with no access to resources, then these group memberships need to be taken into account to ensure fair distribution of resources. In the next section, we provide a brief overview of findings on children's resource allocation decisions, and then discuss the role of group processes.

Moral necessity and resource access

With age, children give increasing consideration to both merit (hard work and effort) and need (how many resources someone needs) when allocating resources (Damon, 1977; Elenbaas, Rizzo, Cooley, & Killen, 2015; Rizzo, Elenbaas, Cooley, & Killen, in press; Sigelman & Waitzman, 1991). Although there remain different perspectives in the research literature regarding how best to measure fairness reasoning, many studies indicate that young children view it as fair to give more resources to a hard working than to a lazy recipient, and expect that equal work will be rewarded with equal reward (Baumard, Mascaró, & Chevallier, 2012; Liénard, Chevallier, Mascaró, Kiura, & Baumard, 2013; Ng, Heyman, & Barner, 2011; Shaw & Olson, 2012). Likewise, some research suggests that children as young as five years of age are able to take need into consideration, allocating more resources to a recipient in need than to a recipient who already has plenty of resources available (Kienbaum & Wilkening, 2009; Rizzo & Killen, 2015).

While these investigations provide important insight into children's conceptions of fairness, research has not fully examined whether children take into account the

moral necessity of the different types of resources that groups have access to. For example, most work has focused on allocations of resources that could be seen as luxury (enjoyable to have, but not needed to avoid harm; e.g., cookies, coins) as opposed to necessary (needed to avoid harm; e.g., food, water, medicine). The type of resource being allocated can influence the fairness of a given means of allocation through the introduction of additional moral concerns, such as the concern for others' welfare resulting from a lack of necessary resources.

In two studies designed to capture children's understanding of both the type of resource (luxury, necessary) and recipients' relative claims over a resource, Rizzo and colleagues (Rizzo et al., in press; Rizzo & Killen, in press) measured 3–8-year-olds' allocations of resources described as necessary and luxury to recipients who had different levels of merit or need for the resource. First, children's allocation of luxury and necessary resources to recipients who either worked hard or were lazy (Rizzo et al., in press) was investigated. With age, children allocated more luxury resources to the hard working recipient, demonstrating an understanding of merit-based fairness. When allocating necessary resources, however, 3–8-year-olds chose to allocate the resources equally, and justified their allocations by referencing concern for others' welfare. This suggests that, when allocating necessary resources, children are concerned with ensuring the welfare of the recipients, even when their relative merit (or work) is unequal, given that an unequal allocation of necessary resources would have harmful consequences for the disadvantaged recipient. As one takes disadvantaged status into account when considering resource allocation, the role of group membership necessarily becomes part of the decision.

Role of group membership and history in resource allocation

Extending these findings to the claims of need and poverty, 3–8-year-olds' allocations of resources to recipients who were either rich and from a rich town, or poor and from a poor town were analyzed (Rizzo & Killen, in press). In this study, a developmental shift was identified, such that 3–4-year-olds allocated resources equally, whereas 5–6-year-olds and 7–8-year-olds allocated more resources to the poor character than the rich character. That is, younger children allocated resources equally and older children allocated more resources to the poor character in order to "even out" the distribution in a fair way. The developmental difference pertained to children's conceptions of when a distributive means was necessary to achieve a fair end. Thus, children consider need or poverty to be an important and legitimate reason to allocate resources to an individual. Taken together, research on children's moral judgments, reasoning, and behavior in resource allocation tasks has revealed that, from a young age, children acknowledge the fairness of equal allocations for

all, rewards for effort or productivity, relative distributions based on need, and consider the type of resource when allocating resources; children's conceptions of fairness develop early, and reflect the complex use of multiple different forms of moral and conventional reasoning.

The research discussed thus far specifically pertains to children's resource allocations to third party individuals, meaning that the child him/herself is not a resource recipient and does not have any meaningful affiliation with the recipients. This work is valuable for understanding children's conceptions of fairness regarding resource allocations in a group-neutral context. Children's lives are highly social, however, and resource allocations are frequently made in contexts when recipients represent multiple group memberships.

Indeed, as early as the preschool years, children incorporate group membership into their allocation decisions by benefiting their own group at the expense of an out-group (Moore, 2009; Olson & Spelke, 2008). Unfortunately, preferential allocation to one's own social group has the potential to translate into a form of bias, and withholding resources from another group based solely on group membership is a form of discrimination. In addition to benefitting members of their immediate social groups, preschoolers allocate more resources to members of their gender and racial in-group (Dunham, Baron, & Carey, 2011; Renno & Shutts, 2015; Zinser, Bailey, & Edgar, 1976) than to members of out-groups. In fact, preschoolers often expect others to distribute preferentially to the in-group as well, particularly if the resource-allocator is noted to prefer their own in-group over a relevant out-group (Elenbaas & Killen, in press-a).

However, far from a simple in-group-preference-out-group-dislike pattern, recent research has revealed the complexity of children's resource allocation decisions as they make sense of numerous different claims and factors for consideration, including prior histories of allocation to the groups in question, the type of resource to be allocated, group norms about allocation, and shifting group identities. For example, European American children as young as age 9 have been found to allocate more money to productive characters depicted as Black than to productive characters depicted as White and more money to poor characters depicted as White than poor characters depicted as Black, demonstrating an implicit form of lowered expectations for African Americans relative to in-group European Americans (McGillicuddy-De Lisi, Daly, & Neal, 2006). By contrast, European American 8–11-year-olds have been shown to rectify an experimental status quo resource inequality by giving more to an individual representing a disadvantaged racial group, even when that meant that a representative of their own racial group received less (Olson, Dweck, Spelke, & Banaji, 2011). These results reveal conflicting conceptions of the role of racial group membership in resource allocation decisions, and indicate an important avenue for future research.

Children do not always privilege in-group members in their resource allocations. In fact, recent research has approached this question by asking not only when children choose to advantage the in-group, but also when they prioritize fairness over group biases. The SRD model emphasizes the impact of group norms on children's moral and social decision making and reasoning, and group norms have an important impact on children's resource allocation decisions. For example, experimental introduction of an antiracist norm can prompt 9–10-year-olds to allocate equally to racial in-group and out-group members, or even to give more to an out-group member when societal inequalities are made salient (Monteiro, de França, & Rodrigues, 2009).

Though several studies have demonstrated that children are motivated to control their prejudiced behavior under conditions of high public focus (Rutland et al., 2005), such social pressure is not always necessary. Children often prioritize moral norms about the fair treatment of others over in-group favoritism (Mulvey, Hitti, Rutland, Abrams, & Killen, 2014b). In fact, Cooley and Killen (2015) found that children as young as the preschool years negatively evaluate a classroom in-group member who deviates from a class norm of equal allocation by advocating for unequal allocation, and provide reasons for their evaluations that pertain to fairness and equality. By contrast, they positively evaluate a group member who deviates from their group's norm of unequal allocation by advocating for equal allocation. Importantly, preschoolers are unfavorable towards members of their own group who espouse an unequal allocation, even when it benefits the group, demonstrating their priority for fairness over group membership.

Thus, on the one hand, children as young as 5 years of age can take individuals' relative need into account when allocating resources, choosing to give more resources to an individual who has received less in the past. And, on the other hand, young children sometimes demonstrate in-group bias in their resource allocations, choosing to allocate more resources to an individual from their social (e.g., racial, gender) group. However, when fairness norms are made salient, children as young as the preschool years report disliking in-group members who seek to keep more resources for the in-group and give less to the out-group. As outlined in the SRD model, children simultaneously reason and make judgments based on morality, social identity, and group norms when they allocate resources to in-group and out-group members. Research drawing on this model has revealed how children's conceptions of fair resource distribution vary based on the type of resource being allocated (luxury versus necessary resources) and the need and merit of resource recipients, and has highlighted the role of group norms in children's resource allocation decisions, revealing that children do not always privilege in-group members in their allocations, and even show support of out-group members who advocate for fair distributions. This research is important for understanding the complexity

of children's social reasoning about group dynamics and resource allocation, and can even shed light on the development of allocation behaviors and reasoning that contribute to group-level resource inequalities in adult society.

Social inequalities and resource allocation

In a recent line of research, Elenbaas and colleagues (Elenbaas & Killen, in press-b; Elenbaas et al., 2015) investigated whether and how children consider existing social inequalities in access to important resources as well as group identity when making decisions about resource allocation. When one group is disadvantaged relative to another group in terms of their access to or possession of important societal resources like job opportunities, housing, quality education, or medical care, individuals may determine that providing more resources for disadvantaged groups is the fair course of action (Anderson, 1999; Scheffler, 2015). Thus, one goal of this research was to determine whether children take disadvantaged backgrounds into account when allocating resources.

Another goal was to examine group identity and group processes, and, specifically, whether children's own racial group membership played a role in their resource allocation decisions when disadvantaged groups reflected (or did not reflect) their own racial group identity. To investigate these goals, U.S. kindergartners' and fifth graders' allocations of social resources (educational and health supplies) to institutions (schools and hospitals) that differed by racial group membership (African American and European American) was investigated. In contrast to previous work, which has largely focused on allocation of "luxury" items such as candy or stickers, which reflect inequalities of small, desirable goods, this study expanded the focus to the societal level in order to understand children's reactions and reasoning about social resource inequalities. In addition, group identity functioned on three levels: (1) participants' group identity by race; (2) the racial group identity of the recipient group; and (3) the societal association between racial group identity and access to resources.

In two different studies (one pertaining to allocation of school supplies and one pertaining to allocation of hospital supplies), participants observed an unequal distribution norm that advantaged (gave more resources to) schools or hospitals attended by children of African American or European American background (Elenbaas & Killen, in press-b; Elenbaas et al., 2015). The majority of kindergartners and fifth graders judged that this distributional inequality was not acceptable. When it was their turn to allocate educational supplies, kindergartners' (ages 5–6 years) allocation decisions depended on the distribution norm that they had witnessed: when their racial in-group had a history of disadvantage relative to their

racial out-group, young children allocated more resources to the institution attended by children of their racial in-group, but when the racial out-group had a history of disadvantage, young children allocated equally between the two institutions. Thus, young children demonstrated a greater sensitivity to the needs of their in-group, correcting the inequality when their in-group was disadvantaged, but not when the racial out-group was disadvantaged. By contrast, older children (ages 10–11 years) corrected the inequality by giving more to the group that had received less, regardless of whether it was their in-group or their out-group. These age-related changes in allocation decisions were supported by increased reasoning about the importance of equal access to educational supplies (Elenbaas et al., 2015).

Interestingly, when allocating health supplies in a similar context, older children's decisions differed based on which group they had seen receiving fewer supplies. With age, children demonstrated increasing awareness of average economic disparities between African Americans and European Americans in broader society (independent of the experimental paradigm). This increasing awareness of broader inequality between groups, as well as children's increasingly negative judgments of an inequality of medical supplies, explained older children's decisions to correct the inequality that was observed in the experiment for the disadvantaged African American peers (Elenbaas & Killen, in press-b). With age, children also reasoned about others' rights and the importance of access to medical care, revealing their moral concerns for others' welfare in this complex context.

Supporting the SRD model, the results of these studies highlight the ways in which children weigh morality, group identity, and intergroup norms when allocating resources between racial groups. Because these studies examined children's allocations of resources that are, in fact, unequally distributed in United States to groups with a history of resource advantage or disadvantage, these results can be applied to understanding the development of behaviors and reasoning that either support or seek to shift the societal status quo. U.S. children are aware of some of the existing inequalities between racial groups in their society, and demonstrate strong concern for righting unjustified unequal distributions of important resources.

Conclusions, Implications, and Future Directions

Group processes are central to the development of social cognition and moral judgment. In situations involving social inclusion/exclusion and resource allocation, children's group identity plays a significant role in when and whether exclusion is viewed as unfair or legitimate as well as how resources are divided to ensure a fair outcome. Group processes reflect many different aspects of social development,

including group identity, group affiliation, and interpretations of group goals. Throughout development, children take multiple considerations into account when making moral judgments. Group processes are both a context for moral judgment decisions as well as an important consideration that must be weighed and considered when making decisions involving the fair treatment of others.

Overall, the study of how group processes bear on social and moral development provides important insight into the developmental changes that occur throughout development. On the one hand, from a young age children view social exclusion as wrong and unfair, even when stereotypic expectations are salient. On the other hand, children are vulnerable to stereotypes, and, particularly in situations that are ambiguous or complex, they will exclude others who do not fit the group expectations, even when this is based on irrelevant criteria. Yet, children are also oriented towards fairness and equality, taking into account someone who has few resources in contrast to someone with lots of resources, and even considering a history of disadvantaged status when allocating resources. Determining what factors help children to give priority to morality in the context of group processes requires more detailed investigation.

Group interactions provide children with a wealth of opportunities to engage with peers in constructive and meaningful ways, making friends, learning about new ideas and perspectives, and taking other viewpoints into account. At the same time, groups can serve to perpetuate inequalities, create social hierarchies, and foster in-group and out-group conflict. How children navigate the world of group identity and group processes is an important topic to investigate in child development. Understanding the role of groups in children's lives provides a window into the development of morality, sociality, and psychology.

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